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Nutrient Management Plans Statutes & Regulations

North Carolina

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Nutrient Management Plans

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

- 1) N.C. Gen. Stat. §§ 143-215.1, .3(a), 143-215.10A—.10G; 2 N.C.A.C. 59D, 15A N.C.A.C. 02T.1301—.1307
- 2) N.C. Gen. Stat. §§ 143-214.5, 143-215.8B, 143B-282(c)—(d); 15 N.C.A.C. 02B.0272
- 3) N.C. Gen Stat § 143-215.3(a)(1); 15A N.C.A.C. 02B.0239
- 4) N.C. Gen. Stat. §§ 143-214.5, 215.8B, 143B-282(c)—(d); 15A N.C.A.C. 02B.0236, .0238, .0255, .0256, .0264, .0280

The statutes and Constitution are current through the 2018 regular and special legislative sessions. The statutes are subject to changes by the North Carolina Revisor of Statutes.

1) N.C. Gen. Stat. §§ 143-215.1, .3(a), 143-215.10A—.10G; 2 N.C.A.C. 59D, 15A N.C.A.C. 02T.1301—.1307

§ 143-215.1. Control of sources of water pollution; permits required

(a) Activities for Which Permits Required. – Except as provided in subsection (a6) of this section, no person shall do any of the following things or carry out any of the following activities unless that person has received a permit from the Commission and has complied with all conditions set forth in the permit:

- (1) Make any outlets into the waters of the State.
- (2) Construct or operate any sewer system, treatment works, or disposal system within the State.
- (3) Alter, extend, or change the construction or method of operation of any sewer system, treatment works, or disposal system within the State.
- (4) Increase the quantity of waste discharged through any outlet or processed in any treatment works or disposal system to any extent that would result in any violation of the effluent standards or limitations established for any point source or that would adversely affect the condition of the receiving waters to the extent of violating any applicable standard.

(5) Change the nature of the waste discharged through any disposal system in any way that would exceed the effluent standards or limitations established for any point source or that would adversely affect the condition of the receiving waters in relation to any applicable standards.

(6) Cause or permit any waste, directly or indirectly, to be discharged to or in any manner intermixed with the waters of the State in violation of the water quality standards applicable to the assigned classifications or in violation of any effluent standards or limitations established for any point source, unless allowed as a condition of any permit, special order or other appropriate instrument issued or entered into by the Commission under the provisions of this Article.

(7) Cause or permit any wastes for which pretreatment is required by pretreatment standards to be discharged, directly or indirectly, from a pretreatment facility to any disposal system or to alter, extend or change the construction or method of operation or increase the quantity or change the nature of the waste discharged from or processed in that facility.

(8) Enter into a contract for the construction and installation of any outlet, sewer system, treatment works, pretreatment facility or disposal system or for the alteration or extension of any such facility.

(9) Dispose of sludge resulting from the operation of a treatment works, including the removal of in-place sewage sludge from one location and its deposit at another location, consistent with the requirement of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act and regulations promulgated pursuant thereto.

(10) Cause or permit any pollutant to enter into a defined managed area of the State's waters for the maintenance or production of harvestable freshwater, estuarine, or marine plants or animals.

(11) Cause or permit discharges regulated under G.S. 143-214.7 that result in water pollution.

(12) Construct or operate an animal waste management system, as defined in G.S. 143-215.10B, without obtaining a permit under either this Part or Part 1A of this Article.

(a1) In the event that both effluent standards or limitations and classifications and water quality standards are applicable to any point source or sources and to the waters to which they discharge, the more stringent among the standards established by the Commission shall be applicable and controlling.

(a2) No permit shall be granted for the disposal of waste in waters classified as sources of public water supply where the head of the agency that administers the public water supply program pursuant to Article 10 of Chapter 130A of the General Statutes, after

review of the plans and specifications for the proposed disposal facility, determines and advises the Commission that any outlet for the disposal of waste is, or would be, sufficiently close to the intake works or proposed intake works of a public water supply as to have an adverse effect on the public health.

(a3) If the Commission denies an application for a permit, the Commission shall state in writing the reason for the denial and shall also state the Commission's estimate of the changes in the applicant's proposed activities or plans that would be required in order that the applicant may obtain a permit.

(a4) The Department shall regulate wastewater systems under rules adopted by the Commission for Public Health pursuant to Article 11 of Chapter 130A of the General Statutes except as otherwise provided in this subsection. No permit shall be required under this section for a wastewater system regulated under Article 11 of Chapter 130A of the General Statutes. The following wastewater systems shall be regulated by the Department under rules adopted by the Commission:

(1) Wastewater systems designed to discharge effluent to the land surface or surface waters.

(2) Wastewater systems designed for groundwater remediation, groundwater injection, or landfill leachate collection and disposal.

(3) Wastewater systems designed for the complete recycle or reuse of industrial process wastewater.

(a5) For purposes of this subsection, "agricultural products" means horticultural, viticultural, forestry, dairy, livestock, poultry, bee, and any farm products. Notwithstanding subsection (a) of this section, a permit shall not be required for a wastewater management system for the treatment and disposal of wastewater produced from activities related to the processing of agricultural products if all of the following conditions are met:

(1) The activities related to the processing of the agricultural products are carried out by the owner of the agricultural products.

(2) The activities related to the processing of the agricultural products produce no more than 1,000 gallons of wastewater per day.

(3) The wastewater is not generated by an animal waste management system as defined in G.S. 143-215.10B.

(4) The wastewater is disposed of by land application.

(5) No wastewater is discharged to surface waters.

(6) The disposal of the wastewater does not result in any violation of surface water or groundwater standards.

(a6) No permit shall be required to enter into a contract for the construction, installation, or alteration of any treatment works or disposal system or to construct, install, or alter any treatment works or disposal system within the State when the system's or work's principal function is to conduct, treat, equalize, neutralize, stabilize, recycle, or dispose of industrial waste or sewage from an industrial facility and the discharge of the industrial waste or sewage is authorized under a permit issued for the discharge of the industrial waste or sewage into the waters of the State. Notwithstanding the above, the permit issued for the discharge may be modified if required by federal regulation.

(a7) For high rate infiltration wastewater disposal systems that utilize non-native soils or materials in a basin sidewall to enhance infiltration, the non-native soils or materials in the sidewall shall not be considered part of the disposal area provided that all of the following standards are met:

(1) In addition to the requirements established by the Commission pursuant to subsection (a4) of G.S. 143-215.1, the treatment system shall include a mechanism to provide filtration of effluent to 0.5 microns or less and all essential treatment units shall be provided in duplicate.

(2) Particle size analysis in accordance with ASTM guidelines for all native and non-native materials shall be performed. Seventy-five percent (75%) of all non-native soil materials specified shall have a particle size of less than 4.8 millimeters.

(3) Non-native materials shall comprise no more than fifty percent (50%) of the basin sidewall area.

(4) Systems meeting the standards set out in subdivisions (1), (2), and (3) of this subsection shall be considered nondischarge systems, and the outfall of any associated groundwater lowering device shall be considered groundwater provided the outfall does not violate water quality standards.

(b) Commission's Power as to Permits. –

(1) The Commission shall act on all permits so as to prevent, so far as reasonably possible, considering relevant standards under State and federal laws, any significant increase in pollution of the waters of the State from any new or enlarged sources. No permit shall be denied and no condition shall be attached to the permit, except when the Commission finds such denial or such conditions necessary to effectuate the purposes of this Article.

(2) The Commission shall also act on all permits so as to prevent violation of water quality standards due to the cumulative effects of permit decisions.

Cumulative effects are impacts attributable to the collective effects of a number of projects and include the effects of additional projects similar to the requested permit in areas available for development in the vicinity. All permit decisions shall require that the practicable waste treatment and disposal alternative with the least adverse impact on the environment be utilized.

(3) General permits may be issued under rules adopted pursuant to Chapter 150B of the General Statutes. Such rules may provide that minor activities may occur under a general permit issued in accordance with conditions set out in such rules. All persons covered under general permits shall be subject to all enforcement procedures and remedies applicable under this Article.

(4) The Commission shall have the power:

a. To grant a permit with such conditions attached as the Commission believes necessary to achieve the purposes of this Article.

b. To require that an applicant satisfy the Department that the applicant, or any parent, subsidiary, or other affiliate of the applicant or parent:

1. Is financially qualified to carry out the activity for which the permit is required under subsection (a) of this section; and

2. Has substantially complied with the effluent standards and limitations and waste management treatment practices applicable to any activity in which the applicant has previously engaged, and has been in substantial compliance with other federal and state laws, regulations, and rules for the protection of the environment.

3. As used in this subdivision, the words "affiliate," "parent," and "subsidiary" have the same meaning as in 17 Code of Federal Regulations § 240.12b-2 (April 1, 1990, Edition).

4. For a privately owned treatment works that serves 15 or more service connections or that regularly serves 25 or more individuals, financial qualification may be demonstrated through the use of a letter of credit, insurance, surety, trust agreement, financial test, bond, or a guarantee by corporate parents or third parties who can pass the financial test. No permit shall be issued under this section for a privately owned treatment works that serves 15 or more service connections or that regularly serves 25 or more individuals, until financial qualification is established and the issuance of the permit shall be contingent on the continuance of the financial qualification for the duration of the activity for which the permit was issued.

c. To modify or revoke any permit upon not less than 60 days' written notice to any person affected.

d. To designate certain classes of minor activities for which a general permit may be issued, after considering:

1. The environmental impact of the activities;
2. How often the activities are carried out;
3. The need for individual permit oversight; and
4. The need for public review and comment on individual permits.

e. To designate certain classes of minor activities for which:

1. Performance conditions may be established by rule; and
2. Individual or general permits are not required.

(5) The Commission shall not issue a permit for a new municipal or domestic wastewater treatment works that would discharge to the surface waters of the State or for the expansion of an existing municipal or domestic wastewater treatment works that would discharge to the surface waters of the State unless the applicant for the permit demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Commission that:

- a. The applicant has prepared and considered an engineering, environmental, and fiscal analysis of alternatives to the proposed facility.
- b. The applicant is in compliance with the applicable requirements of the systemwide municipal and domestic wastewater collection systems permit program adopted by the Commission.

(b1) Repealed by Session Laws 1991, c. 156, s. 1.

(c) Applications for Permits and Renewals for Facilities Discharging to the Surface Waters. –

(1) All applications for permits and for renewal of existing permits for outlets and point sources and for treatment works and disposal systems discharging to the surface waters of the State shall be in writing, and the Commission may prescribe the form of such applications. All applications shall be filed with the Commission at least 180 days in advance of the date on which it is desired to commence the discharge of wastes or the date on which an existing permit expires, as the case may be. The Commission shall act on a permit application as quickly as possible. The Commission may conduct any inquiry or investigation it considers necessary

before acting on an application and may require an applicant to submit plans, specifications, and other information the Commission considers necessary to evaluate the application.

