

Section A - Chapter 1

Introduction to Basinwide Water Quality Planning

1.1 What is Basinwide Water Quality Planning?

Basinwide water quality planning is a nonregulatory, 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 A-1 and Table A-1). Preparation of a basinwide water quality plan is a five-year process, which is broken down into three phases (Table A-2). While these plans are prepared by the DWQ, their implementation and the protection of water quality entail the coordinated efforts of many agencies, local governments and stakeholder groups in the state. The first cycle of plans was completed in 1998, but each plan is updated at five-year intervals.

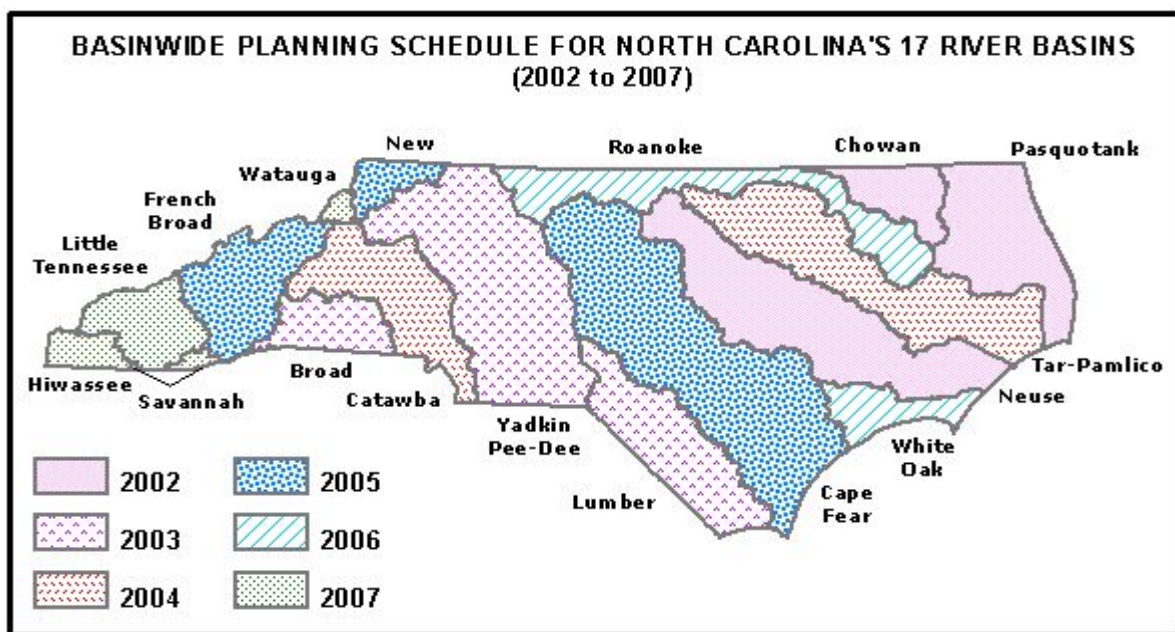


Figure A-1 Basinwide Planning Schedule (2002 to 2007)

1.2 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.
- Assure equitable distribution of waste assimilative capacity.
- Better evaluate cumulative effects of pollution.
- Improve public awareness and involvement.

Table A-1 Basinwide Planning Schedule (2000 to 2007)

Basin	DWQ Biological Data Collection	River Basin Public Workshops	Public Mtgs. and Draft Out For Review	Final Plan Receives EMC Approval	Begin NPDES Permit Issuance
Chowan	Summer 2000	3/2001	5/2002	7/2002	11/2002
Pasquotank	Summer 2000	3/2001	5/2002	7/2002	12/2002
Neuse	Summer 2000	6/2001	5/2002	7/2002	1/2003
Broad	Summer 2000	11/2001	11/2002	2/2003	7/2003
Yadkin-Pee Dee	Summer 2001	4/2002	1/2003	3/2003	9/2003
Lumber	Summer 2001	12/2002	9/2003	12/2003	7/2004
Tar-Pamlico	Summer 2002	3/2003	12/2003	3/2004	9/2004
Catawba	Summer 2002	10/2003	6/2004	9/2004	12/2004
French Broad	Summer 2002	11/2003	11/2004	2/2005	9/2005
New	Summer 2003	4/2004	5/2005	9/2005	3/2006
Cape Fear	Summer 2003	5/2004	4/2005	8/2005	4/2006
Roanoke	Summer 2004	4/2005	4/2006	8/2006	1/2007
White Oak	Summer 2004	10/2005	9/2006	12/2006	6/2007
Savannah	Summer 2004	10/2005	11/2006	2/2007	8/2007
Watauga	Summer 2004	10/2005	12/2006	3/2007	9/2007
Hiwassee	Summer 2004	10/2005	11/2006	2/2007	8/2007
Little Tennessee	Summer 2004	3/2006	1/2007	4/2007	10/2007

Note: A basinwide plan was completed for all 17 basins during the first cycle (1993 to 1998).

