



North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Division of Water Quality
Coleen H. Sullins
Director

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Governor

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Secretary

October 21, 2009

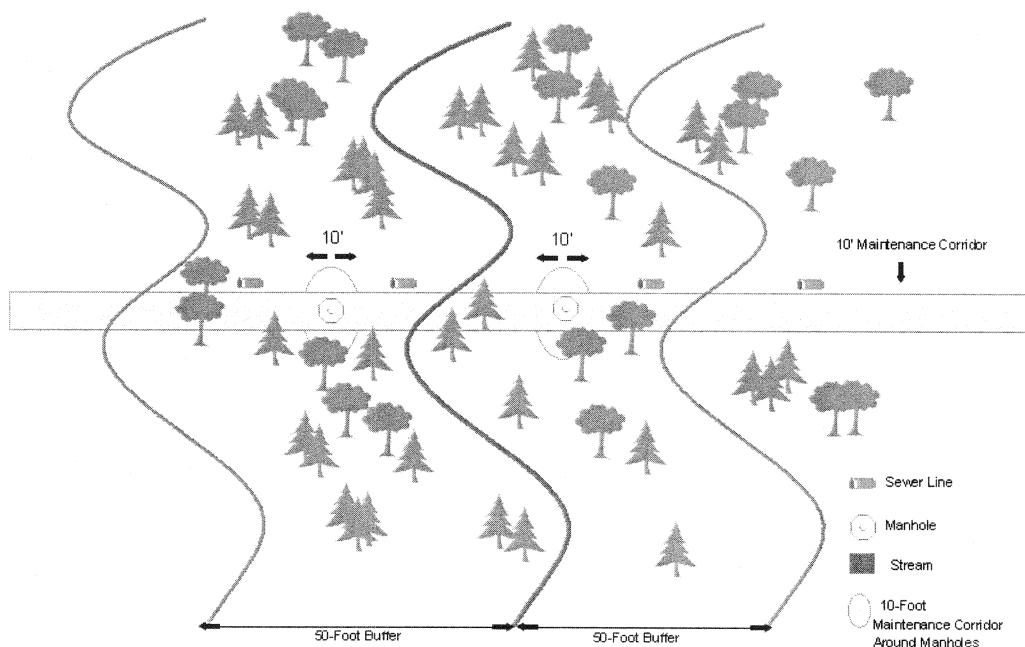
Buffer Interpretation/Clarification #2009-005

MEMORANDUM

RE: Presently in the table of uses in the Neuse River Basin Buffer Rules [15A NCAC 02B.0233(6)], the Catawba River Basin Buffer Rules [15A NCAC 02B.0243(6)], and the Tar-Pamlico River Basin Buffer Rules [15A NCAC 02B.0259(6)], utility lines that have a maintenance corridor of less than or equal to 10-feet in width are exempt from these rules.

Problem: It has been brought to the Division of Water Quality's (DWQ) attention that some maintenance corridors have not been maintained at a frequency sufficient to keep woody vegetation from becoming established. There has been confusion as to when a new buffer authorization is required for clearing unmaintained maintenance corridors associated with utility lines.

Solution: The 10-foot wide maintenance corridors for utility lines that eventually cross a stream at a perpendicular angle (between 75 and 105 degrees), can have any woody vegetation cleared in those corridors and still be considered exempt per the above-mentioned buffer rules. If manholes or hard structures such as a building are in the buffer, a 10-foot maintenance corridor is maintained around those structures in order for the clearing equipment to have adequate access to maintain the utility lines. An exempt use in the above-mentioned buffer rules does not require written concurrence or review by DWQ.



The drawing below illustrates the 10-foot maintenance corridor and shows how to measure around manholes

Signature: M. M. M. M.

Date: 10/21/2009

Signature: Chad W. W.

Date: 10/21/09

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