

1 **15A NCAC 07H .0209 IS PROPOSED FOR AMENDMENT AS FOLLOWS:**

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3 **15A NCAC 07H .0209 COASTAL SHORELINES**

4 (a) Description. The Coastal Shorelines category includes estuarine shorelines and public trust shorelines. Estuarine  
5 shorelines AEC are those non-ocean shorelines extending from the normal high water level or normal water level  
6 along the estuarine waters, estuaries, sounds, bays, fresh and brackish waters, and public trust areas as set forth in an  
7 agreement adopted by the Wildlife Resources Commission and the Department of ~~Environment and Natural Resources~~  
8 Environmental Quality [described in Rule .0206(a) of this Section] for a distance of 75 feet landward. For those  
9 estuarine shorelines immediately contiguous to waters classified as Outstanding Resource Waters by the  
10 Environmental Management Commission, the estuarine shoreline AEC shall extend to 575 feet landward from the  
11 normal high water level or normal water level, unless the Coastal Resources Commission establishes the boundary at  
12 a greater or lesser extent following required public hearing(s) within the affected county or counties. Public trust  
13 shorelines AEC are those non-ocean shorelines immediately contiguous to public trust areas, as defined in Rule 07H  
14 .0207(a) of this Section, located inland of the dividing line between coastal fishing waters and inland fishing waters  
15 as set forth in that agreement and extending 30 feet landward of the normal high water level or normal water level.

16 (b) Significance. Development within coastal shorelines influences the quality of estuarine and ocean life and is  
17 subject to the damaging processes of shore front erosion and flooding. The coastal shorelines and wetlands contained  
18 within them serve as barriers against flood damage and control erosion between the estuary and the uplands. Coastal  
19 shorelines are the intersection of the upland and aquatic elements of the estuarine and ocean system, often integrating  
20 influences from both the land and the sea in wetland areas. Some of these wetlands are among the most productive  
21 natural environments of North Carolina and they support the functions of and habitat for many valuable commercial  
22 and sport fisheries of the coastal area. Many land-based activities influence the quality and productivity of estuarine  
23 waters. Some important features of the coastal shoreline include wetlands, flood plains, bluff shorelines, mud and  
24 sand flats, forested shorelines and other important habitat areas for fish and wildlife.

25 (c) Management Objective. The management objective is to ensure that shoreline development is compatible with  
26 the dynamic nature of coastal shorelines as well as the values and the management objectives of the estuarine and  
27 ocean system. Other objectives are to conserve and manage the important natural features of the estuarine and ocean  
28 system so as to safeguard and perpetuate their biological, social, aesthetic, and economic values; to coordinate and  
29 establish a management system capable of conserving and utilizing these shorelines so as to maximize their benefits  
30 to the estuarine and ocean system and the people of North Carolina.

31 (d) Use Standards. Acceptable uses shall be those consistent with the management objectives in Paragraph (c) of this  
32 Rule. These uses shall be limited to those types of development activities that will not be detrimental to the public  
33 trust rights and the biological and physical functions of the estuarine and ocean system. Every effort shall be made  
34 by the permit applicant to ~~avoid, mitigate or reduce~~ avoid or minimize adverse impacts of development to estuarine  
35 and coastal systems through the planning and design of the development project. In every instance, the particular  
36 location, use, and design characteristics shall comply with the general use and specific use standards for coastal  
37 shorelines, and where applicable, the general use and specific use standards for coastal wetlands, estuarine waters, and

1 public trust areas described in Rule .0208 of this Section. Development shall be compatible with the following  
2 standards:

