WHAT ARE SURFACE WATER CLASSIFICATIONS?

Surface Water Classifications are designations applied to surface water bodies, such as streams, rivers and lakes, which define the uses that water is to be protected. Each classification provides a set of water quality standards applicable to the designated uses. By defining the uses, classifications and their associated rules may be designed to protect water quality, fish and wildlife, and other uses suitable for Class C. Secondary recreational activities may be affected.

HOW DO CLASSIFICATIONS AFFECT ME?

Before you buy property, plan a new development project, construct a new road or undertake other land use activities, you should check with local, state and federal agencies about the water quality of the surface water bodies receiving your drainage or connected to your property. Many classifications, especially those designed to protect drinking water supplies and certain high quality waters, have protection rules which may affect land use decisions.

WHY DO THEY SOMETIMES OVERLAP?

Many counties, cities and towns have several classifications applied to the same area. This is because surface waters are classified to protect different uses or special characteristics of the waterbody. For example, a stream or specific stream segment may be classified as Class WS-II (Trout Waters) and as High Quality Waters (HQW) under the same classification system. This provides flexibility to protect different uses or special characteristics of the waterbody.

HOW DO I DETERMINE MY STREAM’S CLASSIFICATION?

DWS classifies all surface waters. Use the classification search capabilites at http://dwq.deno.state.nc.us/BA/reports/Reports.html. You can also call DWS in Raleigh, (919) 807-6412, or any of our regional offices to contact other agencies listed in this brochure for any of their classifications which may apply.

HOW CAN THIS BROCHURE HELP ME?

This brochure provides an overview of the various surface freshwater classifications used in North Carolina. The rules of these designations may be obtained by contacting the appropriate regulatory agency. The rules presented in this document are based on the minimum protection rules of state and federal agencies. Local governments, in most cases, can adopt more stringent land use or other resource protection rules to suit local conditions.

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

More detailed information is available from the Division of Water Quality’s (or DWQ’s) Regional Offices. A list of these offices is available at the NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources’ website or by contacting other agencies listed in this brochure for any of their classifications which may apply.

A Guide to Surface Freshwater Classifications in North Carolina

NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources
Division of Water Quality

DOW CENTRAL AND REGIONAL OFFICES (R.O.)

Central Office
DENR - Division of Water Quality
1617 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1617
Courier: 52-01-00
T: (919) 807-6300; F: (919) 807-6492

Asheville Regional Office (ARO)
Roger Edwards, Surface Water Protection Supervisor
Landmark Development, Aquifer Protection Supervisor
2000 US Highway 70, Swannanoa, NC 28778
Courier: 12-04-01, T: (704) 296-4200, F: (828) 259-7194
Avery, Haywood, Polk
Brown,Jackson, Henderson, Rutherford
Burke, Jackson, Swain
Caldwell, Macon, Transylvania
Cherokee, Madison, Yancey
Kings Mountain, Mitchell
Graham, Mitchell

Washington Regional Office (WaRo)
Al C. Williams, Surface Water Protection Coordinator
David May, Aquifer Protection Supervisor
949 Washington Square Mall
Washington, NC 27889
Courier: 2-05-01, T: (252) 946-4441, F: (252) 946-4441
Carteret, Craven, Pender, Pamlico
Chowan, Hyde, Pasquotank
Columbus, Duplin, Lenoir
Cumberland, Gates, New Hanover
Curtis, Lenoir, Washington
Dare, Martin,Wayne

Raleigh Regional Office (RRO)
Danny B. Smith, Surface Water Protection Coordinator
Jaziel Zymmerman, Aquifer Protection Supervisor
3901 North Capital Blvd., Raleigh, NC 27603
Courier: 52-01-00, T: (919) 751-4200, F: (919) 571-4718
Chatham, Johnston, Vance
Durham, Lee, Nash
Edgecombe, Franklin, Northampton, Warren
Franklin, Johnston, Nash
Harnett, Person

Mooresville Regional Office (MRO)
Kris Krews, Surface Water Protection Coordinator
155 North Central Avenue
Mooreville, NC 28114
Courier: 01-01-00, T: (704) 683-2600, F: (704) 683-4690
Alexander, Gaston, Iredell
Cabarrus, Iredell, Stanly
Catawba, Gaston, Union
Cleveland, Mecklenburg

