



DWR Proposes Timeline for Nutrient Criteria Activities in 2016 February 2016

The North Carolina Division of Water Resources (DWR) has proposed a tentative schedule for nutrient criteria-related activities for the remainder of the calendar year. The timeline includes parallel activities for all three “flagship” waters for nutrient criteria development: High Rock Lake, the Albemarle Sound, and the Middle Cape Fear River basin. DWR has not yet received feedback on the schedule from the Science Advisory Council (SAC) or the Criteria Implementation Committee (CIC), and the timeline is subject to revision.

Presently, the following major activities are being proposed by DEQ:

High Rock Lake: The tentative schedule calls for the SAC to reach consensus on appropriate indicators of nutrient effects in February, even as they continue to research the appropriate criteria magnitudes. By April, DWR and the SAC will develop a study plan to monitor these parameters (likely to include algal toxins) in High Rock Lake in the summer 2016. Criteria development is scheduled to commence in October, drawing upon data collected in 2016 as it becomes available. DWR would like to finalize High Rock Lake criteria recommendations by the end of 2016 and begin discussion of how criteria for other lakes and reservoirs should be developed.

Albemarle Sound: DWR’s tentative schedule includes calls for the SAC to review background material and data report for Albemarle Sound, in parallel with similar activities being coordinated by the Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Partnership (APNEP). As early as March, DWR will ask the SAC to develop a conceptual model for nutrient effects similar to what was performed in 2015 for High Rock Lake. The schedule also calls for a review of proposed criteria for Albemarle Sound in June-August 2016. However, it is unclear that APNEP’s Phase I report for Albemarle Sound (due in summer 2016) will contain strong criteria recommendations; a more likely outcome is that it will include ranges of potential criteria and recommendations for additional study in Phase II.

Middle Cape Fear River Basin: In 2016, DWR and the SAC are expected to review background information and existing data for the Middle Cape Fear River basins. By summer, the SAC may be prepared to discuss potential nutrient-related indicators and data gaps, leading to the development of a study plan for 2017. The tentative schedule does not call for the development of criteria for the Cape Fear River in 2016.

DWR’s tentative schedule calls for the CIC to begin assessing the feasibility and implications of any draft nutrient criteria in August 2016, with continued consideration over the remainder of the year. Meeting materials will continue to be posted to DWR’s website for nutrient criteria development:
<http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/wq/nutrientcriteria>.