



North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Beverly Eaves Perdue
Governor

Dee Freeman
Secretary

September 28, 2012

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: 2012 Basinwide Water Quality Management Plan

DATE: September 28, 2012

Pursuant to G.S. 143-215.8B, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources shall submit to the Environmental Review Commission a report on the progress in developing and implementing basinwide water quality management plans and on increasing public involvement and public education in connection with basinwide water quality management planning by October 1st of each year. Please consider the Basinwide Management Plan 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) 707-8618 or via e-mail at Kari.Barsness@ncdenr.gov.

cc: Robin Smith, Assistant Secretary for Environment, NCDENR
Chuck Wakild, Director, DWQ, NCDENR
Kristin Walker, Fiscal Research Division
Mariah Matheson, Research Division, NC General Assembly
Lanier McRee, Fiscal Research Division, NC General Assembly

The Division of Water Quality Basinwide Planning Program's Annual Report to the ERC – Oct. 1, 2011, through Sept. 30, 2012

The N.C. Division of Water Quality's (DWQ) Basinwide Planning Unit conducted its work with stakeholder input during this year, and has maintained public participation through increased electronic communication. Stakeholders provide watershed information pertinent to protecting and enhancing water quality throughout each basin. Work was performed across all 17 river basins, with some basins receiving more attention during the year due to the rotating permit cycle.

During this reporting period, basinwide management plans were completed by the NC DWQ and approved by the N.C. Environmental Management Commission (EMC) for the following river basins: Roanoke, New, Savannah, Hiwassee and Little Tennessee rivers. Stakeholders have included the Watershed Association of the Tuckasegee River, Little Tennessee Watershed Association, Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition, Land Trust for the Little Tennessee, Jackson-Macon Conservation Alliance, the National Committee for the New River, local Soil and Water Conservation Districts, U.S. Department of Agriculture and other federal, state and local agencies. River basins with plans in draft stages during this same period include: Cape Fear, White Oak, Chowan, Pasquotank, and Watauga rivers.

Water quality issues that are identified and documented in basinwide water quality management plans provide an opportunity for local governments, natural resource groups, researchers, soil and water agencies and others to leverage recommendations provided in basinwide plans when applying for several types of grant funding and loan programs. All basinwide management plans are available at: <http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/wq/ps/bpu>

Additional work was done this year to identify the users of water quality management plans and to explore recommendations to refine and improve the management documents for specific user categories into the future. More than 28 professional user groups or agencies were identified that use the water quality management plans on at least four different watershed scales, ranging from the six digit hydrologic unit code (larger) to the 12-digit hydrologic code (smaller watershed size).

Water Quality Impairments

Water quality impairments are formally identified every other year by the NC DWQ through the "use support" assessment process for surface waters. The impairments are compiled and submitted to the U.S. EPA for review and approval pursuant to Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act. The results of impairment are based on a five-year compilation of data that has gone through quality assurance and quality control. For example, the 2012 impairments are based on data collected from 2006-2010. The following graph illustrates the most recent (2010 and 2012) water quality impairments for North Carolina:

