

AGENDA
Orange County Commission for the Environment
March 9th, 2020
7:30 p.m.

Southern Human Services Center, 2501 Homestead Road, Chapel Hill

- | <u>Time</u> | <u>Item</u> | <u>Title</u> |
|--------------------|--------------------|--|
| 7:30 | I. | Call to Order |
| 7:32 | II. | Additions or Changes to Agenda |
| 7:34 | III. | Approval of Draft Minutes – February 10th, 2020
The CFE will consider approval of minutes from the last meeting. <u>Action needed</u> (Attachment 1) |
| 7:35 | IV. | CFE Activities - 2020
The CFE will discuss current activities. |
| 7:45 | V. | Eno-New Hope Landscape Conservation Plan
Steering Committee members from the Eno-New Hope Landscape Conservation Group will present results and recommendations of the Eno-New Hope Landscape Conservation Plan with a focus on Orange County. |
| 8:10 | VI. | Climate Action Tax
Brennan Bouma will provide an update to the CFE on the current status of approving the Climate Action Tax projects. |
| 8:20 | VII. | Upper Neuse River Basin Association (UNRBA) Falls Lake Regulatory Forum
Wesley Poole will provide an update to the CFE on UNRBA's recent Falls Lake Regulatory Forum that was held in Durham on February 12, 2020. (Attachment 2) |
| 8:30 | VIII. | Committee Meetings
CFE Committees will break out for discussion. |
| 8:50 | IX. | Updates and Information Items
Staff and/or CFE members will provide updates on the following items: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Earth Evening - April 24th, 2020 6 - 8pm Any other new information from CFE members and staff |
| 9:00 | X. | Adjournment <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>* Next Meeting: April 13th, 2020 @ West Campus Office Building, Room 302, 131 West Margaret Lane, Hillsborough</i> |

CFE Activities – 2020

Item	Committee/Person(s) Responsible	Next Steps
Fast Facts for a Greener Orange	B. Bouma	Bouma presented first four tips structured from SOE report. Working with an intern to create a full list from the 2019 SOE. Will be posted to CFE Facebook page and Twitter forums.
Rights-of-Way Subcommittee	B. Saul	Subcommittee formation approved by CfE at January meeting.
Review and update of Forest Management Policy	Land Resources	Ongoing review by committee and staff.
Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory	B. Ward B. Bouma	Complete! Posted to Orange County Sustainability Website.
Climate Action Plan	B. Ward B. Bouma	Initial work has begun to lay out scope and format. With GHG Inventory completion and successful application for LEED for Cities and Communities Grant, planning can begin in earnest. Seeing CFE assistance in climate action generation and community engagement.
Carbon Fee & Dividend / Fossil Fuel Divestment resolution(s)	B. Ward A. Parry	Review again in Fall 2020.
Landscape corridor planning	Land resources	Presentation tonight!
Idling Campaign	B. Bouma	
Right of Nature	K. Piracci	Group of CfE members to meet and discuss.
Coordination with Planning Dept		

Recent Achievements

- The State of the Environment is complete!
- We helped to host the 2019 Environmental Summit.
- Hosted ecostudio UNC student Kerina Patel researching the successes of the rural buffer
- BOCC unanimously passed our “Best Practices on Roadsides and Rights-of-Way” resolution

- CFE mentioned by County leaders several times during recent Our Climate Resolutions event in Chapel Hill

CFE Meeting Ground Rules (Adopted 9/12/11)

1. Keep to agenda topic under discussion
2. Share relevant information
3. One person speaks at a time after recognition by the Chair
4. Everyone is invited to participate in discussions - no one person should dominate discussions
5. Strive to reach consensus first before voting

Orange County Commission for the Environment

DRAFT Meeting Summary

February 10, 2020; 7:30 pm

West Campus Office Building, Room 302, 131 West Margaret Lane, Hillsborough

Present: Bradley Saul (Chair), Bill Ward, James Eichel, Jody Eimers, Laura Doherty, Kim Piracci, Alan Parry, Jeremy Marzuola, Carrie Fletcher

Absent: Lynne Gronback

Staff: Brennan Bouma, Chris Hirni, Wesley Poole

I. Call to Order

Saul called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

II. Additions or Changes to Agenda

Saul requested to insert Piracci's presentation of draft proposed ordinance concerning rights of nature as **Item VII**.

