



North Carolina Revises Nutrient Criteria Development Plan September 2019

In June 2019, the North Carolina DWR received EPA approval of several revisions to its Nutrient Criteria Development Plan (NCDP). The original NCDP was approved in June 2014, and DWR considered updates necessary to keep the plan consistent with both activities to date and future schedules. DWR did not heavily advertise their intent to revise the plan until after EPA approval, and did not solicit public input on the revisions, presumably because they consider the revisions to be minor. The original NCDP did not mention the Criteria Implementation Committee (CIC), and so a description of this group has been added to the revised plan. DWR also extended the schedule of criteria development activities to be more realistic. The updated NCDP calls for completion of estuarine criteria in 2025, reservoir/lake criteria in 2028, and river/stream criteria in 2029. The Chowan River was added to the Albemarle Sound estuary pilot because the two systems are connected, and the Chowan River has recently experienced algal blooms. DWR also slightly revised the language describing the Scientific Advisory Council (SAC); e.g., removing the duties given to the CIC and emphasizing the advisory nature of the group.

The NCDP section on the SAC also includes new language regarding DWR's intent to "fill vacancies and revise membership as necessary." DWR plans to invite several new SAC members with expertise relevant to the estuary pilot (e.g., fisheries, submerged aquatic vegetation). Similarly, some SAC members are likely to step down after the lake pilot is complete. DWR decisions on SAC membership are expected by late August or early September.