



North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Pat McCrory
Governor

John E. Skvarla, III
Secretary

October 1, 2014

MEMORANDUM

TO: ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW COMMISSION
The Honorable Mike Hager
The Honorable Ruth Samuelson
The Honorable Brent Jackson

FROM: Neal Robbins, Director of Legislative Affairs

SUBJECT: 2014 Surface Water Identification Training and Certification Program Report

DATE: October 1, 2014

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 2014 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.robbs@ncdenr.gov.

cc: Mitch Gillespie, Assistant Secretary for Environment, NCDENR
Thomas A Reeder, Director, DWR, NCDENR
Kristin Walker, Fiscal Research Division, NC General Assembly
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Lanier McRee, Fiscal Research Division, NC General Assembly

Surface Water Identification and Training Certification Course Annual Report

In accordance with G.S. 143-214.25A

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, 2013 and September 30, 2014, DWR offered one SWITC training course. This course took place December 3-6 at the NCDA&CS Agronomic Division’s Eaddy Building in Raleigh. DWR is partnering with NC State University to offer classes in the future. Below is a summary of the December 2013 course:

- 23 students attended.
- 17 students were DWR staff.
- 1 student was NCFS staff.
- 3 students were from local governments with delegated local buffer programs.
- 2 students were from other local and state agencies (Mecklenburg County, NC Division of Parks and Recreation).

Certifications: DWR issued 15 new certifications to DWR staff, NCFS staff and local government staff as a result of this course. These 15 individuals are certified to determine where surface waters are present and thus where the riparian buffer rules apply. DWR also issued three training certificates to other individuals that successfully completed the course. These three 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.

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 2.7. DWR asked the participants to rate their level of knowledge again after the course, and the average was 4.3.

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.