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T15: 02L .0100

SUBCHAPTER 2L - GROUNDWATER CLASSIFICATION
AND STANDARDS

SECTION .0100 - GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

.0101 INTRODUCTION

(a) N.C. General Statute 143-214.1 directs that the Environmental Management Commission (hereinafter referred to as the EMC) develop and adopt after proper study a series of classifications and standards which will be appropriate for the purpose of classifying each of the waters of the state in such a way as to promote the policy and purposes of the act. Pursuant to this statute, the Regulations of this Subchapter establish a series of classifications and water quality standards applicable to the underground waters of the state.

(b) These Regulations and the standards they establish apply to all classified underground waters and all activities conducted in proximity thereto. Many common activities take place in or near shallow subsurface waters with no resulting violation of GA groundwater quality standards and it is the intention of these Regulations that those activities continue unimpeded except where specific problems are identified on a case by case basis. These activities include:

- (1) the agricultural operations of applying fertilizer, herbicides, or pesticides to croplands or pastures, and the raising of livestock;
- (2) silvicultural fertilizer, herbicide or pesticide application; home or commercial fertilizer, pesticide, or herbicide application;
- (3) structural pest control activities when conducted according to label directions; and
- (4) subsurface or surface municipal, industrial, and domestic waste disposal activities when these systems are installed and operated according to regulations established by the Department of Human Resources, Division of Health Services, or the Division of Environmental Management.

(c) The regulations established in this Subchapter are intended to maintain and preserve the quality of the subsurface and groundwaters, prevent and abate pollution and contamination, protect public health, and permit management of the underground waters for their best usage by the citizens of North Carolina. It is the policy of the EMC that the best usage of the underground water of the state is as a source of drinking water in its ambient state. These underground waters generally are a

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potable source of drinking water without the necessity of treatment. It is the intent of these Regulations to protect the overall high quality of North Carolina's underground waters and to enhance and restore the quality of degraded underground waters to the level established by the standards wherever practicable.

History Note: Statutory Authority G.S. 143-214.1;
143-214.2;
Eff. June 10, 1979;
Amended Eff. December 30, 1983.

.0102 DEFINITIONS

The definition of any word or phrase used in these regulations shall be the same as given in G.S. 143-213 except that the following words and phrases shall have the following meanings:

- (1) Deleterious substance means any substance which may cause the water to be unpleasant to taste, or unsightly, or is toxic or otherwise renders the water unsuitable for human consumption.
- (2) Fresh groundwaters are those groundwaters having a chloride concentration equal to or less than 250 milligrams per liter.
- (3) Groundwaters are those waters in the saturated zone of the water-bearing formations.
- (4) Infiltration water means the water that infiltrates or moves into the subsurface or occurs between the land surface and the top of the saturated zone or serves to recharge groundwaters.
- (5) Micrograms per liter ($\mu\text{g}/\text{l}$) gives the weight in micrograms of any constituent in one liter of solution.
- (6) Milligrams per liter (mg/l) is the weight in milligrams of any specific constituent or constituents in a liter of the solution.
- (7) Naturally occurring concentration means the concentration of chemical or biological substances or physical characteristics which exist naturally and which have not been changed by man's activities.
- (8) Natural quality means the physical, biological and chemical quality which occurs naturally and which has not been changed by man's activities.
- (9) Parts per million (ppm) and parts per billion (ppb) shall be construed to be equivalent to milligrams per liter and micrograms per liter, respectively.
- (10) Point of discharge or outlet is the point of initial contact of waste with the existing soil or rock materials.
- (11) Potable waters are those waters suitable for drinking, culinary and food processing purposes.

