



North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Pat McCrory
Governor

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Secretary

October 1, 2013

MEMORANDUM

TO: ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW COMMISSION
The Honorable Brent Jackson, Chair
The Honorable Ruth Samuelson, Co-Chair
The Honorable Mike Hager, Co-Chair

FROM: Neal Robbins, Director of Legislative Affairs

SUBJECT: 2013 Surface Water Identification Training and Certification program Report

DATE: October 1, 2013

Pursuant to Session Law 2010-180, Sec. 4(b), the Division of Water Resources shall submit to the Environmental Review Commission a report on the Surface Water Identification Training and Certification program by October 1st of each year. Please consider the 2013 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 neal.robbsins@ncdenr.gov.

cc: Mitch Gillespie, Assistant Secretary for Environment, NCDENR
Thomas A Reeder, Director, DWR, NCDENR
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 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, 2012 and September 30, 2013, DWR offered one SWITC training course. This course took place May 14-17th at the Walnut Creek Wetland Center in Raleigh. Due to expiring grant funds, only one SWITC course has been offered so far this year. The budget is currently being assessed to determine if enough funds remain for another course offering in fall of 2013. Below is a summary of the May, 2013 course:

- 26 students attended.
- 9 students were DWR staff.
- One student was a NCFS staff member.
- 7 students were from local governments with delegated local buffer programs.
- 10 students were from other local and state agencies (Franklin County, Johnston County, Department of Transportation, City of Winston Salem, City of Raleigh, Stafford-Virginia Planning Department, and the NC Department of Agriculture).

Certifications: DWR issued 11 new certifications to DWR staff, NCFS staff and local government staff as a result of this course. These individuals are certified to determine where surface waters are present and thus where the riparian buffer rules apply. DWR also issued six training certificates to other individuals that successfully completed the course. These six individuals are not eligible to be officially certified because they do not meet the certification criteria in G.S. 143-214.25A. Finally, DWR issued two additional full certificates to students who needed only to pass the field testing component of this course to complete previous course requirements. There are several students who need to retake field tests, or take the final written exam in order to become certified.

Effectiveness: DWR consistently receives positive feedback about this course. DWR asked the participants to rate their level of knowledge before the course (on a scale of 1-5), and the average was 2.0. DWR asked the participants to rate their level of knowledge again after the course, and the average was 4.1.

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.