III. Approval of Draft Minutes from January 13th, 2020

Motion by Ward; seconded by Fletcher; none opposed; motion passed.

IV. CFE Activities – 2020

CFE discussed current activities with a brief status update for each item.

V. Presentation – Environmental Justice

Bouma presented on topic by sharing slides from Orange County Employee Training along with TED talk video about the danger of a single story. Group activity highlighted how people benefit from a clean, green environment. Closed with note that the CHJI plans to do an environmental justice timeline and asked how CFE might contribute.

VI. Greene Tract - Update

Hirni provided an update on the Greene Tract and discussed the 2020 Greene Tract Resolution & Environmental Assessment Interlocal Agreement. Explained that DEAPR had not been that involved to date, but will be so in the future due to the proposed 60 acres Headwaters Preserve within the tract.

VII. Draft Proposed Ordinance – Rights of Nature

Piracci presented a draft proposed ordinance concerning rights of nature that environmental attorney, Linda Wendling, had put together. Saul asked Piracci to keep researching the topic and report back to the CFE.

VIII. Committee Meetings

CFE Committees met to discuss initiatives / projects.

Orange County Commission for the Environment**DRAFT Meeting Summary****February 10, 2020; 7:30 pm***West Campus Office Building, Room 302, 131 West Margaret Lane, Hillsborough*

IX. Updates and Information Items

Saul notified CFE that Parry, Fletcher and Ward had been recommended for reappointment and four of the remaining five CFE vacancies had been recommended for appointment. Recommendations were as follows: Francis Binkowski to position #2 (Air Quality), Kim Livingston to position #3 (At-Large, formerly Land Resources), Elizabeth McWhorter to position #5 (Water Resources) and Jaya Nair to position #7 (At-Large). One vacancy will remain for an At-Large position. Saul reminded CFE members of attendance requirements moving forward. CFE briefly discussed Earth Evening involvement coming up on Friday, April 24 from 6-8pm.

X. Adjournment

Fletcher motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:07 pm; seconded by Parry; none opposed; motion passed.

Fast Facts



What is the Upper Neuse River Basin Association (UNRBA)?

For more than 20 years, the UNRBA has provided a collaborative forum for considering and promoting innovative approaches to water quality planning and management in the Upper Neuse River Basin's 770-square-mile watershed. Our members represent six municipalities, six counties, six local soil and water conservation districts, and a regional water and sewer authority.

We are committed to helping our members comply with Stage I of the Falls Lake Nutrient Management Strategy while developing a more feasible and cost-effective strategy for Stage II.

By relying on science, focusing on the lake's uses, and considering fiscal constraints, our members' investments will make cost-effective and sustainable water quality improvement possible for Falls Lake.

Why is Falls Lake important?

Falls Lake is a tremendous asset. It was originally constructed to help protect downstream areas from flooding, and it also provides drinking water, habitat for fish and wildlife, and a place for recreation.

What is the Falls Lake Nutrient Management Strategy?

Chlorophyll-a is the green pigment that allows plants to harness sunlight to turn CO₂ into food. At high concentrations, it can point to nutrient pollution – in other words, the presence of too much nitrogen and phosphorous in our water, which stimulate plant and algae growth.

In 2010, the NC Environmental Management Commission adopted a nutrient management strategy and rules for the Upper Neuse Basin to reduce the amount of nitrogen and phosphorous that enter the lake.

Who do the Falls Lake Rules regulate?



