

**Path Forward Committee (PFC) Meeting Agenda**  
September 7, 2021, 9:30 AM to Noon  
**Remote Access Only (see last page of agenda for instructions)**

Materials related to the PFC Meeting has been placed on the UNRBA website unless noted otherwise on the [Meeting page](#). A direct link to the meeting presentation for the September 7, 2021 meeting is provided here: [PFC meeting](#).

**I. Opening Comments, Agenda Review/Revisions — Co-Chair Michelle Woolfolk**

**II. UNC Collaboratory Falls Lake Research Presentation by Dr. Brent McKee — Informational Item**

Item Summary (Forrest Westall and Brent McKee): Selected research funded through the Collaboratory to study Falls Lake will be presented at either MRSW or PFC meetings in 2021. Dr. Brent McKee's study objectives include the measurement of suspended sediment inputs and associated organic carbon to Falls Lake, and the amount of sediment mixing and accumulation impacting nutrient fluxes and carbon Falls Lake. This study is important to the current UNRBA lake modeling efforts. Dr. McKee's short [presentation](#) from the May Symposium and his [interim report](#) are available on line at <https://nutrients.web.unc.edu/2021-falls-lake-symposium/> and <https://nutrients.web.unc.edu/resources/>.

**III. Modeling and Regulatory Support Status — Review MRSW Decision on WARMF Watershed Model**

Item Summary (Alix Matos and Michelle Woolfolk): The Watershed Analysis Risk Management Framework (WARMF) model for the Falls Lake watershed has been calibrated for stream flows and water quality. Preliminary performance criteria and time series comparisons of simulated and observed concentrations were reviewed during the August PFC meeting. Based on feedback received during the meeting, further improvements to the model have been made and were discussed by the MRSW during a special meeting held August 27, 2021. During the special meeting, the MRSW voted to approve the calibration of the watershed model and to use it to begin calibration of WARMF Lake and EFDC. The calibration results and the feedback from the special meeting will be summarized during the September PFC meeting. The model output will soon be post-processed to identify the major sources of loading to the lake. This information will provide the best available picture of what sources in the watershed fall into the "controllable" category and lay the foundation on the feasibility and potential effectiveness of management actions to reduce nutrient input. WARMF Lake has been set up and the modeling team is working on evaluation of flow (sometimes bi-directional as noted by Dr. Rick Luettich in presentation in July) and thermal stratification. The modeling team plans to reach out to Collaboratory funded researchers to review modeling as it progresses. Calibration of the Environmental Fluid Dynamics Code (EFDC) will continue once the watershed modeling is approved for use as lake-model input by the PFC. The modeling team is working on the watershed model calibration report and the EFDC model calibration report. The two scenario workgroups (Scenario Output and the Model Scenario Output Workgroups) are continuing to develop a process to select scenarios to evaluate and to develop documentation to describe and compare output.

**IV. Status of the UNRBA Stage I Existing Development Interim Alternative Implementation Approach (IAIA) — Informational Item**

Item Summary (Forrest Westall): On June 16, 2021, the UNRBA Compliance Group Committee (CGC) submitted the Stage I Existing Development Interim Alternative Implementation Approach (IAIA) Program to DWR and the EMC. DWR acknowledged receipt of the submittal on June 30, 2021 and implementation of

the program began on July 1, 2021. A reporting tool has been developed and reviewed by the IAIA Reporting Workgroup. This tool will be distributed to the PFC in September for review and discussion at their next meeting.

**V. Status of Proposed Chlorophyll a Site Specific Standards for High Rock Lake — Informational Item**

Item Summary (Forrest Westall and Jay Sauber): In July, the EMC voted to send the proposed High Rock Lake Site Specific Water Quality Standard out to public hearing. The official public notice will come out in the September 1<sup>st</sup> edition of the NC Register. The hearing will be virtual and is scheduled for October 28<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 with the comment period ending on November 15<sup>th</sup>. This proposal is precedent setting for site specific chlorophyll-a criteria in NC lakes and reservoirs and will likely affect the process for establishing a site-specific standard for Falls Lake. At the September 15, 2021 Board meeting, The Executive Director will request that the Board reaffirm his authorization to comment on this rule-making precedent.

**VI. 2022 303(d) Listing and Delisting Methodology**

Item Summary (Forrest Westall and Jay Sauber): On June 3, 2021, EPA approved North Carolina's submittal of the 2020 303(d) list of waters not attaining water quality standards. EPA approval of the NC 2020 303(d) list facilitated DWR's decision to finalize the Integrated Report (IR) that includes all 305(b) water quality assessments (water quality standard assessments for waters meeting and not meeting water quality standards). Falls Lake assessments are not included in the 303(d) list because of the current water quality management strategy (Falls Rules). DWR, in responding to UNRBA Comments, stated "*DWR acknowledges that the UNRBA is currently in the process of developing updated models for Falls Lake and has also conducted special studies to further the ecological understanding of the lake. These studies will support the development of any future site specific approach(es), through the rules readoption process. Following rules readoption, DWR will determine if a site specific assessment approach is called for and adjust the Integrated Report Category Assignment Procedure as necessary.*"

