N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Asheville Regional Office Profile

Asheville Region – 19 county territory
Estimated Population per 2010 – 953,982
Population Projection by 2030 – 1.13 million
Total Area of the Region – 7,987 sq. miles
Total Stream Miles – 10,612
Total Freshwater Lake Acres – 38,312

Major Cities

- Asheville, Buncombe County
- Hendersonville, Henderson County

Natural Resources

- Six River Basins
  - Hiwassee
  - Little Tennessee
  - Savannah
  - French Broad
  - Broad
  - Catawba
- National Parks
  - Blue Ridge Parkway
  - Great Smoky Mountains National Park
  - Appalachian Trail
  - Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor
  - Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail
  - Trail of Tears National Historic Trail
  - Pisgah National Forest
  - Nantahala National Forest
- State Parks
  - South Mountain State Park
  - Lake James State Park
  - Chimney Rock State Park
  - Mount Mitchell State Park
  - Gorges State Park

Major Industry

- Tourism
- Mining – K T Feldspar & Unimin Corporation – Mitchell/Avery counties
- Blue Ridge Paper Products - Haywood County
- Duke Energy Carolinas LLC - Cliffside Steam Station, Rutherford County
- Progress Energy - Buncombe County
- Imerys – Henderson County
- Coats American – McDowell County
- Baxter Healthcare Corp. - McDowell County
- Stanley Furniture Company Inc. - Graham County
- Jackson Paper Manufacturing Company - Jackson County
- Thomasville Furniture Industries Inc. - Caldwell County
- Google Data Center – Caldwell County
- Facebook Data Center– Rutherford County

Minor Industry

- Parton Lumber Company Inc. - Rutherford County
- Drexel Heritage Furniture Industries–Burke County
- Zickgraf Hardwood Flooring Company LLC - Macon County
- Columbia Plywood Corporation - McDowell County
- Blue Ridge Tissue Corp. - Caldwell County
- GE Lighting Solutions LLC – Henderson County
- Jeld-Wenn Inc. – McDowell County
- Clement Pappas - Henderson County
- Silver Line Plastics – Buncombe County

Special Interest

- Major Universities: UNC-Asheville & Western Carolina

Division of Air Quality (DAQ)
DAQ's 14-person Asheville Regional Office staff ensures that a wide range of core goals and objectives of the DAQ are met. Most priorities stem from the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments in conjunction with other related federal air quality rules and regulations, with a primary focus of protecting North Carolina's citizens from air pollution so that they can live healthy, prosperous lives. The basic duties performed include, but are not limited to, the issuance of air permits, investigation of citizen complaints, inspection of industrial facilities, and operation and maintenance of a network of sophisticated air monitors. Staff also provides daily compliance assistance to business and industry. DAQ ARO provides same-day service for priority complaints and ambient monitors with problems.

Number of nonattainment or maintenance* counties:
Great Smoky Mountains National Park, contained within two counties (Haywood and Swain), is a maintenance area. *(Maintenance means these areas once violated federal air quality standards but are now meeting that standard.) Despite showing compliance with those federal air standards, the DAQ must maintain certain requirements and produce periodic updates showing continued compliance with those federal air standards.

Class I areas: Linville Gorge National Wilderness Area, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Joyce Kilmer Slickrock National Wilderness Area, Shining Rock National Wilderness Area

Relevant ARO Statistics: *all averages based on data from the five previous fiscal years (7/2006-6/2011)*

- DAQ currently has 335 permitted facilities in ARO: 29 Title V; 77 Synthetic minor; 229 Small.
- DAQ ARO issues an average of 108 permits to facilities each year with an average time to process and issue each permit of 42 days; many are issued in much less time.
- DAQ ARO provides an average of 14 reviews each year for permit revocations, tax certifications, and environmental assessments.
- DAQ ARO issues approximately 17 written permit applicability determinations each year, plus at least that many more via telephone.
- DAQ ARO performs technical reviews and provides comments to the Permits Section staff in central office on an average of 23 Title V permit applications each year.
- DAQ ARO conducts an average of 383 compliance inspections each year, providing on-site customer assistance with each inspection (including stack test observations, risk management plan inspections, and disaster response).
- DAQ ARO investigates an average of 271 complaints each year, serving at least two customers with each complaint investigation.
- Each permitted facility is assigned an inspector who serves as the facility's personal contact/customer service representative for all questions and issues; service is provided throughout the year for these facilities.
- Each of DAQ's 15 ambient monitors in the ARO, located at 10 different monitoring sites, requires personal visits for servicing on at least a weekly basis.
- The ARO observes an average of 22 source tests each year.

