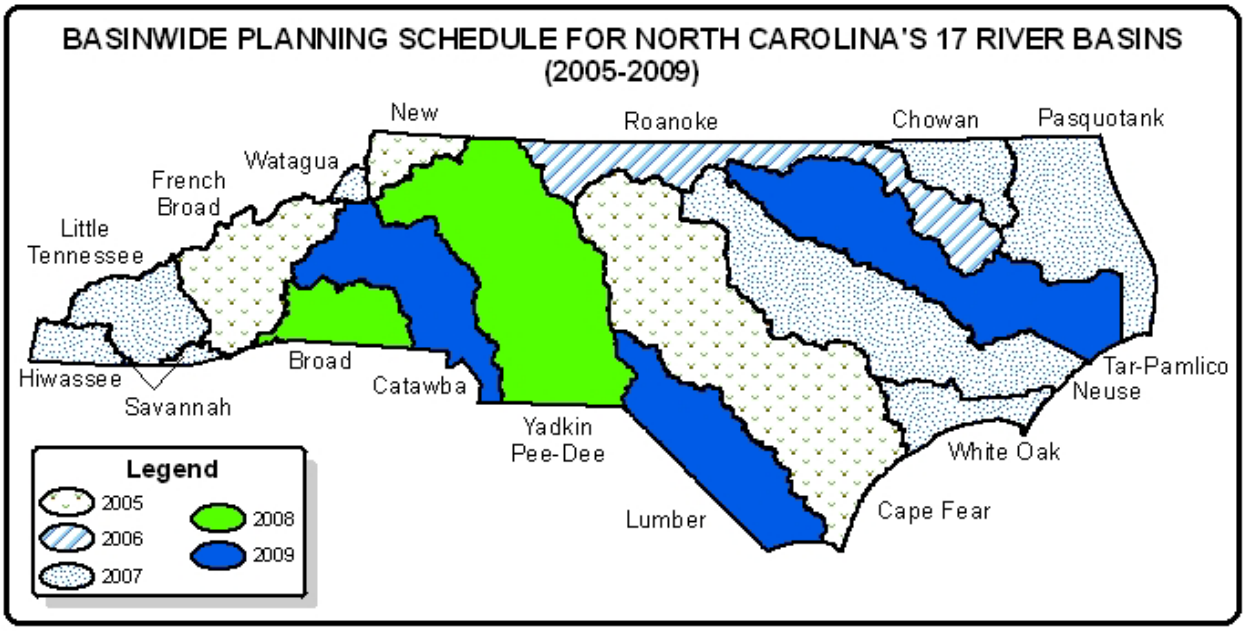
## What is Basinwide Water Quality Planning?

Basinwide water quality planning is a watershed-based approach to restoring and protecting the quality of North Carolina's surface waters. Basinwide water quality plans are prepared by the NC Division of Water Quality (DWQ) for each of the 17 major river basins in the state (Figure 1 and Table 1). Preparation of a basinwide water quality plan is a five-year process, which is broken down into three phases (Table 2).

While these plans are prepared by DWQ, their implementation and the protection of water quality entail the coordinated efforts of many agencies, local governments and stakeholder groups throughout the state. The first cycle of plans was completed in 1998. Each plan is updated at five-year intervals.

Figure 1 Basinwide Planning Schedule (2005 to 2009)




## Goals of Basinwide Water Quality Planning

The goals of basinwide planning are to:

- Identify water quality problems and restore full use to Impaired waters.
- Identify and protect high value resource waters.
- Protect unimpaired waters yet allow for reasonable economic growth.

DWQ accomplishes these goals through the following objectives:

- Collaborate with other agencies to develop appropriate management strategies. This includes providing agencies information related to financial and funding opportunities.

- Assure equitable distribution of waste assimilative capacity.
- Evaluate cumulative effects of pollution.
- Improve public awareness and involvement.
- Regulate point and nonpoint sources of pollution where other approaches are not successful.

## Benefits of Basinwide Water Quality Planning

Basinwide planning and management benefits water quality by:

- Focusing resources on one river basin at a time.
- Using sound ecological planning and fostering comprehensive NPDES permitting by working on a watershed scale.
- Ensuring better consistency and equitability by clearly defining the program's long-term goals and approaches regarding permits and water quality improvement strategies.
- Fostering public participation to increase involvement and awareness about water quality.
- Integrating and coordinating programs and agencies to improve implementation of point and nonpoint source pollution reduction strategies.