- 3 (1) All development projects, proposals, and designs shall preserve and not weaken or eliminate natural  
4 barriers to erosion including peat marshland, resistant clay shorelines, and cypress-gum protective  
5 fringe areas adjacent to vulnerable shorelines.
- 6 (2) All development projects, proposals, and designs shall limit the construction of impervious surfaces  
7 and areas not allowing natural drainage to only so much as is necessary to adequately service the  
8 major purpose or use for which the lot is to be developed. Impervious surfaces shall not exceed 30  
9 percent of the AEC area of the lot, unless the applicant can effectively demonstrate, through  
10 innovative design, that the protection provided by the design would be equal to or exceed the  
11 protection by the 30 percent limitation. Redevelopment of areas exceeding the 30 percent  
12 impervious surface limitation may be permitted if impervious areas are not increased and the  
13 applicant designs the project to comply with the intent of the rule to the maximum extent feasible.
- 14 (3) All development projects, proposals, and designs shall comply with the following mandatory  
15 standards of the North Carolina Sedimentation Pollution Control Act of 1973:
  - 16 (A) All development projects, proposals, and designs shall provide for a buffer zone along the  
17 margin of the estuarine water which is sufficient to confine visible siltation within 25  
18 percent of the buffer zone nearest the land disturbing development.
  - 19 (B) No development project proposal or design shall permit an angle for graded slopes or fill  
20 which is greater than an angle which can be retained by vegetative cover or other  
21 erosion-control devices or structures.
  - 22 (C) All development projects, proposals, and designs which involve uncovering more than one  
23 acre of land shall plant a ground cover sufficient to restrain erosion within 30 working days  
24 of completion of the grading; provided that this shall not apply to clearing land for the  
25 purpose of forming a reservoir later to be inundated.
- 26 (4) Development shall not have a significant adverse impact on estuarine and ocean resources.  
27 Significant adverse impacts include development that would directly or indirectly impair water  
28 quality standards, increase shoreline erosion, alter coastal wetlands or Submerged Aquatic  
29 Vegetation (SAV), deposit spoils waterward of normal water level or normal high water, or cause  
30 degradation of shellfish beds.
- 31 (5) Development shall not interfere with existing public rights of access to, or use of, navigable waters  
32 or public resources.
- 33 (6) No public facility shall be permitted if such a facility is likely to require public expenditures for  
34 maintenance and continued use, unless it can be shown that the public purpose served by the facility  
35 outweighs the required public expenditures for construction, maintenance, and continued use. For  
36 the purpose of this standard, "public facility" means a project that is paid for in any part by public  
37 funds.

- 1 (7) Development shall not cause irreversible damage to valuable, historic architectural or archaeological  
2 resources as documented by the local historic commission or the North Carolina Department of  
3 Natural and Cultural Resources.
- 4 (8) Established common-law and statutory public rights of access to the public trust lands and waters  
5 in estuarine areas shall not be eliminated or restricted. Development shall not encroach upon public  
6 accessways nor shall it limit the intended use of the accessways.
- 7 (9) Within the AECs for shorelines contiguous to waters classified as Outstanding Resource Waters by  
8 the EMC, no CAMA permit shall be approved for any project which would be inconsistent with  
9 applicable use standards adopted by the CRC, EMC or MFC for estuarine waters, public trust areas,  
10 or coastal wetlands. For development activities not covered by specific use standards, no permit  
11 shall be issued if the activity would, based on site-specific information, degrade the water quality or  
12 outstanding resource values.
- 13 (10) Within the Coastal Shorelines category (estuarine and public trust shoreline AECs), new  
14 development shall be located a distance of 30 feet landward of the normal water level or normal  
15 high water level, with the exception of the following:
- 16 (A) Water-dependent uses as described in Rule 07H .0208(a)(1) of this Section;
- 17 (B) Pile-supported signs (in accordance with local regulations);
- 18 (C) Post- or pile-supported fences;
- 19 (D) Elevated, slatted, wooden boardwalks exclusively for pedestrian use and six feet in width  
20 or less. The boardwalk may be greater than six feet in width if it is to serve a public use or  
21 need;
- 22 (E) Crab Shedders, if uncovered with elevated trays and no associated impervious surfaces  
23 except those necessary to protect the pump;
- 24 (F) Decks/Observation Decks limited to slatted, wooden, elevated and unroofed decks that  
25 shall not singularly or collectively exceed 200 square feet;
- 26 (G) Grading, excavation and landscaping with no wetland fill except when required by a  
27 permitted shoreline stabilization project. Projects shall not increase stormwater runoff to  
28 adjacent estuarine and public trust waters;
- 29 (H) Development over existing impervious surfaces, provided that the existing impervious  
30 surface is not increased and the applicant designs the project to comply with the intent of  
31 the rules to the maximum extent feasible;
- 32 (I) Where application of the buffer requirement would preclude placement of a residential  
33 structure with a footprint of 1,200 square feet or less on lots, parcels and tracts platted prior  
34 to June 1, 1999, development may be permitted within the buffer as required in  
35 Subparagraph (d)(10) of this Rule, providing the following criteria are met:
- 36 (i) Development shall minimize the impacts to the buffer and reduce runoff by  
37 limiting land disturbance to only so much as is necessary to construct and provide