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- (12) Saline groundwaters are those groundwaters having a chloride concentration of more than 250 mg/l.
- (13) The saturated zone is that part of the water-bearing consolidated and unconsolidated formations in which all the voids are filled with water under pressure greater than atmospheric. It does not include the capillary fringe.
- (14) Subsurface means the area beneath the land surface and may or may not be part of the saturated zone.
- (15) Subsurface waters are those waters occurring in the subsurface and include groundwaters and infiltration waters.
- (16) Toxic substances shall mean those substances which if ingested or assimilated into any organism either directly or indirectly will cause death, disease, behavioral abnormalities, cancer, genetic mutations, physiological malfunctions (including malfunctions in such organisms of their offspring).
- (17) The unsaturated zone is the portion of the consolidated and unconsolidated formations between land surface and the water table. It includes the capillary fringe.
- (18) Water table is the surface of the saturated zone in the unconfined water-bearing formation or material at which the pressure is atmospheric.
- (19) Thermal waste for purposes of groundwater quality means discharges having a temperature which is in excess of 30 degrees fahrenheit above or below the naturally occurring temperature of the receiving groundwater as determined by the director.
- (20) Underground waters means all waters in the subsurface including infiltration and groundwaters.

History Note: Statutory Authority G.S. 143-214.1;
 Eff. June 10, 1979.
 Amended Eff. December 30, 1983.

.0103 GENERAL RULES

- (a) The discharge of any wastes to the subsurface or groundwaters of the state by means of wells is prohibited.
- (b) No person shall cause or allow the concentration of any toxic or deleterious substances to exceed that specified in Rule .0202 of this Subchapter, except in accordance with a compliance schedule authorized by the director.
- (c) Underground waters which contain toxic or deleterious substances in excess of the maximum allowable concentrations but for which it may be feasible to upgrade the quality to the standards established for classification, shall be additionally

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designated restricted (RS) by the director, as shall those underground waters for which the standard is established by statutory variance. Where naturally occurring concentrations as established under Rule .0202(b) of this Subchapter exceed the standard, the director may designate those waters RS (restricted), whether or not restoration or treatment is feasible. Where the source of contamination and the responsible party is identified, an RS designation shall be accompanied by a compliance schedule issued within 12 months of the designation or shall be the result of a duly granted statutory variance to the applicable standard.

(d) Any person subject to the provisions of General Statute 143-215.1 may apply to the EMC for a variance from the groundwater classifications and quality standards established pursuant to these Regulations and North Carolina General Statute 143-214.1. A variance may be granted by the commission pursuant to the requirements of North Carolina General Statute 143-215.3(e). The burden of proof in any public hearing or other proceeding pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 143-215.3(e) shall be upon the applicant for a variance. No variance shall be granted to allow the discharge of waste to the subsurface or groundwaters of the state by means of wells.

(e) Any person conducting an activity causing or contributing to the violation of groundwater quality standards who could not by the exercise of due care know that the activity would result in pollution of the underground waters may request and the director may authorize a compliance schedule. A compliance schedule will require that the groundwaters be restored to the level of the standard, or as close thereto as technically feasible, over a period of time not to exceed 5 years. In all cases, the level of restoration required in the compliance schedule will be at least as stringent as the GSB standards and will contain annual interim attainment goals for substances present at levels above the standards. Compliance schedules may be revised or revoked by the director and shall be revoked if the terms of the compliance schedule are violated by the party to whom it is issued.

(f) An activity or source of pollution operating under and in compliance with the terms of a statutory variance or a compliance schedule established under these Regulations is deemed to be in compliance with groundwater quality standards.

(g) It is the intention of the Environmental Management Commission to protect all the underground waters existing below a depth of 20 feet beneath the surface of the land to a level of quality at least as high as that required under the standards established in Rule .0202 of this Subchapter. In keeping with the overall policy of the EMC to protect, maintain, and enhance

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water quality within the State of North Carolina, the EMC will not approve any project or development which would result in the significant degradation of groundwaters whose existing quality is better than the assigned standard, unless such degradation is found to be economically and socially justifiable, and in the best public interest. It is within the authority and in keeping with the policies of the EMC to decline to allow degradation from the existing background quality of an underground water source down to the level of the standard without such social and economic justification. Prior to the approval of any project or development which will result in the significant degradation of ground water quality, the EMC will solicit, through public notice, or public hearing, or both, comments from the public and governmental agencies relative to the project or development and anticipated underground water quality degradation.

History Note: Statutory Authority G.S. 143-214.1;
143-214.2; 143-215.3(c);
Eff. June 10, 1979;
Amended Eff. December 30, 1983.