Three counties in North Carolina operate their own local air quality programs. One of those local air quality programs is located in Buncombe County. In this area, the Buncombe County local air program is responsible for enforcing state and federal air quality regulations. They fulfill all core objectives in that county including air permitting, inspections/ compliance/complaints, technical assistance and ambient air monitoring. The local agency, with a staff of seven, regulates 66 facilities consisting of 7 Title V, 12 Synthetic minor and 47 Small facilities.

N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Asheville Regional Office Profile

Division of Land Resources (DLR)
DLR's mission is to promote the wise use and protection of North Carolina's land and geologic resources. The division is comprised of the following three sections:

- Land Quality: Implements the Sedimentation Pollution Control Act of 1973, Mining Act of 1971 and Dam Safety Law of 1967. Primary duties of these three environmental regulatory programs include advance plan or permit approval, routine onsite inspections of mines, dams and construction sites, and compliance activities as necessary.
- Geological Survey (non-regulatory): Examines, describes and maps the geology and mineral resources of the state, and publishes reports and maps. Administers cooperative geologic and topographic map agreements with federal, state and local agencies.
- Geodetic Survey (non-regulatory): Uses state-of-the-art methods of precise positioning and advanced geodetic techniques to establish and maintain the state's official survey base. Supports mapping of county and state boundaries, floodplains, boundary determination, property delineation, infrastructure development, resources evaluation surveys and scientific applications. Establishes, maintains and monitors a network of global positioning system (GPS) Continuously Operating Reference Stations (CORS).

DLR's Land Quality Section has 10 positions located in the Asheville Regional Office, three of which are vacant. These positions consist of one engineering supervisor, three engineers, two environmental senior specialists and four environmental specialists. The Geological Survey has one hydrogeologist supervisor and three hydrogeologists. The Geodetic Survey has one engineering supervisor and two engineering technicians.

Land Quality Section Activity Measures *(FY06-07 through FY10-11 five year averages)*

	Statewide	**ARO**
New Acres Approved to be Disturbed:	26,918	1,568 (based on last four fiscal years; FY 06-07 by region not available)
New Sediment Projects:	2,657	247
Sediment Inspections: (avg. 8,000 open projects statewide)	18,756	2,272
Mining Inspections: (avg. 900 permitted mines statewide)	925	64
Dam Safety Inspections: (avg. 1,000 high hazard dams statewide)	1,892	378
Complaints Investigated (Sediment and Mining):	1,072	322
No. of Delegated Sediment Local Programs:	51	12
Delegated Sediment Local Program Assistance Hours:	695	169

Unique Issues
The following areas currently have delegated local sediment programs in the ARO: Asheville, Avery County, Buncombe County, Columbus, Haywood County, Henderson County, Highlands, Grandfather Village, Jackson, Lake Lure, Macon and Swain. Other unique issues in the ARO include trout buffer rules and public projects/construction (government and universities).

N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Asheville Regional Office Profile

Division of Waste Management (DWM)

The mission of the Division of Waste Management is to prevent the harmful release of waste to the environment and to clean up existing contamination. The division is organized by type of waste managed, in a manner consistent with federal organization of programs delegated or approved by EPA for state implementation. The division has four sections: solid waste, hazardous waste, superfund and underground storage tanks. A state brownfields program operates across sections.

Regional activities primarily focus on inspections, complaint investigations, contaminant clean-up oversight, technical assistance, permit assistance and compliance and enforcement. This is intended to be a general overview of averaged data.

Solid Waste Section Staff:	4.38 FTE	Underground Storage Tank Section staff:	7.33 FTE
Hazardous Waste Section Staff:	1.2 FTE	Brownfields Program Staff:	1.00 FTE
Superfund Section Staff:	1.74 FTE		

NOTE: FTEs represent home-based staff combined with regional office staff. In some cases, regional office FTEs provide services in more than one region. FTEs were allocated to regions. In most cases, DWM program regions are different from DENR regional office areas.

Primary Waste Management Facilities with Regional Oversight

Permitted Solid Waste Facilities:	156	Inactive Hazardous Waste Sites:	142
Notified Solid Waste Facilities:	251	Active Petroleum Releases:	1,161
Permitted Hazardous Waste Facilities:	5	Permitted Soil Remediation Sites:	2
Hazardous Waste Generators:	812	Permitted Underground Storage Tank Facilities:	973
Regulated Dry-cleaning facilities:	103	Sites Seeking Brownfield Agreements:	40

(Other facilities such as EPA National Priorities List Sites, Department of Defense Sites, sites with dry-cleaning releases, pre-regulatory landfills and sites with no viable responsible party are handled by central office staff.)