State and federal agencies that contribute to stormwater runoff



New and existing development which are required to reduce nutrient loading through stormwater controls



Agriculture that may grow crops, produce animals, or hold lands in an unmanaged state



Wastewater treatment facilities that discharge treated wastewater into rivers and streams

What do the Rules require?

Stage I

2011 to 2024

Meeting nutrient-related water quality standards in the lake below Highway 50 and improve nutrient levels in the upper portion of the lake

- ◆ Decrease nitrogen and phosphorus loading to the lake from all sectors
- ◆ Prevent new development from increasing nutrient loading

Stage II

2024 to 2041

Meet nutrient-related water quality standards in both the lower and upper portions of the lake

- ◆ Decrease nitrogen loading to the lake by 40 percent
- ◆ Decreased phosphorus loading to the lake by 77 percent

Success in Stage I

Substantial investment throughout the basin has led to what appears to be early compliance with the Stage I nutrient management rules.

For example...

- ◆ Wastewater treatment plant retrofits have reduced nitrogen output by 20 percent or more and phosphorous output by 40 percent or more.
- ◆ Local governments across the Basin implemented mandatory rules for new urban development to prevent increases in nutrient runoff as a result of new construction. In some cases, nutrient loading has even decreased after development as a result!
- ◆ Agricultural pasture lands have already exceeded their Stage I goals for nitrogen, while crop lands have exceeded the nitrogen goals for both Stage I and II.

Measurements show that investments like these have improved water quality throughout the lake.

Stage II Stumbling Blocks

Stage II presents unnecessary challenges to future water quality improvements. Research by our technical consultants indicates that Stage II...

- ◆ Requires nutrient reductions that are impossible with today's technology
- ◆ Rules out cost-effective, innovative solutions that exist today
- ◆ Would cost local governments and citizens in the Basin over **\$1 billion** to implement
- ◆ May only produce minor improvements – Falls Lake already provides safe drinking water, supports a healthy fishery, and provides enjoyable recreation with today's good water quality

The UNRBA is committed to leading the development of a more effective strategy for improving water quality in Stage II.

Can the Stage II rules be reexamined and revised?

Yes! The Falls Lake Rules specifically allow for a reexamination of the Stage II requirements. Pursuant to the rules, the UNRBA is working with the State of North Carolina and partners across the basin to reexamine Stage II of the Nutrient Management Strategy.

What steps has the UNRBA taken to reexamine the Stage II rules?

Data collection – Good policy is built on sound science.

We're investing in data collection and modeling to fill important gaps in our understanding of the lake and watershed.

In July 2019, we released the results of a 51-month, \$3 million water quality monitoring program for Falls Lake and its tributaries. With nearly 30,000 data points covering 23 different kinds of water quality measurements, the study provides critical scientific information to inform science-based models of the lake and watershed – powerful decision-making tools that will help us evaluate new strategies to improve water quality above and beyond what has been achieved in Stage I.

Collaboration

Science alone cannot tell us how to balance competing wants and needs. We are committed to continued engagement with Basin stakeholders. Broad input will help us to develop an approach that improves water quality and generates widespread support.

- ◆ We will continue to reach out to local governments, agricultural representatives, regulated entities, environmental groups, community advocates, developers, and others.
- ◆ We will continue to host stakeholder meetings for our water quality modeling project to seek feedback on the assumptions our model makes and the next steps in its development.

Where can I learn more?