.0104 ANALYTICAL PROCEDURES

Tests or analytical procedures to determine compliance or non-compliance with the underground water quality standards established in Rule .0202 of this Subchapter will be in accordance with:

- (1) the methods described in Standard Methods for the Examination of Water and Wastewater, fifteenth edition, 1980; and the 1981 supplement thereto;
- (2) testing, monitoring, or analytical procedures required as a condition of a permit issued by the Division of Environmental Management under N.C.G.S. 143-214.1; or
- (3) methods approved by letter from the Director of the Division of Environmental Management.

History Note: Statutory Authority G.S. 143-214.1;
Eff. June 10, 1979;
Amended Eff. December 30, 1983.

.0105 ADOPTION BY REFERENCE

The Standard Methods for the Examination of Water and Wastewater, fifteenth edition, 1980, and the 1981 supplement, both prepared and published jointly by the American Public Health Association, the American Water Works Association, and the Water Pollution Control Federation, are hereby adopted by reference as analytical procedures for underground waters, to be effective November 1, 1983.

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History Note: Statutory Authority G.S. 143-214.1;
Eff. December 30, 1983.

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SECTION .0200 - CLASSIFICATIONS AND WATER QUALITY
STANDARDS

.0201 UNDERGROUND WATER CLASSIFICATIONS

The classifications which may be assigned to the underground waters will be those specified in the following series of classifications:

- (1) Class GA waters; usage and occurrence:
 - (a) Best Usage of Waters. Existing or potential source of water supply for drinking, culinary use, and food processing without treatment, except where necessary to correct naturally occurring conditions.
 - (b) Conditions Related to Best Usage. This class is intended for those groundwaters in which chloride concentrations are equal to or less than 250 mg/l, considered safe for drinking, culinary use, and food processing without treatment, but which may require disinfection or other treatment when necessary to reduce naturally occurring concentrations in order not to exceed the maximum concentrations specified in Rule .0202 of this Section.
 - (c) Occurrence. At depths greater than 20 feet below land surface and in the saturated zone above a depth of 20 feet where these waters are a principal source of potable water supply.
- (2) Class GSA waters; usage and occurrence:
 - (a) Best Usage. Existing or potential source of water supply for potable mineral water, culinary use, food processing, and conversion to fresh waters by treatment.
 - (b) Conditions Related to Best Usage. This class is intended for those groundwaters in which naturally occurring chloride concentrations are greater than 250 mg/l, and which are considered safe for potable mineral water, culinary use, and food processing without treatment but may require disinfection or other treatment when necessary to reduce naturally occurring concentrations in order not to exceed the maximum concentrations specified in Rule .0202 of this Section.
 - (c) Occurrence. At depths greater than 20 feet below land surface and in the saturated zone above a depth of 20 feet where these waters are a principal source of potable mineral water supply.
- (3) Class GB waters; usage and occurrence:

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- (a) Best Usage. Source of recharge to surface waters and groundwaters occurring below a depth of 20 feet, source of treatable water supply.
 - (b) Conditions Related to Best Usage. Precipitation is the principal source of recharge to the saturated zone. The water in the saturated zone above a depth of 20 feet is of drinking water quality in much of the state. However, the upper 20 feet of the earth's surface is generally very vulnerable to pollution from man's activities, and should be considered a cycling zone for removing most or all of the contaminants from the water by adsorption, absorption, filtration or other natural treatment processes. In recognition of this fact, this classification is intended for those fresh groundwaters occurring at depths less than 20 feet below land surface that are of suitable quality for recharge to the deeper aquifers and surface waters of the state.
 - (c) Occurrence. In the saturated zone above a depth of 20 feet below land surface.
- (4) Class GSB waters; usage and occurrence:
- (a) Best Usage. Source of recharge to saline surface waters and saline groundwaters occurring below a depth of 20 feet, source of treatable water supply.
 - (b) Conditions Related to Best Usage. Precipitation is the principal source of recharge to the saturated zone. The water in the saturated zone above a depth of 20 feet of the earth's surface is generally very vulnerable to pollution from man's activities and should be considered a cycling zone for removing most or all of the contaminants from the water by adsorption, absorption, filtration or other natural treatment processes. In recognition of this fact, this classification is intended for those saline groundwaters occurring at depths less than 20 feet below land surface that are of suitable quality for recharge to the deeper aquifers and surface waters of the state.
 - (c) Occurrence. In the saturated zone above a depth of 20 feet below land surface.
- (5) Class GC waters; usage:
- (a) Best Usage of Waters. Source of water supply for purposes other than human drinking, culinary use, or food processing.
 - (b) Conditions Related to Best Usage. This class includes those waters that do not meet the quality criteria requirements of waters having a higher classification and for which measures to upgrade to a higher