Regional Data Elements Annual Average *(Data does not reflect central office staff functions that are performed in regions of the state.)*

Compliance Inspections Conducted:	673
Complaints Investigated:	52
Permits Issued (only soil remediation permits are issued regionally):	0.6
Permit Reviews:	26
Petroleum Releases Under Review:	554
Petroleum Releases Closed:	100
Inactive Hazardous Waste Sites Under Review:	11
Inactive Hazardous Waste Sites Closed (during FY 10-11):	1
Review of Local Government/Private Sector Solid Waste Reports/Plans:	50 facility reports/88 LG reports/ 19 LG plans
Notices of Violations issued:	234
Emergency Response Technical Assistance Events:	7*
Facility Assistance Visits and Training/Presentations Provided:	110**
Brownfields Agreements Issued:	5 annually, 21 total
Brownfield Land Use Restriction Evaluations:	22

*Emergency Response Technical Assistance Events are not tracked by UST Section.
**Facility Assistance Visits and Training/Presentations Provided are not tracked by UST Section.

Future data will be reported by DWM regions as it is currently tracked. DWM data for this report was presented in a manner that correlates with the seven DENR regions. In many cases, functions performed by regional office staff may also be performed by central office staff for particular regions.

N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Asheville Regional Office Profile

Division of Water Quality (DWQ)

This region is located in the mountains region, which features high water quality and abundant trout populations. Economics center primarily on natural resources through tourism and outdoor recreation. A high rate of farmland conversion to residential homes causes increases water quality threats from sediment, nutrients and pesticides.

Characteristics of Asheville Regional Office

- Mining operations pose threats from waste and tailings
- Largest coal ash structural fill projects require specialized inspection and compliance oversight. Many outstanding resource waters and high quality waters with increased regulatory protection
- Water-related outdoor recreation includes trout fishing, canoeing, swimming, kayaking and rafting
- Beef, poultry and dairy operations require specialized inspection and compliance oversight
- Long travel distances require greater time commitment for public response and inspections
- High number of second home developments results in seasonal wastewater flow issues
- Complex, highly variable fractured rock hydrogeology
- Naturally occurring radon in groundwater is a potential public health threat
- Legacy pesticide issues in groundwater associated with fruit orchards
- Increased reliance on groundwater in recent years
- Locally variable precipitation due to mountainous terrain poses unique management problems

Statistics for Asheville Regional Office

- Number of DWQ Staff: 21
- Total High Quality/Outstanding Resource Watershed Square Miles: 1,826
- Water Supply Watershed Square Miles: 1,519
- Monitored Impaired Streams/Rivers: 15 percent
- Monitored Impaired Lakes/Reservoirs: 9 percent
- Number of Water Quality Monitoring Sites: 150
- Population Relying on Groundwater for Drinking Water: 46 percent
- Population Relying on Surface Water for Drinking Water: 54 percent

Regional Data Elements Annual Averages

- Active Facilities: 1,154
- Permit Applications Reviewed with Permits Issued by Regional Offices: 322
- Permit applications Reviewed in Regional Offices with Permits Issued in Central Office: 123
- Compliance Inspections Conducted: 1299
- Notices of Violations Sent: 386
- Civil Penalties Assessed: 98
- Water Samples Collected: 747
- Lab Audits Conducted: 63
- Complaints, Incidents, Emergency Response Calls: 555

Permitted Facilities

- Number of Permitted Wastewater Treatment Plants: 292
- Number of Permitted NPDES Stormwater Facilities: 480
- Number of Permitted State Stormwater Facilities: 24
- Number of Permitted Single-Family Residences: 186
- Residuals Fields Acres: 1,604
- Reuse Irrigation Acres: 324
- Surface Irrigation Wastewater Acres: 275
- Number of Permitted Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations: 23

N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Asheville Regional Office Profile

Division of Water Resources (DWR)
The PWS Section regional office staff ensures the safety of North Carolina's public drinking water by implementing the requirements of the federal Safe Drinking Water Act and the North Carolina Drinking Water Act. These requirements are primarily federal rules that North Carolina has adopted by reference. The regional office staff works directly with public water supply system owners and operators on a daily basis to ensure that the drinking water supplied to the state's citizens is safe and healthy.

Asheville Regional Office PWS Section staff consists of nine full-time employees.

Regulated Public Water Systems
The following table presents the number, types and population served by the public water systems in the Asheville region.

	Community (e.g., city, town, mobile home park)	Non-transient Non-community (e.g., workplace, school)	Transient (e.g., rest area, church)	Adjacent*	Total
Very Small (<= 500)	225	71	907	19	1,222
Small (501-3,300)	49	7	7	0	63
Medium (3,301-10,000)	26	0	0	0	26
Large (10,001- 100,000)	8	0	0	0	8
Very Large (>100,000)	1	0	0	0	1
Total	**309**	**78**	**914**	**19**	**1,320**

* Two or more adjacent water systems, owned by the same supplier of water, that in combination serve 15 or more service connections or 25 or more persons.

