

## Appendix 2 Water Quality Classifications

(Excerpts from the North Carolina Administrative Code)

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### 15A NCAC 02B .0301 CLASSIFICATIONS: GENERAL

- (a) Schedule of Classifications. The classifications assigned to the waters of the State of North Carolina are set forth in the schedules of classifications and water quality standards assigned to the waters of the river basins of North Carolina, 15A NCAC 2B .0302 to .0317. These classifications are based upon the existing or contemplated best usage of the various streams and segments of streams in the basin, as determined through studies and evaluations and the holding of public hearings for consideration of the classifications proposed.
- (b) Stream Names. The names of the streams listed in the schedules of assigned classifications were taken as far as possible from United States Geological Survey topographic maps. Where topographic maps were unavailable, U.S. Corps of Engineers maps, U.S. Department of Agriculture soil maps, and North Carolina highway maps were used for the selection of stream names.
- (c) Classifications. The classifications assigned to the waters of North Carolina are denoted by the letters WS-I, WS-II, WS-III, WS-IV, WS-V, B, C, SA, SB, and SC in the column headed "class." A brief explanation of the "best usage" for which the waters in each class must be protected is given as follows:

#### Fresh Waters

Class WS-I: waters protected as water supplies which are in natural and undeveloped watersheds; in public ownership; point source discharges of treated wastewater are permitted pursuant to Rules .0104 and .0211 of this Subchapter; local programs to control nonpoint source and stormwater discharge of pollution are required; suitable for all Class C uses;

Class WS-II: waters protected as water supplies which are generally in predominantly undeveloped watersheds; point source discharges of treated wastewater are permitted pursuant to Rules .0104 and .0211 of this Subchapter; local programs to control nonpoint source and stormwater discharge of pollution are required; suitable for all Class C uses;

Class WS-III: waters protected as water supplies which are generally in low to moderately developed watersheds; point source discharges of treated wastewater are permitted pursuant to Rules .0104 and .0211 of this Subchapter; local programs to control nonpoint source and stormwater discharge of pollution are required; suitable for all Class C uses;

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Class WS-IV: waters protected as water supplies which are generally in moderately to highly developed watersheds; point source discharges of treated wastewater are permitted pursuant to Rules .0104 and .0211 of this Subchapter; local programs to control nonpoint source and stormwater discharge of pollution are required; suitable for all Class C uses;

Class WS-V: waters protected as water supplies which are generally upstream and draining to Class WS-IV waters or waters previously used for drinking water supply purposes or waters used by industry to supply their employees, but not municipalities or counties, with a raw drinking water supply source, although this type of use is not restricted to a WS-V classification; no categorical restrictions on watershed development or treated wastewater discharges are required, however, the Commission or its designee may apply appropriate management requirements as deemed necessary for the protection of downstream receiving waters (15A NCAC 2B .0203); suitable for all Class C uses;

Class B: primary recreation and any other usage specified by the "C" classification;

Class C: aquatic life propagation and survival, fishing, wildlife, secondary recreation, and agriculture.

Tidal Salt Waters:

Class SA: shellfishing for market purposes and any other usage specified by the "SB" and "SC" classification;

Class SB: primary recreation and any other usage specified by the "SC" classification;

Class SC: aquatic life propagation and survival, fishing, wildlife, and secondary recreation.

#### Supplemental Classifications

Trout Waters: Suitable for natural trout propagation and maintenance of stocked trout;

Swamp Waters: Waters which have low velocities and other natural characteristics which are different from adjacent streams;

NSW: Nutrient Sensitive Waters which require limitations on nutrient inputs;

HQW: High Quality Waters which are waters that are rated as excellent based on biological and physical/chemical characteristics through division monitoring or special studies, native and special native trout waters (waters and their tributaries) designated by the Wildlife Resources Commission, primary nursery areas (PNA) designated by the Marine Fisheries Commission and other functional nursery areas designated by the Wildlife Resources Commission, critical habitat areas designated by the Wildlife Resources Commission or the Department of Agriculture, all water supply watersheds which are either classified as WS-I or WS-II or those for which a formal petition for reclassification as WS-I or WS-II has been received from the appropriate local government and accepted by the Division of Environmental Management and all Class SA waters.

ORW: Outstanding Resource Waters which are unique and special waters of exceptional state or national recreational or ecological significance which require special protection to maintain existing uses.

FWS: Future Water Supply Waters which are waters intended for future drinking water supply purposes.

(d) Water Quality Standards. The water quality standards applicable to each classification assigned are those established in 15A NCAC 2B .0200, Classifications and Water Quality Standards Applicable to the Surface Waters of North Carolina, as adopted by the North Carolina Environmental Management Commission.

(e) Index Number.

(1) Reading the Index Number. The index number appearing in the column so designated is an identification number assigned to each stream or segment of a stream, indicating the specific tributary progression between the main stem stream and the tributary stream.

(2) Cross-Referencing the Index Number. The inclusion of the index number in the schedule is to provide a

(3) cross reference between the classification schedules and an alphabetic list of streams.

(f) Classification Date. The classification date indicates the date on which enforcement of the provisions of Section 143-215.1 of the General Statutes of North Carolina became effective with reference to the classification assigned to the various streams in North Carolina.

(g) Reference. Copies of the schedules of classifications adopted and assigned to the waters of the various river basins may be obtained at no charge by writing to:

Director  
Division of Environmental Management  
Department of Environment, Health, and Natural Resources  
Post Office Box 29535

Raleigh, North Carolina 27626-0535

(h) Places where the schedules may be inspected:

Division of State Library Archives - State Library Building

109 E. Jones Street

Raleigh, North Carolina.

(i) Unnamed Streams.

(1) Any stream which is not named in the schedule of stream classifications carries the same classification as that assigned to the stream segment to which it is tributary except:

(A) unnamed streams specifically described in the schedule of classifications; or

(B) unnamed freshwaters tributary to tidal saltwaters will be classified "C"; or

(C) after November 1, 1986, any newly created areas of tidal saltwater which are connected to Class SA waters by approved dredging projects will be classified "SC" unless case-by-case reclassification proceedings are conducted.

(2) The following river basins have different policies for unnamed streams entering other states or for specific areas of the basin:

Hiwassee River Basin (Rule .0302); Little Tennessee River Basin and Savannah River Drainage Area (Rule .0303); French Broad River Basin (Rule .0304); Watauga River Basin (Rule .0305); Broad River Basin (Rule .0306); New River Basin (Rule .0307); Catawba River Basin (Rule .0308); Yadkin-Pee Dee River Basin (Rule .0309); Lumber River Basin (Rule .0310); Roanoke River Basin (Rule .0313); Tar-Pamlico River Basin (Rule .0316); Pasquotank River Basin (Rule .0317).

*History Note: Authority G.S. 143-214.1; 143-215.1; 143-215.3(a)(1);*

*Eff. February 1, 1976; Amended Eff. August 1, 1995; August 3, 1992; August 1, 1990; October 1, 1989.*

**END**