Visit our website UpperNeuse.org

Members of the public are welcome to attend all UNRBA meetings. To join us at an upcoming meeting or review minutes from previous meetings, visit our website at UpperNeuse.org



Nutrient Management Strategy Reexamination Milestones

2011 to 2018

- ✓ Successful investments in nutrient reduction throughout the basin improve water quality in Falls Lake
- ✓ DWR approves modeling framework and procedures | UNRBA begins model set-up
- ✓ UNRBA hosts two technical workshops and compiles data from stakeholders
- ✓ UNRBA develops framework for Stage II Reexamination
- ✓ DWR approves monitoring program | UNRBA begin monitoring in 2014 and finishes in 2018
- Program collects over 28,000 observations!
- ✓ NC General Assembly sets a 2023 end date for the reexamination process

2019

MODELING CONTINUES

- UNRBA releases its final Monitoring Report
- UNRBA continues to develop computer models of Falls Lake and its watershed
- UNC Collaboratory begins its Falls Lake evaluation
- Communication and support-building continue throughout the reexamination process

2020

MODELING STREAM FLOWS AND LAKE LEVELS

- Falls Lake Regulatory Forum
 - FOCUS | Briefing jurisdictional leaders on the status of reexamination
- UNRBA calibrates models to observed stream flows and lake water levels
- Third Technical Stakeholder Workshop
 - FOCUS | Calibration of stream flows and water levels
- Communication and support-building continue
- UNC Collaboratory continues its Falls Lake evaluation

2021

MODELING WATER QUALITY

- UNRBA calibrates models to observed water quality in streams and Falls Lake
- Fourth Technical Stakeholder Workshop
 - FOCUS | Calibration of water quality
- UNRBA begins reaching out to stakeholders to develop and vet potential replacement strategies for managing nutrients
- The UNC Collaboratory releases its first interim report on Falls Lake
 - Falls Lake evaluation continues
- Communication and support-building continue

CONTINUE FOR
2022-2024



2022

COMPARING MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

UNRBA uses models to compare nutrient management actions



How do actions in the watershed and lake affect the lake's water quality?

How feasible and cost-effective are different kinds of management actions?

Is the current chlorophyll-a standard for Falls Lake attainable?

Are regulatory alternatives warranted for this man-made water body?

UNRBA releases its Final Modeling Report



DOCUMENTS | Model development, calibration, and scenario evaluations

Communication and support-building continue



Watershed and lake models complete!

UNRBA submits models to DWR for review and approval.



Fifth Technical Stakeholder Workshop

FOCUS | Assessing management actions

Feedback guides direction for revised nutrient management strategy



The UNC Collaboratory releases its second interim report on Falls Lake

Falls Lake evaluation continues

2023

PROPOSING A NEW STRATEGY

UNRBA releases its draft strategy proposal



Communication and support-building continue



The UNC Collaboratory releases its final report on Falls Lake



Sixth Technical Stakeholder Workshop

FOCUS | Presenting the revised nutrient management strategy



UNRBA Water Summit on Nutrient Management Recommendations



UNRBA submits its recommendations to the EMC

2024

REACHING CONSENSUS ON A STRATEGY ADOPTION PROCESS

Communication and support-building continue throughout the basin



Revised strategy implementation steps begin!



Seventh Technical Stakeholder Workshop

FOCUS | Update on the path to adoption



Strategy adoption approach selected

Who are we?

The UNRBA is a non-profit organization comprised of six municipalities, six counties, six local soil and water conservation districts, and a regional water and sewer authority. Since 1990, we have been dedicated to providing a forum for considering and promoting innovative approaches to water quality planning and management in the Upper Neuse River Basin's 770-square-mile watershed. For more information about the Association and our mission, visit UpperNeuse.org.

Nutrient Management Strategy Reexamination Milestones

2020 MODELING STREAM FLOWS AND LAKE LEVELS

- UNRBA hosts first Falls Lake Regulatory Forum to brief leaders on the status of Stage II re-examination
- UNRBA calibrates models to observed stream flows and lake water levels
- Third Technical Stakeholder Workshop - calibration of stream flows and water levels
- Communication and support - building consensus throughout the re-examination process
- UNC Collaboratory continues its Falls Lake evaluation

