



Upper Neuse River Basin Association (UNRBA) Board of Directors (BOD) Meeting Agenda
March 19, 2025, 9:30 AM to Noon
In Person Meeting at Butner Town Hall, Camp Butner Room
[Remote Access Option \(see page 6 for instructions\)](#)

Materials related to this BOD Meeting have been placed on the UNRBA website unless noted otherwise on the [Meeting Page](#). See items under the March 19, 2025, meeting date.

I. Opening—Jane Harrison, Vice Chair

- A. Introductions and Announcements**
- B. Roll Call for Quorum**
- C. Identification of any Conflicts**
- D. Review and Approval of Agenda**

II. Action Items

- A. Approval of [January 15, 2024, Draft Board Minutes](#)**
- B. Approval of the [Treasurer's Report](#)**
- C. Review and Approval of the Proposed Budget for FY2026 and Review 5-year Budget Projection**

Item Summary (Forrest Westall): The UNRBA has moved into a period of supporting the use of [Consensus Principles II](#) in the development of revised Falls Lake Rules. It will be essential for the UNRBA to have sufficient resources to support the ongoing activities of the UNRBA. While we do not anticipate a heavy demand for extensive technical support using modeling, we must maintain an experienced and capable “team” to effectively keep a viable UNRBA effort to successfully develop revised rules.

In FY2026 (July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026), the UNRBA will continue to support its members and DWR by compiling feedback from stakeholders to develop draft rule language. This activity will be followed, through coordination with the membership, by development of a fiscal analysis of the proposed rules, as supported by the PFC and the Board, and then presentation of the rule package to the Environmental Management Commission (EMC), a formal comment period, public hearing(s), and ultimately readoption of the rules (likely in the first quarter of 2027).

The UNRBA will need to maintain a collaborative relationship between DWR, the EMC, and the General Assembly to support an effective readoption process. The recommendations developed by the UNRBA lay out a path that is an innovative, based on watershed management approach primarily addressing nutrients. Due to the scientific findings and realities of this watershed, the revised strategy will need to forge a strategy that is a departure from standard or existing nutrient management efforts. This new approach will need significant support to develop rules that make sense, are effective in maintaining uses in Falls Lake, that can be implemented, and that garner broad support by the regulatory agencies, the membership of the UNRBA, environmental interest groups, development interests in the watershed, and other stakeholders. This approach is clearly a “one-water” effort, but one that will include a specific regulatory framework and the cooperation of all stakeholders. The UNRBA has been committed to working through this with DWR and the staff responsible for developing revised rules. This is a primary, ongoing commitment.

In addition, the UNRBA will proceed with working on receiving approval of a specific 303(d) assessment methodology for Falls Lake and for continuing the development of a site-specific chlorophyll-a standard. The UNRBA members have also supported the importance and need for ongoing monitoring in the watershed. This

includes tributary monitoring in the watershed to track progress and changes in water quality. While this will be a future effort and depending on when revised rules are finalized and put in place, the UNRBA team will need to support designing and carrying out a monitoring program in the future. The UNRBA needs to be “ready” to assist with the planning and support this work and not lose important continuity and focus. DWR and other organizations continue to monitor water quality in Falls Lake. Because DWR has paused the tributary monitoring, now for an extensive period of time, the UNRBA has discussed restarting the UNRBA monitoring program in the future. This would require updates to the previously developed monitoring program and quality assurance project plan. Depending on when monitoring would begin, these updates may be needed during FY2026. In the future, the UNRBA will need to press for and participate in the development of ongoing reporting and assessment of the data to support the evaluation of changes in the watershed. This ongoing assessment is critical to the objective of responding as quickly as possible to water quality issues in the lake and watershed.

The PFC and the UNRBA Board members requested a budget amount to consider during the local government annual budgeting process. During the November 20, 2024, meeting, the Executive Director presented to the Board a planning-level budget of \$899,500. Following that meeting, the PFC in December requested additional information about the budget and discussed capping the legal support fund based on pending information from the legal group. This objective was discussed at the January Board meeting. At its March 4th meeting, the PFC discussed and recommended a revised budget of \$767,000. The presented FY26 budget does not include budget for modeling subcontractors. However, the budget does include the continued collection of \$100,000 for the UNRBA’s legal and regulatory support fund contribution. The Legal Group met in February and recommended collection of this amount for the FY 2026 budget and that future collections would be evaluated before a budget is developed for coming fiscal years. While it is extremely difficult to predict the future, a 5-year budget projection has been developed and will be shared during the Board’s March meeting. Just to note ongoing considerations, the Board has discussed several issues that may need to be addressed in the future including water quality monitoring, as noted, and development/turbidity, and emerging contaminants.

