

Agenda Item: 11-04 Request for Approval of the Proposed Reclassification of a Southwest Creek Segment in Onslow County (White Oak River Basin) to Class SC

Explanation:

Wilmington Regional Office DWQ staff requested the reclassification of a segment of Southwest Creek (Onslow County, White Oak River Basin) from Class C to Class SC. This reclassification is for a portion of Southwest Creek from approximately 0.5 mile upstream of Mill Run to the New River, and about 2 miles of the creek are proposed to be reclassified. The purpose of this rule change is to reflect the saltwater nature of these waters. These waters were originally classified in 1956, prior to NC's coastal monitoring programs, and thus, DWQ has much better information now on these waters than in the past. Water quality studies show that these waters meet the criteria for Class SC.

If reclassified, the ambient water quality standards for Class SC waters will apply. Compared with the ambient standards for Class C waters, the Class SC standards are less restrictive, equal to, or more restrictive, depending on which parameters are compared. Thus, the specific wastewater components of any new NPDES wastewater (WW) facility that would be discharged to these waters would determine whether the discharge would be affected by this reclassification. Development practices will not be affected.

Staff with Camp Lejeune and Onslow County, the government entities with jurisdiction in the area immediately adjacent to the proposed waters, have stated they have no concerns with the proposal. There are currently no NPDES WW dischargers to the proposed waters, and there are no planned discharges to these proposed waters, according to DWQ staff in the Wilmington Regional Office as well as Camp Lejeune staff. In addition, the land area directly adjacent to the proposed waters contains little development except for a few road endings, Marine Corps base related activities occur on these lands, and the above-mentioned staffs stated that no development is proposed on these lands.

In May 2010 and July 2010, the Water Quality Committee and the Commission, respectively, approved the request to proceed with rule-making for the proposed reclassification. During the comment period, two letters in support of the reclassification were received. The Report of Proceedings sent to the members of the EMC includes further details on this proposed reclassification.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the proposed reclassification be approved by the Commission. If reclassified as proposed, the effective date for this reclassification will be July 1, 2011.