

Wake County Staff Review of the Upper Neuse Watershed Management Plan July 16, 2003 Meeting Summary

Prepared July 16, 2003

UNRBA mission: To preserve and protect the water quality in the Upper Neuse River Basin through innovative, cost effective and environmentally sound strategies and to create a coalition of local governments and stakeholders in a water resources partnership.

On July 16, 2003, Chris Dreps of the Upper Neuse River Basin Association (UNRBA) met with staff from Wake County in the County Office Building. The objectives of the meeting were to:

- Review the analyses in the Upper Neuse Watershed Management Plan (Plan);
- Discuss the management strategies proposed for Wake County; and
- Receive staff guidance for proceeding with the introduction of the Plan to Wake County elected officials.

Meeting attendees are listed below.

Name	Department/Program
Mark Bailey	Environmental Services
Rick Rowe	Environmental Services
Phelecia Cooper	Environmental Services
Everett Lynn	Environmental Services
Kent Daeke	Environmental Services
Steve Woodruff	Environmental Services
Mike Coughlin	Environmental Services
Ken Cromartie	Environmental Services
Wright Lowery	Community Services
Andre Pierce	Environmental Services
Tom Hill	Environmental Services
Ben Bearden	UNRBA
Chris Dreps	UNRBA

Plan Analysis

Chris Dreps presented a brief background of the UNRBA. He then summarized the Plan's analyses. The two major analyses discussed are the drinking water quality assessment (chlorophyll a levels) and the habitat/recreation assessment (impervious cover). For each analysis, the UNRBA Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), made up of local government and NC DENR staff, set management targets. The Plan analyzes current, Year 2025, and two buildout scenarios. All analyses assume development would be 100% compliant with existing regulations and the Neuse rules for nitrogen reduction.

The analysis shows that by 2025, water quality targets in Lake Michie and the Little River Reservoir are close to being exceeded. Under both buildout scenarios, the targets would be exceeded.

The impervious cover target (10% watershed-wide average) is currently exceeded in Ellerbe Creek, Little Lick Creek, and the lower portions of the Eno River watershed. By 2025, Lick Creek and portions of the Eno all the way to Hillsborough will exceed 10% impervious cover.

Questions and comments:

Rick Rowe asked if nutrients were considered in the watershed analysis, to which Chris responded that both nitrogen and phosphorus were considered.

Tom Hill mentioned that Falls Lake was originally intended to be deeper in the upper reaches where it is currently shallow and Chlorophyll a levels are higher.

Wright Lowery commented that Wake County has compared the location of impaired streams to an estimated cover analyses and noticed the correlation between high impervious cover and impaired streams.

Tom commented that the 303d list, while decent for identifying impaired streams, is still a limited resource.

Mike commented that Wake County uses a 15% impervious cover limit, which also includes roads.

Mark Bailey commented that the monitoring system mentioned in the recommendations is absolutely necessary to determine if the Plan recommendations are being met as well as if the recommendations from the analysis are adequate.

Everet Lynn mentioned that the data entry has just been completed for the Wake County septic system study and that the study should be completed by year's end.

Tom asked if there is a phosphorus recommendation for urban areas. Chris responded that it is 0.6 ug/L and that the slide had accidentally been left out.

Steve Woodruff and Tom mentioned that there is an increase in small horse farms where property owners are not familiar with proper treatment/disposal of animal waste and that these farms are contributing to non-point source pollution.

Recommended Management Strategies

Chris presented the general recommendations. Those specific to Wake County are:

- Nitrogen Performance Standard (3.6 lbs./acre/year)
- Enhanced Peak Flow Management
- Watershed-wide Monitoring
- Septic Systems (Inspections, Info. Mgmt., Education)
- Enhanced Construction, Site Inspection, and Enforcement Action
- Enhanced Animal Operations Inspections
- Stormwater Quality BMP Inspection & Enforcement
- Low-Impact Design Education
- Targeted Land Acquisition
- Buffer Maintenance Education

- Agricultural/Forestry BMP's
- General Watershed Education and Adopt-a-Stream Program
- Stream & Wetland Restoration Projects
- Stormwater Retrofit Projects

A general estimate of the additional programmatic costs to government of implementing the Plan is: \$7,441 per year in year one. A septic system inspection/maintenance program would cost an estimated \$606,000 per year in year one, a cost of about \$67 per system owner.

Costs for all programs will increase with inflation and growth.

Discussion

Large Group:

Mark Bailey wants to set up a meeting with Chris, Tom, and Mike to discuss the recommendations in detail. Mark feels that finding a way to overlap Plan recommendations with Wake County's Watershed Management Plan would be the most effective way to move forward with adopting the recommendations.

Several folks commented that the cost estimates seem low. Chris responded that they are low figures since they consider only "major" developments over 50 acres in size. The estimates are only for additional programmatic costs to governments, and they assume that the county already has the staff to carry out the additional work.

After the meeting ended, a small group of Mark Bailey, Tom Hill, and Wright Lowery met to discuss the next steps:

Mark wants to find out WRP priorities and how they affect Wake County's decision making. Tom mentioned that Wake County has a great relationship with WRP, so this should not be difficult.

Tom commented that a problem with most of the watershed assessment tools available is that they are very general, which might raise issues about a tool's legitimacy. However, if the State requires the tool be used, that would lend the tool more credibility. Additionally, Tom mentioned that there are presently a lot of tools out there and that Wake County is looking into the "Watersheds" software as a possible tool.

Mark Suggested that Wright and Tom be involved in the stakeholder group for developing the USGS/WRP funded tool.

Tom is interested in getting the data used in the UNRBA analysis and suggested that UNRBA and Wake County start sharing data.

Next steps

Mark will discuss with Rick Rowe who, from Wake County, Chris should present to and will let Chris know.

Mark will review the Plan recommendations in detail in order to establish a baseline for what is being done in Wake County.

Chris will send Mark a copy of the Plan on CD and will send an email attachment of the Plan recommendations for Wake County.

Tom Hill and Chris will communicate to begin updating the recommendations spreadsheet to reflect recommendations, how the current approach compares with the recommendation, comparable Wake County WSMP recommendation, and next steps.

Mark will send Chris a copy of the Wake County WSMP on CD.