

Catawba River Study Committee

February 10, 2010

MINUTES

Attendance:

Terry Watts	Hickory
Charles Beck	Lenoir
Dan McClure	Carolina Land & Lakes RC&D
Sue Ballbach	Catawba County
Seth Harris	Alexander County
Jan Herman	Conover
Terry Lail	Conover
Greg Padgett	Valdese
Mike Bennett	Hickory
Rani Holland	Long View
Seth Nagy	Coop. Ext. Caldwell
Jonathan Kanipe	Catawba
John Martin	Citizen
Caroline Martin	Lake Hickory Cove Keeper
Lenny Rogers	Coop. Ext. Alexander
John Tippet	WPCOG
Sam Schultz	Maiden
Bob Hibbitts	Catawba County
Sam Erwin	WPCOG
Tony Gallegos	WPCOG
Jessica Bargsley	Rutherford College
David Merryman	Catawba Riverkeeper
Lisbeth Hoover	LRU
Kathelyn Burwell	LRU
Kenneth Vilargos	LRU
Erin Seiling	LRU

Bob Hibbitts called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. Mr. Hibbitts turned the meeting over to Tony Gallegos who discussed proposed updates to the Catawba River Study Committee (CRSC). Mr. Gallegos gave a background summary on how the CRSC started and mentioned the groups 10 initial concerns and how these are still relevant today. A subcommittee recently met and developed two recommendations to modify the existing committee.

The first recommendation was "Change Committees Name to Western Piedmont Water Resources Committee". The new name will better reflect the broader nature of the committee and to recognize water management issues in the Yadkin River Basin also affect our regions local governments.

The second recommendation was “Update Mission”. The committee serves in an advisory role for the local governments and the Western Piedmont Council of Governments Policy Board on water resources and watershed issues including: water quality, water supply, water safety and recreation, and landuse within the regions river basins.

Also, Mr. Gallegos showed a list of groups that have at one time or another been involved with the committee and he would like to invite those groups to a future meeting. Sue Ballbach made a motion to accept the two recommendations and invite the groups to attend a future meeting. The motion was seconded by Charles Beck and was passed unanimously.

Water Resource Updates

1. Interbasin Transfer Settlement

Mike Bennett and David Merryman gave an update on the recent IBT transfer. The settlement will place limits on how much Concord/Kannapolis can withdraw from the Catawba River during drought situations. A new water intake on the Yadkin River to be completed by 2015 will also figure into the restrictions. The water levels are as follows:

<u>Drought State Status</u>	<u>MGD Permitted</u>
0	10
1	9
2	8.5
3	7
4	6

Concord and Kannapolis must also follow a long list of water conservation measures.

2. Fecal Coliform Levels in Lower Creek

Mr. Gallegos mentioned that DWQ had monitored Lower Creek in 2009 for fecal Coliform. Five samples were taken at each site and the results were much higher than those for 2004 and 2005. The 5x30 samples were taken during the summer when warmer water would potentially contribute to higher levels. Follow-up needed. LCAT considering proposal for partnership to address next steps.

3. NPDES Phase II Stormwater Programs (SWWG)

Terry Watts mentioned that the next step for the Stormwater group is the Public Education Coalition.

4. CWMTF Septic Assistance Grant Application

Mr. Gallegos mentioned that the WPCOG had resubmitted the \$500,000 Septic Assistance Grant application recently to the CWMTF for a modified program. There is no indication at this time what kind of funds the CWMTF will have for this cycle.

5. AmeriCorp Grant

The WPCOG is working with the Centralina Council of Governments on the AmeriCorp grant. Funding will allow 20 FTE people to work on sustainability for a year. This is a three year grant and the City of Lenoir has committed to hosting a person WPCOG is requesting a person to work with stormwater partnership.

6. Clarks Creek TMDL, local stakeholder grant application

Dan McClure briefed the group on the Clarks Creek project. A group of stakeholders met last week in Newton to begin the development of a 319 application to address water quality concerns on Clark Creek. This watershed affects Hickory, Conover, Newton and Maiden.

