

Tar-Pamlico River Basin Regional Council
Three Steers Restaurant
Greenville, North Carolina

May 8, 1998

Meeting Notes

The meeting was called to order at 9:40 a.m. by Vice-chairman Paul Blount, and self-introductions were made. There were 15 members present, plus Joan Giordano, Suzanne Hoover and Guy Stefanski of DWQ. Bitsy Waters, a planning consultant from Charlottesville, Virginia, then introduced herself, explained that she was acting as a facilitator for the meeting, and then described what she intended for the Council to accomplish today. Basically, of all of our priority concerns, which 2 or 3 should we focus on and how should we go about doing something about them. Her facilitator's report is included in this package.

Mary Jane Jennings spoke on the Tar-Pamlico Extension Environmental Education Team, and she explained what we are requesting the legislature to do. The Council consensus was to have Chairman Bell sign the proposal and submit it to our North Carolina senators and representatives. This needs to be followed up by phone calls and letters to our legislators, and then let Mary Jane know that you have done it.

Suzanne Hoover reported that the Tar-Pamlico Basinwide Plan is currently being updated, and there will be public workshops held on June 3 in Greenville and June 4 in Nashville.

The next meeting will be June 19 at the Louisburg Police Training Center in Louisburg, N. C. The meeting will go from 10:00 - 12:30, lunch from 12:30 - 1:30, and a local tour at 1:30.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00.

U:\Furness\TarRiver.598

Attendance
Joe-Pam R C
May 8, 1989

<u>NAME</u>	<u>AFFILIATION</u>
Jean Jordan	DWR Staff
Guy Stefanski	DWR Staff
Boyce Cheek	Franklin County
Lee Pearson	NOVISBURG NC
Jeff Finner	Beaufort County - I. Insty.
Marg Jane Jennings	Conservation (Franklin)
guest - Adele Basgall	FRANKLIN
Jerome Sullins	Oxford, NC
Paul Brown	Rocky Mount (Nash County)
HARRY S. ODOM	NASH County
BRUCE E PERKINSON	WARREN COUNTY (send RRRC minutes) + put on label
Vince Bellis	Greenville
George Stewart	DSWC Wash.
JIM BALUSS	Edgecombe Co Health Dept
DAN WYNNE	Pitt Co.
Suzanne Homer	DWR
J. S. S. S.	PIRE



**Tar-Pamlico River Basin Regional Council Workshop:
Designing a 2-Year Program of Work
May 8, 1998
Greenville, NC**

Introduction

The Tar-Pamlico River Basin Regional Council held a workshop on May 8, 1998, in Greenville, NC to begin to develop a two year program of work. At this and earlier sessions, members identified a number of issues of concern in this basin. Major concerns are:

- on-site sewage systems
- intensive livestock operations
- non-agricultural/urban run-off
- agricultural run-off
- impaired streams
- loss of riparian buffers
- loss of wetlands
- habitat fragmentation
- loss of biodiversity
- damage to submerged aquatic vegetation
- need for sustainable development practices
- need for better land use planning
- need for more environmental education
- failing municipal waste treatment systems
- funding for infrastructure.

In exploring potential activities for their program of work, the Council revisited a number of these concerns. They specifically considered undertaking initiatives in the areas of protecting the river's edge, promoting sustainable agriculture, strengthening local planning capacity, managing urban run-off, and focusing on septic system failures, groundwater protection, and municipal treatment system failures. They also discussed an initiative they have underway to seek funding for a new Environmental Education Team for the basin. After considering the pros and cons of the various possibilities, the group agreed to move forward with the following agenda.

1. Extension Service environmental education team initiative
2. river's edge initiative
3. groundwater contamination and availability exploration
4. policy and organizational issues.

This report summarizes the Council's first round of discussion on this two-year program of work.

