

**Annual Report to the
North Carolina General Assembly**

***Surface Water Identification and Training
Certification Course***

October 1, 2018 – September 30, 2019

Division of Water Resources



**NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY**

Surface Water Identification and Training Certification Course Annual Report – 2019

In accordance with G.S. 143-214.25A Section 4(b)

Background: The Surface Water Identification Training and Certification (SWITC) Course is offered by the Division of Water Resources, Water Quality Programs (formerly known as the Division of Water Quality prior to August 1, 2013, and hereinafter referred to as “DWR”) to comply with N.C. General Statute 143-214.25A. This statute requires DWR to train and certify staff within the North Carolina Forest Service (NCFS), local governments with delegated riparian buffer programs, and DWR. This training certification is required to determine where surface waters are present and thus where the riparian buffer rules apply.

Courses: Between October 1, 2018 and September 30, 2019, DWR offered two SWITC training courses. These courses took place November 13-16, 2018 at NCSU’s Booth Field Learning Lab (Lake Wheeler Rd facility), and May 14-17, 2019 at NCSU’s Weaver Labs (NCSU main campus) in Raleigh. Due to lack of funding for these courses, DWR partnered with NC State University to offer classes. Below are summaries of the two courses:

November 2018: 31 students attended: Five students were DWR staff, three students were NCFS staff, four students were from local governments with delegated local buffer programs and two students were from other local and state agencies (City of Raleigh, UNC- Chapel Hill).

May 2019: 30 students attended: Four students were DWR staff, three students were NCFS staff, eight students were from local governments with delegated local buffer programs and three students were from other local and state agencies (Chesterfield County, VA; Division of Mitigation Services).

Certifications: DWR issued 12 new certifications in November 2018, and eight new certifications in May 2019 to DWR staff, NCFS staff, and delegated local government staff as a result of these courses. These 20 individuals are certified to determine where surface waters are present and thus where the riparian buffer rules apply. DWR also issued 14 training certificates in November 2018 and 19 training certificates in May 2019 to other individuals that successfully completed the course. These 33 individuals are not eligible to be officially certified because they do not meet the certification criteria in G.S. 143-214.25A.

Effectiveness: DWR consistently receives positive feedback about this course. The class also fills quickly upon opening of registration and consistently carries a waitlist. DWR asked the participants to rate their level of knowledge before the course (on a scale of 1-5), and the average was 2.4 in November 2018, and 2.5 in May 2019. DWR asked the participants to rate their level of knowledge again after the course, and the average was 4.5 in November 2018, and 4.3 in May 2019.

Recommendations: DWR always reviews the course evaluations completed by the students and makes adjustments to the course as needed based on that feedback. DWR will continue to solicit feedback and make improvements to future courses.

