

Appendix V

Other Water Quality Data in the Watauga River Basin

Other Water Quality Research

North Carolina actively solicits "existing and readily available" data and information for each basin as part of the basinwide planning process. Data meeting DWQ quality assurance objectives are used in making use support determinations. When resources allow, data and information indicating possible water quality problems are investigated further. Both quantitative and qualitative information are accepted during the solicitation period.

High levels of confidence must be present in order for outside quantitative information to carry the same weight as information collected from within DWQ. This is particularly the case when considering waters for the Impaired categories in the Integrated Report and 303(d) list. Methodology for soliciting and evaluating outside data is presented in *North Carolina's 2002 Integrated Report*, which is available on-line http://h2o.enr.state.nc.us/tmdl/Docs_303/2002/2002_Integrated_Rept.pdf. The next data solicitation period for the Watauga River basin is scheduled for fall 2008.

DWQ data solicitation includes the following:

- Information, letters and photographs regarding the uses of surface waters for boating, drinking water, swimming, aesthetics and fishing.
- Raw data submitted electronically and accompanied by documentation of quality assurance methods used to collect and analyze the samples. Maps showing sampling locations must also be included.
- Summary reports and memos, including distribution statistics and accompanied by documentation of quality assurance methods used to collect and analyze the data.

Contact information must accompany all data and information submitted.

Any data submitted to DWQ from other water sampling programs conducted in the Watauga River basin have been reviewed. Data that meet quality and accessibility requirements were considered for use support assessments and the 303(d) list. These data are also used by DWQ to adjust the location of biological and chemical monitoring sites. In particular, DWQ has reviewed and considered information developed through the Volunteer Water Information Network (VWIN) as managed by the University of North Carolina – Asheville (UNCA) Environmental Quality Institute (EQI). Other programs or research that developed data or information are presented in individual subbasin chapters.

For VWIN, each county with monitoring stations has a coordinator to organize and train volunteers and to ensure that all stations are monitored monthly. The NC Cooperative Extension Service (CES), the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, and Equinox Environmental Consultation & Design coordinate monitoring in the Watauga River basin. Southern Appalachian Man and the Biosphere (SAMAB), the National Forest Foundation, and the Appalachian Trail Park Office initiated watershed monitoring. The Blue Ridge Resource Conservation & Development Council and the NC CES provide funding. The information obtained through VWIN provides an overall view of water quality conditions and changes over time.

In the Watauga River basin, VWIN monitors 11 sites, which are listed in the following table. These sites generally agree with DWQ ambient monitoring data but were not used in use support assessments. VWIN has collected two years of monthly data for most sites. Parameters monitored include major nutrients, turbidity, suspended solids, pH, alkalinity, conductivity and heavy metals such as zinc, copper and lead.

County	Stream Name	Sampling Location
Avery	Elk River	Near Appalachian Trail and Elk River Falls
	Elk River	Downstream from Lees McRae
	Spring to UT	Spring to Unnamed Tributary on the Appalachian Trail at Doll Flats
Watauga	Watauga River	NC-TN State Line
	Watauga River	Gauging station upstream from Cove Creek
	Watauga River	Hwy 105/Appalachian Angler
	Cove Creek	Near confluence with the Watauga River
	Laurel Fork	Flintlock Campground
	Dutch Creek	Valle Crucis Elementary School
	Brushy Fork	Corner of Hwy 421/321
	Boone Fork	Downstream from Price Lake