2-Year Program of Work

1. Extension Service Environmental Education Team Initiative

The Council agreed to seek state legislation and funding for an Extension Service Environmental Education Team to serve the Tar-Pamlico Basin. The team would consist of five members: a coordinator, three extension agents, and one habitat specialist. They would be supported by the Cooperative Extension Program at NC State and would function as a basin-wide problem solving team. Specific activities the team might engage in include promoting best management practices and nutrient sensitive waters strategies, and implementing a variety of CCMP recommendations to reduce nonpoint source pollution.

The Council recognizes the Extension Program offers an excellent model for providing leadership, information, and support to local land owners and communities on best management practices and other technical support activities. They also understand this staff is stretched very thin. A special Extension Team established in the Neuse Basin has proved beneficial and the Tar-Pamlico Council believes their basin needs a similar dedicated team to address fish kills and other significant water quality concerns. Once the program is established, the Council anticipates sharing staffing with the Neuse Basin to maximize benefits in both basins. The Council sees this as a very effective way to address a wide range of concerns related to nonpoint source pollution in the basin.

Timeframe and Implementation

Council members took a vote endorsing this initiative and the Chairman is sending formal requests to appropriate sponsors to launch the initiative. Council members were asked to meet with their legislators to express support for the initiative and help with the over-all lobbying process. The Council will attempt to have this team established and funding provided in the upcoming session of the legislature. If successful, they will work with the new education team over the next two years on specific nonpoint source problems in the basin.

2. River's Edge Initiative

After considerable discussion, Council members agreed an initiative that focused on preserving the important environmental and recreational values of the river's edge offered an appealing way to approach many of their concerns including water quality protection, health and habitat protection, and building planning capacity at the local level. They see ways this initiative can tie in to existing cost share programs and local greenway efforts, and provide numerous educational opportunities. They believe the river's edge provides a unifying concept around which state/local, public/private partnerships can be formed.

The Council is not ready to select specific initiatives or demonstration projects yet, but did outline a process for learning what they need to know about various issues related to the river's edge today.

Step 1: Briefing on state data, laws and regulations. The Council wants to be briefed by state agency representatives and others on water quality data, special habitat areas along the river, and current and proposed state laws and regulations related to river's edge protection.

Step 2: Briefings on local visions, activities and demonstration projects. The Council wants to get snapshots of what is happening in the upper, middle and lower parts of the Tar-Pamlico basin in terms of visions for use of the river and its edge, local planning being done related to flood plains and river banks, and any publicly or privately sponsored projects underway.

Step 3: Develop a template of rivers edge management techniques. The Council wants to use what it learns from various local activities and other sources to begin to build an idea bank of creative ways to protect the river's edge. These could include state guidelines, voluntary programs, ways to combine recreation with protection, and recommendations regarding different types of buffers.

Step 4: Share these ideas and initiate joint projects. The Council, and the Extension Team if in place, will share these ideas with local governments and organizations and look for opportunities to form partnerships on various demonstration projects. The Tar-Pamlico Council will also work with the Coordinating Council to elevate certain things, like for example the need for state guidelines of some kind, to the state level for action if and when this is deemed appropriate.

Timeframe and Implementation

For the Council's June 19th meeting, they asked staff to invite a state agency representative(s) to provide an overview of what the river's edge is like in terms of water quality and natural heritage areas. At that meeting the Council will also receive a "snapshot" of visions, planning and projects related to the river's edge in the upper part of the Tar-Pamlico Basin. At their next meeting, they will receive similar briefings on the middle and lower parts of the basin.

Council members in the three parts of the basin agreed to pull together these snapshots, building on their own knowledge and talking with others in their region. Specifically the Council wants these presentations to include:

- special values/threats along that part of the rivers edge
- current and proposed recreational uses
- nature and extent of local planning related to the rivers edge

- demonstration projects underway along the river
- local groups that are active in river-related preservation.

Use of slides and photos at these presentations is encouraged where available.

3. Groundwater Contamination and Availability Exploration

A number of Council members expressed serious concerns about current and potential threats to groundwater from failing septic systems and excessive withdrawals. They agreed, however, that they did not know as much as they would like to about the extent of the problem, or the extent to which it is considered a significant water quality problem in the Tar-Pamlico Basin. For this reason, they decided they would schedule an educational session on this matter for their third meeting following this workshop, once they have completed their sessions on the river's edge.