Fayetteville Regional Office (FRO)
Mark Luse, Surface Water Protection Coordinator
Art Barchardt, Aquifer Protection Supervisor
610 East Center Avenue Suite 201
Fayetteville, NC 28301-9043
Courier: 12-04-01, T: (919) 807-6300, F: (919) 807-6492
Anson, Columbus, Robeson
Bladen, Columbus, Scotland
Cumberland, Moore, Scotland
Hoke, Robeson, Union

Wilmingtom Regional Office (WRO)
Rick Sherrill, Surface Water Protection Supervisor
Art Barchardt, Aquifer Protection Supervisor
127 Cardinal Drive Extension, Wilmington, NC 28405-2445
(910) 742-7144, T: (910) 797-5100, F: (910) 759-2004
Brunswick, Duplin, Onslow
Cumberland
New Hanover
Pender, Robeson, Surry

Winston-Salem Regional Office (WSRO)
Steve Field, Surface Water Protection Coordinator
1908 Old Salem Road, Winston-Salem, NC 27101
585 Waukash Street, Winston-Salem, NC 27107
Courier: 15-15-01, T: (336) 771-5000, F: (336) 771-4631
Avery
Alamance
Caswell, Forsyth, Surry
Catawba, Randolph, Wilkes
Davidson, Stokes, Yadkin

Surface classification used in North Carolina

A Guide to Surface Freshwater Classifications in North Carolina
### DWG Primary Classifications

**WATER SUPPLY - I (WS-I)**
- entire water supply watershed
- none
- 1/2 mile critical area
- none
- general permits, 1 du / 2 ac or 6-24% built-up area
- rigorous stream & 25’ of 1’ of rainfall through use of engineered stormwater controls. Required critical area or stormwater detention.
- no restrictions
- none required
- standard rules apply
- yes
- yes
- yes

**WATER SUPPLY - II (WS-II)**
- rest of the watershed
- 1/2 mile critical area
- 1 du / 2 ac or 12-30% built-up area
- no restrictions
- 1 du / 2 ac or 12-30% built-up area
- standard rules apply
- no restrictions
- no restrictions
- 1 du / 2 ac or 12-30% built-up area
- standard rules apply
- yes
- yes

**WATER SUPPLY - III (WS-III)**
- rest of the watershed
- 1/2 mile critical area
- 1 du / 2 ac or 12-30% built-up area
- standard rules apply
- yes
- yes

**WATER SUPPLY - IV (WS-IV)**
- protected area
- 1/2 mile critical area
- 1 du / 2 ac or 12-30% built-up area
- standard rules apply
- yes
- yes

**WATER SUPPLY - V (WS-V)**
- river segment
- receiving stream
- no restrictions
- no restrictions
- standard rules apply

**CLASS B (B)**
- receiving stream
- no restrictions
- 1 du / 2 ac or 12-30% built-up area
- standard rules apply
- yes
- yes

### DWG Supplemental Classifications

**NUTRIENT SENSITIVE WATERS (NSW)**
- entire water supply basin
- none
- 1 mile area (watershed-specific nutrient removal required)
- 1 du / 2 ac or 12-30% built-up area
- no restrictions
- no restrictions
- standard rules apply
- yes
- yes

**DROW T WATERS (TW)**
- receiving stream & 20’ buffer area
- 1 du / 2 ac or 12-30% built-up area
- no restrictions
- no restrictions
- standard rules apply
- yes
- yes

**HIGH QUALITY WATERS (HQW)**
- normally protected, 1-mile designated waters
- no restrictions
- no restrictions
- no restrictions
- no restrictions
- standard rules apply
- yes
- yes

**SWAMP WATERS (SW)**
- receiving stream
- no restrictions
- no restrictions
- standard rules apply

### Other Agency Classifications

**FEDERAL WILD & SCENIC RIVERS**
- river corridor
- no specific restrictions
- no specific restrictions
- no specific restrictions
- standard rules apply
- yes

**NC NATURAL & SCENIC RIVERS**
- river corridor
- no specific restrictions
- no specific restrictions
- no specific restrictions
- standard rules apply
- yes

**DESIGNATED PUBLIC MOUNTAIN TROUT WATERS**
- designated waters
- no specific restrictions
- no specific restrictions
- no specific restrictions
- standard rules apply
- yes

### Notes

1. Agricultural activities must maintain a 10-foot vegetated buffer from perennial surface waters or equivalent control as determined by the Soil and Water Conservation Commission.
2. On-farm practices are subject to the provisions of the Agricultural Pollution Control Act (adopted by the division of Land Resources) or local government ordinances.
3. All agricultural activities are subject to the provisions of the Food Security Act of 1985 and the Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act of 1990.