**VII. Status of the EPA Draft Ambient Water Quality Criteria Recommendations for Lakes and Reservoirs**

Item Summary (Forrest Westall and Jay Sauber): EPA noticed their Draft Ambient Water Quality Criteria Recommendations for Lakes and Reservoirs of the Conterminous United States: Information Supporting the Development of Numeric Nutrient Criteria on May 22, 2020. The criteria are models that yield total nitrogen and total phosphorus concentrations to protect the designated uses of Aquatic Life, Recreation, and Drinking Water. These models, based on a 2007 EPA national lake survey, will replace EPA criteria based on the ecoregion/reference condition approach. If adopted, this document could potentially influence the UNRBA re-examination process review by EPA and the DWR. At the June 17<sup>th</sup> Board meeting, the Board authorized the Executive Director to submit comments on this EPA proposal on behalf of the UNRBA. During the July PFC meeting, an overview of the EPA proposal was provided, and the Executive Director provided a draft of the comments to the PFC on July 7<sup>th</sup>. The UNRBA comments were finalized following comments from the PFC. Formal comments on the EPA Draft Criteria document for lakes were submitted to the Federal Docket on July 13, 2020. A copy of the final comments was provided to the Board and the PFC. A summary of the comments submitted was provided during the August 4, 2020 PFC meeting ([August2020 PFC PowerPoint Presentation](#), slides 15-26). On August 13, 2021, EPA finalized the recommendations; few changes were made in response to comments received from several organizations. In response to comments, EPA reiterated that the models are available to State's to use to set criteria, but State's can use

other justified methods for setting criteria. EPA's approved recommendations are available at [Ambient Water Quality Criteria to Address Nutrient Pollution in Lakes and Reservoirs | US EPA](#).

**VIII. Plan for Statistical Model Development and Regulatory Options for the Chlorophyll-a Water Quality Standard**

Item Summary (Forrest Westall and Alix Matos): The UNRBA legal workgroup discussed the FY2021 scope of work with Barnes and Thornburg to provide legal support. The primary task for FY2021 is to begin consideration of a petition for rulemaking for Falls Lake (e.g., site specific criteria). This work will be partially supported by the UNRBA Statistical Model of Falls Lake. The models supporting the Re-examination of the Falls Nutrient Management Strategy will be discussed with an emphasis on the Statistical Model. To support this effort, the Technical Advisors Workgroup met in May to discuss contacts for local data and information that can be used to evaluate the designated uses of Falls Lake. The Technical Advisors Workgroup is comprised of MRSW and PFC members and has identified staff at their jurisdictions or other local experts to provide data and information. A revised list of contacts (sources of information on uses in the lake and any complaints/data about issues meeting those uses) based on input from the MRSW will be discussed during this PFC meeting. The modeling team will be meeting virtually with these contacts in September and October. The statistical modeling team and the legal team are also coordinating with Dr. Marty Lebo who has been identified as a Subject Matter Expert for assistance to the UNRBA for evaluating site-specific criteria for Falls Lake. Evaluation of other State's site-specific standards for chlorophyll-a and nutrient-related standards is ongoing.

**IX. Communications Support – Information Item**

Item Summary (Forrest Westall): The UNRBA and UNC Collaboratory met virtually to discuss research studies for FY22. The Falls Lake researchers funded through the Collaboratory will be presenting at upcoming UNRBA MRSW and PFC meetings to ensure the modeling team is integrating these studies into the models. The UNRBA Modeling Team has been and will continue to reach out to the Falls Lake researchers as the modeling progresses to ensure the best science and available information is incorporated into the models. The UNRBA Technical Stakeholder Workshop was postponed until FY2022 (this fiscal year) due to COVID-19 and the Collaboratory/UNRBA Symposium. The plan was to hold this workshop in person this November, but recent developments with COVID-19 will likely require either holding the workshop virtually or delaying until early 2022. The Executive Director and his team recently discussed the modeling project with Tim Wool at EPA Region 4. The UNRBA is also planning meetings with DWR and DEQ to review the technical work and discuss the general approach for the re-examination. The PFC will continue to discuss external stakeholder communication needs.

**X. Other Status Items—Information Item**

Item Summary (Forrest Westall): Brief statements on several ongoing activities:

- Leadership and organizational changes at NCDEQ and EPA—Elizabeth Biser was confirmed by the NC Senate as Secretary of DEQ on August 24, 2021 ([Senate confirms Elizabeth Biser as DEQ secretary | Coastal Review](#), [NC DEQ: Elizabeth S. Biser](#))
- Intensive workgroup activity and management of expectations and resources—A lot to do between now and recommendations in 2023
- Ongoing DEQ/DWR Items—MOA, Neuse Watershed Model Information Session / Delivery Factors for WWTP, etc.

XI. Closing Comments— Co-Chair Michelle Woolfolk

Next BOD Meeting: September 15, 2021, 9:30 AM to Noon  
 Next PFC or MRSW Meeting: October 5, 2021, 9:30 AM to Noon

### Remote Access Instructions for the MRSW and PFC Meetings

This meeting will open 10 minutes prior to the official meeting start time to allow for users to test equipment and ensure communication methods are functioning.

Equipment Type	Access Information	Notes
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Computers without audio capabilities, or audio that is not working	<a href="#">Join Microsoft Teams Meeting</a> (888) 404-2493 Passcode: 371 817 961# <b>Please mute your phone unless you want to provide input.</b>	Follow instructions above. <b>Turn down your computer speakers, mute your computer microphone</b> , dial the number through your phone and enter the passcode.
Phone only	(888) 404-2493 Passcode: 371 817 961#	Dial the toll-free number and enter the passcode. <b>Please mute your phone unless you want to provide input.</b>

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