1 access to the residence and to allow installation or connection of utilities such as  
2 water and sewer; and

3 (ii) The residential structure development shall be located a distance landward of the  
4 normal high water or normal water level equal to 20 percent of the greatest depth  
5 of the lot. Existing structures that encroach into the applicable buffer area may  
6 be replaced or repaired consistent with the criteria set out in Rules .0201 and .0211  
7 in Subchapter 07J of this Chapter; and

8 (J) Where application of the buffer requirement set out in 15A NCAC 07H .0209(d)(10) would  
9 preclude placement of a residential structure on an undeveloped lot platted prior to June 1,  
10 1999 that are 5,000 square feet or less that does not require an on-site septic system, or on  
11 an undeveloped lot that is 7,500 square feet or less that requires an on-site septic system,  
12 development may be permitted within the buffer if all the following criteria are met:

13 (i) The lot on which the proposed residential structure is to be located, is located  
14 between:

15 (I) Two existing waterfront residential structures, both of which are within  
16 100 feet of the center of the lot and at least one of which encroaches into  
17 the buffer; or

18 (II) An existing waterfront residential structure that encroaches into the  
19 buffer and a road, canal, or other open body of water, both of which are  
20 within 100 feet of the center of the lot;

21 (ii) Development of the lot shall minimize the impacts to the buffer and reduce runoff  
22 by limiting land disturbance to only so much as is necessary to construct and  
23 provide access to the residence and to allow installation or connection of utilities;

24 (iii) Placement of the residential structure and pervious decking may be aligned no  
25 further into the buffer than the existing residential structures and existing pervious  
26 decking on adjoining lots;

27 (iv) The first one and one-half inches of rainfall from all impervious surfaces on the  
28 lot shall be collected and contained on-site in accordance with the design  
29 standards for stormwater management for coastal counties as specified in 15A  
30 NCAC 02H .1005. The stormwater management system shall be designed by an  
31 individual who meets applicable State occupational licensing requirements for the  
32 type of system proposed and approved during the permit application process. If  
33 the residential structure encroaches into the buffer, then no other impervious  
34 surfaces will be allowed within the buffer; and

35 (v) The lots must not be adjacent to waters designated as approved or conditionally  
36 approved shellfish waters by the Shellfish Sanitation Section of the Division of

1 Environmental Health of the Department of ~~Environment and Natural Resources.~~  
2 Environmental Quality.

3 (e) The buffer requirements in Paragraph (d) of this Rule shall not apply to Coastal Shorelines where the  
4 Environmental Management Commission (EMC) has adopted rules that contain buffer standards, or to Coastal  
5 Shorelines where the EMC adopts such rules, upon the effective date of those rules.

6 (f) Specific Use Standards for Outstanding Resource Waters (ORW) Coastal Shorelines.