7. Grant Applications

Mr. Gallegos mentioned that current priority is working on ARRA 205j grant on water efficiency education and outreach including one for the Hickory stormwater outreach.

The next meeting was set for March 10. Agenda items not covered will be carried over. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Catawba River Study Committee

MINUTES

March 10, 2010

Attendance:

Sam Erwin	WPCOG
Terry Lail	Conover
Lance Hight	Conover
Tony Gallegos	WPCOG
Sue Ballbach	Catawba County
Seth Harris	Alexander County
Dennis Benfield	Caldwell Soil & Water
Greg Padgett	Valdese
Jonathan Kanipe	Town of Catawba
Caroline Martin	Lake Hickory Cove Keeper
John Martin	Citizen
Phil Piaski	CVHA
Nora Coffey	Lake James SP
Kelly Hoke	Lake James SP
Sam Schultz	Maiden
Mark Young	Morganton
Bob Hibbitts	Catawba County

Bob Hibbitts opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. The minutes from the last meeting were reviewed and a motion to approve was made by Dennis Benfield and seconded by Greg Padgett.

Chairman Hibbitts turned the meeting over to Tony Gallegos who recognized Phil Piaski with the Catawba Valley Heritage Alliance (CVHA); and Nora Coffey and Kelly Hoke with State Park System who discussed the upcoming Riverfest 2010. Mr. Piaski told the group that Lake James State Park will be taking over lead sponsorship for Catawba Riverfest which will occur on September 18 this year at Lake James State Park. There will be many advantages for the new location. New site is nearly completed but not yet open to public, opening expected by early summer. Since the State Park has dedicated manpower to devote toward planning and organizing the event and each state park is mandated to have at least one significant event each year. Another issue that is resolved by switching from Geitner Park in Hickory is limited parking and space for exhibitors. The State Park there is ample parking (~425). The format for the festival will be much the same as past events. There will educational exhibits and a canoe/kayak race. Mr. Piaski, Ms. Coffey and Ms. Hoke asked everyone to let them know of any prospective exhibitors. Lance H noted that since Lake James is a destination rather than in one of our communities that advertising the event broadly through our region and beyond will be

essential. Ideas were suggested and all present were willing to assist in appropriate ways to help make this event a success.

Mr. Gallegos continued discussion from the last meeting on the CRSC Project Priorities and Budget 2010.

A letter from WPCOG to local governments regarding their assessments including water quality (resource) contribution was mailed out this week with minimal changes over previous years due only to shifting populations. Just under ½ FTE person is funded through assessments to local governments the remainder of funding for COG water resources program is through grants of special technical assistance contracts.

Two aim areas where staff resources are focused for the next several months are:

(1) The ARRA 205j grant to assist the Water Management Group. This grant funded project is focused on water efficiency and conservation education and outreach; and is basin-wide; and in partnership with Centralina COG. WPCOG is administering the grant. Initial survey and evaluation of group needs in nearly completed. Work will continue on this project throughout the calendar year.

(2) The special contract for services with the City of Hickory's Stormwater Program for Education Outreach Assistance for the period Jan-June 2010. This project will require an extended amount of dedicated time by COG staff (primarily Tony).

Mr. Gallegos mentioned that he is also committed to explore viability of forming a Voluntary (as opposed to mandatory) Water Monitoring Coalition for the (Upper) Catawba, but has yet to be able to commit significant time to this project, which was also recommended in the 2009 Lake Rhodhiss Watershed Restoration Plan. Previous considerations for forming a Coalition have failed due to increased costs to local dischargers for monitoring above their currently required levels.

The committee was asked about other specific priorities they desired to address. No new specific needs were identified by those present that are not already identified in the mission of the committee and currently being addresses to some degree.