(2)

a. The Department shall refer each application for permit, or renewal of an existing permit, for outlets and point sources and treatment works and disposal systems discharging to the surface waters of the State to its staff for written evaluation and proposed determination with regard to issuance or denial of the permit. If the Commission concurs in the proposed determination, it shall give notice of intent to issue or deny the permit, along with any other data that the Commission may determine appropriate, to be given to the appropriate State, interstate and federal agencies, to interested persons, and to the public.

a1. The Commission shall prescribe the form and content of the notice. Public notice shall be given at least 45 days prior to any proposed final action granting or denying the permit. Public notice shall be given by publication of the notice one time in a newspaper having general circulation within the county.

b. Repealed by Session Laws 1987, c. 734.

(3) If any person desires a public hearing on any application for permit or renewal of an existing permit provided for in this subsection, he shall so request in writing to the Commission within 30 days following date of the notice of intent. The Commission shall consider all such requests for hearing, and if the Commission determines that there is a significant public interest in holding such hearing, at least 30 days' notice of such hearing shall be given to all persons to whom notice of intent was sent and to any other person requesting notice. At least 30 days prior to the date of hearing, the Commission shall also cause a copy of the notice thereof to be published at least one time in a newspaper having general circulation in such county. In any county in which there is more than one newspaper having general circulation in that county, the Commission shall cause a copy of such notice to be published in as many newspapers having general circulation in the county as the Commission in its discretion determines may be necessary to assure that such notice is generally available throughout the county. The Commission shall prescribe the form and content of the notices.

The Commission shall prescribe the procedures to be followed in hearings. If the hearing is not conducted by the Commission, detailed minutes of the hearing shall be kept and shall be submitted, along with any other written comments, exhibits or documents presented at the hearing, to the Commission for its consideration prior to final action granting or denying the permit.

(4) Not later than 60 days following notice of intent or, if a public hearing is held, within 90 days following consideration of the matters and things presented at such hearing, the Commission shall grant or deny any application for issuance of a new permit or for renewal of an existing permit. All permits or renewals issued by the Commission and all decisions denying application for permit or renewal shall be in writing.

(5) Repealed by Session Laws 2011-398, s. 60(b), effective July 25, 2011, and applicable to permits that are issued on or after July 1, 2011.

(6) The Commission shall not act upon an application for a new nonmunicipal domestic wastewater discharge facility until it has received a written statement from each city and county government having jurisdiction over any part of the lands on which the proposed facility and its appurtenances are to be located which states whether the city or county has in effect a zoning or subdivision ordinance and, if such an ordinance is in effect, whether the proposed facility is consistent with the ordinance. The Commission shall not approve a permit application for any facility which a city or county has determined to be inconsistent with its zoning or subdivision ordinance unless it determines that the approval of such application has statewide significance and is in the best interest of the State. An applicant for a permit shall request that each city and county government having jurisdiction issue the statement required by this subdivision by mailing by certified mail, return receipt requested, a written request for such statement and a copy of the draft permit application to the clerk of the city or county. If a local government fails to mail the statement required by this subdivision, as evidenced by a postmark, within 15 days after receiving and signing for the certified mail, the Commission may proceed to consider the permit application notwithstanding this subdivision.

(c1) Any person who is required to obtain an individual wastewater permit under this section for a facility discharging to the surface waters of the State that have been classified as nutrient sensitive waters (NSW) under rules adopted by the Commission shall not discharge more than an average annual mass load of total nitrogen than would result from a discharge of the permitted flow, determined at the time the Commission makes a finding that those waters are experiencing or are subject to excessive growth of microscopic or macroscopic vegetation, having a total nitrogen concentration of five and one-half milligrams of nitrogen per liter (5.5 mg/l). The total nitrogen concentration of 5.5 mg/l for nutrient sensitive waters required by this subsection applies only to:

(1) Facilities that were placed into operation prior to 1 July 1997 or for which an authorization to construct was issued prior to 1 July 1997 and that have a design capacity to discharge 500,000 gallons per day or more.

(2) Facilities for which an authorization to construct is issued on or after 1 July 1997.

(c2) Any person who is required to obtain an individual wastewater permit under this section for a facility discharging to the surface waters of the State that have been classified as nutrient sensitive waters (NSW) under rules adopted by the Commission where phosphorus is designated by the Commission as a nutrient of concern shall not discharge more than an average annual mass load of total phosphorus than would result from a discharge of the permitted flow, determined at the time the Commission makes a finding that those waters are experiencing or are subject to excessive growth of microscopic or macroscopic vegetation, having a total phosphorus concentration of two milligrams of phosphorus per liter (2.0 mg/l). The total phosphorus concentration of 2.0 mg/l for nutrient sensitive waters required by this subsection applies only to:

(1) Facilities that were placed into operation prior to 1 July 1997 or for which an authorization to construct was issued prior to 1 July 1997 and that have a design capacity to discharge 500,000 gallons per day or more.

(2) Facilities for which an authorization to construct is issued on or after 1 July 1997.

(c3) A person to whom subsection (c1) or (c2) of this section applies may meet the limits established under those subsections either individually or on the basis of a cooperative agreement with other persons who hold individual wastewater permits if the cooperative agreement is approved by the Commission. A person to whom subsection (c1) or (c2) of this section applies whose agreement to accept wastewater from another wastewater treatment facility that discharges into the same water body and that results in the elimination of the discharge from that wastewater treatment facility shall be allowed to increase the average annual mass load of total nitrogen and total phosphorus that person discharges by the average annual mass load of total nitrogen and total phosphorus of the wastewater treatment facility that is eliminated. If the wastewater treatment facility that is eliminated has a permitted flow of less than 500,000 gallons per day, the average annual mass load of total nitrogen or phosphorus shall be calculated from the most recent available data. A person to whom this subsection applies shall comply with nitrogen and phosphorus discharge monitoring requirements established by the Commission. This average annual load of nitrogen or phosphorus shall be assigned to the wastewater discharge allocation of the wastewater treatment facility that accepts the wastewater.

(c4) A person to whom subsection (c1) of this section applies may request the Commission to approve a total nitrogen concentration greater than that set out in subsection (c1) of this section at a decreased permitted flow so long as the average annual mass load of total nitrogen is equal to or is less than that required under subsection (c1) of this section. A person to whom subsection (c2) of this section applies may request the Commission to approve a total phosphorus concentration greater than that set out in subsection (c2) of this section at a decreased permitted flow so long as the average annual mass load of total phosphorus is equal to or is less than that required under subsection (c2) of this section. If, after any 12-month period following approval of a greater concentration at a decreased permitted flow, the Commission finds that the greater concentration at a decreased permitted flow does not result in an average annual mass

load of total nitrogen or total phosphorus equal to or less than those that would be achieved under subsections (c1) and (c2) of this section, the Commission shall rescind its approval of the greater concentration at a decreased permitted flow and the requirements of subsections (c1) and (c2) of this section shall apply.

(c5) For surface waters to which the limits set out in subsection (c1) or (c2) of this section apply and for which a calibrated nutrient response model that meets the requirements of this subsection has been approved by the Commission, mass load limits for total nitrogen or total phosphorus shall be based on the results of the nutrient response model. A calibrated nutrient response model shall be developed and maintained with current data, be capable of predicting the impact of nitrogen or phosphorus in the surface waters, and incorporated into nutrient management plans by the Commission. The maximum mass load for total nitrogen or total phosphorus established by the Commission shall be substantiated by the model and may require individual discharges to be limited at concentrations that are different than those set out in subsection (c1) or (c2) of this section. A calibrated nutrient response model shall be developed by the Department in conjunction with the affected parties and is subject to approval by the Commission.

(c6) For surface waters that the Commission classifies as nutrient sensitive waters (NSW) on or after 1 July 1997, the Commission shall establish a date by which facilities that were placed into operation prior to the date on which the surface waters are classified NSW or for which an authorization to construct was issued prior to the date on which the surface waters are classified NSW must comply with subsections (c1) and (c2) of this section. The Commission shall establish the compliance schedule at the time of the classification.

(d) Applications and Permits for Sewer Systems, Sewer System Extensions and Pretreatment Facilities, Land Application of Waste, and for Wastewater Treatment Facilities Not Discharging to the Surface Waters of the State. –

(1) All applications for new permits and for renewals of existing permits for sewer systems, sewer system extensions and for disposal systems, and for land application of waste, or treatment works which do not discharge to the surface waters of the State, and all permits or renewals and decisions denying any application for permit or renewal shall be in writing. The Commission shall act on a permit application as quickly as possible. The Commission may conduct any inquiry or investigation it considers necessary before acting on an application and may require an applicant to submit plans, specifications, and other information the Commission considers necessary to evaluate the application. If the Commission fails to act on an application for a permit, including a renewal of a permit, within 90 days after the applicant submits all information required by the Commission, the application is considered to be approved. Permits and renewals issued in approving such facilities pursuant to this subsection shall be effective until the date specified therein or until rescinded unless modified or revoked by the Commission. Prior to acting on a permit application for the land application of bulk residuals resulting from the operation of a wastewater treatment facility, the

Commission shall provide notice and an opportunity for comment from the governing board of the county in which the site of the land application of bulk residuals is proposed to be located. Local governmental units to whom pretreatment program authority has been delegated shall establish, maintain, and provide to the public, upon written request, a list of pretreatment applications received.

(2) An applicant for a permit to dispose of petroleum contaminated soil by land application shall give written notice that he intends to apply for such a permit to each city and county government having jurisdiction over any part of the land on which disposal is proposed to occur. The Commission shall not accept such a permit application unless it is accompanied by a copy of the notice and evidence that the notice was sent to each such government by certified mail, return receipt requested. The Commission may consider, in determining whether to issue the permit, the comments submitted by local governments.

(d1) Each applicant under subsections (c) or (d) for a permit (or the renewal thereof) for the operation of a treatment works for a private multi-family or single family residential development, in which the owners of individual residential units are required to organize as a lawfully constituted and incorporated homeowners' association of a subdivision, condominium, planned unit development, or townhouse complex, shall be required to enter into an operational agreement with the Commission as a condition of any such permit granted. The agreement shall address, as necessary, construction, operation, maintenance, assurance of financial solvency, transfers of ownership and abandonment of the plant, systems, or works, and shall be modified as necessary to reflect any changed condition at the treatment plant or in the development. Where the Commission finds appropriate, it may require any other private residential subdivision, condominium, planned unit development or townhouse complex which is served by a private treatment works and does not have a lawfully constituted and incorporated homeowners' association, and for which an applicant applies for a permit or the renewal thereof under subsections (c) or (d), to incorporate as a lawfully constituted homeowners' association, and after such incorporation, to enter into an operational agreement with the Commission and the applicant as a condition of any permit granted under subsections (c) or (d). The local government unit or units having jurisdiction over the development shall receive notice of the application within an established comment period and prior to final decision.

(d2) No permit issued pursuant to subsection (c) of this section shall be issued or renewed for a term exceeding five years. All other permits issued pursuant to this section for which an expiration date is specified shall be issued for a term not to exceed eight years.

(d3) The Department may transfer a permit issued pursuant to subsection (d) of this section without the consent of the permit holder to a successor-owner of the property on which the permitted activity is occurring or will occur as provided in this subsection:

(1) The Department may transfer a permit if all of the following conditions are met:

a. The successor-owner of the property submits to the Department a written request for the transfer of the permit.

b. The Department finds all of the following:

1. The permit holder is one of the following:

I. A natural person who is deceased.

II. A partnership, limited liability corporation, corporation, or any other business association that has been dissolved.