7 (1) Within the AEC for estuarine and public trust shorelines contiguous to waters classified as ORW by  
8 the EMC, all development projects, proposals, and designs shall limit the built upon area in the AEC  
9 to no more than 25 percent or any lower site specific percentage as adopted by the EMC as necessary  
10 to protect the exceptional water quality and outstanding resource values of the ORW, and shall:

11 ~~(A)~~ — have no stormwater collection system;

12 ~~(B)~~(A) provide a buffer zone of at least 30 feet from the normal high water line or normal water  
13 line;

14 ~~(C)~~(B) otherwise be consistent with the use standards set out in Paragraph (d) of this Rule.

15 (2) Development (other than single-family residential lots) more than 75 feet from the normal high  
16 water line or normal water line but within the AEC as of June 1, 1989 shall be permitted in  
17 accordance with rules and standards in effect as of June 1, 1989 if:

18 (A) the development has a CAMA permit application in process, or

19 (B) the development has received preliminary subdivision plat approval or preliminary site  
20 plan approval under applicable local ordinances, and in which financial resources have  
21 been invested in design or improvement.

22 (3) Single-family residential lots that would not be buildable under the low-density standards defined  
23 in Paragraph (f)(1) of this Rule may be developed for single-family residential purposes so long as  
24 the development complies with those standards to the maximum extent possible.

25 (4) For an ORW nominated subsequent to June 1, 1989, the effective date in Paragraph (f)(2) of this  
26 Rule shall be the dates of nomination by the EMC.

27 (g) Urban Waterfronts.

28 (1) Description. Urban Waterfronts are waterfront areas, not adjacent to Outstanding Resource Waters,  
29 in the Coastal Shorelines category that lie within the corporate limits of any municipality duly  
30 chartered within the 20 coastal counties of the state. In determining whether an area is an urban  
31 waterfront, the following criteria shall be met as of the effective date of this Rule:

32 (A) The area lies wholly within the corporate limits of a municipality; and

33 (B) the area has a central business district or similar commercial zoning classification where  
34 there is minimal undeveloped land, mixed land uses, and urban level services such as water,  
35 sewer, streets, solid waste management, roads, police and fire protection, or in an area with  
36 an industrial or similar zoning classification adjacent to a central business district.

1 (2) Significance. Urban waterfronts are recognized as having cultural, historical and economic  
2 significance for many coastal municipalities. Maritime traditions and longstanding development  
3 patterns make these areas suitable for maintaining or promoting dense development along the shore.  
4 With proper planning and stormwater management, these areas may continue to preserve local  
5 historical and aesthetic values while enhancing the economy.

6 (3) Management Objectives. To provide for the continued cultural, historical, aesthetic and economic  
7 benefits of urban waterfronts. Activities such as in-fill development, reuse and redevelopment  
8 facilitate efficient use of already urbanized areas and reduce development pressure on surrounding  
9 areas, in an effort to minimize the adverse cumulative environmental effects on estuarine and ocean  
10 systems. While recognizing that opportunities to preserve buffers are limited in highly developed  
11 urban areas, they are encouraged where practical.

12 (4) Use Standards:

13 (A) The buffer requirement pursuant to Subparagraph (d)(10) of this Rule is not required for  
14 development within Urban Waterfronts that meets the following standards:

- 15 (i) The development must be consistent with the locally adopted land use plan;  
16 (ii) Impervious surfaces shall not exceed 30 percent of the AEC area of the lot.  
17 Impervious surfaces may exceed 30 percent if the applicant can effectively  
18 demonstrate, through a stormwater management system design, that the  
19 protection provided by the design would be equal to or exceed the protection by  
20 the 30 percent limitation. The stormwater management system shall be designed  
21 by an individual who meets any North Carolina occupational licensing  
22 requirements for the type of system proposed and approved during the permit  
23 application process. Redevelopment of areas exceeding the 30 percent impervious  
24 surface limitation may be permitted if impervious areas are not increased and the  
25 applicant designs the project to comply with the intent of the rule to the maximum  
26 extent feasible; and  
27 (iii) The development shall meet all state stormwater management requirements as  
28 required by the NC Environmental Management Commission;

29 (B) Non-water dependent uses over estuarine waters, public trust waters and coastal wetlands  
30 may be allowed only within Urban Waterfronts as set out below.