2021 MODELING WATER QUALITY

- UNRBA calibrates models to observed water quality in streams and in Falls Lake
- Fourth Technical Stakeholder Workshop - calibration of water quality
- UNRBA continues outreach to external stakeholders for input on potential replacement strategies
- UNRBA hosts the second Falls Lake Regulatory Forum for input on potential replacement strategies
- UNC Collaboratory releases its first interim report on Falls Lake and continues its Falls Lake evaluation
- Communication efforts and support-building continue

2022 COMPARING MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

- Watershed and lake models are fully calibrated
- UNRBA submits modeling files to DWR for review and approval
- UNRBA uses calibrated models to compare nutrient management actions:
 - How do actions in the watershed and lake affect the lake's water quality?
 - How feasible and cost-effective are different kinds of management actions?
 - Is the current chlorophyll-a standard for Falls Lake attainable?
 - Are regulatory alternatives warranted for this man-made water body?
- Fifth Technical Stakeholder Workshop – evaluation of management actions and technical feedback
- UNRBA hosts the third Falls Lake Regulatory Forum to receive feedback from leaders to guide direction of the revised nutrient management strategy
- UNRBA releases Final Modeling Report documenting model calibration and scenario evaluations
- UNC Collaboratory releases second interim report on Falls Lake - Falls Lake evaluation continues
- Communication and support-building continues

2023 PROPOSING A NEW STRATEGY

- UNRBA releases its draft strategy for nutrient management
- Sixth Technical Stakeholder Workshop - presenting revised strategy
- Communication efforts and support-building continue
- UNRBA hosts the fourth Falls Lake Regulatory Forum on the revised strategy
- The UNC Collaboratory releases its final report on Falls Lake
- UNRBA submits its recommendations to the EMC

2024 REACHING CONSENSUS ON A STRATEGY ADOPTION PROCESS

- Seventh Technical Stakeholder Workshop - update on the path to adoption
- Communication efforts and support-building continue throughout the basin
- Strategy-adoption approach selected
- Revised strategy implementation steps begin

Additional Resources and Contact Information

- **General Information:** <https://upperneuse.org/>
 - Home: the UNRBA and its mission
 - Falls Lake Rules, challenges, and successes
 - Developing a better strategy
- **Technical Resources:** <https://www.unrba.org/>
 - Meeting schedules, agendas, and materials
 - UNRBA monitoring program, quality assurance project plan, data portal, and monitoring reports
 - Nutrient credit program and tracking tool
 - Re-examination planning, modeling quality assurance project plan, stakeholder sessions
- **Contact Information:**
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UNRBA Board of Directors and Alternates (Date: 2/3/2020)

Member	Director	Alternate # 1	Alternate #2
City of Creedmoor	Neena Nowell	Del Mims	ND*
City of Durham	Javiera Caballero	Reginald Hicks	Michelle Woolfolk
City of Raleigh	Pending	Kenneth Waldroup	Carolyn Bachl
Durham County	Ellen Reckhow	Ryan Eaves	McKenzie Myers
Franklin County	Harry Foy	Scott Hammerbacher	ND*
Granville County	Owen Roberts	Barry Baker	Michael Felts
Orange County	Sally Greene	Jamezette Bedford	Wesley Poole
Person County	Jimmy Clayton	Lori Oakley	Kayla DiCristina
South Granville WASA	Scott Schroyer	Fred Dancy	ND*
Town of Butner	Bill McKellar	Mike Ciriello	Thomas Morrow
Town of Hillsborough	Jenn Weaver	Terry Hackett	ND*
Town of Wake Forest	Carrie Mitchell	ND*	ND*
Wake County	Sig Hutchinson	Melinda Clark	Matt Calabria

* ND = Not Designated

UNRBA Forum Questions and Answers



Question 1 – What is the basis of North Carolina’s chlorophyll-a standard, and how does it compare to other States?

