



North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Beverly Eaves Perdue  
Governor

Dee Freeman  
Secretary

**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  
Director of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs

SUBJECT: 2012 Surface Water Identification Training and Certification Program  
Annual Report

DATE: October 23, 2012

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 2012 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) 707-8618 or via e-mail at [Kari.Barsness@ncdenr.gov](mailto:Kari.Barsness@ncdenr.gov).

cc: Robin Smith, Assistant Secretary for Environment, NCDENR  
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Timothy Dale, Fiscal Research Division  
Mariah Matheson, Research Division, NC General Assembly

## **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 G.S. 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 (NCFS), local governments with delegated riparian buffer programs and DWQ. This training certification is required to ensure that staff members of these entities are able to properly determine where surface waters are present and thus where the riparian buffer rules apply.

**Courses:** Between Oct. 1, 2011, and Sept. 30, 2012, DWQ offered three SWITC training courses. The first course took place Oct. 11-14, 2011, at B.H. Corpening Center in Crossnore. The second course took place May 1-4, 2012, at Haw River State Park in Browns Summit. The third course took place Sept. 18-21, 2012, at the Ralph Winkworth Forestry Center in Kinston.

- 17-25 students attended each course for a total of 62 students.
- 22 students were DWQ staff.
- 9 students were NCFS staff.
- 8 students were from local governments with delegated local buffer programs.
- 23 students were from other local and state agencies (Lincoln County, Appalachian District, Johnston County, Beaufort County, Hertford County, Pender County, other DENR divisions, Department of Health and Human Services, Ecosystem Enhancement Program, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the state of Delaware).

**Certifications:** DWQ issued 21\* certifications to DWQ staff, NCFS 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 13\* training certificates to other individuals that successfully completed the course. These 13\* 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 2.4. DWQ asked the participants to rate their level of knowledge again after the course, and the average was 4.3.

**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.

\* Tests and evaluations for the September 2012 class were not graded or reviewed at the time this report was compiled (9-24-12).