- 31 (i) Existing structures over coastal wetlands, estuarine waters or public trust areas  
32 may be used for commercial non-water dependent purposes provided that the  
33 structure promotes, fosters, enhances or accommodates public benefit.  
34 Commercial, non-water dependent uses shall be limited to restaurants and retail  
35 services. Residential uses, lodging and new parking areas shall be prohibited.  
36 (ii) For the purposes of this Rule, existing enclosed structures may be replaced ~~and~~  
37 and/or expanded vertically provided that vertical expansion does not exceed the

original footprint of the structure, is limited to one additional story over the life of the ~~structure~~ structure, and is consistent with local requirements or limitations.

(iii) New structures built for non-water dependent purposes are limited to pile-supported, single-story, unenclosed decks and boardwalks, and shall meet the following criteria:

(I) The proposed development shall provide for enhanced public access to the shoreline;

(II) Structures may be roofed but shall not be enclosed by partitions, plastic sheeting, screening, netting, lattice or solid walls of any kind and shall be limited to a single story;

(III) Structures shall be pile supported and require no filling of coastal wetlands, estuarine waters or public trust areas;

(IV) Structures shall not extend more than 20 feet waterward of the normal high water level or normal water level;

(V) Structures shall be elevated at least three feet over the wetland substrate as measured from the bottom of the decking;

(VI) Structures shall have no more than six feet of any dimension extending over coastal wetlands;

(VII) Structures shall not interfere with access to any riparian property and shall have a minimum setback of 15 feet between any part of the structure and the adjacent property owners' areas of riparian access. The line of division of areas of riparian access shall be established by drawing a line along the channel or deep water in front of the properties, then drawing a line perpendicular to the line of the channel so that it intersects with the shore at the point the upland property line meets the water's edge. The minimum setback provided in the rule may be waived by the written agreement of the adjacent riparian owner(s) or when two adjoining riparian owners are co-applicants. Should the adjacent property be sold before construction of the structure commences, the applicant shall obtain a written agreement with the new owner waiving the minimum setback and submit it to the permitting agency prior to initiating any development;

(VIII) Structures shall be consistent with the US Army Corps of Engineers setbacks along federally authorized waterways;

(IX) Structures shall have no significant adverse impacts on fishery resources, water quality or adjacent wetlands and there must be no reasonable alternative that would avoid wetlands. Significant adverse impacts

1 include the development that would directly or indirectly impair water  
2 quality standards, increase shoreline erosion, alter coastal wetlands or  
3 Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV), deposit spoils waterward of  
4 normal water level or normal high water level, or cause degradation of  
5 shellfish beds;

6 (X) Structures shall not degrade waters classified as SA or High Quality  
7 Waters or Outstanding Resource Waters as defined by the NC  
8 Environmental Management Commission;

9 (XI) Structures shall not degrade Critical Habitat Areas or Primary Nursery  
10 Areas as defined by the NC Marine Fisheries Commission; and

11 (XII) Structures shall not pose a threat to navigation.

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13 *History Note: Authority G.S. 113A-107(b); 113A-108; 113A-113(b); 113A-124;*  
14 *Eff. September 1, 1977;*  
15 *Amended Eff. April 1, 2001; August 1, 2000; August 3, 1992; December 1, 1991; May 1, 1990;*  
16 *October 1, 1989;*  
17 *Temporary Amendment Eff. October 15, 2001 (exempt from 270 day requirement-S.L. 2000-142);*  
18 *Temporary Amendment Eff. February 15, 2002 (exempt from 270 day requirement-S.L. 2001-494);*  
19 *Amended Eff. September 1, 2018; March 1, 2010; April 1, 2008; August 1, 2002.*  
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