## How You Can Get Involved

To assure that basinwide plans are accurately written and effectively implemented, it is important for citizens and local stakeholders to participate in all phases of the planning process. You may contact the basinwide planner responsible for your basin anytime during the plan's development. Upon request, the basin planner can also present water quality information and basin concerns to local stakeholder groups.

To make the plan more inclusive, DWQ is coordinating with the local Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD), council of governments, NC Cooperative Extension Service, the county Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and stakeholder groups to develop language and identify water quality concerns throughout the basin. Citizens and local communities can also be involved during the planning process by contacting their county extension service or local SWCD.

During the public comment period, the draft plan is available online and by request for a period of at least 30 days. DWQ welcomes written comments and questions during this phase of the planning process and will incorporate comments and suggestions when appropriate.

## Division of Water Quality Functions and Locations

For more information on the basinwide planning process, DWQ activities, or contacts, visit http://h2o.enr.state.nc.us/basinwide/ or call (919) 733-5083 and ask for the basin planner responsible for your basin of interest. You can also contact the appropriate Regional Office (Figure 2) for additional information. For general questions about the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, contact the Customer Service Center at 1-877-623-6748.

Table 1 Basinwide Planning Schedule (2004 to 2011)

| Basin | DWQ Biological Data Collection | Draft Out For Public Review | Final Plan Receives EMC Approval | Begin NPDES Permit Issuance |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Chowan** | Summer 2005 | 7/2007 | 9/2007 | 11/2007 |
| **Pasquotank** | Summer 2005 | 7/2007 | 9/2007 | 12/2007 |
| **Neuse** | Summer 2005 | 1/2008 | 3/2008 | 1/2008 |
| **Broad** | Summer 2005 | 1/2008 | 3/2008 | 7/2008 |
| **Yadkin-Pee Dee** | Summer 2006 | 3/2008 | 5/2008 | 9/2008 |
| **Lumber** | Summer 2006 | 3/2008 | 5/2008 | 7/2009 |
| **Tar-Pamlico** | Summer 2007 | 3/2009 | 5/2009 | 9/2009 |
| **Catawba** | Summer 2007 | 3/2009 | 5/2009 | 12/2009 |
| **French Broad** | Summer 2007 | 3/2009 | 5/2009 | 7/2010 |
| **New** | Summer 2008 | 6/2010 | 5/2010 | 1/2011 |
| **Cape Fear** | Summer 2008 | 6/2010 | 9/2010 | 2/2011 |
| **Roanoke** | Summer 2004 | 7/2006 | 9/2006 | 1/2007 |
| **White Oak** | Summer 2004 | 3/2007 | 5/2007 | 6/2007 |
| **Savannah** | Summer 2004 | 1/2007 | 3/2007 | 8/2007 |
| **Watauga** | Summer 2004 | 11/2006 | 1/2007 | 9/2007 |
| **Hiwassee** | Summer 2004 | 1/2007 | 3/2007 | 8/2007 |
| **Little Tennessee** | Summer 2004 | 1/2007 | 3/2007 | 10/2007 |

Note: A basinwide plan was completed for all 17 basins during the second cycle (1998 to 2003).

Table 2 Five-Year Planning Process for Development of an Individual Basinwide Plan

| | |
|---|---|
| **Years 1 – 2**<br><br>**Water Quality Data Collection and Identification of Goals and Issues** | • Identify sampling needs<br>• Conduct biological monitoring activities<br>• Conduct special studies and other water quality sampling activities<br>• Coordinate with local stakeholders and other agencies to continue to implement goals within current basinwide plan |
| **Years 2 – 3**<br><br>**Data Analysis and Collect Information from State and Local Agencies** | • Gather and analyze data from sampling activities<br>• Develop use support ratings<br>• Conduct special studies and other water quality sampling activities<br>• Work with state and local agencies to establish goals and objectives<br>• Identify and prioritize issues for the next basin cycle<br>• Develop preliminary pollution control strategies<br>• Coordinate with local stakeholders and other state/local agencies |
| **Years 3 – 5**<br><br>**Preparation of Draft Basinwide Plan, Public Review, Approval of Plan, Issue NPDES Permits, and Begin Implementation of Plan** | • Develop draft basinwide plan based on water quality data, use support ratings, and recommended pollution control strategies<br>• Circulate draft basinwide plan for review and present draft plan for public review<br>• Revise plan (when appropriate) to reflect public comments<br>• Submit plan to Environmental Management Commission for approval<br>• Issue NPDES permits<br>• Coordinate with other agencies and local interest groups to prioritize implementation actions<br>• Conduct special studies and other water quality sampling activities |

## Reference Materials

There are several reference documents and websites that provide additional information about basinwide planning and the basin's water quality. These include:

- *Supplemental Guide to North Carolina's Basinwide Planning: Support Document for Basinwide Water Quality Plans* (January 2007) This document includes general information about water quality issues and programs to address these issues. It is intended to be an informational document on water quality. Visit the website at http://h2o.enr.state.nc.us/basinwide/ to download this document.
- *Pasquotank River Basinwide Assessment Report* (March 2006). This technical report presents physical, chemical, and biological data collected in the Pasquotank River basin. This report can be found on the DWQ Environmental Sciences Section (ESS) website at http://www.esb.enr.state.nc.us/.
- *Pasquotank River Basinwide Water Quality Management Plan* (September 1997; July 2002). These first basinwide plans for the Pasquotank River basin present water quality data, information, and recommended management strategies for the first two five-year cycles.
- *North Carolina's Basinwide Approach to Water Quality Management: Program Description* (Creager and Baker, 1991). NC DWQ Water Quality Section. Raleigh, NC.

## How to Read the Basinwide Plan

**Chapters 1 -7: Subbasin and Watershed Information**

**Summarizes information and data by subbasin, including:**

- **Recommendations from the previous basin plan**
- **Achievements, current priority issues and concerns**
- **Impaired waters and water with notable impacts**
- **Goals and recommendations for the next five years by subbasin**

**Chapter 8 – 15**

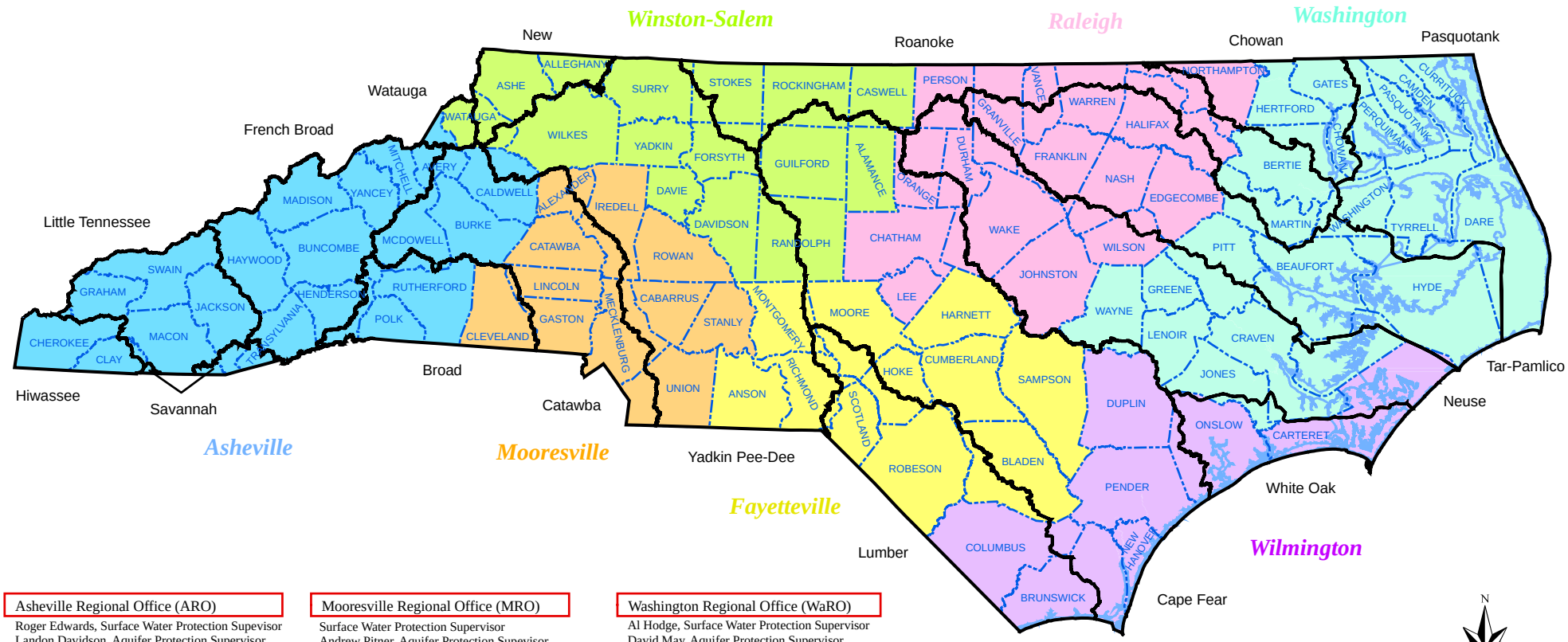
**Presents information on various topics of interest to the protection and restoration of water quality in the basin, including:**

