



North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Beverly Eaves Perdue  
Governor

Dee Freeman  
Secretary

September 28, 2011

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW COMMISSION  
The Honorable David Rouzer, Chair  
The Honorable Mitch Gillespie, Co-Chair  
The Honorable Ruth Samuelson, Co-Chair

FROM: Kari Barsness *KKB*  
Director of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs

SUBJECT: 2011 Surface Water Identification Training and Certification Program  
Annual Report

DATE: September 28, 2011

Pursuant to Session Law 2010-180, Sec. 4 (b), the Division of Water Quality shall submit to the Environmental Review Commission a report on the Surface Water Identification Training and Certification program by October 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. Please consider the 2011 Surface Water Identification Training and Certification Program Report attached as the formal submission of this report.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me by phone at (919) 715-4189 or via e-mail at [Kari.Barsness@ncdenr.gov](mailto:Kari.Barsness@ncdenr.gov).

cc: Assistant Secretary Robin Smith  
Coleen Sullins, Director, Division of Water Quality  
Kristin Walker, Fiscal Research Division  
Lanier McRee, Fiscal Research Division  
Claire Hester, Fiscal Research Division  
Mariah Matheson, Research Division

## **Surface Water Identification and Training Certification Course Annual Report**

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 Quality (DWQ) to comply with N.C. General Statute 143-214.25A. This statute requires DWQ to train and certify staff within the Division of Forest Resources (DFR), now identified as the N.C. Forest Service, local governments with delegated riparian buffer programs, and DWQ. This training certification is required to determine where surface waters are present and thus where the riparian buffer rules apply.

Courses: Between October 1, 2010 and September 30, 2011, DWQ offered two SWITC training courses. The first course took place October 19-22, 2010, at the Ralph Winkworth Forestry Center in Kinston. The second course took place April 5-8, 2011, at the Wake County Cooperative Extension Office in Raleigh.

- 23 students attended each course for a total of 46 students.
- 13 students were DWQ staff.
- 5 students were DFR staff.
- 11 students were from local governments with delegated local buffer programs.
- 17 students were from other local and state agencies (city of Fayetteville, Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Land Resources, Department of Transportation, Division of Parks and Recreation, Ecosystem Enhancement Program, the state of Georgia and the state of Tennessee).

Certifications: DWQ issued 28 certifications to DWQ staff, DFR staff and local government staff. These individuals are certified to determine where surface waters are present and thus where the riparian buffer rules apply. DWQ also issued 15 training certificates to other individuals that successfully completed the course. These 15 individuals are not eligible to be certified because they do not meet the certification criteria in G.S. 143-214.25A. Finally, DWQ issued three incompletes to students who did not complete the course and exams.

Effectiveness: DWQ consistently receives positive feedback about this course. During the April 2011 course, DWQ asked the participants to rate their level of knowledge before the course (on a scale of 1-5), and the average was 2.15. DWQ asked the participants to rate their level of knowledge again after the course, and the average was 4.1.

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