- Falls Lake water quality impairment decisions and the Falls Lake rules are based on the non-attainment of the chlorophyll-a standard. NC first adopted a chlorophyll water quality standard in 1979 (~40 years ago). NC and SC both have a 40 µg/L chlorophyll-a standard. However, NC considers waters impaired if the chlorophyll-a standard is exceeded in more than 10% of the samples. South Carolina considers waters impaired when the chlorophyll-a standard is exceeded in more than 25% of samples. This is a significant difference.
- Most states have a narrative standard for eutrophication concerns. Narrative standards evaluate impairment based on observable, negative impacts to the designated uses of a lake such as aquatic life, swimming, water supply, and recreation.

Question 2 – How is NC’s standard different than other States that have a numeric criterion?

- Other states that have numeric standards for chlorophyll-a typically have specific applications such as growing season averages that are evaluated at specific locations within the lake. For example, locations identified near a dam, at a water supply intake, or at a certain bridge crossing are typical. Most other states with a chlorophyll-a water quality standard incorporate a duration, frequency, central tendency of magnitude, or specific conditions that provide for an allowable exceedance of the standard under certain circumstances.

Question 3 – How is chlorophyll-a related to the designated uses of Falls Lake – swimming, drinking water, aquatic life, and recreation?

- Quantifiable linkages between chlorophyll and designated uses are very difficult to define. Chlorophyll is an indicator of fertility and not necessarily a reliable indicator of problems. For example, you can have drinking water taste and odor problems even when chlorophyll-a levels are well below 40 µg/L. Alternatively, you may not have any taste and odor problems when chlorophyll-a is well above 40 µg/L. The same example may apply to toxic algae episodes, and not all algae are toxic. It is not the chlorophyll levels that are associated with toxicity but rather particular species of algae that may be triggered under certain conditions to produce toxins.

Question 4 – Did the UNC Collaboratory Report on Jordan Lake suggest that NC should reevaluate the chlorophyll-a standard with an emphasis on the standards being site- specific and seasonal?

- The Jordan Lake UNC Collaboratory Report did suggest the need for NC to re-evaluate its water quality standard for chlorophyll-a as follows:

UNC Collaboratory Jordan Lake Final Report December 2019

“The state’s longstanding broad nutrient sensitive waters criterion (an instantaneous chlorophyll-a standard of 40 µg/l applied everywhere) should be reevaluated. For the past few years scientists have been reviewing this issue as part of the work of the Nutrient Criteria Development Plan Science Advisory Council. The Department of Environmental Quality should continue to engage in and encourage discussions related to development of new standards with an emphasis on the standards being site-specific and seasonal.”

UNRBA Forum Questions and Answers



Question 5 - How long will it take to complete the effort on water quality modeling, and what are some of the example scenarios that will be evaluated?

- The UNRBA Watershed and Lake Models are scheduled to be completed by 2022. The models will allow evaluation of many different scenarios, but realistically, we want to focus on the lake's response to different levels of nutrient management in the watershed. We also want to understand how things that we cannot control, like very large storm events, affect nutrient loading and the growth of algae in the lake. We can test scenarios like best available technologies, and we can also test extreme conditions like if the watershed was completely undeveloped. Primarily we will evaluate the response of the lake to varying levels of investment resulting in non-point and point source reductions.

Question 6 - Is the State providing any resources to the UNRBA in working on these issues? What can our legislators do to support this effort?

- The UNRBA worked cooperatively with DWR to provide some additional data from within the lake. DWR's data is the main source of lake quality and represents the measurements we will be using in calibration and confirmation of the lake models.
- DWR is fully engaged with the efforts of the UNRBA. DWR is consistently present at our committee meetings and Board meetings. DWR has also helped the UNRBA secure funding grants like the development of new nutrient reduction credits for practices including the elimination of illicit discharges and soil improvement. Currently DWR is working with the UNRBA to obtain a grant to fund revisions to the watershed model code for nutrient loading from different types of onsite wastewater treatment systems.
- The NC General Assembly supported a Session Law to assist with revising the compliance schedule for Stage I and delayed the implementation of Stage II prior to the revision of the Falls Lake Rules. DWR delayed requirements for compliance with parts of the Falls Lake Nutrient Management Strategy to coincide with the Session Law.