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classification would technically or economically not be feasible, or not in the best interest of the public, or for which maximum feasible restoration has been completed.

- (c) Occurrence. As determined by the commission on a case by case basis.

History Note: Statutory Authority G.S. 143-214.1;
Eff. June 10, 1979.
Amended Eff. December 30, 1983.

.0202 UNDERGROUND WATER QUALITY STANDARDS

(a) The water quality standards for the underground waters of the state are those specified in this Rule. These standards are the maximum levels of contamination that are permitted under these Regulations. It is the policy of the EMC, however, to protect and maintain the existing quality of the groundwaters where that quality is better than the assigned standards. Therefore, the increase in any constituent for which a standard is specified to a concentration of 50 percent of the standard may result in review or modification of an existing permit, requirements for additional monitoring, or issuance of a special order where a violation of standards may be predicted.

(b) Class GA Waters. The maximum allowable contaminant levels for toxic and deleterious substances are those concentrations specified in Subparagraphs (1) - (31) of this Paragraph. For substances not specified, the standard is the naturally occurring concentration as determined by the director. Where not otherwise indicated, the standard refers to the total concentration of any constituent.

- (1) where naturally occurring concentrations exceed the established standard, the standard will be the naturally occurring concentration as determined by the director;
- (2) total coliform: 1 per 100 milliliters;
- (3) endrin: .0002 mg/l;
- (4) lindane: .004 mg/l;
- (5) methoxychlor: 0.1 mg/l;
- (6) toxaphene: .005 mg/l;
- (7) 2,4,D: 0.1 mg/l;
- (8) 2,4,5,-TP Silvex .01 mg/l;
- (9) total trihalomethanes: 0.10 mg/l;
- (10) arsenic: .05 mg/l;
- (11) barium: 1.0 mg/l;
- (12) cadmium: .010 mg/l;
- (13) chromium: .05 mg/l;
- (14) lead: .05 mg/l;

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- (15) mercury: .002 mg/l;
- (16) nitrate: (as N) 10.0 mg/l;
- (17) nitrite: (as N) 1.0 mg/l;
- (18) selenium: .01 mg/l;
- (19) silver: .05 mg/l;
- (20) fluoride: 1.5 mg/l;
- (21) combined radium - 226 and radium - 228: 5 pCi/l;
- (22) gross alpha particle activity: 15 pCi/l;
- (23) gross beta particle activity: 50 pCi/l;
- (24) iron: 0.30 mg/l;
- (25) manganese: .05 mg/l;
- (26) pH: no increase from naturally occurring pH values in acidity below or increase in alkalinity above 7;
- (27) chloride: 250 mg/l;
- (28) color less than 15 units;
- (29) phenol: not greater than 1.0 ug/l;
- (30) total dissolved solids: 500 mg/l; and
- (31) thermal: not greater than 30 degrees Fahrenheit variance from the naturally occurring level as determined by the director.

(c) Class GSA Waters. The maximum allowable contaminant levels for toxic and deleterious substances are those concentrations specified Subparagraphs (1) - (31) of this Paragraph. For substances not specified, the standard is the naturally occurring concentration as determined by the director. Where not otherwise indicated, the standard refers to the total concentration of any constituent.