Mr. Gallegos went on to share some updates on impaired surface waters based on recently released draft 2010 303d list and Lake Rhodhiss which was indicated as one of the state priorities for TMDL development. This information can be found in the draft 2010 Integrated 305b Report on DWQ website.

COG staff is working on GIS maps that reflect changes in our regions impaired surface water quality overtime and by type of impairment.

A draft map of 2010 listed waters was shared on screen, once finalized we hope to have them available on the WPCOG website.

According to DWQ staff the Lake Rhodhiss TMDL is currently in development. This will impact the Wastewater Treatment Plants discharging to the lake through the NPDES permit process. Other impacts are yet to be determined. A special meeting(s) with state staff to engage local stakeholders in TMDL process will be scheduled at times other than regular meeting time because of ongoing conflicts.

Sam Erwin told the group about the water monitoring currently being conducted on Wilson Creek. The Friends of Wilson Creek contracted with Foothills Conservancy to coordinate the sampling which is being conducted with volunteers through the Friends of Wilson Creek. A request will be made to share their findings at CRSC meeting in the future.

Upcoming Meetings/Events/Workshops/Conferences:

- Friday, March 12 to discuss the Hunting Creek Watershed at 10am Morganton City Hall. Elements of the watershed planning document and how each agency/organization may plug-in certain strategies will be discussed.
- Clark Creek Watershed Group, TBD the week of March 29th through April 2nd. DWQ and Equinox Environmental work on narrowing the focus of the project.
- WRRI's Annual Conference and the NCWRA Symposium are scheduled for March 0-31, 2010 at the McKimmon Center in Raleigh.
- "Growing a Green Future", will be held on Saturday, April 17, between 10am-2Pm on the "Green" between the Arts and Science Center and the Patrick Beaver Memorial Library in Hickory.
- Earth Day event April 24, 2010 at Morganton Soccer Complex on the Greenway.
- NALNS 19th Annual Southeastern Lake Management Conference – May 2-7, 2010 in Winston-Salem. (two sessions and six speakers regarding Lake Rhodhiss)

At this point, no future meeting date was set. Mr. Gallegos will work on scheduling a meeting to discuss Lake Rhodhiss TMDL then send out a notice.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned ~1:05pm

Western Piedmont Water Resources Committee

May 12, 2010

MINUTES

Attendance:

Sam Erwin	WPCOG, Environmental Specialist
John Tippet	WPCOG, Director of Planning, Community Development,
Tony Gallegos	WPCOG, Natural Resources Administrator
Jake Rash	NC Wildlife Resources Commission
Greg Padgett	Valdese, Water Treatment Plant Superintendent
Tony Robinson	Media & NCHS
Terry Watts	Hickory, Stormwater Administrator
Lenny Rogers	NCCES, extension Director
Susan Ballbach	Catawba County Senior Planner
Angie Harris	Newton, Public Works
Jon Kanipe	City of Catawba, Manager
Charles Beck	Lenoir Public Works Director
John Martin	Citizen
Caroline Martin	Lake Hickory Covekeeper
Janice Herman	Conover, Public Works
David Merriman	Catawba Riverkeeper
Clay Neill	Neill Grading
Warren DePree	Lenoir, Stormwater Specialist
Mick Berry	Hickory, City Manager

Chair and Vice Chairpersons could not attend the committee for medical reasons Tony Gallegos opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. The minutes from the last meeting were reviewed and a motion to approve was made by Lenny Rogers and seconded by Sue Ballbach.

Mr. Gallegos turned the meeting over to Jake Rash, Coldwater Research Coordinator with NC Wildlife Resources Commission who gave a presentation on Fishery Management Opportunities for North Carolina Communities. Mr. Rash told the group that the Commission manages trout for the protection of wild resources and to provide angling opportunities. Different regulations apply to different streams and these are determined by natural reproduction, available habitat, angler access, amount of use and landowner desires. The Commission manages approximately 1,000 miles of stocked waters and 1,000 miles of wild waters in the State. The role of landowners is a key to angler access. Basically there is no written formal agreement between a landowner and the Commission. It is a handshake agreement. There is a continual loss of angler access and approximately 85% of stocked waters are on private lands.

