

ANNOUNCEMENT

PROPOSED WATER SUPPLY RECLASSIFICATION OF NEUSE RIVER AND QUARRY: PUBLIC HEARING SET FOR DECEMBER

A public hearing is going to be conducted in order to receive public comments on the proposed reclassification and associated fiscal note for two segments of the Neuse River and an abandoned quarry in Johnston County (Neuse River Basin) to allow a new water supply riverine intake and utilization of the quarry's water as a water supply by Johnston County (County). These waters will be reclassified to the Class Water Supply-IV (WS-IV) and Class WS-IV CA (Critical Area) classifications.

PUBLIC HEARING

Location: Princeton Town Hall – Meeting Room
503 Doctor Donnie H. Jones Jr.
Boulevard West
Princeton, NC 27569

Date: Tuesday, December 13, 2011

Time: 7:00 p.m.

BACKGROUND OF RECLASSIFICATION REQUEST

A request for reclassification of two segments of the Neuse River and an abandoned quarry was submitted by the County. The quarry is to receive water from a proposed Neuse River intake, and is to be reclassified from Class C to WS-IV CA. The subject portions of the Neuse River are to be reclassified from WS-V and WS-IV (PA) to WS-IV (PA) and WS-IV CA, respectively. The reclassification is needed to construct the public water supply intake and utilize the quarry's water as a public water supply, in order to meet water demands projected through 2050.

The Division of Water Resources' Public Water Supply Section (formerly with the Division of Environmental Health) supports the proposed reclassification, and the Division of Water Resources' In Stream Flow Unit (formerly the In Stream Flow Branch) concurs with the reclassification. A Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI) has been issued for this project. Finally, the waters to be reclassified meet water supply standards according to 2011 DWQ studies, except for high chloride levels in the quarry, which are likely due to high evaporation rates and residence times. Dilution and reduced residence times in the quarry, which will occur once river water is pumped in it, should result in lowered chloride levels.

GENERAL DEFINITION OF PROPOSED RECLASSIFICATION

Waters designated WS-IV are protected as a water supply for drinking, culinary, or food processing purposes and for those uses where a higher WS classification (such as WS-I, II, or III) is not feasible. A Critical Area (CA) is defined as the area within approximately one-half mile and draining to a river intake for WS-IV waters. A Protected Area (PA) for WS-IV waters is defined as the area within 10 miles and draining to a river intake, excluding the CA.

WATERS TO BE AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSED RECLASSIFICATION

The quarry is located about two miles north of the Town of Princeton along the western bank of the Little River; the boundary of its proposed CA consists of the top of the quarry and includes about 19 acres. The portion of the river proposed to be reclassified to WS-IV CA extends along the river from the intake, which is to be placed at Richardson Bridge Road (SR 1201), to a point nearly 0.5 miles upstream of that intake, and includes approximately 136 acres. There is a portion of one named tributary, a Bawdy Creek segment, to the Neuse River in the proposed CA, which is to be reclassified to WS-IV CA. The portion of the river proposed to be reclassified to WS-IV (PA) extends along the river from a point about 1.7 miles upstream of Bawdy Creek to a point nearly 1.4 miles downstream of Gar Gut, and includes approximately 7,500 acres. A portion of one named tributary, another part of Bawdy Creek, to the Neuse River exists in the proposed PA, and this water is to be reclassified to WS-IV (PA). There is a portion of the watershed draining to the intake between the proposed CA and the proposed PA that is already classified as PA for an existing downstream WS-IV intake on the Neuse River.

REGULATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROPOSED RECLASSIFICATION

If reclassified, regulations affecting new development as well as existing and new wastewater discharges would apply throughout the proposed areas. Other requirements, which would apply only in the CAs, are additional treatment for new industrial process wastewater discharges, no new land application sites, and no new landfills. Forestry and farming practices will not be affected.

In the proposed areas, there are currently no wastewater discharges. There are not any known planned land application sites in the proposed CAs, or known planned wastewater discharges or developments in the entire proposed areas.

The local governments that have land use jurisdiction within the proposed areas are responsible for developing and implementing the water supply watershed ordinances within the Protected Area and the Critical Area. The local governments will have 270 days after the effective date of the proposed reclassification to develop or modify water supply watershed protection ordinances that must at least meet the state's minimum requirements (15A NCAC 2B .0100 and .0200). The proposed areas are located entirely within the jurisdiction of Johnston County.

A fiscal analysis for this proposal has been completed and approved, and the analysis' quantifiable results revealed a one-time cost of approximately \$600 to the state and \$500 to Johnston County.

MEETING FEDERAL TRIENNIAL REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

The public hearing and comment period are to be held in accordance with the federal Water Pollution Control Act (the Clean Water Act) which requires States, at least every three years, to review and revise water quality standards to protect aquatic life and human health. These standards are provided in existing rules NCAC 15A 02B .0100 and .0201 through .0228. The process is called the Triennial Review and includes an assessment and revision of the designated uses of waters (classifications) and the water quality criteria (standards), which are based on the designated uses. More specifically, the public hearing and associated comment period are to address the potential assignment of a WS-IV classification to portions of the Neuse River watershed, including a quarry, for the purpose of protecting its proposed designated use as a public water supply. This proposal will result in changing the water quality standards for waters within the above-mentioned Critical Areas and Protected Area.

HOW TO SUBMIT COMMENTS

You may attend the public hearing and provide verbal comments that specifically address the proposed reclassification and its fiscal note for two Neuse River segments and the quarry. The Hearing Officer may limit the length of time that you may speak at the public hearing, if necessary, so that all those who wish to speak may have an opportunity to do so. In addition, written comments addressing the proposed reclassification and fiscal note for the two Neuse River segments and quarry will be accepted until January 17, 2012.

All persons interested and potentially affected by the proposal are encouraged to read this entire announcement and make comments on the proposed reclassification. The EMC may not adopt a rule that differs substantially from the text of the proposed rule published in the North Carolina Register unless the EMC publishes the text of the proposed different rule and accepts comments on the new text (General Statute 150B 21.2 (g)). The proposed effective date for the final rule for this proposed reclassification pursuant to this hearing process is July 1, 2012 pending EPA approval. Written comments on the proposed reclassification of two Neuse River segments and a quarry may be submitted to Elizabeth Kountis of the Water Quality Planning Section at the postal address, e-mail address, or fax number listed below.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Existing Division of Water Quality rules are located on the internet at <http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/wq/ps/csu/rules>. This announcement and a map of the waters proposed to be reclassified are located on the internet via <http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/wq/event-calendar> (look under "2011-12-13"). Further explanations and details on reclassifications may be obtained by writing or calling:

Elizabeth Kountis
DENR-Division of Water Quality, Planning Section
1617 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1617
phone (919) 807-6418
fax (919) 807-6497
Elizabeth.Kountis@ncdenr.gov

In the case of inclement weather on the day of the scheduled public hearing, please contact the above telephone number for a recorded message regarding any changes to the location, date or time of the hearing.