III. A person who has been lawfully and finally divested of title to the property on which the permitted activity is occurring or will occur.

IV. A person who has sold the property on which the permitted activity is occurring or will occur.

2. The successor-owner holds title to the property on which the permitted activity is occurring or will occur.

3. The successor-owner is the sole claimant of the right to engage in the permitted activity.

4. There will be no substantial change in the permitted activity.

(2) The permit holder shall comply with all terms and conditions of the permit until such time as the permit is transferred.

(3) The successor-owner shall comply with all terms and conditions of the permit once the permit has been transferred.

(4) Notwithstanding changes to law made after the original issuance of the permit, the Department may not impose new or different terms and conditions in the permit without the prior express consent of the successor-owner.

(e) Administrative Review. – A permit applicant, a permittee, or a third party who is dissatisfied with a decision of the Commission may commence a contested case by filing a petition under G.S. 150B-23 within 30 days after the Commission notifies the applicant or permittee of its decision. If the permit applicant, the permittee, or a third party does not file a petition within the required time, the Commission's decision is final and is not subject to review.

(f) Local Permit Programs for Sewer Extension and Reclaimed Water Utilization.
– Municipalities, counties, local boards or commissions, water and sewer authorities, or groups of municipalities and counties may establish and administer within their utility service areas their own general permit programs in lieu of State permit required in G.S. 143-215.1(a)(2), (3), and (8) above, for construction, operation, alteration, extension, change of proposed or existing sewer system, subject to the prior certification of the Commission. For purposes of this subsection, the service area of a municipality shall include only that area within the corporate limits of the municipality and that area outside a municipality in its extraterritorial jurisdiction where sewer service or a reclaimed water utilization system is already being provided by the municipality to the permit applicant or connection to the municipal sewer system or a reclaimed water utilization system is immediately available to the applicant; the service areas of counties and the other entities or groups shall include only those areas where sewer service or a reclaimed water utilization system is already being provided to the applicant by the permitting authority or connection to the permitting authority's system is immediately available. No later than the 180th day after the receipt of a program and statement submitted by any local government, commission, authority, or board the Commission shall certify any local program that does all of the following:

- (1) Provides by ordinance or local law for requirements compatible with those imposed by this Part and the rules implementing this Part.
- (2) Provides that the Department receives notice and a copy of each application for a permit and that it receives copies of approved permits and plans upon request by the Commission.
- (3) Provides that plans and specifications for all construction, extensions, alterations, and changes be prepared by or under the direct supervision of an engineer licensed to practice in this State.
- (4) Provides for the adequate enforcement of the program requirements by appropriate administrative and judicial process.
- (5) Provides for the adequate administrative organization, engineering staff, financial and other resources necessary to effectively carry out its plan review program.
- (6) Provides that the system is capable of interconnection at an appropriate time with an expanding municipal, county, or regional system.
- (7) Provides for the adequate arrangement for the continued operation, service, and maintenance of the sewer or a reclaimed water utilization system.
- (8) Is approved by the Commission as adequate to meet the requirements of this Part and the rules implementing this Part.

(f1) The Commission may deny, suspend, or revoke certification of a local program upon a finding that a violation of the provisions in subsection (f) of this section has occurred. A denial, suspension, or revocation of a certification of a local program shall be made only after notice and a public hearing. If the failure of a local program to carry out this subsection creates an imminent hazard, the Commission may summarily revoke the certification of the local program. Chapter 150B of the General Statutes does not apply to proceedings under this subsection.

(f2) Notwithstanding any other provision of subsections (f) and (f1) of this section, if the Commission determines that a sewer system, treatment works, or disposal system is operating in violation of the provisions of this Article and that the appropriate local authorities have not acted to enforce those provisions, the Commission may, after written notice to the appropriate local government, take enforcement action in accordance with the provisions of this Article.

(g) Any person who is required to hold a permit under this section shall submit to the Department a written description of his current and projected plans to reduce the discharge of waste and pollutants under such permit by source reduction or recycling. The written description shall accompany the payment of the annual permit fee. The written description shall also accompany any application for a new permit, or for modification of an existing permit, under this section. The written description required by this subsection shall not be considered part of a permit application and shall not serve as the basis for the denial of a permit or permit modification.

(h) Each applicant for a new permit or the modification of an existing permit issued under subsection (c) of this section shall include with the application: (i) the extent to which the new or modified facility is constructed in whole or in part with funds provided or administered by the State or a unit of local government, (ii) the impact of the facility on water quality, and (iii) whether there are cost-effective alternative technologies that will achieve greater protection of water quality. The Commission shall prepare an annual summary and analysis of the information provided by applicants pursuant to this subsection. The Commission shall submit the summary and analysis required by this subsection to the Environmental Review Commission (ERC) as a part of each annual report that the Commission is required to make to the ERC under G.S. 143B-282(b).

(i) Any person subject to the requirements of this section who is required to obtain an individual permit from the Commission for a disposal system under the authority of G.S. 143-215.1 or Chapter 130A of the General Statutes shall have a compliance boundary as may be established by rule or permit for various categories of disposal systems and beyond which groundwater quality standards may not be exceeded. Multiple contiguous properties under common ownership and permitted for use as a disposal system shall be treated as a single property with regard to determination of a compliance boundary and setbacks to property lines.

(j) Repealed by Session Laws 2014-122, s. 12(a), effective September 20, 2014.

(k) Where operation of a disposal system permitted under this section results in exceedances of the groundwater quality standards at or beyond the compliance boundary, the Commission shall require the permittee to undertake corrective action, without regard to the date that the system was first permitted, to restore the groundwater quality by assessing the cause, significance, and extent of the violation of standards and submit the results of the investigation and a plan and proposed schedule for corrective action to the Secretary. The permittee shall implement the plan as approved by, and in accordance with, a schedule established by the Secretary. In establishing a schedule the Secretary shall consider any reasonable schedule proposed by the permittee.

§ 143-215.3. General powers of Commission and Department; auxiliary powers

(a) Additional Powers. – In addition to the specific powers prescribed elsewhere in this Article, and for the purpose of carrying out its duties, the Commission shall have the power:

(1) To make rules implementing Articles 21, 21A, 21B, or 38 of this Chapter.

(1a) To adopt fee schedules and collect fees for the following:

a. Processing of applications for permits or registrations issued under Article 21, other than Parts 1 and 1A, Articles 21A, 21B, and 38 of this Chapter;

b. Administering permits or registrations issued under Article 21, other than Parts 1 and 1A, Articles 21A, 21B, and 38 of this Chapter including monitoring compliance with the terms of those permits; and

c. Reviewing, processing, and publicizing applications for construction grant awards under the Federal Water Pollution Control Act.

No fee may be charged under this provision, however, to a farmer who submits an application that pertains to his farming operations.

[. . .]

§ 143-215.10A. Legislative findings and intent

The General Assembly finds that animal operations provide significant economic and other benefits to this State. The growth of animal operations in recent years has increased the importance of good animal waste management practices to protect water quality. It is critical that the State balance growth with prudent environmental safeguards. It is the intention of the State to promote a cooperative and coordinated approach to animal waste management among the agencies of the State with a primary emphasis on technical assistance to farmers. To this end, the General Assembly intends to establish a permitting

program for animal waste management systems that will protect water quality and promote innovative systems and practices while minimizing the regulatory burden. Technical assistance will be provided by the Division of Soil and Water Conservation of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. Inspection and enforcement will be provided by the Division of Water Resources.

§ 143-215.10B. Definitions

As used in this Part:

- (1) "Animal operation " means any agricultural feedlot activity involving 250 or more swine, 100 or more confined cattle, 75 or more horses, 1,000 or more sheep, or 30,000 or more confined poultry with a liquid animal waste management system, or any agricultural feedlot activity with a liquid animal waste management system that discharges to the surface waters of the State. A public livestock market regulated under Article 35 of Chapter 106 of the General Statutes is an animal operation for purposes of this Part.
- (2) "Animal waste " means livestock or poultry excreta or a mixture of excreta with feed, bedding, litter, or other materials from an animal operation.
- (3) "Animal waste management system " means a combination of structures and nonstructural practices serving a feedlot that provide for the collection, treatment, storage, or land application of animal waste.
- (4) "Division " means the Division of Water Resources of the Department.
- (5) "Feedlot " means a lot or building or combination of lots and buildings intended for the confined feeding, breeding, raising, or holding of animals and either specifically designed as a confinement area in which animal waste may accumulate or where the concentration of animals is such that an established vegetative cover cannot be maintained. A building or lot is not a feedlot unless animals are confined for 45 or more days, which may or may not be consecutive, in a 12-month period. Pastures shall not be considered feedlots for purposes of this Part.
- (6) "Technical specialist " means an individual designated by the Soil and Water Conservation Commission, pursuant to rules adopted by that Commission, to certify animal waste management plans.

§ 143-215.10C. Applications and permits

- (a) No person shall construct or operate an animal waste management system for an animal operation or operate an animal waste management system for a dry litter poultry facility that is required to be permitted under 40 Code of Federal Regulations § 122, as amended at 73 Federal Register 70418 (November 20, 2008), without first obtaining an

individual permit or a general permit under this Article. The Commission shall develop a system of individual and general permits for animal operations and dry litter poultry facilities based on species, number of animals, and other relevant factors. It is the intent of the General Assembly that most animal waste management systems be permitted under a general permit. The Commission, in its discretion, may require that an animal waste management system be permitted under an individual permit if the Commission determines that an individual permit is necessary to protect water quality, public health, or the environment. The owner or operator of an animal operation shall submit an application for a permit at least 180 days prior to construction of a new animal waste management system or expansion of an existing animal waste management system and shall obtain the permit prior to commencement of the construction or expansion. The owner or operator of a dry litter poultry facility that is required to be permitted under 40 Code of Federal Regulations § 122, as amended at 73 Federal Register 70418 (November 20, 2008), shall submit an application for a permit at least 180 days prior to operation of a new animal waste management system.

(a) An owner or operator of an animal waste management system for an animal operation or a dry litter poultry facility that is required to be permitted under 40 Code of Federal Regulations § 122, as amended at 73 Federal Register 70418 (November 20, 2008), shall apply for an individual National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit or a general NPDES permit under this Article and may not discharge into waters of the State except in compliance with an NPDES permit.

(b) An animal waste management system that is not required to be permitted under 40 Code of Federal Regulations § 122, as amended at 73 Federal Register 70418 (November 20, 2008), shall be designed, constructed, and operated so that the animal operation served by the animal waste management system does not cause pollution in the waters of the State except as may result because of rainfall from a storm event more severe than the 25-year, 24-hour storm.

