

**NC Source Water Collaborative**  
**Meeting Summary**  
**September 16, 2016**

**Attendees**

Jay Frick, NCDEQ, Div. Water Resources	Joey Hester, NC Dpt. Ag. & Consumer Svcs, Div. Soil & Water Conservation	Gale Johnson, NCDEQ, Div. Water Resources
AJ Lang, NCDACS, Div. of Forest Service	Debbie Maner, NC Rural Water Association	Brooke Massa, NC Wildlife Resources Commission
George Matthis, River Guardian Foundation	Christy Perrin, NC Water Resources Research Institute & NC Watershed Stewardship Network	Rebecca Sadosky, NCDEQ, Div. Water Resources
Cy Stober, NCDEQ, Div. Water Resources	Julie Ventaloro, NC DEQ, Div. Energy, Mining, and Land Resources	

**Introduction**

The meeting was called to order by Cy Stober, who briefly reviewed the agenda and handed the meeting over to Rebecca Sadosky. No PowerPoints were used for this meeting and no supporting materials accompany these minutes.

**Review NC Source Water Protection Awards Program**

Rebecca Sadosky led a conversation regarding the 2016 NC Source Water Protection Awards, distributing a draft announcement and brief for inclusion in NCSWC member newsletters, websites, and other outreach media. Emphasis will be made in recruiting coastal and/or groundwater communities, as they have been underrepresented in the awards program thus far. She asked if anyone could offer any specific outlets for the request for nominations.

Debbie Maner stated that the **NC RWA has a texting service that will be used to distribute the announcement.**

Jay Frick inquired about the firmness of the December 1 deadline.

Rebecca Sadosky replied that it is necessary to have adequate time for preparation for the mid-March awards ceremony at the annual NC WRRI Conference. Furthermore, the application is not burdensome at one page and extending the deadline is unlikely to increase program participation.

Rebecca Sadosky then distributed a spreadsheet of participating members who can assist in the distribution of the awards announcement and went through it thoroughly, request updates for each entry.

- The NCSU Extension Agents' participation in the Watershed Education Network listserv has declined in recent years, but the announcement will still be distributed that way.
- The NC Watershed Stewardship Network will distribute the announcement, but Christy Perrin will also cross-post the announcement to the NC SeaGrant listserv, which should assist in the recruitment of coastal communities.
- Julie Ventaloro noted that the NC League of Municipalities contact is now Sarah Collins.
- George Matthis noted that, with the departure of Holly Denham at NCDWR, Lisa Tolley would be a good contact for distribution of the announcement to the environmental educators listserv.
- George Matthis also asked if the community colleges have been invited to participate in the awards program in the past. Christy Perrin replied that she feels that many of them are included in the WRRRI and UNC utilities (water, sewer, stormwater) listservs.
- It was noted by many at the meeting that the NCDWR website has changed dramatically in recent years, so posting the announcement on the website without directing visitors to it will be a challenge for NCDWR staff.
- Debbie Maner committed to distributing the announcement via Twitter, Facebook, and the NCRWA texting service.
- Cy Stober volunteered to distribute the announcement through many of the listservs that the UNC School of Government operates, including water, wastewater, greengov, stormwater, planning, environmental health, and possibly floodplain.

Jay Frick inquired if it would be possible to distribute the awards announcement to all recipients of federal and state cost share dollars for water-related projects.

Joey Hester noted that reaching to individual farmers who receive federal and/or state assistance would mean contacting thousands of individuals, many of whom would ignore the e-mail/letter. Reaching out NC DSWC field staff and having them nominate exemplary farms for the award will be a more effective and fruitful approach. **The NC Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts awards a Family Farm of the Year and a subset of these would be great nominees for NC Source Water Protection Awards.** Julie Groce manages that program and he is uncertain of its award deadline.

Brooke Massa **recommended distributing the announcement to North Carolina's Conservation Partnerships.** Julie noted that there are several on the coast, which will support the NCSWC's stated intent of reaching out to this area of the state better.

Jay Frick **recommended distributing the announcement to NCDWR's regional offices** and asking staff to nominate exemplary projects.