[The Board will vote on the proposed FY 2026 budget.](#)

III. Status Reports and Informational Items

A. Status of the Falls Lake Rules Readoption Process

Item Summary (Forrest Westall): The UNRBA submitted the [UNRBA Concepts and Principles for Reexamination](#) and [Consensus Principles II](#) to DWR and the EMC on November 22, 2023. The NC Collaboratory submitted their final report in December 2023. These submittals trigger the initiation of the Falls Lake Rules Readoption Process. As noted in other agenda items and as directed by the Board, the UNRBA is engaging on every aspect of this process and how management options or proposals may impact our efforts to achieve a balanced, realistic, technologically feasible, and effective set of new rules. The UNRBA will continue to reference the scientific basis for appropriate rules as reflected in our 10-year evaluation and the work of the Collaboratory. The following activities are ongoing:

- The UNRBA continues to consider a legislative change to § 77-141 (legislation that created the Falls Lake Watershed Association—the UNRBA operates under this designation as well) that would explicitly support the concept of a watershed organization like the UNRBA developing and implementing a water quality protection plan. The Legal group, PFC and Board have previously reviewed and supported this change. Staff from DWR and American Rivers have also indicated support for this specific change. The proposal is still under consideration by the Legislator and discussions continue about the need for this revision. The

Executive Director and support team met with representatives from the Home Builders Association to discuss this legislative change and how it would benefit both the local governments and the developers. These meetings have led to better engagement of the Home Builders in the rules readoption process.

- As reflected in the approved Consensus Principles II, the Executive Director and support team will continue to promote the importance of securing revised rules and push to continue the momentum the work of the UNRBA has generated toward achieving the readoption of revised Falls Lake Rules. The rules review workgroup process, as developed and approved by the PFC, has been making progress and has developed preliminary draft rules. Each of four workgroups have met multiple times since December 2024. On March 4th, all of the workgroups met for a workshop to discuss drafts of the Purpose and Scope and Wastewater Rules. The next workshop will be April 1st which will focus on New Development and Existing Managed Lands. We anticipate bringing revised preliminary drafts to the PFC for discussion at their May 6th meeting. DWR has been and will continue to participate in all of these workgroup meetings.
- UNRBA and DWR will compile input from the workgroups to develop a set of updated draft rules to take to a broader set of stakeholders, including the UNRBA PFC, the UNRBA Board, and stakeholder contacts compiled by both the UNRBA and DWR since the reexamination began. Our goal is for UNRBA and DWR to present a joint set of rules to the NC Environmental Management Commission.

B. Continued Rule Development for Jordan Lake and High Rock Lake Watersheds

Item Summary (Forrest Westall): We continue to monitor DWR's draft proposal for changes to new development (ND) requirements (post-construction stormwater controls) for the High Rock Lake Watershed and the rules readoption process for the Jordan Lake Watershed. We remain concerned that these processes could negatively impact the Falls Lake rules readoption process, both in timing and in trying to "set" an approach for nutrient management that could be inconsistent with the recommendations of the UNRBA. Based on the preliminary proposal on post construction stormwater requirements we have discussed previously, the proposal seems to indicate that DWR is seeking what may be a more restrictive development control program for new development without fully supporting the need or the benefits of such an approach. The recommendation of the UNRBA has promoted some minor revisions to the existing ND program for management of new development in the watershed. We also believe that trying to adopt more aggressive requirements for new development, which likely provide little or no improvement over current requirements, threatens the development of broad support for maintaining the essential management components of the existing ND Rule in the Falls Watershed. The UNRBA seeks to ensure that productive programs continue in Falls and are not put at risk by seeking new and potentially more restrictive requirements for ND which could generate considerable push back. This continues to be an important discussion topic for the New Development Workgroup. Recent discussions on this point with DWR are encouraging and attention to this issue remains a priority.

C. Discussion of House Bill 382 and Impacts to Local Government Zoning Authority

Item Summary (Forrest Westall): Subpart III-K. of [Senate Bill 382](#) prohibits a local government to initiate down-zoning without the consent of all affected property owners. This bill applies to any ordinance or zoning change within 180 days of the day of adoption and any passed after the day of adoption. The Governor's veto of the bill was overridden on December 11, 2024, and the bill was passed.