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

Years 1 - 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify sampling needs • Conduct biological monitoring activities • Conduct special studies and other water quality sampling activities • Coordinate with local stakeholders and other agencies to continue to implement goals within current basinwide plan
Water Quality Data Collection and Identification of Goals and Issues	
Years 2 - 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather and analyze data from sampling activities • Develop use support ratings • Conduct special studies and other water quality sampling activities • Conduct public workshops to establish goals and objectives and identify and prioritize issues for the next basin cycle • Develop preliminary pollution control strategies • Coordinate with local stakeholders and other agencies
Data Analysis and Public Workshops	
Years 3 - 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop draft basinwide plan based on water quality data, use support ratings, and recommended pollution control strategies • Circulate draft basinwide plan for review and present draft plan at public meetings • Revise plan after public review period • Submit plan to Environmental Management Commission for approval • Issue NPDES permits • Coordinate with other agencies and local interest groups to prioritize implementation actions • Conduct special studies and other water quality sampling activities
Preparation of Draft Basinwide Plan, Public Review, Approval of Plan, Issue NPDES Permits and Begin Implementation of Plan	

1.3 Major Components of the Basinwide Plan

Each basinwide plan is subdivided into four major sections. The format provides general basinwide information, information by each major watershed, and descriptions of water quality protection initiatives.

Section A: Basinwide Information

- Introduces the basinwide planning approach used by the state.
- Provides an overview of the river basin including: hydrology, land use, local government jurisdictions, population and growth trends, natural resources, wastewater discharges, animal operations and water usage.
- Presents general water quality information including summaries of water quality monitoring programs and use support ratings in the basin.

Section B: Subbasin Information

- Summarizes recommendations from previous basin plan, achievements made, what wasn't achieved and why, current priority issues and concerns, Impaired waters, and goals and recommendations for the next five years by subbasin.

Section C: Current and Future Initiatives

- Presents current and future water quality initiatives and success stories by federal, state and local agencies, and corporate, citizen and academic efforts.
- Describes DWQ goals and initiatives beyond the five-year planning cycle for the basin.

Appendices

- Lists NPDES dischargers and individual stormwater permits.
- Describes water quality data collected by DWQ, use support methodology and 303(d) listing methodology.
- Provides workshop summaries, points of contact, and a glossary of terms and acronyms.

1.4 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.

1.5 How to Get Involved

To assure that basinwide plans are accurately written and effectively implemented, it is important for citizens and other local stakeholders to participate in the planning process during:

- **Local Workshops:** (Prior to the preparation of draft basinwide plans.) DWQ staff present information about basinwide planning and the basin's water quality. Participants can ask questions, share concerns, and discuss potential solutions to water quality issues in the basin.
- **Public Meetings:** (After the draft plan is prepared.) DWQ staff discuss the draft plan and its major recommendations, seeking public comments and questions.
- **Public Comment Period:** (After the draft plan is prepared). The comment period is at least 30 days in length. Draft plans are made available on-line or by request.

