

## 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 2 and Table 2). Preparation of a basinwide water quality plan is a five-year process, which is broken down into three phases (Table 3). 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.

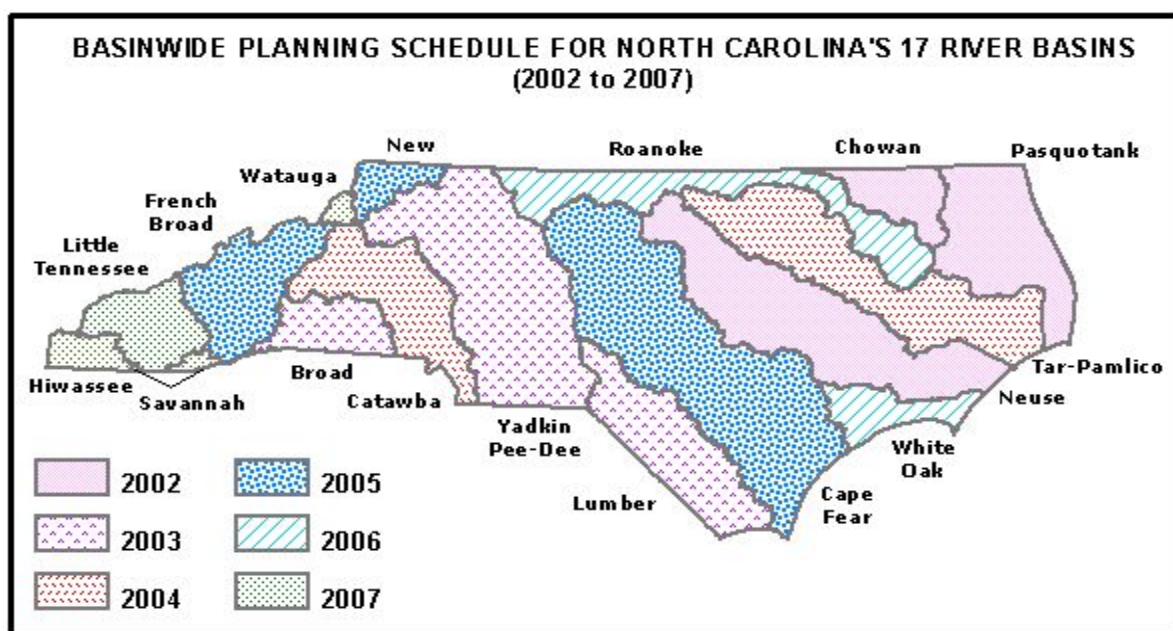


Figure 2 Basinwide Planning Schedule (2002 to 2007)

## 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 2 Basinwide Planning Schedule (2000 to 2007)

| Basin                                                                                                                                                          | DWQ Biological Data Collection | Draft for Public Review | Plan Receives EMC Approval | Begin NPDES Permit Issuance |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Chowan                                                                                                                                                         | Summer 2000                    | 5/2002                  | 7/2002                     | 11/2002                     |
| Pasquotank                                                                                                                                                     | Summer 2000                    | 5/2002                  | 7/2002                     | 12/2002                     |
| Neuse                                                                                                                                                          | Summer 2000                    | 5/2002                  | 7/2002                     | 1/2003                      |
| Broad                                                                                                                                                          | Summer 2000                    | 11/2002                 | 2/2003                     | 7/2003                      |
| Yadkin-Pee Dee                                                                                                                                                 | Summer 2001                    | 1/2003                  | 3/2003                     | 9/2003                      |
| Lumber                                                                                                                                                         | Summer 2001                    | 9/2003                  | 12/2003                    | 7/2004                      |
| Tar-Pamlico                                                                                                                                                    | Summer 2002                    | 12/2003                 | 3/2004                     | 9/2004                      |
| Catawba                                                                                                                                                        | Summer 2002                    | 7/2004                  | 9/2004                     | 12/2004                     |
| French Broad                                                                                                                                                   | Summer 2002                    | 2/2005                  | 4/2005                     | 9/2005                      |
| New                                                                                                                                                            | Summer 2003                    | 7/2005                  | 9/2005                     | 3/2006                      |
| <b>Cape Fear</b>                                                                                                                                               | <b>Summer 2003</b>             | <b>4/2005</b>           | <b>8/2005</b>              | <b>4/2006</b>               |
| Roanoke                                                                                                                                                        | Summer 2004                    | 6/2006                  | 10/2006                    | 1/2007                      |
| White Oak                                                                                                                                                      | Summer 2004                    | 9/2006                  | 12/2006                    | 6/2007                      |
| Savannah                                                                                                                                                       | Summer 2004                    | 11/2006                 | 2/2007                     | 8/2007                      |
| Watauga                                                                                                                                                        | Summer 2004                    | 12/2006                 | 3/2007                     | 9/2007                      |
| Hiwassee                                                                                                                                                       | Summer 2004                    | 11/2006                 | 2/2007                     | 8/2007                      |
| Little Tennessee                                                                                                                                               | Summer 2004                    | 1/2007                  | 4/2007                     | 10/2007                     |
| Note: A basinwide plan was completed for all 17 basins during the first cycle (1993 to 1998). This schedule represents the second and/or third cycle for each. |                                |                         |                            |                             |

Table 3 Five-Year Process for Development of an Individual Basinwide Plan

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

## 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.

## 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 3). For general questions about the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, contact the Customer Service Center at 1-877-623-6748.

## 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.

## Washington



NC Division of Water Quality  
Basinwide Planning Program  
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## Other Reference Materials

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

- *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. Visit the website at <http://h2o.enr.state.nc.us/basinwide/> to download document.
- *Cape Fear River Basinwide Assessment Report*. June 2004. This technical report presents physical, chemical and biological data collected in the Cape Fear River basin.
- *Cape Fear River Basinwide Water Quality Management Plan*. October 1996 and July 2000. These first basinwide plans for the Cape Fear River basin present water quality data, information and recommended management strategies for the first two five-year cycles.
- NC Division of Water Quality Environmental Sciences Branch website at <http://www.esb.enr.state.nc.us/>.
- *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.
- *Watershed Restoration Plan for the Cape Fear River Basin*. July 2001. DWQ NC Wetlands Restoration Program.

## How to Read the Basinwide Plan

### Chapters 1 - 24: Subbasin and Watershed Information

- Summarizes information and data by subbasin, including: recommendations from previous basin plan, achievements, current priority issues and concerns, Impaired waters, and goals and recommendations for the next five years by subbasin.

### Chapter 25 - 37

- Presents information on various topics of interest to the protection and restoration of water quality in the basin, including: stream classifications, population and land cover changes, stressors to water quality, agricultural, forestry and permitting activities in the basin, water and natural resources, and water quality initiatives.

### Appendices

- Population and land use changes over time, local governments in the basin.
- Describes water quality data collected by DWQ, use support methodology and 303(d) listing methodology.
- Lists NPDES dischargers and individual stormwater permits.
- Points of contact and a glossary of terms and acronyms.