D. Modeling and Regulatory Support Status and Evaluating a Falls Lake Assessment Methodology and Site-Specific Chlorophyll-a Water Quality Standard

Item Summary (Alix Matos): Modeling files and reports for the WARMF watershed model, WARMF lake model, EFDC lake model, and statistical/Bayesian lake model have been submitted to the Division of Water Resources (DWR) for review and approval. Modeling reports and summaries of key findings are available at <https://unrba.org/resource-library>. Email communications from DWR staff indicate the agency has no additional comments on these reports and accepts them as the final submittals. The Executive Director has requested a formal statement from DWR as specified in Section (5)(f)(iii) of the [Falls Lake Rules](#) which require that “the Division shall assure that the supplemental modeling is conducted in accordance with the quality assurance requirements of the Division.” The UNRBA submitted and the Division approved the [UNRBA Quality Assurance Project Plan](#) for this purpose. This submittal completes the documentation of the work completed before the UNRBA developed its recommendations which were made based on the conclusions reached in the modeling evaluation. No issues with the formal review step are expected. The UNRBA’s re-examination effort form the basis of our proposed revisions to the Falls Lake Rules.

The UNRBA continues to focus on our primary priority: coordination with DWR and stakeholders in the development of a revised management strategy through the rules readoption process. However, the UNRBA has identified, as part of the Reexamination and recommendations, that two additional goals remain under consideration: modifications of the 303(d)-water quality assessment method for chlorophyll-a in Falls Lake, and the development of a proposed site-specific chlorophyll-a criteria. Dr. Martin Lebo is coordinating with the statistical modeling effort on his continued evaluation of a Falls Lake-specific assessment methodology and site-specific chlorophyll-a. We greatly appreciate that the NC Collaboratory is provided additional funding to Dr. Nathan Hall to provide input on some of the ecological processes in Falls Lake (including algal species and edibility of higher trophic level organisms) related to development of a Falls Lake-specific assessment methodology and site-specific chlorophyll-a. Timing is important in assessing the current “use-support” processes used by DWR. We continue to keep revision of these two key factors in regulatory assessment of “meeting” uses as important long-term goals, but we do not want to deter moving forward with revised rules.

E. Communications Support

Item Summary (Forrest Westall): The work with DWR on the revised Falls Lake Rules continues and will be even more important in FY2026. Consistent with our expanding stakeholder process as outlined, we will have additional meetings to gather input from NC Collaboratory staff, researchers, and representatives of NGOs. As we have continued to do, we encourage our jurisdictions to identify additional communication needs and to request support from the UNRBA team as needed. Recent, ongoing, or upcoming activities are noted below:

- Delivering a Falls Lake Presentation at the Water Resources Research Institute Annual Conference on March 20, 2025.
- Coordinating with DWR on a larger stakeholder engagement kickoff meeting for the rules readoption process
- Status updates with DWR to the EMC when requested
- American Rivers has been coordinating with UNRBA members to create videos to celebrate the 2022 designation of “Neuse River of the Year”

- The UNRBA website contractor is working on creating the YouTube videos of the Falls Lakes water quality simulations; a brief document will be developed to provide context and a single reference for the list of videos.
- Planning a meeting with the new Secretary of DEQ

The “open” nature of all UNRBA meetings remains a key component of a transparent communications approach. We encourage member representatives and interested individuals to speak up about ideas and opportunities to communicate our work and the importance of our recommendations on a revised strategy and a site-specific standard. We also continue to look to our engaged membership representatives to use materials developed to help with communication within their jurisdictions. We remain available to assist with any presentations/meetings that are set up to discuss Falls Lake and the status of our work and the rules readoption process.

F. Ongoing Discussions/Issues:

Item Summary (Forrest Westall):

- DWR Neuse Watershed Model/Delivery Factors for WWTP –final modeling report was presented on January 28th
- Ongoing NC State University UNRBA and Jordan Lake One Water research study
- Impacts on implementation of nutrient requirements in light of PFAS/PFOS and other emerging requirements on wastewater management costs to local governments

G. Closing Comments—Board Members and Vice Chair

Next PFC Meeting: May 6, 2025, 9:30 AM to Noon

Next Board Meeting: May 21, 2025, 9:30 AM to Noon

This schedule may be revised, and notices will be provided about any change.

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- If you dial in through your phone, mute your computer microphone and turn down your speakers to **avoid feedback**
- Unless you are speaking, please mute your computer/device microphone or phone microphone to **minimize background noise**
- UNRBA meetings are open meetings; however, please **limit the discussion to UNRBA Board Members** to facilitate moving through action items