- **Surface water classifications**
- **Water quality stressors**
- **Stormwater and wastewater management**
- **Population and land cover changes**
- **Water quality management strategies**
- **Agricultural, forestry and natural resources**
- **Managing Impaired waters and TMDL process**

**Appendices**

- **Water quality data collected by DWQ**
- **Use support methodology**
- **NPDES discharger, non-discharge and general stormwater permits**
- **Points of contact**
- **Glossary of terms and acronyms**

# North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources
# Division of Water Quality Regional Offices




## Asheville Regional Office (ARO)

Roger Edwards, Surface Water Protection Supervisor
Landon Davidson, Aquifer Protection Supervisor
2090 US Highway 70
Swannanoa, NC 28778
COURIER 12-59-01
Phone: (828) 296-4500
Fax: (828) 299-7043

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|---|---|---|
| Avery | Haywood | Polk |
| Buncombe | Henderson | Rutherford |
| Burke | Jackson | Swain |
| Caldwell | Macon | Transylvania |
| Cherokee | Madison | Yancey |
| Clay | McDowell | |
| Graham | Mitchell | |

## Mooresville Regional Office (MRO)

Surface Water Protection Supervisor
Andrew Pitner, Aquifer Protection Supevisor
610 East Center Avenue / Suite 301
Mooresville, NC 28115
COURIER 09-08-06
Phone: (704) 663-1699
Fax: (704) 663-6040

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| Alexander | Lincoln |
| Cabarrus | Mecklenburg |
| Catawba | Rowan |
| Cleveland | Stanly |
| Gaston | Union |
| Iredell | |

## Washington Regional Office (WaRO)

Al Hodge, Surface Water Protection Supervisor
David May, Aquifer Protection Supervisor
943 Washington Square Mall
Washington, NC 27889
COURIER 16-04-01
Phone: (252) 946-6481
Fax: (252) 946-9215
Fax: (252) 975-3716

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| Beaufort | Gates | Pamlico |
| Bertie | Greene | Pasquotank |
| Camden | Hertford | Perquimans |
| Chowan | Hyde | Pitt |
| Craven | Jones | Tyrrell |
| Currituck | Lenoir | Washington |
| Dare | Martin | Wayne |

## Winston-Salem Regional Office (WSRO)

Steve Tedder, Surface Water Protection Supervisor
Sherri Knight, Aquifer Protection Supervisor
585 Waughtown Street
Winston-Salem, NC 27107
COURIER 13-15-01
Phone: (336) 771-5000
Fax: (336) 771-4631

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| Alamance | Forsyth | Watauga |
| Alleghany | Guilford | Wilkes |
| Ashe | Randolph | Yadkin |
| Caswell | Rockingham | |
| Davidson | Stokes | |
| Davie | Surry | |

## Central Office

DENR
DIVISION OF WATER QUALITY
1617 MAIL SERVICE CENTER
RALEIGH NC 27699-1617
COURIER 52-01-00
Phone: (919) 733-7015
Fax: (919) 733-2496

## Fayetteville Regional Office (FRO)

Belinda Henson, Surface Water Protection Supervisor
Art Barnhardt, Aquifer Protection Supervisor
225 Green Street
Systel Building Suite 714
Fayetteville, NC 28301-5043
COURIER 14-56-25
Phone: (910) 433-3300
Fax: (910) 486-0707

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| Anson | Moore |
| Bladen | Richmond |
| Cumberland | Robeson |
| Harnett | Sampson |
| Hoke | Scotland |
| Montgomery | |

## Raleigh Regional Office (RRO)

Chuck Wakild, Surface Water Protection Supervisor
Jay Zimmerman, Aquifer Protection Supervisor
3800 Barrett Drive
Raleigh, NC 27609
COURIER 52-01-00
Phone: (919) 791-4200
Fax: (919) 571-4718

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|---|---|---|
| Chatham | Johnston | Vance |
| Durham | Lee | Wake |
| Edgecombe | Nash | Warren |
| Franklin | Northampton | Wilson |
| Granville | Orange | |
| Halifax | Person | |

## Wilmington Regional Office (WiRO)

Ed Beck, Surface Water Protection Supervisor
Charlie Stehman, Aquifer Protection Supervisor
127 Cardinal Drive Extension
Wilmington, NC 28405-2845
COURIER 04-16-33
Phone: (910) 796-7215
Fax: (910) 350-2004

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| Brunswick | New Hanover |
| Carteret | Onslow |
| Columbus | Pender |
| Duplin | |

NCDENR

Planning Section
Basinwide Planning Unit
January 2007