- (1) where naturally occurring concentrations exceed the established standard, the standard will be the naturally occurring concentration as determined by the director;
- (2) total coliform: 1 per 100 milliliters;
- (3) endrin: .0002 mg/l;
- (4) lindane: .004 mg/l;
- (5) methoxychlor: 0.1 mg/l;
- (6) toxaphene: .005 mg/l;
- (7) 2,4,D: 0.1 mg/l;
- (8) 2,4,5,-TP Silvex .01 mg/l;
- (9) total trihalomethanes: 0.10 mg/l;
- (10) arsenic: .05 mg/l;
- (11) barium: 1.0 mg/l;
- (12) cadmium: .010 mg/l;
- (13) chromium: .05 mg/l;
- (14) lead: .05 mg/l;
- (15) mercury: .002 mg/l;
- (16) nitrate: (as N) 10.0 mg/l;
- (17) nitrite: (as N) 1.0 mg/l;

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- (18) selenium: .01 mg/l;
 - (19) silver: .05 mg/l;
 - (20) fluoride: 1.5 mg/l;
 - (21) combined radium - 226 and radium - 228: 5 pCi/l;
 - (22) gross alpha particle activity: 15 pCi/l;
 - (23) gross beta particle activity: 50 pCi/l;
 - (24) iron: 0.30 mg/l;
 - (25) manganese: .05 mg/l;
 - (26) pH: No increase from naturally occurring pH values in acidity below or increase in alkalinity above 7;
 - (27) chloride: allowable increase not to exceed 100 percent of the naturally occurring chloride concentration;
 - (28) color less than 15 units;
 - (29) phenol: not greater than 1.0 ug/l;
 - (30) total dissolved solids: 1000 mg/l; and
 - (31) thermal: not greater than 30 degrees Fahrenheit variance from the naturally occurring level as determined by the director.
- (d) Class GB Waters. No increase above the naturally occurring concentration of any toxic or deleterious substance unless it can be shown, upon request, to the satisfaction of the director that the increase:
- (1) will not cause or contribute to the contravention of water quality standards in adjoining waters of a different class;
 - (2) will not accumulate in a manner such that unusual or different hydrological conditions may cause a threat to public health or the environment; and
 - (3) will not cause an existing or potential water supply to become unsafe or unsuitable for its current use.
- (e) Class GSB Waters. No increase above the naturally occurring concentration of any toxic or deleterious substance unless it can be shown, upon request, to the satisfaction of the director that the increase:
- (1) will not cause or contribute to the contravention of water quality standards in adjoining waters of a different class;
 - (2) will not accumulate in a manner such that unusual or different hydrological conditions may cause a threat to public health or the environment; and
 - (3) will not cause an existing or potential water supply to become unsafe or unsuitable for its current use.
- (f) Class GC Waters. All chemical, radioactive, biological, taste producing, odor producing, thermal, and other toxic or deleterious substances shall not exceed the concentration existing at the time of classification.

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History Note: Statutory Authority G.S. 143-214.1;
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SECTION .0300 - ASSIGNMENT OF UNDERGROUND WATER
CLASSIFICATIONS

.0301 CLASSIFICATIONS: GENERAL

(a) Schedule of Classifications. The classifications are based on the quality, occurrence and existing or contemplated best usage of the underground waters as established in Section .0200 of this Subchapter and are assigned statewide except where supplemented or supplanted by specific classification assignments by major river basins.

(b) Classifications and Water Quality Standards. The classifications and standards assigned to the underground waters are denoted by the letters GA, GSA, GB, GSB, or GC. These classifications refer to the classifications and standards established by 15 NCAC 2L, "Classifications and Standards Applicable to the Underground Waters of North Carolina."

History Note: Statutory Authority G.S. 143-214.1;
Eff. December 30, 1983.

.0302 STATEWIDE

(a) The classifications assigned to the underground waters located within the boundaries or under the extraterritorial jurisdiction of the State of North Carolina are:

- (1) Class GA Waters. Those underground waters in the state naturally containing less than 250 mg/l chloride and occurring at depths greater than 20 feet below land surface are classified GA.
- (2) Class GB Waters. Those underground waters in the state naturally containing less than 250 mg/l chloride concentration and occurring between land surface and a depth of 20 feet are classified GB.
- (3) Class GSA Waters. Those underground waters in the state naturally containing greater than 250 mg/l chloride concentration and occurring at depths greater than 20 feet below land surface are classified GSA.
- (4) Class GSB Waters. Those underground waters in the state naturally containing greater than 250 mg/l chloride concentration and occurring between land surface and a depth of 20 feet are classified GSB.
- (5) Class GC Waters. Those underground waters assigned the classification GC in Rules .0303 - .0318 of this Section.