At that informational session, they would like to have a hydrologist from the state's Water Resources Department, and a representative of the state health department brief them on groundwater quantity and quality issues, and the implications for water quality, human health, and economic development in the region. Specific questions the Council will be attempting to answer include:

- what is the extent of the problem?
- is it linked to water quality in the rivers and sounds?
- what if anything can this Council do to address these concerns?

Once those questions have been answered, the Council will decide whether or not to proceed with an initiative in this area.

4. Policy and Organizational Issues

The Council will be seeking legislative action on its proposed Extension Team and may or may not identify policy issues to pursue under its river's edge initiative. Beyond this, they acknowledged that a number of issues like failing septic and municipal waste treatment systems, and urban run-off are experienced in all river basins, and require state action and funding to address. Their representatives to the CCMP Coordinating Council will track these issues and learn which ones are of greatest interest in other basins.

The group has agreed to meet in different parts of the basin to try to make it easier for all members to attend some meetings. They continue to work with staff to maintain as active a membership roster as possible.

**Tar-Pamlico River Basin Regional Council Workshop:
Designing a 2-Year Program of Work
May 8, 1998
Greenville, NC**

Introduction

The Tar-Pamlico River Basin Regional Council held a workshop on May 8, 1998, in Greenville, NC to begin to develop a two year program of work. At this and earlier sessions, members identified a number of issues of concern in this basin. Major concerns are:

- on-site sewage systems
- intensive livestock operations
- non-agricultural/urban run-off
- agricultural run-off
- impaired streams
- loss of riparian buffers
- loss of wetlands
- habitat fragmentation
- loss of biodiversity
- damage to submerged aquatic vegetation
- need for sustainable development practices
- need for better land use planning
- need for more environmental education
- failing municipal waste treatment systems
- funding for infrastructure.

In exploring potential activities for their program of work, the Council revisited a number of these concerns. They specifically considered undertaking initiatives in the areas of protecting the river's edge, promoting sustainable agriculture, strengthening local planning capacity, managing urban run-off, and focusing on septic system failures, groundwater protection, and municipal treatment system failures. They also discussed an initiative they have underway to seek funding for a new Environmental Education Team for the basin. After considering the pros and cons of the various possibilities, the group agreed to move forward with the following agenda.

1. Extension Service environmental education team initiative
2. river's edge initiative
3. groundwater contamination and availability exploration
4. policy and organizational issues.

This report summarizes the Council's first round of discussion on this two-year program of work.



2-Year Program of Work

1. Extension Service Environmental Education Team Initiative

The Council agreed to seek state legislation and funding for an Extension Service Environmental Education Team to serve the Tar-Pamlico Basin. The team would consist of five members: a coordinator, three extension agents, and one habitat specialist. They would be supported by the Cooperative Extension Program at NC State and would function as a basin-wide problem solving team. Specific activities the team might engage in include promoting best management practices and nutrient sensitive waters strategies, and implementing a variety of CCMP recommendations to reduce nonpoint source pollution.

The Council recognizes the Extension Program offers an excellent model for providing leadership, information, and support to local land owners and communities on best management practices and other technical support activities. They also understand this staff is stretched very thin. A special Extension Team established in the Neuse Basin has proved beneficial and the Tar-Pamlico Council believes their basin needs a similar dedicated team to address fish kills and other significant water quality concerns. Once the program is established, the Council anticipates sharing staffing with the Neuse Basin to maximize benefits in both basins. The Council sees this as a very effective way to address a wide range of concerns related to nonpoint source pollution in the basin.

Timeframe and Implementation

Council members took a vote endorsing this initiative and the Chairman is sending formal requests to appropriate sponsors to launch the initiative. Council members were asked to meet with their legislators to express support for the initiative and help with the over-all lobbying process. The Council will attempt to have this team established and funding provided in the upcoming session of the legislature. If successful, they will work with the new education team over the next two years on specific nonpoint source problems in the basin.

