

Catawba-Wateree System of Reservoirs

Mr. Jeff Lineberger has made exceptional and enduring contributions to source water protection in North Carolina through his multi-decade career with Duke Energy and his visionary leadership within the Catawba–Wateree River Basin and other basins throughout the Mountain and Piedmont regions of the state. His work exemplifies collaborative, science-based stewardship that balances human water needs with long-term ecological integrity.

Jeff was instrumental in forming the Catawba–Wateree Water Management Group (CWWMG) in 2007. From its inception, the CWWMG has served as a nationally recognized model for basin-wide collaboration, with a mission to promote projects and investments that preserve and enhance the Catawba–Wateree system while ensuring reliable water resources for communities, industry, and the environment. Jeff’s leadership helped establish the group’s shared vision and durable governance framework, bringing together utilities, local governments, regulators, and stakeholders who had historically operated independently. Similarly, in 2015, Jeff played a key role in forming the Yadkin–Pee Dee Water Management Group.

A hallmark of Jeff’s impact has been his ability to build partnerships and leverage funding to advance source water protection projects. Since 2007, the CWWMG has invested nearly \$10 million in initiatives that directly protect drinking water sources and enhance watershed resilience. Jeff was instrumental in these efforts, which include land conservation and preservation projects such as riparian buffer protection, lakefront irrigation studies, raw water intake contingency planning, best practices for water conservation, and the development and evaluation of low-inflow protocols. His involvement in these and many other projects demonstrates a commitment to proactive, preventative approaches that reduce risks to water supplies before crises occur.

Jeff also played a key role in developing the first Catawba–Wateree Water Supply Master Plan, released in 2014. This landmark effort established sustainable water management targets extending through 2065, providing utilities and communities with a science-based roadmap for growth, drought preparedness, and long-term source water protection. The plan remains a foundational tool for coordinated decision-making across the basin.

Equally significant has been Jeff’s dedication to public education and stakeholder engagement. He was a key participant in the formation of the Citizens Water Academy in 2019 and continues to serve as a regular speaker, helping residents understand the complexities of water management in the Catawba–Wateree basin. He also helped initiate the annual Catawba–Wateree Summit in 2017, which educates elected officials, utilities,

and agencies using transparent, science-driven information. Through these efforts, Jeff has empowered the public and decision-makers alike to use water resources responsibly and with confidence in the underlying data.

Jeff's leadership style is defined by integrity, clarity, and collaboration. He has fostered partnerships with organizations such as the Catawba Riverkeeper, including participation in annual river cleanups, and consistently promotes honest dialogue among diverse interests. His expertise in water modeling and hydro operations, combined with his ability to communicate complex concepts clearly, has built trust among utilities and the public alike.

Through vision, persistence, and an unwavering belief in the stakeholder process, Mr. Jeff Lineberger has strengthened source water protection across North Carolina and set a lasting standard for collaborative watershed management.