1.6 Other References

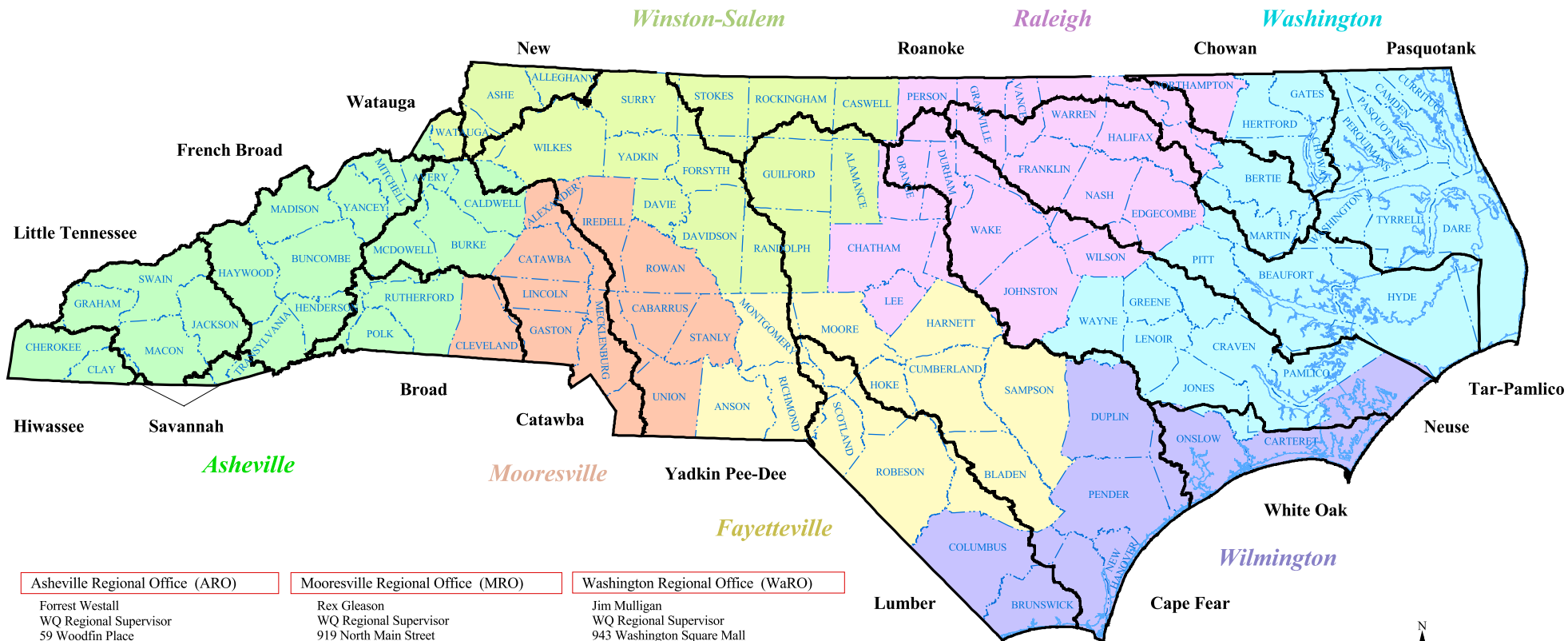
There are several reference documents and websites that provide additional information about basinwide planning and the basin's water quality:

- *Lumber River Basinwide Assessment Report.* June 2002. This technical report presents physical, chemical and biological data collected in the Lumber River basin. 146 pages.
- *Lumber River Basinwide Water Quality Management Plan.* May 1994. This first basinwide plan for the Lumber River basin presents water quality data, information and recommended management strategies for the first five-year cycle. 181 pages.
- *Lumber River Basinwide Water Quality Management Plan.* May 1999. This second basinwide plan for the Lumber River basin presents water quality data, information and recommended management strategies for the second five-year cycle. 200 pages.
- *A Citizen's Guide to Water Quality Management in North Carolina.* August 2000. 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. 156 pages.
- *NC Basinwide Wetlands and Riparian Restoration Plan for the Lumber River Basin.* DWQ NC Wetlands Restoration Program.
- *North Carolina's Basinwide Approach to Water Quality Management: Program Description.* Creager, C.S. and J.P. Baker. 1991. DWQ Water Quality Section. Raleigh, NC.
- NC Division of Water Quality Environmental Sciences Branch website at <http://www.esb.enr.state.nc.us/>.

1.7 Division of Water Quality Functions and Locations

For more information on the above documents, DWQ activities or contacts, please 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. Feel free to contact the appropriate Regional Office for additional information (Figure A-2). For general questions about the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, contact the Customer Service Center at 1-877-623-6748.

**Figure A-2 North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources
Division of Water Quality Regional Offices**



Asheville Regional Office (ARO)

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WQ Regional Supervisor
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Asheville, NC 28801
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Buncombe	Henderson	Rutherford
Burke	Jackson	Swain
Caldwell	Macon	Transylvania
Cherokee	Madison	Yancey
Clay	McDowell	
Graham	Mitchell	

Mooresville Regional Office (MRO)

Rex Gleason
WQ Regional Supervisor
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Cabarrus	Mecklenburg
Catawba	Rowan
Cleveland	Stanly
Gaston	Union
Iredell	

Washington Regional Office (WaRO)

Jim Mulligan
WQ Regional Supervisor
943 Washington Square Mall
Washington, NC 27889
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Bertie	Greene	Pasquotank
Camden	Hertford	Perquimans
Chowan	Hyde	Pitt
Craven	Jones	Tyrrell
Currituck	Lenoir	Washington
Dare	Martin	Wayne

Fayetteville Regional Office (FRO)

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Bladen	Richmond
Cumberland	Robeson
Harnett	Sampson
Hoke	Scotland
Montgomery	

Raleigh Regional Office (RRO)

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Durham	Lee	Wake
Edgecombe	Nash	Warren
Franklin	Northampton	Wilson
Granville	Orange	
Halifax	Person	

Wilmington Regional Office (WiRO)

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Carteret	Onslow
Columbus	Pender
Duplin	

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Fax: (336) 771-4630

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

Central Office

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