

Agenda Item: 12-03 **Request Approval of the Proposed Reclassification of the South Fork New River in Ashe and Watauga Counties (New River Basin) to Class WS-IV and WS-IV CA (Action Item)(Jeff Morse)**

Explanation:

The Town of Boone requested that a segment of the South Fork New River in Ashe and Watauga Counties be reclassified to WS-IV CA and WS-IV (PA) to allow a new drinking water intake structure to be placed in the river. The Town's water system has surpassed 80% of capacity, which is DENR's trigger for requiring an expansion plan. The NC Division of Water Resources (DWR) does not object to the proposal. An Environmental Assessment (EA) for this project received a Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI). DWQ studies indicated that the waters meet water supply water standards.

A portion of the river to be reclassified currently is included in a High Quality Waters (HQW) classified area. The HQW area includes lands and waters located one (1) mile and draining to the classified HQW waters. In addition, a special management strategy with only HQW wastewater discharge provisions is applicable to the entire proposed watershed outside of the HQW area. Neither the HQW designation nor the special management strategy will be affected by this proposal.

In March 2011 and May 2011, the Water Quality Committee and the Commission, respectively, approved the request to proceed with rule-making for the proposed reclassification. A public hearing was held in August 2011 in Boone. The Report of Proceedings sent to the members of the EMC includes all written comments received and further details on this proposed reclassification.

Recommendation:

The Hearing Officer recommends that the proposed reclassification be approved by the Commission. If reclassified as proposed, and approved by the Rules Review Commission in February 2012, the effective date for this reclassification will be March 1, 2012.