(b1) An existing animal waste management system that is required to be permitted under 40 Code of Federal Regulations § 122, as amended at 73 Federal Register 70418 (November 20, 2008), shall be designed, constructed, maintained, and operated in accordance with 40 Code of Federal Regulations § 412, as amended at 73 Federal Register 70418 (November 20, 2008), so that the animal operation served by the animal waste management system does not cause pollution in waters of the State except as may result because of rainfall from a storm event more severe than the 25-year, 24-hour storm. A new animal operation or dry litter poultry facility that is required to be permitted under 40 Code of Federal Regulations § 412.46, as amended at 73 Federal Register 70418 (November 20, 2008), shall be designed, constructed, maintained, and operated so that there is no discharge of pollutants to waters of the State.

(c) The Commission shall act on a permit application as quickly as possible and may conduct any inquiry or investigation it considers necessary before acting on an application.

(d) All applications for permits or for renewal of an existing permit shall be in writing, and the Commission may prescribe the form of the applications. All applications shall include an animal waste management system plan approved by a technical specialist. The Commission may require an applicant to submit additional information the Commission considers necessary to evaluate the application. Permits and renewals issued pursuant to this section shall be effective until the date specified therein or until rescinded unless modified or revoked by the Commission.

(e) An animal waste management plan for an animal operation shall include all of the following components:

(1) A checklist of potential odor sources and a choice of site-specific, cost-effective remedial best management practices to minimize those sources.

(2) A checklist of potential insect sources and a choice of site-specific, cost-effective best management practices to minimize insect problems.

(3) Provisions that set forth acceptable methods of disposing of mortalities.

(4) Provisions regarding best management practices for riparian buffers or equivalent controls, particularly along perennial streams.

(5) Provisions regarding the use of emergency spillways and site-specific emergency management plans that set forth operating procedures to follow during emergencies in order to minimize the risk of environmental damage.

(6) Provisions regarding periodic testing of waste products used as nutrient sources as close to the time of application as practical and at least within 60 days of the date of application and periodic testing, at least once every three years, of soils at crop sites where the waste products are applied. Nitrogen shall be a rate-determining element. Phosphorus shall be evaluated according to the nutrient management standard approved by the Soil and Water Conservation Commission of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and the Natural Resources Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture for facilities that are required to be permitted under 40 Code of Federal Regulations § 122, as amended at 73 Federal Register 70418 (November 20, 2008). If the evaluation demonstrates the need to limit the application of phosphorus in order to comply with the nutrient management standard, then phosphorus shall be a rate-determining element. Zinc and copper levels in the soils shall be monitored, and alternative crop sites shall be used when these metals approach excess levels.

(7) Provisions regarding waste utilization plans that assure a balance between nitrogen application rates and nitrogen crop requirements, that assure that lime is applied to maintain pH in the optimum range for crop production, and that include corrective action, including revisions to the waste utilization plan based on data of

crop yields and crops analysis, that will be taken if this balance is not achieved as determined by testing conducted pursuant to subdivision (6) of this subsection.

(8) Provisions regarding the completion and maintenance of records on forms developed by the Department, which records shall include information addressed in subdivisions (6) and (7) of this subsection, including the dates and rates that waste products are applied to soils at crop sites, and shall be made available upon request by the Department.

(f) Any owner or operator of a dry litter poultry facility that is not required to be permitted under 40 Code of Federal Regulations § 122, as amended at 73 Federal Register 70418 (November 20, 2008), but that involves 30,000 or more birds shall develop an animal waste management plan that complies with the testing and record-keeping requirements under subdivisions (6) through (8) of subsection (e) of this section. Any operator of this type of animal waste management system shall retain records required under this section and by the Department on-site for three years.

(f1) An animal waste management plan for a dry litter poultry facility required to be permitted under 40 Code of Federal Regulations § 122, as amended at 73 Federal Register 70418 (November 20, 2008), shall include the components set out in subdivisions (3), (6), (7), and (8) of subsection (e) of this section, and to the extent required by 40 Code of Federal Regulations § 122, as amended at 73 Federal Register 70418 (November 20, 2008), for land application discharges, subdivision (4) of subsection (e) of this section.

(f2) Periodic testing of waste products as required in subdivision (6) of subsection (e) of this section, subsection (f) of this section and subsection (f1) of this section may be temporarily suspended in compliance with G.S. 106-399.4 when the State Veterinarian, in consultation with the Commissioner of Agriculture and with the approval of the Governor, determines that there is an imminent threat within the State of a contagious animal disease. The suspension of testing only applies to the animal operation types designated by the State Veterinarian, and shall be in effect for a period of time that the State Veterinarian deems necessary to prevent and control the animal disease. During the suspension of waste analysis, waste product nutrient content to be used for application of waste at no greater than agronomic rates shall be established by the 1217 Interagency Committee as created by Session Law 1995-626.

(g) The Commission shall encourage the development of alternative and innovative animal waste management technologies. The Commission shall provide sufficient flexibility in the regulatory process to allow for the timely evaluation of alternative and innovative animal waste management technologies and shall encourage operators of animal waste management systems to participate in the evaluation of these technologies. The Commission shall provide sufficient flexibility in the regulatory process to allow for the prompt implementation of alternative and innovative animal waste management technologies that are demonstrated to provide improved protection to public health and the environment.

(h) The owner or operator of an animal waste management system shall:

(1) In the event of a discharge of 1,000 gallons or more of animal waste to the surface waters of the State, issue a press release to all print and electronic news media that provide general coverage in the county where the discharge occurred setting out the details of the discharge. The owner or operator shall issue the press release within 48 hours after the owner or operator has determined that the discharge has reached the surface waters of the State. The owner or operator shall retain a copy of the press release and a list of the news media to which it was distributed for at least one year after the discharge and shall provide a copy of the press release and the list of the news media to which it was distributed to any person upon request.

(2) In the event of a discharge of 15,000 gallons or more of animal waste to the surface waters of the State, publish a notice of the discharge in a newspaper having general circulation in the county in which the discharge occurs and in each county downstream from the point of discharge that is significantly affected by the discharge. The Secretary shall determine, at the Secretary's sole discretion, which counties are significantly affected by the discharge and shall approve the form and content of the notice and the newspapers in which the notice is to be published. The notice shall be captioned "NOTICE OF DISCHARGE OF ANIMAL WASTE". The owner or operator shall publish the notice within 10 days after the Secretary has determined the counties that are significantly affected by the discharge and approved the form and content of the notice and the newspapers in which the notice is to be published. The owner or operator shall file a copy of the notice and proof of publication with the Department within 30 days after the notice is published. Publication of a notice of discharge under this subdivision is in addition to the requirement to issue a press release under subdivision (1) of this subsection.

(i) A person who obtains an individual permit under G.S. 143-215.1 for an animal waste management system that serves a public livestock market shall not be required to obtain a permit under this Part and is not subject to the requirements of this Part.

§ 143-215.10D. Operations review

(a) The Division, in cooperation with the Division of Soil and Water Conservation of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, shall develop a reporting procedure for use by technical specialists who conduct operations reviews of animal operations. The reporting procedure shall be consistent with the Division's inspection procedure of animal operations and with this Part. The report shall include any corrective action recommended by the technical specialist to assist the owner or operator of the animal operation in complying with all permit requirements. The report shall be submitted to the Division within 10 days following the operations review unless the technical specialist observes a violation described in G.S. 143-215.10E. If the technical specialist finds a

violation described in G.S. 143-215.10E, the report shall be filed with the Division immediately.

(b) An animal operation may request an operations review. The operations review shall be conducted by a technical specialist employed by the Division of Soil and Water Conservation of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, a local Soil and Water Conservation District, or the federal Natural Resources Conservation Services working under the direction of the Division of Soil and Water Conservation.

§ 143-215.10E. Violations requiring immediate notification

(a) Any employee of a State agency or unit of local government lawfully on the premises and engaged in activities relating to the animal operation who observes any of the following violations shall immediately notify the owner or operator of the animal operation and the Division:

- (1) Any direct discharge of animal waste into the waters of the State.
- (2) Any deterioration or leak in a lagoon system that poses an immediate threat to the environment.
- (3) Failure to maintain adequate storage capacity in a lagoon that poses an immediate threat to public health or the environment.
- (4) Overspraying animal waste either in excess of the limits set out in the animal waste management plan or where runoff enters waters of the State.
- (5) Any discharge that bypasses a lagoon system.

(b) Any employee of a federal agency lawfully on the premises and engaged in activities relating to the animal operation who observes any of the above violations is encouraged to immediately notify the Division.

§ 143-215.10F. Inspections

(a) Except as provided in subsection (b) of this section, the Division shall conduct inspections of all animal operations that are subject to a permit under G.S. 143-215.10C at least once a year to determine whether the system is causing a violation of water quality standards and whether the system is in compliance with its animal waste management plan or any other condition of the permit.

(b) As an alternative to the inspection program set forth in subsection (a) of this section, the Division of Soil and Water Conservation of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services shall conduct inspections of all animal operations that are subject to a permit under G.S. 143-215.10C at least once a year to determine whether the system is

causing a violation of water quality standards and whether the system is in compliance with its animal waste management plan or any other condition of the permit. The alternative inspection program shall be located in up to four counties selected using the criteria set forth in Section 15.4(a) of S.L. 1997-443, as amended, as it existed prior to its expiration. The Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services shall establish procedures whereby resources within the local Soil and Water Conservation Districts serving the counties are used for quick response to complaints and reported problems previously referred only to the Division of Water Resources.

§ 143-215.10G. Fees for animal waste management systems

(a) The Department shall charge an annual permit fee to an animal operation that is subject to a permit under G.S. 143-215.10C for an animal waste management system according to the following schedule:

(1) For a system with a design capacity of 38,500 or more and less than 100,000 pounds steady state live weight, sixty dollars (\$ 60.00).

(2) For a system with a design capacity of 100,000 or more and less than 800,000 pounds steady state live weight, one hundred eighty dollars (\$ 180.00).

(3) For a system with a design capacity of 800,000 pounds or more steady state live weight, three hundred sixty dollars (\$ 360.00).

(a1) The Department shall charge an annual permit fee to a dry litter poultry facility that is subject to a permit under G.S. 143-215.10C for an animal waste management system according to the following schedule:

(1) For a system with a permitted capacity of less than 25,000 laying chickens, less than 37,500 nonlaying chickens, or less than 16,500 turkeys, sixty dollars (\$ 60.00).

(2) For a system with a permitted capacity of 25,000 or more but less than 200,000 laying chickens, 37,500 or more but less than 290,000 nonlaying chickens, 16,500 or more but less than 133,000 turkeys, one hundred eighty dollars (\$ 180.00).

(3) For a system with a permitted capacity of more than 200,000 laying chickens, more than 290,000 nonlaying chickens, or more than 133,000 turkeys, three hundred sixty dollars (\$ 360.00).

(b) An application for a new permit under this section shall be accompanied by an initial application fee equal to the annual fee for that permit. If a permit is issued, the application fee shall be applied as the annual fee for the first year that the permit is in effect. If the application is denied, the application fee shall not be refunded.

(c) Fees collected under this section shall be credited to the Water and Air Quality Account. The Department shall use fees collected pursuant to this section to cover the costs of administering this Part.

.0101 PURPOSE

This Subchapter describes the operating procedures for the division under the guidance of the commission implementing the Agriculture Cost Share Program for Nonpoint Source Pollution Control. Procedures and guidelines for participating districts are also described. The purpose of the voluntary program is to reduce the delivery of agricultural nonpoint source (NPS) pollution into the water courses of the state.