Question 7 - It seems that the UNRBA is making good progress on the re-examination, is there any problem with the Raleigh water supply?

- The majority of the drinking water in Raleigh comes from Falls Lake and is treated at the E.M. Johnson Water Treatment Plant. Falls Lake provides raw water that results in a public drinking water supply that meets State and Federal water quality rules. The City of Raleigh provides both annual and monthly drinking water quality reports. Laboratory staff from the City of Raleigh perform an exceptional level of testing to ensure the safety of drinking water. In 2018, staff at the Raleigh laboratory collected, tested and analyzed Raleigh's water between 6,000 and 7,000 times a month.
- Seasonal taste and odor issues that sometimes occur are consistent with other reservoirs and surface water supplies throughout NC. Falls Lake meets its designated drinking water use, and Raleigh is in compliance with all national Primary Drinking Water Regulations.

Question 8 - What is the real problem? Is water quality in the lake bad? Is it getting worse? Is there an algae problem or is the problem with our water quality assessment tools?

- Falls Lake was placed on NC's impaired waters list (Section 303(d) under the Federal Clean Water Act) for non-attainment of the water quality standard for chlorophyll-a. This standard requires that chlorophyll-a not exceed 40 µg/l.



- Nutrient loading to Falls Lake has dropped since it was first impounded. However, chlorophyll-a levels can vary due to operation of the dam, sediment nutrient releases and the timing of storm flow periods. Nutrient loading is an important factor, but it is not the only factor that controls chlorophyll-a levels.
- Chlorophyll-a is a measure of algal productivity but is not a measure of algal problems. It is an indicator that algal issues and effects on designated uses should be evaluated, but chlorophyll-a itself is not toxic. Chlorophyll-a is necessary to support the base of the aquatic food web and productive and healthy fisheries in Falls Lake. The challenge for the UNRBA is to strike the right balance in terms of protecting designated uses, supporting a healthy food web, and finding cost-effective solutions to improve water quality.
- NC's current water quality standard for chlorophyll-a is not a reliable measure of functional insults on the designated uses. It is the UNRBA's position that the reservoir needs a site-specific standard that links chlorophyll-a measurements to actual impairment of uses. This is also the approach that the NC Division of Water Resources has taken with the Scientific Advisory Council (SAC) appointed under its Nutrient Criteria Development Plan. The SAC, which, includes representation by EPA Region IV, is recommending an average chlorophyll-a standard as a component of a site-specific criterion for High Rock Lake.

Question 9 - Why does it take so long to come to an agreement between the local governments and the State of North Carolina on how to best protect Falls Lake?

- There are many parties, or stakeholders, interested in the management of Falls Lake. These groups, and the individuals that make them up, have various views of what needs to be done to properly manage this reservoir. The parties include the local governments, agriculture, agencies, and non-governmental organizations.
- The state agencies such as the Department of Environmental Quality and its Divisions are also stakeholders. These regulatory agencies have public policy, rules, and laws that govern management of water quality in the state.
- All of these interest groups have an impact on the local governments in the watershed. The local governments also have varying views of the level of management needed to protect Falls Lake and the Falls Lake drainage area.
- All of these factors make a stakeholder process complicated, involved, and sometimes difficult. It takes considerable time to work through these potential conflicts.
- The UNRBA is committed to consensus-based decisions whenever possible. In building consensus decisions, the UNRBA seeks to be transparent in our meetings and all of our efforts working towards a successful re-examination of the Falls Lake Rules. Our goal is to develop a cost-effective approach and a sustainable future for all of the Falls Lake designated uses. Consensus takes time, but it is worth the effort. It serves no positive purpose to fail to bring people together and find common ground.