Public lands are ideal for the Commission. There are opportunities for cooperative partnerships between the Commission and property owners. These include fishing piers, tackle loaner program and educational kiosks. The Commission also has an outreach program where they provide presentations, fish for fun events, materials and technical guidance. Other services include trout maps, website and media services including press releases and the publication *Wildlife in North Carolina*. In 2006, the Commission conducted a trout angler opinion survey and it showed that hatchery supported waters are the most fished, followed by delayed harvest and wild waters. Public lands are more commonly used than private lands. The survey showed that 81% of respondents were satisfied with their fishing and the size and quantity of stocked trout. The study also showed that the demographic profile of the typical trout angler is shifting from a rural resident to an urban-piedmont resident. The Commission has also conducted an Economic Evaluation of the impact of the designated public mountain trout waters program. Approximately 93,000 trout anglers spent approximately \$146 million on trips and equipment a year. The total impact was \$174,000. An estimated 1,977 jobs were supported and approximately \$56 million in income was generated. Mr. Rash went over what municipalities can do to help the program. They can ensure access, provide angler parking and trails. They can also assist with educational kiosks and riparian stewardship. Finally, they can assist with selling fishing licenses at convenient locations.

Current Projects/Grant Updates

- Mr. Gallegos told the group that the ARRA 205j Water Management Group Education/Outreach Assistance grant started in October 2009 and will conclude on August 31. WPCOG is partnering with CCOG on project.
- Mr. Gallegos and Terry Watts updated the group on the Hickory Stormwater Education Outreach Assistance. The WPCOG has a contract with Hickory and the program has involved working with Education and Outreach effort associated with the City's Phase II Stormwater permit. A voluntary Stormwater Partnership of local Phase II governments is being developed and will kick off in the new fiscal year, less than full participation is anticipated initially due to required financial contribution to operate Partnership Activities.

Water Resource Updates

- **The TMDL for Lake Rhodhiss is being developed!** It is anticipated committee may assist with evening public meetings in the region later this summer.
- The Catawba Basin Plan will be released next week and the public will have until June 18 to comment on the plan. Lake Hickory is to be classified supporting.
- Mr. Gallegos told the group that the North American Lakes Management Society SE conference was held in Winston-Salem. He and several other partners presented on various aspects of the Lake Rhodhiss Watershed Restoration Project.
- South Carolina and Duke have reached an agreement regarding the 401 water quality certification in relation to the relicensing further challenges pending

- The Catawba-Wateree Drought Management Advisory Group will meet next week. The principal agenda topics include LIP status through May 1, update on weather and hydro operations, status, review and discussion of the work by the LIP Evaluation Committee from 2009 and proposed LIP revisions and update on relicensing activities.
- David Merriman talked about water quality permits for Duke's coal generating plants and the need for coal ash waste to be regulated.
- Greg Padgett talked about local governments beginning to conduct phosphorous monitoring on Lake Rhodhiss on an annual basis.

Grants

- The Septic Tank program application with CWMTF is still on hold.
- The AmeriCorps grant addresses stormwater and other environmental stewardship problems in the basin did not have enough matching fund commitments from private sector to submit for funding.
- An application is being developed to address the Clark Creek TMDL.
- Habitat Enhancement Program applications are due in July through Duke. The WPCOG may partner with NC Wildlife Resources Commission on a project submittal.

Meeting Dates

At the last meeting, the committee decided to hold several meetings away from the WPCOG. The tentative schedule for the remaining meetings this year is as follows:

- July 14 - Morganton Ag Resources Center, Rhodhiss TMDL. Update, Tour – Livestock exclusion SW BMP
- Sept 8 – Lenoir, Library, Dam removal efforts American Rivers; Tour – SW Wetlands. Stream Restoration Lower Creek
- Nov 10 – Taylorsville, Town Hall or CVCC Extension. Tour School Wetlands

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by David Merriman and seconded by Greg Padgett. The meeting was adjourned.