.0102 DEFINITIONS FOR SUBCHAPTER 59D

In addition to the definitions found in G.S. 143-215.74, the following terms used in this Subchapter have the following meanings:

- (1) Agriculture Nonpoint Source (NPS) Pollution means pollution originating from a diffuse source as a result of agricultural activities related to crop production, production and management of poultry and livestock, land application of waste materials, and management of forestland incidental to agricultural production.
- (2) Allocation means the annual share of the state's appropriation to participating districts.
- (3) Applicant means a person(s) who applies for best management practice cost sharing monies from the district. An applicant may also be referred to as a cooperator. All entities, with which the applicant is associated, including those in other counties, shall be considered the same applicant.
- (4) Average Costs means the calculated cost, determined by averaging actual costs and current cost estimates necessary for best management practice implementation. Actual costs include labor, supplies, and other direct costs required for physical installation of a practice.
- (5) Best Management Practice (BMP) means a structural or nonstructural management based practice used singularly or in combination to reduce nonpoint source inputs to receiving waters.
- (6) Conservation Plan of Operation (CPO) means a written plan scheduling the applicant's decisions concerning land use, and both cost shared and non cost shared BMPs to be installed and maintained on the operating unit.

(7) Cost Share Agreement means an annual or long term agreement between the applicant and the district which defines the BMPs to be cost shared, rate and amount of payment, minimum practice life, and date of BMP installation. The agreement shall state that the recipient shall maintain and repair the practice(s) for the specified minimum life of the practice. The Cost Share Agreement shall have a maximum contract life of three years for BMP installation. The district shall perform an annual status review during the installation period.

(8) Cost Share Incentive (CSI) means a predetermined fixed payment paid to an applicant for implementing a BMP in lieu of cost share.

(9) Cost Share Rate means a cost share percentage paid to an applicant for implementing BMPs.

(10) Detailed Implementation Plan means the plan approved by the commission that specifies the guidelines for the current program, year including BMPs that will be eligible for cost sharing and the minimum life expectancy of those practices.

(11) District BMP means a BMP designated by a district to reduce the delivery of agricultural NPS pollution and which is reviewed and approved by the Division to be technically adequate prior to funding.

(12) Encumbered Funds means monies from a district's allocation which have been committed to an applicant after initial approval of the cost share agreement.

(13) Full Time Equivalent (FTE) means 2,080 hours per annum which equals one full time technical position.

(14) In kind Contribution means a contribution by the applicant towards the implementation of BMPs. In kind contributions shall be approved by the district and can include but not be limited to labor, fuel, machinery use, and supplies and materials necessary for implementing the approved BMPs.

(15) Landowner means any natural person or other legal entity, including a governmental agency, who holds either an estate of freehold (such as a fee simple absolute or a life estate) or an estate for years or from year to year in land, but does not include an estate at will or by sufferance in land. Furthermore, a governmental or quasi governmental agency such as a drainage district or a soil and water conservation district, or any such agency, by whatever name called, exercising similar powers for similar purposes, can be a landowner for the purposes of these Rules if the governmental agency holds an easement in land.

(16) Program Year means the period from July 1 through June 30 for which funds are allocated to districts.

(17) Proper Maintenance means that a practice(s) is being maintained such that the practice(s) is successfully performing the function for which it was originally implemented.

(18) Soil Loss Tolerance (t) means the maximum allowable annual soil erosion rate to maintain the soil resource base, depending on soil type.

(19) Strategy Plan means the annual plan for the N.C. Agriculture Cost Share Program for Nonpoint Source Pollution Control to be developed by each district. The plan identifies pollution treatment needs and the level of cost sharing and technical assistance monies required to address those annual needs in the respective district.

(20) Technical Representative of the district means a person designated by the district to act on their behalf who participates in the planning, design, implementation and inspection of BMPs. These practices shall be technically reviewed by the Division. The district chairman shall certify that the technical representative has properly planned, designed and inspected the BMPs.

(21) Unencumbered Funds means the portion of the allocation to each district which has not been committed for cost sharing.

.0103 ALLOCATION GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

(a) The Commission shall allocate the cost share funds to the districts in the designated program areas. To receive fund allocations, each district designated eligible by the Commission shall submit an annual strategy plan to the Commission at the beginning of each fiscal year. Funds may be allocated to each district for any or all of the following purposes: cost share payments, cost share incentive payments, technical assistance, or administrative assistance. Use of funds for technical and administrative assistance must follow the guidelines set forth in Rule .0106 of this Subchapter.

(b) Funds shall be allocated to the districts at the beginning of the fiscal year and whenever the Commission determines that sufficient funds are available to justify a reallocation. Districts shall be allocated monies based on the identified level of agriculture-related nonpoint source pollution problems, the respective district's BMP installation goals as demonstrated in the district annual strategy plan, and the district's record of performance to affect BMP installation by cooperating farmers. The allocation method used for disbursement of funds is based on the relative position of each respective district for those parameters approved by the Commission pursuant to Paragraph (g) of this Rule. Each district is assigned points for each parameter, and the points are totaled and proportioned to the total dollars available under the current program year funding according to the following formula:

(1) Sum of Parameter Points = Total Points

(2) Percentage Total Total Dollars Available

Points Each x Dollars = to

District Available Each District

(3) The minimum allocated to a particular district shall be twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) per program year, unless the district requests less than twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000).

(4) If a district requests less than the dollars available to that district in Subparagraph (b)(2) of this Rule, then the excess funds beyond those requested by the district shall be allocated to the districts who did not receive their full requested allocation using the same methodology described in Subparagraph (b)(2) of this Rule.

(c) 95 percent of the total program funding shall be allocated to the district accounts in the initial allocation. The Division shall retain five percent of the total funding in a contingency fund to be used to respond to an emergency or natural disaster. If the funds are not needed to respond to an emergency, then the contingency fund shall be allocated at the March meeting of the Commission.

(d) The Commission may recall funds allocated to a district during a fiscal year that have not been encumbered to an agreement at any time if it determines the recalled funds are needed to respond to an emergency or natural disaster.

(e) At any time a district may submit a revised strategy plan and apply to the Commission for additional funds.

(f) CPO's that encumber funds under the current year must be submitted to the Division by 5:00 p.m. on the first Wednesday in June.

(g) Districts shall be allocated funds based on their respective data for each of the following parameters:

(1) Percentage of total acres of agricultural land in North Carolina that are in the respective district (including cropland, hayland, pasture land, and orchards/vineyards) as reported in the most recent edition of the North Carolina Agricultural Statistics. The actual percentage shall be normalized to a 1-100 scale. (20%)

(2) Percentage of total number of animal units in North Carolina that are in the respective district as reported in the most recent edition of the North Carolina Agricultural Statistics and converted to animal units using the conversion factors approved by the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service. The actual percentage shall be normalized to a 1-100 scale. (20%)

(3) Relative rank of the number of miles of stream identified as less than fully supporting due to agricultural nonpoint source pollution as reported in the state's 303(d) list, 305(b) report, and basin plan. (20%)

(4) Relative rank of the percentage of the county draining to waters classified as Primary Nursery Areas, Outstanding Resource Waters, High Quality Waters, Trout, Shellfishing, and Critical Water Supply on the current schedule of Water Quality Standards and Classifications. (10%)

(5) The percentage of cost share funds allocated to a district that are encumbered to contracts in the best three of the most recent four completed program years as reported on the NC Agriculture Cost Share Program Database. (10%)

(6) Percentage of program funds encumbered to contracts that are actually expended for installed BMPs in the best three of the most recent four-year period for which the allowed time for implementing contracted BMPs has expired as reported on the NC Agriculture Cost Share Program Database. (10%)

(7) Relative rank of the average erosion rate for agricultural land in the county as reported in the National Resources Inventory, unless the State Conservationist of the Natural Resources Conservation Service specifies that another information source would be more current and accurate. (10%)

.0104 BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ELIGIBLE FOR COST SHARE PAYMENTS

(a) BMP's eligible for cost sharing will be restricted to those BMP's listed in the Detailed Implementation Plan approved by the commission for the current program year. BMP's shall meet the following criteria to be listed in the Detailed Implementation Plan:

(1) All eligible BMP's must be designed to reduce the input of agricultural nonpoint source pollution into the water courses of the state or as otherwise authorized by statute.

(2) Information establishing the average cost of the specified BMP must be available. District BMP's may use actual costs as indicated by receipts, if average costs are not available.

(3) Eligible BMP's shall have adequate technical specifications as set forth in Paragraph (b) of this Rule.

(b) BMP definitions and specifications are set forth periodically in the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service Technical Guide, Section IV, Raleigh, North Carolina or by the division for district BMP's. BMP specifications appropriate for the current program year shall be met or exceeded in order for an applicant to qualify for cost sharing. Provisions for exceeding BMP design specifications by an applicant may be

considered at the time of application with the district. The applicant shall assume responsibility for all costs associated with exceeding BMP design specifications.

(c) The minimum life expectancy of the BMP's shall be listed in the Detailed Implementation Plan. Practices designated by a district shall meet the life expectancy requirement established by the division for that district BMP.

.0105 COST SHARE AND INCENTIVE PAYMENTS

(a) Cost share and incentive payments may be made through Cost Share Agreements between the district and the applicant.

(b) For all practices except those eligible for CSI, the state shall provide a percentage of the average cost for BMP installation not to exceed the maximum cost share percentages shown in subdivisions (6), (8), and (9) of G.S. 143-215.74(b), and the applicant shall contribute the remainder of the cost. In kind contributions by the applicant shall be included in the applicants' cost share contribution. In kind contributions shall be specified in the agreement for cost sharing and shall be approved by the district.

(c) CSI payments shall be limited to a maximum of three years per farm.

(d) Average installation costs for each comparative area or region of the state and the amount of cost share incentive payments shall be updated and revised at least triennially by the Division for approval by the Commission.

(e) The total annual cost share payments to an applicant shall not exceed the maximum funding authorized in subdivisions (6) and (9) of G.S. 143-215.74(b).

(f) Cost share payments to implement BMPs under this program may be combined with other funding programs, as long as the combined cost share rate does not exceed the amount and percentages set forth in Paragraphs (b) and (e) of this Rule. For special funding programs where the applicant relinquishes all production capability on his or her agricultural land for at least 10 years, combined funding may equal up to 100 percent. Agriculture Cost Share Program funding shall not exceed the maximum cost share percentages shown in subdivisions (6), (8), and (9) of G.S. 143-215.74(b).

(g) Use of cost share payments is restricted to land located within the county approved for funding by the Commission. However, in the situation where an applicant's farm is not located solely within a county, the entire farm, if contiguous, shall be eligible for cost share payments.

(h) Cost share contracts used on or for local, state or federal government land must be approved by the Commission in order to avoid potential conflicts of interest and to ensure that such contracts are consistent with the purposes of this program.