2. River's Edge Initiative

After considerable discussion, Council members agreed an initiative that focused on preserving the important environmental and recreational values of the river's edge offered an appealing way to approach many of their concerns including water quality protection, health and habitat protection, and building planning capacity at the local level. They see ways this initiative can tie in to existing cost share programs and local greenway efforts, and provide numerous educational opportunities. They believe the river's edge provides a unifying concept around which state/local, public/private partnerships can be formed.



The Council is not ready to select specific initiatives or demonstration projects yet, but did outline a process for learning what they need to know about various issues related to the river's edge today.

Step 1: Briefing on state data, laws and regulations. The Council wants to be briefed by state agency representatives and others on water quality data, special habitat areas along the river, and current and proposed state laws and regulations related to river's edge protection.

Step 2: Briefings on local visions, activities and demonstration projects. The Council wants to get snapshots of what is happening in the upper, middle and lower parts of the Tar-Pamlico basin in terms of visions for use of the river and its edge, local planning being done related to flood plains and river banks, and any publicly or privately sponsored projects underway.

Step 3: Develop a template of rivers edge management techniques. The Council wants to use what it learns from various local activities and other sources to begin to build an idea bank of creative ways to protect the river's edge. These could include state guidelines, voluntary programs, ways to combine recreation with protection, and recommendations regarding different types of buffers.

Step 4: Share these ideas and initiate joint projects. The Council, and the Extension Team if in place, will share these ideas with local governments and organizations and look for opportunities to form partnerships on various demonstration projects. The Tar-Pamlico Council will also work with the Coordinating Council to elevate certain things, like for example the need for state guidelines of some kind, to the state level for action if and when this is deemed appropriate.

Timeframe and Implementation

For the Council's June 19th meeting, they asked staff to invite a state agency representative(s) to provide an overview of what the river's edge is like in terms of water quality and natural heritage areas. At that meeting the Council will also receive a "snapshot" of visions, planning and projects related to the river's edge in the upper part of the Tar-Pamlico Basin. At their next meeting, they will receive similar briefings on the middle and lower parts of the basin.

Council members in the three parts of the basin agreed to pull together these snapshots, building on their own knowledge and talking with others in their region. Specifically the Council wants these presentations to include:

- special values/threats along that part of the rivers edge
- current and proposed recreational uses
- nature and extent of local planning related to the rivers edge



- demonstration projects underway along the river
- local groups that are active in river-related preservation.

Use of slides and photos at these presentations is encouraged where available.

3. Groundwater Contamination and Availability Exploration

A number of Council members expressed serious concerns about current and potential threats to groundwater from failing septic systems and excessive withdrawals. They agreed, however, that they did not know as much as they would like to about the extent of the problem, or the extent to which it is considered a significant water quality problem in the Tar-Pamlico Basin. For this reason, they decided they would schedule an educational session on this matter for their third meeting following this workshop, once they have completed their sessions on the river's edge.

At that informational session, they would like to have a hydrologist from the state's Water Resources Department, and a representative of the state health department brief them on groundwater quantity and quality issues, and the implications for water quality, human health, and economic development in the region. Specific questions the Council will be attempting to answer include:

- what is the extent of the problem?
- is it linked to water quality in the rivers and sounds?
- what if anything can this Council do to address these concerns?

Once those questions have been answered, the Council will decide whether or not to proceed with an initiative in this area.

4. Policy and Organizational Issues

The Council will be seeking legislative action on its proposed Extension Team and may or may not identify policy issues to pursue under its river's edge initiative. Beyond this, they acknowledged that a number of issues like failing septic and municipal waste treatment systems, and urban run-off are experienced in all river basins, and require state action and funding to address. Their representatives to the CCMP Coordinating Council will track these issues and learn which ones are of greatest interest in other basins.

The group has agreed to meet in different parts of the basin to try to make it easier for all members to attend some meetings. They continue to work with staff to maintain as active a membership roster as possible.