Western Piedmont Water Resources Committee

Burke County Agricultural Resources Center
July 23, 2010

MINUTES

Attendance:

Tony Gallegos	WPCOG
Sam Erwin	WPCOG
Mark Oakley	Duke Energy
Kevin Clark	SWCD
Pamela Bowman	SWCD Watershed Coordinator
Connie Brower	DENR-DWQ
Melanie Williams	DENR-DWQ
Julie Gyrzb	DENR-DWQ-NPDES
Sandra Moore	DENR-DWQ
Nikki Remington	DENR-DWQ
Elton Barber	NRCS Burke
Andrew Kota	Foothills Conservancy
George Johnson	Lake James Association
Suzy Johnson	Lake James Association
Forest Westhall	Hearing Officer NC EMC
Jeff Morse	Valdese
Seth Nagy	Dir. Coop Ext. Caldwell
Chuck Hanson	Hickory PW
Penny Peeler	WPCC
Dr Robert Fearn	Prof-Resident Lake James
Dan McClure	CLL, RC&D
Greg Padgett	Valdese WWTP
Susan Ballbach	Catawba Co. Planning
Charles Beck	Lenoir PW
Damon Pollard	Ag Agent Coop Ext. Burke
Lee Anderson	Morganton Planning
David Merryman	Catawba Riverkeeper
Carrie Mahoney	Upper Catawba Advocate
Carol Martin	Lake Hickory Cove Keeper
John Martin	Citizen Hickory
Rani Holland	Long View WTP
Eddie Hicks	Long View WTP
Millie McCathern	Community of Lake James
Jack Huss	CLL-RC&D Board
Jim Peterson	Community of Lake James

Johnny Wear
Don Danford
Otis Wilson
Howard Morgan
Warren Dupree
Jim Carr
Tony Yount
Mike Young
Greg Wilson
Laurie Laciero
John Kinley

Rutherford College Planner (WPCOG)
Morganton PU Director
Lake James Cove keeper
Lake James Resident
Lenoir Stormwater Program
Lake Hickory Association
Lake James Cove Keeper
Morganton Engineer
Granite Falls Planner
Claremont Planner (WPCOG)
Hildebran Planner (WPCOG)

Tony Gallegos opened the meeting; thanked SWCD and Duke Energy for helping arrange morning and afternoon tours; and had everyone introduce themselves (Perhaps record crowd 51)

Mark Oakley with Duke Energy who gave an update on the FERC Relicensing.

The process began in 2003 and 70 of the 85 entities have signed on to the agreement. The North Carolina process has gone smooth while the South Carolina process has not gone smooth. Several organizations have opposed the relicensing and FERC has denied the request for the new permit. Duke Energy is appealing the process. Two things have to happen to get the process moving. First, the water quality certification in SC has to be approved and a biological review has to be done as to whether the sturgeon will be negatively impacted by the project. The best time estimate for approval is 2nd to 4th quarters in 2011. After the license is approved work can begin to implement the items that Duke committed to in the agreement.

Melanie Williams with NC DENR DWQ gave an update on the request to proceed for approval of the 2010 Catawba River Basin Plan.

The schedule for approval is internal review

April 15 to May 7;
Pubic Review: May 18 to June 18, 2010;
EMC WQC: July 14, 2010; and
EMC: September 2010.

Between the 2004 and 2010 plan 23.6 miles were removed from impaired waters while 226 miles were added to the impaired list. Ms. Williams went over biological rating trends and ambient monitoring system stations. Copper, turbidity, Fecal Coliform and ph were discussed. Impaired lakes on the Catawba chain are Lakes Rhodhiss, Mountain Island and portions of Wylie. Ms. Williams went over the reasons why Rhodhiss is impaired which include high pH along with nitrogen and phosphorous. A Lake Rhodhiss Restoration Plan has been developed (WPCOG 2009). Mountain Island and Lake Wylie problems and recommendations were also discussed.