(i) The district Board of Supervisors may approve Cost Share Agreements with cost share percentages or amounts less than the maximum allowable in subdivisions (6), (8), and (9) of G.S. 143-215.74(b) if:

(1) The Commission allocates insufficient cost share BMP funding to the district to enable it to award funding to all applicants;

(2) The district establishes other criteria in its annual strategy plan for cost sharing percentages or amounts less than those allowable in subdivisions (6), (8), and (9) of G.S. 143-215.74(b).

(j) For purposes of determining eligible payments under practice-specific caps described in the detailed implementation plan, the district board shall consider all entities with which the applicant is associated, including those in other counties, as the same applicant.

.0106 TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FUNDS

(a) The funds available for technical assistance shall be allocated by the commission based on the recommendation of the division and the needs as expressed by the district and needs to accelerate the installation of BMP's in the respective district. Each district may use these monies to fund new positions or to accelerate present technical assistance positions. Districts must provide an itemized budget to the division in order to qualify for technical assistance funds. Matching funds for district technical assistance shall be approved by the commission prior to any expenditure of funds. Budget revisions submitted by the districts may be approved by the NPS Section based on Paragraph (b) of this Rule. N. C. Agriculture Cost Share technical assistance funds may be used for each FTE technical position with the district matching at least 50 percent of the total. Priorities for funding positions shall be assigned based as follows:

(1) Subject to availability of funds and local match, provide support for one FTE technical position for every district.

(2) Subject to availability of funds and local match, provide support for one additional FTE technical position if the position is needed to further support program implementation. Priority for funding positions beyond one FTE per district shall be based on the following parameters:

(A) Whether the position is presently funded by program technical assistance funds.

(B) The number of program dollars encumbered to contracts in the highest three of the previous four completed program years, and

(C) The number of program dollars actually expended for installed BMPs in the highest three years of the most recent four-year period for which the

allowed time for implementing contracted BMPs has expired as reported on the NC Agriculture Cost Share Database.

(3) Subject to availability of funds and local match, provide support for additional FTE technical position if the position is needed to further accelerate treatment of identified critical nonpoint source pollution problem(s).

(b) Technical assistance funds may be used for salary, benefits, social security, field equipment and supplies, office rent, office equipment and supplies, postage, telephone service, travel and mileage. A maximum of two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500) per year for each FTE technical position is allowed for mileage charges.

(c) Technical assistance funds may not be used to fund technical assistance positions which do not meet the following minimum requirements:

(1) associated degree in engineering, agriculture, forestry or related field; or

(2) high school diploma with two years experience in the fields listed in Rule .0106(c)(1), of this Subchapter.

(d) Cost shared positions must be used to accelerate the program activities in the district. A district technician cost shared with program funds may work on other activities as delegated by the field office supervisor but the total hours charged to the program by field office personnel must equal or exceed those hours funded through the program. Also, these hours must be in addition to those hours normally spent in BMP planning and installation by district personnel.

(e) District technicians may be jointly funded by more than one district to accelerate the program in each participating district. Each district must be eligible for cost sharing in the program. Requests for funding (salary, FICA, insurance, etc.) of a shared position must be presented to the division by all concerned districts and the division shall cost share to the billing district at a 50-50 rate based on the portion of the FTE provided each respective district. A shared position must be officially housed in one specific district and cost share for support items (office rent, telephone, etc.) shall be paid to one district only.

(f) Funds, if available, shall be allocated to each participating district to provide for administrative costs under this program. These funds shall be used for clerical assistance and other related program administrative costs and shall be matched with in-kind funds of an equal amount from the district.

.0107 COST SHARE AGREEMENT

(a) The landowner shall be required to sign the agreement for all practices other than agronomic practices and land application of animal wastes. An applicant who is not the landowner may submit a long term written lease or other legal document, indicating control over the land in lieu of the landowner's signature, provided the control runs the

life of the practice as listed in the respective Program Year's Implementation Plan. Signature on the agreement constitutes responsibility for BMP maintenance and continuation.

(b) As a condition for receiving cost share or cost share incentive payments for implementing BMP's, the applicant shall agree to continue and maintain those practices for the minimum life as set forth in the Detailed Implementation Plan, effective the date the BMP's are implemented.

(c) As a condition for receiving cost share payments, the applicant shall agree to submit a soil test sample for analysis and follow the fertilizer application recommendations as close as reasonably and practically possible. Soil testing shall be required a minimum of every two years on all cropland affected by cost share payments. Failure to soil test shall not constitute noncompliance with the cost share agreement.

(d) As a condition for receiving cost share payments for waste management systems, the applicant shall agree to have the waste material analyzed once every year to determine its nutrient content. If the waste is land applied, the applicant shall agree to soil test the area of application and to apply the waste as close as reasonably and practically possible to recommended rates. When waste is land applied, waste analysis and soil testing shall be conducted annually.

(e) The technical representative of the district shall determine if the practice(s) implemented have been installed according to specifications as defined for the respective program year in the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Technical Guide, Section IV, Raleigh, North Carolina, according to other specifications approved by the Commission pursuant to 02 NCAC 59G .0103, or according to specifications approved by the Division for district BMP's based on the criteria established in 02 NCAC 59G .0103(c). The district shall be responsible for making an annual spot check of five percent of all the cost share agreements to ensure proper maintenance. Waste management systems shall be included as part of the annual five percent check except for systems on farms without certified waste management plans. In those cases, the districts shall conduct annual status reviews for five years following implementation.

(f) If the technical representative of the district determines that a BMP for which program funds were received has been destroyed or has not been properly maintained, the applicant will be notified that the BMP must be repaired or re-implemented within 30 working days. For vegetative practices, applicants are given one calendar year to re-establish the vegetation. The district may grant a prescribed extension period if it determines compliance can not be met due to circumstances beyond the applicants control.

(g) If the practices are not repaired or reimplemented within the specified time, the applicant shall be required to repay to the Division a prorated refund for cost share BMP's as shown in Table 1 and 100 percent of the cost share incentive payments received.

Table 1
PRORATED REFUND SCHEDULE FOR NONCOMPLIANCE OF COST SHARE
PAYMENTS

Percent Age of Practice Life	Percent Refund
0	100
10	95
20	89
30	82
40	74
50	65
60	55
70	44
80	31
90	17
100	0

(h) An applicant, who has been found in noncompliance and who does not agree to repair or reimplement the cost shared practices, and a District may jointly request the commission to informally mediate the case. To invoke this method of mediation, both parties must stipulate that the commission mediation is binding.

(i) An applicant shall have 180 days to make repayment to the Division following the final appeals process.

(j) The inability to properly maintain cost shared practices or the destruction of such practices through no fault of the applicant shall not be considered as noncompliance with the cost share agreement.

(k) When land under cost share agreement changes owners the new landowner shall be strongly encouraged by the district to accept the remaining maintenance obligation. If the new landowner does not accept the maintenance requirements in writing, then the original applicant shall be required to refund 100 percent of all CSI payments and a prorated portion of cost share payments in accordance with Table 1 in Paragraph (g) of this Rule.

.0108 DISTRICT PROGRAM OPERATION

(a) As a component of the annual strategy plan, the district shall prioritize both cropland and animal operations according to pollution potential. The district shall target technical and financial assistance to facilitate BMP implementation on the identified critical areas.

(b) Priority by the district may be given to implementing systems of BMP's which provide the most cost effective reduction of nonpoint source pollution.

- (c) All applicants shall apply to the district and complete the necessary forms in order to receive cost share payments.
- (d) The district shall review each application and the feasibility of each application. The district shall review and approve the evaluation and assign priority for cost sharing. All applicants shall be informed of cost share approval or denial.
- (e) Upon approval of the application by the district, the applicant and the district shall enter into a cost share agreement. The cost share agreement shall list the practices to be cost shared with state funds. The agreement shall also include the average cost of the recommended practice(s), cost incentive payment of the practice(s), and the expected implementation date of the practice(s). The District shall develop CPO's, which shall become a part of the cost share agreement.
- (f) Upon completion of practice(s) implementation, the technical representative of the district shall notify the district of compliance with design specifications.
- (g) Upon notification, the district shall review the CPO. Upon approval, the district shall certify the practices in the CPO and notify the Division to make payment to the applicant.
- (h) Upon receipt of a quarterly statement from the district, the Division shall reimburse to the district the appropriate amount for technical and clerical assistance.
- (i) The district shall be responsible for and approve all BMP inspections as set forth in Rule .0107(e) of this Section to insure proper maintenance and continuation under the cost share agreement.
- (j) The district shall keep appropriate records dealing with the program.

.1301 SCOPE

The rules in this Section shall apply to all persons proposing to construct, modify, expand, or operate an animal waste management system. These Rules shall not apply to manure haulers regulated pursuant to Section .1400 of this Subchapter.

.1302 DEFINITIONS

The definitions in G.S. 143-215.10B, in Rule .0103 and .1102 of this Subchapter, and as follows shall apply to this Section.

- (1) "Animal waste management plan" means a plan to properly collect, store, treat or apply animal waste to the land in an environmentally safe manner developed in accordance with G.S. 143-215.10C.
- (2) "Animal Waste Residuals" means residuals that have been generated during the treatment of animal waste.

(3) "Bag or other container" shall mean a bag, bucket, bin, box, carton, vehicle, trailer, tanker, or an open or closed receptacle with a load capacity of 1.102 short tons or one metric ton or less.

(4) "Expanded animal waste management system" means an increase in the permitted steady state live weight associated with the animal waste management system.

(5) "New animal waste management system" means animal waste management systems that are constructed and operated at a site where no feedlot existed previously or where a permit for a system has been rescinded and then reissued when the permittee confines animals in excess of the thresholds established in G.S. 143-215.10B. Notwithstanding Rule .1307(a) of this Section, a new animal waste management system shall not include a facility where a system serving a feedlot that has been abandoned or unused for a period of less than five years and then put back into service or if the facility:

(a) has had no animals on site for five continuous years or more;

(b) notifies the Division in writing at least 60 days prior to bringing any animals back on to the site;

(c) was depopulated after January 1, 2005, and the system ceased operation no longer than 10 years prior to the current date;

(d) at the time the system ceased operation, was in compliance with an individual permit or a general permit issued pursuant to G.S. 143-215.10C;

(e) was issued an individual permit or certificate of coverage under a general permit issued pursuant to G.S. 143-215.10C for operation of the system before any animals are brought on the facility;

(f) was issued a permit that does not allow production, measured by steady state live weight, to exceed the greatest steady state live weight previously permitted for the system under G.S. 143-215.10C;

(g) has no component of the animal waste management system, other than an existing barn or land application site, constructed on land that is located within the 100-year floodplain; and

(h) has an inactive animal waste management system that was not closed using the expenditure of public funds and was not closed pursuant to a settlement agreement, court order, cost share agreement, or grant condition.

(6) "NRCS" means the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service.

.1303 PERMITTING BY REGULATION

(a) The following systems shall be deemed permitted pursuant to Rule .0113 of this Subchapter provided the system meets the criteria in Rule .0113 of this Subchapter and all criteria required for the specific system by this Rule:

(1) Systems that do not meet the criteria of an animal operation permitted under Rule .1304 or Rule .1305 of this Subchapter and all other systems not specifically mentioned in this Section if:

(A) the animal waste is land applied at no greater than agronomic rates to land owned by the waste generator or under the waste generator's authority;

(B) the storage and land application of animal waste is no closer than 100 feet from a well other than a monitoring well;

(C) animal waste is not applied on land that is flooded, saturated with water, frozen, or snow covered at the time of land application; and

(D) no animal waste is land applied during precipitation events.