Cy Stober suggested **reaching out to NC Division of Water Infrastructure staff for the recommendations of excellent projects that they have awarded** Community Development Block Grants and/or Clean Water or Drinking Water State Revolving Fund loans.

Christy Perrin recommended that the **announcement include a photo, preferably one with a face**, in order to enhance participation. This appears repeatedly in the environmental marketing research she is conducting.

Cy Stober asked if NC Water Resources Association could assist in recruiting images for the announcement.

Jay Frick asked if the October 1 announcement launch date is too late to receive nominations. Debbie Maner mentioned that the NCRWA magazine needs any materials for the announcement by September 23. She also wanted to know how much room she should ask for in the magazine.

Rebecca Sadosky stated that most submissions do not come until November anyway, and that participating partners in the announcement should use whichever format they prefer.

Cy Stober asked if a **reminder should be scheduled for early November** and Rebecca replied that it should.

Gale Johnson noted that he maintains a catalog of exemplary Wellhead Protection Plans that do more than the minimum requirements that he would be happy to **nominate in coordination with NCRWA**.

## **Local Government Education Packet**

Cy Stober reviewed the results from the last meeting, guiding the NCDWR staff to develop educational packets for local elected officials that will serve the needs of the utility operators and administrators. He interviewed several NCSWC members – the NC League of Municipalities, the NC Wildlife Resources Commission, the Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Program, and the NC Rural Water Association – on what they think an effective message would be, and the resounding response was to keep it brief and to focus on community development and economic efficiency. Ancillary materials could be developed for more specific topics such as recreational benefit, water quality protection, etc. However, he did not feel comfortable moving forward without better knowing what water treatment operators and public works directors need their elected officials and managers to know when it comes to providing consumers with clean and affordable public drinking water, so he prepared a five-question survey to be distributed via the NCRWA and the NC Water Operators Association. He distributed the drafted survey to the members for review and comment.

Christy Perrin noted that the survey seems focused on the “How?” of water resources management and protection, but less on the “Why?” She suggested reaching out to the NCLM to for more feedback on what goals or purposes might be most compelling to local elected officials to invest in source water protection. She also **suggested that a survey tailored to a more general audience** – but perhaps focused on recent local elected officials who may be more candid – could be constructive.

Cy Stober responded that the **NCLM annually polls its membership** for their priorities in order to set their agenda for the coming year. That information is public and Sarah Collins at the NCLM agreed to share it with him when they have it this winter.

Joey Hester recommended **reaching out to river basin association** for their interest in water treatment needs.

Julie Ventaloro is **aware of Willingness To Pay studies** that have been done for drinking water. Discussion focused on whether these studies can be applied to North Carolina and whether or not the WRRRI conference archives might have information on this. Cy Stober committed to researching this further.

Joey Hester and Julie Ventaloro are aware of **return on investment studies** for river restoration projects that could potentially be applied to this work, and agreed to share what information they have with Cy Stober.

Joey Hester also noted that the county-level SWCD boards often need education and that their initial opinions may be a helpful survey audience as well. He also noted a need for reaching out to the UNC School of Government to educate these board members, something that the NCSWC could potentially collaborate on when they are ready.

George Matthis noted that the NC General Assembly now has a requirement that all SWCD Board member must attend a training in order to serve

The members stated that **identifying a pilot group for feedback on the survey** would be helpful. That was Cy Stober's intent in providing the survey to the NCRWA staff, but it now seems premature. They may still be a good audience for reviewing the survey questions when they are finished.

Joey Hester noted that there **needs to be two products: one for local elected officials** about what their utilities need regarding source water protection and **another for the general public** about why source water protection is needed at all. These products should be reviewed by the NCLM and others to ensure that the language and delivery will be most effective.

**The following changes were recommended for the current survey:**

- Add questions to determine if the respondent is a water treatment operator or a public works director;
- Add a question to assess system size;
- Expand the fifth question permit the ranking of specific land use management strategies that facilitate source water protection; and
- Add one or two questions that will more explicitly evaluate source water protection strategies for utility management and/or community development.

\*All programs in **bold** are action items for the next meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:50.

*Notes by Cy Stober, NCDEQ, PWS Section.*