Basinwide Issues Include: stormwater velocity and volume; on-site wastewater treatment (septic systems); buffers on main stem; and coal ash ponds.

Recommendations and Goals for the upcoming cycle include:

- Action Plans
- Coordinate efforts to plan and implement local watershed management plans
- Participate in analysis of low pH
- Assist with fecal coliform bacteria reduction efforts.
- Support buffer awareness and outreach efforts
- Conduct/support watershed stressor studies.

Public review comment topics include low ph, requests for additional lake sampling, sources of copper, taste & odor issue in Lakes Rhodhiss and Hickory, agricultural impacts, farm bill efforts, need for a nutrient strategy for the whole chain of lakes, full study of coal ash pond impacts, stronger recommendations to reduce nutrients in lakes and evaluate stormwater impacts on lakes.

Connie Brower with NC DENR DWQ gave a presentation on 2008-1010 Surface Water Standards, Triennial Review and Implementation.

The major changes anticipated with the review are for chlorophyll a, aquatic life metals standards, 2.4 D standard (Water Supply only), clarifications and reorganization of red book regulations. Since the 1980's – US EPA has published revisions to many metals and to date, North Carolina has not adopted those recommended changes. Proposed revisions to metals standards reflect the most current science. Toxicity of metals is influenced by many factors such as form and speciation of metal, pH, TSS, DOC, TOC, etc. EPA's national criteria take some of these factors into account including dissolved metals, hardness based criteria with equations. In relation to dissolved metals, the current standards are "total" metals. Upon permit renewal, once adopted, new criteria for metals will be used to calculate limits. For some metals water hardness is associated with aquatic toxicity and proposed numerical standards are based upon a default hardness of 25 mg/l. Some metal standards are hardness dependent. NPDES permits must incorporate protective concentrations that consider instream water hardness. Ms. Brower then reviewed the proposed changes to NC Aquatic Life Standards for Metals with the group. Several metals such as lead and nickel would have significant changes. Permit calculators were discussed and these are located under NPDES Wastewater website. There are two calculators that can be used to determine permit limits for metals. Calculator 1 should provide conservative permit limit estimates for each facility because it uses the lowest hardness proposed under the revised regulations.

The fiscal impact of the regulations is being assessed. DWQ mailed out requests for information on costs and benefits related to the proposal on June 7 and the deadline for submission is September 7.

The current timeline is as follows:

- January/March 2010 – EMC granted DWQ's request to proceed to Notice of Public Hearings
- June 7, 2010 – websites available to assist permit holders
- September 7 – End of timeframe to submit fiscal information to DWQ for inclusion in OSBM Fiscal Note
- Fall 2010 – Staff develops OSBM Fiscal Note
- Spring 2010 – Pubic Hearings announced.

If you want to link people to the full write up on the Tri Rev – here is the link...

<http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/wq/ps/csu/swtrirev>

Mrs. Brower did not discuss the *separate actions* by the state that are designed as a nutrient management strategy. These separate proposals (referred to as the “threshold rules”) are NOT state water quality standards, and have not , to date, been approved to go to public hearing.

These actions were, however, in response to EPA’s desire that the state have more proactive nutrient management. A link to the documents relating to these proposals is <http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/wq/ps/csu/swstandards> .

They appear at the bottom of the page under “what is the Nutrient criteria plan..”

The link to the proposed “Nutrient threshold rules” is in the second EMC WQC agenda item in the linked file here:

http://portal.ncdenr.org/c/document_library/get_file?p_l_id=61624&folderId=1064112&name=DLFE-19521.pdf

Mr. Gallegos closed the meeting and reminded those in attendance of the afternoon tours to see BMPs and a tour of the new Lake James State Park.

Presentations and factsheets available (soon) on WPCOG website

<http://www.wpcog.org/publications.asp> scroll down to Water Resources Committee