(2) Poultry operations that use a dry litter system with more than 30,000 birds and that do not meet the criteria specified in Rule .1305 of this Subchapter if:

(A) records are maintained for three years that include the dates the litter was removed, the estimated amount of litter removed, and the location of the sites where the litter was land applied by the poultry operation;

(B) the waste is applied at no greater than agronomic rates;

(C) a vegetative buffer of at least 25 feet is maintained from a perennial stream or perennial waterbody for land application sites;

(D) land application of litter is no closer than 100 feet from a well other than a monitoring well;

(E) litter is stockpiled no closer than 100 feet from a perennial stream, perennial waterbody, or well other than a monitoring well;

(F) litter is not stockpiled uncovered for greater than 15 days;

(G) litter is not applied on land that is flooded, saturated with water, frozen, or snow covered at the time of land application;

(H) no litter is land applied during precipitation events; and

(I) if a manure hauler is used, records are maintained of the dates the litter was removed, the estimated amount of litter removed, and the name, address, and phone number of the manure hauler.

(3) Land application sites under separate ownership from the waste generator, that receive animal waste from animal waste management systems that are deemed permitted, when all the following conditions are met:

(A) the waste is applied at no greater than agronomic rates;

(B) the storage and land application of animal waste is no closer than 100 feet from a well other than a monitoring well;

(C) a vegetative buffer of at least 25 feet is maintained from a perennial stream or perennial waterbody;

(D) animal waste is not applied on land that is flooded, saturated with water, frozen, or snow covered at the time of land application; and

(E) no animal waste is land applied during precipitation events.

(b) The Director may determine that a system should not be deemed permitted in accordance with this Rule and Rule .0113 of this Subchapter. This determination shall be made in accordance with Rule .0113(e) of this Subchapter.

.1304 STATE PERMITTING REQUIREMENTS

(a) This rule shall apply to animal waste management systems that meet the definition of an animal operation in G.S. 143-215.10B but are not subject to regulation pursuant to Rule .1305 of this Section.

(b) An animal waste management plan shall be submitted as follows:

(1) The animal waste management practices or combination of practices that are selected to comprise a plan for a specific facility shall meet NRCS standards, the standard of practices adopted by the Soil and Water Conservation Commission pursuant to 02 NCAC 59E .0104, or standards for any combination of practices that provide water quality protection and are approved by one of these two agencies; and all applicable State statutes and rules at the time of development or design. NRCS standards relating to phosphorus application rates for animal waste shall not be incorporated as part of this rule.

(2) Permittee shall submit plans that have been approved by a technical specialist. The technical specialist shall certify that the best management practices that comprise the approved plan meet applicable standards and specifications, pursuant to G.S. 143-215.10C. The certification shall be submitted to the Division on Division-supplied forms or forms approved by the Division as providing the same information as required by the Division's forms.

(3) The waste shall not be applied at greater than agronomic rates.

(4) The land application and siting setbacks shall meet the applicable conditions established in G.S. 106-803 and NRCS standards at the time of site construction or at the time waste is first applied at the land application site.

(5) Notwithstanding Subparagraph (b)(4) of this Rule, land application of waste shall be no closer than 100 feet from a well other than a monitoring well and no closer than 200 feet from a dwelling not owned by the waste generator at the time waste is first applied at the land application site. Setback waivers related to distance of land application of waste from a dwelling not owned by the waste generator shall be written, notarized, signed by all parties involved, and recorded with the county of Register of Deeds.

(6) Notwithstanding Rule .1304(b)(4) of this Section, a vegetative buffer of at least 25 feet is maintained from a perennial stream or perennial waterbody for land application sites.

(7) The waste shall not be applied on land that is flooded, saturated with water, frozen, or snow covered at the time of land application.

(8) Land application of waste shall be prohibited during precipitation events.

(9) All waste application equipment shall be tested and calibrated at least once every two calendar years, and the results shall be documented on forms supplied by or approved by the Division as providing the same information as required by the Division's forms.

(10) Visible waste-level gauges shall be installed and maintained to mark the level of the waste in each animal waste lagoon or storage pond that does not gravity feed through a free flowing transfer pipe into a subsequent waste storage structure. The gauge shall have readily visible permanent markings.

(11) New and expanded animal waste treatment systems, such as lagoons and waste storage structures, shall be located at least 100 feet from a perennial stream or perennial waterbody. For new and expanding systems, this setback requirement shall also apply to areas in feedlots where an established vegetative cover will not

be maintained because of the concentration of animals, with the exception of stock trails and stream crossings.

(12) For animal waste management facilities desiring to increase their animal population beyond that permitted, a new individual permit or new certificate of coverage to operate under a general permit shall be issued before the additional animals are stocked.

(c) For each change of ownership of the system, the new owner shall notify the Division in writing within 60 days of transfer of ownership.

(d) New and expanding swine facilities shall demonstrate compliance with Rule .1307 of this Section prior to receiving a permit from the Division.

.1305 NPDES PERMITTING REQUIREMENTS

(a) This Rule shall apply to animal waste management systems subject to regulation pursuant to G.S. 143-215.10C and 40 CFR 122.23, which is incorporated by reference including subsequent amendments and editions and shall apply throughout this Rule. 40 CFR 122.23 can be accessed free of charge at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/>.

(b) With the exception of dry litter poultry systems, an animal waste management plan shall be submitted as follows:

(1) The animal waste management practices or combination of practices that are selected to comprise a plan for a specific facility shall meet NRCS standards, the standard of practices adopted by the Soil and Water Conservation Commission pursuant to 02 NCAC 59E .0104, or standards for any combination of practices that provide water quality protection and are approved by one of these two agencies; and all applicable State statutes and rules and all applicable federal requirements at the time of development or design.

(2) Permittee shall submit plans that have been approved by a technical specialist. The technical specialist shall certify that the best management practices that comprise the approved plan meet applicable standards and specifications, pursuant to G.S. 143-215.10C. The certification shall be submitted to the Division on Division-supplied forms or forms approved by the Division as providing the same information as required by the Division's forms.

(3) The waste shall not be applied at greater than agronomic rates.

(4) The land application and siting setbacks shall meet the applicable conditions established in G.S. 106-803, and NRCS standards at the time of site construction or at the time waste is first applied at the land application site.

(5) The land application and siting setbacks must meet the applicable conditions established in 40 CFR Part 412.

(6) Notwithstanding Subparagraph (b)(4) of this Rule, land application of waste shall be no closer than 100 feet from a well other than a monitoring well and no closer than 200 feet from a dwelling not owned by the waste generator at the time waste is first applied at the land application site. Setback waivers related to distance of land application of waste from a dwelling not owned by the waste generator shall be written, notarized, signed by all parties involved, and recorded with the county of Register of Deeds.

(7) The waste shall not be applied on land that is flooded, saturated with water, frozen, or snow covered at the time of land application.

(8) Land application of waste shall be prohibited during precipitation events.

(9) All waste application equipment shall be tested and calibrated at least once every calendar year, and the results shall be documented on forms supplied by or approved by the Division as providing the same information as required by the Division's forms.

(10) Visible waste-level gauges shall be installed and maintained to mark the level of the waste in each animal waste lagoon or storage pond that does not gravity feed through a free flowing transfer pipe into a subsequent waste storage structure. The gauge shall have readily visible permanent markings.

(11) New and expanded animal waste treatment systems, such as lagoons and waste storage structures, shall be located at least 100 feet from a perennial stream or perennial waterbody. For new and expanding systems, this setback requirement shall also apply to areas in feedlots where an established vegetative cover will not be maintained because of the concentration of animals, with the exception of stock trails and stream crossings.

(12) For animal waste management facilities desiring to increase their animal population beyond that permitted, a new individual permit or new certificate of coverage to operate under a general permit must be issued before the additional animals are stocked.

(c) Dry litter poultry systems, for the purpose of this Rule and G.S. 143-215.10C, shall submit an animal waste management plan as follows:

(1) The animal waste management practices or combination of practices that are selected to comprise a plan for a specific facility shall meet NRCS standards, the standard of practices adopted by the Soil and Water Conservation Commission, or standards for any combination of practices that provide water quality protection and are approved by one of these two agencies; and all applicable State statutes

and rules and all applicable federal requirements at the time of development or design.

(2) The land application and siting setbacks shall meet the conditions established in NRCS standards and 40 CFR Part 412 at the time of construction.

(3) New and expanded animal waste structures, such as houses and dry stacks, shall be protected from the 100-year flood as determined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

(4) The waste shall not be applied at greater than agronomic rates.

(5) Notwithstanding Subparagraph (c)(2) of this Rule, land application of litter shall be no closer than 100 feet from a well other than a monitoring well and no closer than 200 feet from a dwelling not owned by the waste generator at the time waste is first applied at the land application site. Setback waivers related to distance of land application of waste from a dwelling not owned by the waste generator shall be written, notarized, signed by all parties involved, and recorded with the county Register of Deeds.

(6) The waste shall not be applied on land that is flooded, saturated with water, frozen, or snow covered at the time of land application.

(7) Land application of litter shall be prohibited during precipitation events.

(8) All waste application equipment shall be tested and calibrated at least once every calendar year, and the results shall be documented on forms supplied by or approved by the Division as providing the same information as required by the Division's forms.

(9) Visible waste-level gauges shall be installed and maintained to mark the level of the waste in each animal waste lagoon or storage pond that does not gravity feed through a free flowing transfer pipe into a subsequent waste storage structure. The gauge shall have readily visible permanent markings.

(10) For animal waste management facilities desiring to increase their animal population beyond that permitted, a new individual permit or new certificate of coverage to operate under a general permit shall be issued before the additional animals are stocked.

(d) For each change of ownership of the system, the new owner shall notify the Division in writing within 60 days of transfer of ownership.

(e) Systems shall meet all applicable requirements of 40 CFR Part 122 and 40 CFR Part 412.

(f) New and expanding swine facilities shall demonstrate compliance with Rule .1307 of this Section prior to receiving a permit from the Division.

.1306 CLOSURE REQUIREMENTS

(a) Any containment basin, such as a lagoon or a waste storage structure, permitted at an animal operation other than a cattle facility pursuant to this Section shall continue to be subject to the conditions and requirements of the facility's permit until it is closed in compliance with NRCS standards and the permit is rescinded by the Division. Closure shall include pre-notification to the Division and submittal of closure form within 15 days of completion of closure to the Division on a closure form supplied by the Division or a form approved by the Division as providing the same information as required by the Division's forms.

(b) Any Containment basin, such as a lagoon or a waste storage structure, permitted at a cattle facility pursuant to this Section shall continue to be subject to the conditions and requirements of the facility's permit until that permit is rescinded by the Division, based on the factors set out in 15A NCAC 02T .0113(e). Upon request of the permittee, the permit may be rescinded by the Division prior to closure of the containment basin if the cattle facility has not met the definition of an animal operation as established in G.S. 143-215.120B for the previous three years or longer. Upon permit rescission, the following requirements shall apply:

(1) The cattle facility shall be subject to the requirements of Rule .1303 of this Section and Rule .0113 of this Subchapter until the containment basin is closed in compliance with NRCS standards.