History Note: Statutory Authority G.S. 143-214.1;
Eff. December 30, 1983.

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.0303 BROAD RIVER BASIN

No classification assignments other than those specified in Rule .0302 are made for the river basin.

History Note: Statutory Authority G.S. 143-214.1;
Eff. December 30, 1983.

.0304 CAPE FEAR RIVER BASIN

No classification assignments other than those specified in Rule .0302 are made for the river basin.

History Note: Statutory Authority G.S. 143-214.1;
Eff. December 30, 1983.

.0305 CATAWBA RIVER BASIN

No classification assignments other than those specified in Rule .0302 are made for the river basin.

History Note: Statutory Authority G.S. 143-214.1;
Eff. December 30, 1983.

.0306 CHOWAN RIVER BASIN

No classification assignments other than those specified in Rule .0302 are made for the river basin.

History Note: Statutory Authority G.S. 143-214.1;
Eff. December 30, 1983.

.0307 FRENCH BROAD RIVER BASIN

No classification assignments other than those specified in Rule .0302 are made for the river basin.

History Note: Statutory Authority G.S. 143-214.1;
Eff. December 30, 1983.

.0308 HIWASSEE RIVER BASIN

No classification assignments other than those specified in Rule .0302 are made for the river basin.

History Note: Statutory Authority G.S. 143-214.1;
Eff. December 30, 1983.

.0309 LITTLE TENNESSEE RIVER BASIN

No classification assignments other than those specified in Rule .0302 are made for the river basin.

History Note: Statutory Authority G.S. 143-214.1;

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.0310 SAVANNAH RIVER BASIN

No classification assignments other than those specified in Rule .0302 are made for the river basin.

History Note: Statutory Authority G.S. 143-214.1;
Eff. December 30, 1983.

.0311 LUMBER RIVER BASIN

No classification assignments other than those specified in Rule .0302 are made for the river basin.

History Note: Statutory Authority G.S. 143-214.1;
Eff. December 30, 1983.

.0312 NEUSE RIVER BASIN

No classification assignments other than those specified in Rule .0302 are made for the river basin.

History Note: Statutory Authority G.S. 143-214.1;
Eff. December 30, 1983.

.0313 NEW-WATAUGA RIVER BASIN

No classification assignments other than those specified in Rule .0302 are made for the river basin.

History Note: Statutory Authority G.S. 143-214.1;
Eff. December 30, 1983.

.0314 PASQUOTANK RIVER BASIN

No classification assignments other than those specified in Rule .0302 are made for the river basin.

History Note: Statutory Authority G.S. 143-214.1;
Eff. December 30, 1983.

.0315 ROANOKE RIVER BASIN

No classification assignments other than those specified in Rule .0302 are made for the river basin.

History Note: Statutory Authority G.S. 143-214.1;
Eff. December 30, 1983.

.0316 TAR PAMLICO RIVER BASIN

No classification assignments other than those specified in Rule .0302 are made for the river basin.

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History Note: Statutory Authority G.S. 143-214.1;
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.0317 WHITE OAK RIVER BASIN

No classification assignments other than those specified in Rule .0302 are made for the river basin.

History Note: Statutory Authority G.S. 143-214.1;
Eff. December 30, 1983.

.0318 YADKIN-PEE DEE RIVER BASIN

No classification assignments other than those specified in Rule .0302 are made for the river basin.

History Note: Statutory Authority G.S. 143-214.1;
Eff. December 30, 1983.

.0319 RECLASSIFICATION

The underground water classifications as assigned may be revised by the EMC following public notice and subsequent public hearing. Changes may be to a higher or lower classification. Reclassification requests may be submitted to the Director of the Division of Environmental Management.

History Note: Statutory Authority G.S. 143-214.1;
Eff. December 30, 1983.