Regional Office Staff Activity Measures: *annual average for last five years*

- Sanitary Surveys (Inspections) Completed: 597
- Technical/Regulatory Assistance On-Site Visits: 669
- New Development On-Site Assistance: 65
- Well Site Investigations for New Systems: 34
- Training Contact Hours: 895

Unique Characteristics
Steep elevation changes in the Asheville region present significant challenges to water systems. Necessarily high water pressures lead to significant water loss and relatively high incidence of line breaks resulting in boil water advisories. Elevation issues also impede the establishment of interconnections between systems, making it difficult to implement regional strategies to address problems.

Mountain stream source waters have "flashy" water quality following rain events. Variation in raw water quality (e.g., turbidity and coliform bacteria) presents a significant challenge for water treatment facility operators.

N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources
Asheville Regional Office Profile

Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach - One-Stop Environmental Assistance Coordinator

Purpose
The primary responsibility of the non-regulatory One-Stop Environmental Assistance Coordinator staff is to assist business, local governments and citizens identify, understand and comply with all of the state's environmental requirements. There are six (6) coordinators located across the state and represent each regional office. This staff is part of the Division of Environmental Assistance and Outreach (a division formed as part of the 2010 budget process by combining the Customer Service Center, Office of the Small Business Ombudsman and Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance).

Statutory Authority
The One-Stop Permit Assistance and Coordination Program was authorized by S.L. 2000-67 to provide a single point of contact in the regional offices for comprehensive environmental permit information. It was authorized as a pilot in two regions and then expanded statewide to assist citizens in North Carolina as well as out-of-state customers seeking to relocate their businesses or to create a new development in North Carolina. The coordinator's role is an integral part of the new Department of Environment and Natural Resources Environmental Assistance Center, serving as a single point of contact for DENR customers and as a liaison between the customer and the regulatory agencies to improve customer satisfaction.

Primary services provided by the coordinators include: permit and compliance assistance, outreach and education, customer service and technical assistance geared toward understanding environmental requirements and meeting them in a pragmatic, cost effective manner. The coordinators focus on the needs of those customers who are frequently affected by environmental rules but lack the expertise and money needed to hire someone to guide them through the regulatory, permitting and compliance processes. As a result, the coordinators provide the following services:

Key coordinator duties and responsibilities include:
- Serving as a point of contact to address the customer's issues, complaints and information requests
- Providing hands-on compliance assistance and developing customized permit information for proposed projects, including small and large businesses
- Working closely with the NC Department of Commerce to identify environmental requirements and address environmental issues for new and expanding businesses
- Developing permit directory and department- wide resources to provide factual, timely and comprehensive permit assistance
- Coordinating meetings with DENR permitting agencies and the customer to outline potential permitting requirements, fees and timelines
- Scheduling and facilitating pre-application meetings with owners, applicants and permit staff for express permit projects
- Guiding applicants through the permitting processes and providing tracking assistance once the application has been received
- Assisting DENR Divisions with educational training workshops for or related to regulations and rule changes
- Assisting with inquiries from the general public on environmental questions or problems in which they do not know which Division should be contacted
- Serving on work groups dedicated to permit and regulatory reform and customer service
- The coordinators provide on-site consultation and a coordinated permit review and tracking process important for new economic development projects—all at no additional costs. This service has been cited as a competitive advantage by companies when comparing North Carolina with other states. Over the last year, the coordinators have assisted and provided customer service for the following tasks.
- Developed over 150 permit lists,

- Served as a single point of contact for over 7000 customer to address their issues, complaints and information inquiries and request by telephone and electronic mailing
- Coordinated and facilitated over 177 meetings with DENR permitting agencies and the customer to outline potential permitting requirements
- Coordinated over 330 express permitting meeting

They have been involved in alternative energy workgroups, have marketed and coordinated express permitting, have met on-site with economic developers, provided project management and assisted in problem resolution for small businesses, citizen groups and job-creation projects. They continue to be an important resource to ensure that environmental compliance and economic development are compatible.

Case Study

An out-of-state company recently purchased two facilities in western North Carolina. Company management was unfamiliar with North Carolina's laws and was seeking information about existing permits, transfer procedures, permit fees and environmental requirements. While searching the DENR website, a company executive noticed our permit coordination program and called to ask if this information could remain confidential. The coordinator provided him the necessary forms for multiple permitting programs, explained the transfer process and gave information on fees, as well as responded to his questions. The company executive stated, "This is excellent information. I appreciate your assistance, and you have been everything your title implied. Thanks for your quick response".