(2) The farm owner shall maintain records of land application and weekly records of containment basin waste levels on forms provided by or approved by the Division.

(3) Closure shall include pre-notification to the Division and the submittal of a closure form within 15 days of completion of closure to the Division on a closure form supplied by the Division or a form approved by the Division as providing the same information as required by the Division's forms.

(c) The Division shall have the authority to deny a request for permit rescission based on the factors set out in Rule .0113(e) of this Subchapter.

.1307 SWINE WASTE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

(a) This Rule applies to animal waste management systems subject to regulation pursuant to G.S. 143-215.10I and S.L. 2015-263.

(b) An animal waste management system that serves a swine farm subject to regulation pursuant to G.S. 143-215.10I shall meet all of the following performance standards:

(1) Eliminate the discharge of animal waste to surface waters and groundwater through direct discharge, seepage, or runoff. To meet this standard:

(A) earthen structures shall be designed and constructed with synthetic liners to eliminate seepage;

(B) solids storage structures shall meet applicable engineering practices and NRCS design standards;

(C) the Certified Animal Waste Management Plan (CAWMP) shall include all components listed in G.S. 143-215.10C(e), meet current North Carolina NRCS 590 Nutrient Management Conservation Practice Standard requirements, and comply with the NRCS national policy for Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans (CNMP) as defined in the NRCS General Manual, Title 190, Part 405, which are incorporated by reference, including subsequent additions or amendments. The General Manual may be downloaded at no cost from the NRCS website: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/>;

(D) swine waste treatment structures that automatically convey swine waste using pumps shall have audible and visible high water alarms with an auto dialer device set to contact the farm owner or farm manager; a gravity overflow to a basin that can contain the flow rate of the largest pump in the system for the maximum amount of time that an operator will not be on-site; or a secondary containment structure designed, constructed, and operated to contain the volume of the largest animal waste treatment structure and the flow rate of the largest pump in the system for the maximum amount of time that an operator will not be on-site; and

(E) no more than the equivalent volume of one month of design flow of untreated swine waste shall be accumulated and stored prior to the initiation of treatment;

(2) Substantially eliminate atmospheric emission of ammonia. To meet this standard:

(A) Combined ammonia emissions from swine waste treatment and storage structures shall not exceed an annual average of 0.2 kg NH₃-N/wk/1,000 kg of steady-state live weight;

(B) Ammonia emissions from land application sites shall not exceed an annual average of 0.2 kg NH₃-N/wk/1,000 kg of steady-state live weight; and

(C) Ammonia emissions from the swine farm shall not exceed an annual average of 0.9 kg NH₃-N/wk/1,000 kg of steady-state live weight;

(3) Substantially eliminate the emission of odor that is detectable beyond the boundaries of the parcel or tract of land on which the swine farm is located. To meet this standard, swine waste management systems shall reduce odor levels, frequency, and duration from the whole farm, such that the requirements of 15A NCAC 02D .1808 are met at the property boundary;

(4) Substantially eliminate the release of disease-transmitting vectors and airborne pathogens. To meet this standard:

(A) Swine waste management systems shall meet the vector attraction reduction requirements of Rule .1107 of this Subchapter for the land application of separated solids and animal waste residuals for operations subject to this Rule;

(B) Swine waste management systems shall meet the pathogen reduction requirements of Rule .1106(a) of this Subchapter for Class A biosolids that are to be applied to a lawn, home garden, or public contact use site; sold or given away in a bag or container for land application or meet the pathogen reduction requirements of Rule .1106(b) for Class B biosolids that are to be otherwise applied to land; and

(C) Fecal coliform concentrations in the final liquid effluent shall not exceed an annual average of 7,000 Most Probable Number/100mL;

(5) Substantially eliminate nutrient and heavy metal contamination of soil and groundwater. To meet this standard, swine waste management systems that land apply effluent shall:

(A) Meet the current North Carolina NRCS 590 Nutrient Management Conservation Practice Standard requirements and comply with the NRCS national policy for Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans (CNMP) as defined by NRCS General Manual, Title 190, Part 405; and

(B) Demonstrate through predictive calculations or modeling that land application of swine waste at the proposed rate will not cause or contribute to a violation of groundwater standards set forth in 15A NCAC 02L.

§ 143-214.5. Water supply watershed protection

(a) Policy Statement. – This section provides for a cooperative program of water supply watershed management and protection to be administered by local governments consistent with minimum statewide management requirements established by the Commission. If a local government fails to adopt a water supply watershed protection program or does not adequately carry out its responsibility to enforce the minimum water supply watershed management requirements of its approved program, the Commission shall administer and enforce the minimum statewide requirements. The reduction of agricultural nonpoint source discharges shall be accomplished primarily through the Agriculture Cost Share Program for Nonpoint Source Pollution Control.

(b) Development and Adoption of Water Supply Watershed Classifications and Management Requirements. – The Commission shall adopt rules for the classification of water supply watersheds and that establish minimum statewide water supply watershed protection requirements applicable to each classification to protect surface water supplies by (i) controlling development density, (ii) providing for performance-based alternatives to development density controls that are based on sound engineering principles, or (iii) a combination of both (i) and (ii). The Commission may designate water supply watersheds or portions thereof as critical water supply watersheds and impose management requirements that are more stringent than the minimum statewide water supply watershed management requirements. The Commission may adopt rules that require that any permit issued by a local government for a development or construction activity conducted by that local government within a designated water supply watershed be approved by the Department prior to issuance. Any variance from the minimum statewide water supply watershed management requirements must be approved by the Commission prior to the issuance of a permit by a local government. Except as provided by G.S. 153A-347 and G.S. 160A-392, the power to implement this section with respect to development or construction activities that are conducted by State agencies is vested exclusively in the Commission.

(c) Classification of Water Supply Watersheds. – The Commission shall assign to each water supply watershed in the State the appropriate classification with the applicable minimum management requirements. The Commission may reclassify water supply watersheds as necessary to protect future water supplies or improve protection at existing water supplies. A local government shall not be required to submit a revised water supply watershed protection program to the Commission earlier than 270 days after it receives notice of a reclassification from the Commission.

(d) Mandatory Local Programs. – The Department shall assist local governments to develop water supply watershed protection programs that comply with this section. Local government compliance programs shall include an implementing local ordinance and shall provide for maintenance, inspection, and enforcement procedures. As part of its assistance to local governments, the Commission shall approve and make available a model local water supply watershed management and protection ordinance. The model management and protection ordinance adopted by the Commission shall, at a minimum,

include as options (i) controlling development density, (ii) providing for performance-based alternatives to development density controls that are based on sound engineering principles, and (iii) a combination of both (i) and (ii). Local governments shall administer and enforce the minimum management requirements. Every local government that has within its jurisdiction all or a portion of a water supply watershed shall submit a local water supply watershed management and protection ordinance to the Commission for approval. Local governments may adopt such ordinances pursuant to their general police power, power to regulate the subdivision of land, zoning power, or any combination of such powers. In adopting a local ordinance that imposes water supply watershed management requirements that are more stringent than those adopted by the Commission, a county must comply with the notice provisions of G.S. 153A-343 and a municipality must comply with the notice provisions of G.S. 160A-384. This section shall not be construed to affect the validity of any local ordinance adopted for the protection of water supply watersheds prior to completion of the review of the ordinance by the Commission or prior to the assumption by the Commission of responsibility for a local water supply watershed protection program. Local governments may create or designate agencies to administer and enforce such programs. The Commission shall approve a local program only if it determines that the requirements of the program equal or exceed the minimum statewide water supply watershed management requirements adopted pursuant to this section.

(d1) A local ordinance adopted to implement the minimum statewide water supply watershed management requirements applicable to agriculture and silviculture activities shall be no more restrictive than those adopted by the Commission. In adopting minimum statewide water supply watershed management requirements applicable to agriculture activities, the Commission shall consider the policy regarding agricultural nonpoint source discharges set out in subsection (a) of this section. The Commission may by rule designate another State agency to administer the minimum statewide water supply watershed management requirements applicable to agriculture and silviculture activities. If the Commission designates another State agency to administer the minimum statewide water supply watershed management requirements applicable to agriculture and silviculture activities, management requirements adopted by local governments shall not apply to such activities.

(d2) A local government implementing a water supply watershed program shall allow an applicant to average development density on up to two noncontiguous properties for purposes of achieving compliance with the water supply watershed development standards if all of the following circumstances exist:

(1) The properties are within the same water supply watershed. If one of the properties is located in the critical area of the watershed, the critical area property shall not be developed beyond the applicable density requirements for its classification.

(2) Overall project density meets applicable density or stormwater control requirements under 15A NCAC 2B .0200.

(3) Vegetated buffers on both properties meet the minimum statewide water supply watershed protection requirements.

(4) Built upon areas are designed and located to minimize stormwater runoff impact to the receiving waters, minimize concentrated stormwater flow, maximize the use of sheet flow through vegetated areas, and maximize the flow length through vegetated areas.

(5) Areas of concentrated density development are located in upland areas and, to the maximum extent practicable, away from surface waters and drainageways.

(6) The property or portions of the properties that are not being developed will remain in a vegetated or natural state and will be managed by a homeowners' association as common area, conveyed to a local government as a park or greenway, or placed under a permanent conservation or farmland preservation easement unless it can be demonstrated that the local government can ensure long-term compliance through deed restrictions and an electronic permitting mechanism. A metes and bounds description of the areas to remain vegetated and limits on use shall be recorded on the subdivision plat, in homeowners' covenants, and on individual deed and shall be irrevocable.

(7) Development permitted under density averaging and meeting applicable low density requirements shall transport stormwater runoff by vegetated conveyances to the maximum extent practicable.

(8) A special use permit or other such permit or certificate shall be obtained from the local Watershed Review Board or Board of Adjustment to ensure that both properties considered together meet the standards of the watershed ordinance and that potential owners have record of how the watershed regulations were applied to the properties.

(e) Assumption of Local Programs. – The Commission shall assume responsibility for water supply watershed protection, within all or the affected portion of a water supply watershed, if a local government fails to adopt a program that meets the requirements of this section or whenever a local government fails to adequately administer and enforce the provisions of its program. The Commission shall not assume responsibility for an approved local water supply watershed protection program until it or its designee notifies the local government in writing by certified mail, return receipt requested, of local program deficiencies, recommendations for changes and improvements in the local program, and the deadline for compliance. The Commission shall allow a local government a minimum of 120 days to bring its program into compliance. The Commission shall order assumption of an approved local program if it finds that the local government has made no substantial progress toward compliance. The Commission may make such finding at any time between 120 days and 365

days after receipt of notice under this subsection by the local government, with no further notice. Proceedings to review such orders by the Commission shall be conducted by the superior court pursuant to Article 4 of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes based on the agency record submitted to the Commission by the Secretary.

(f) State Enforcement Authority. – The Commission may take any appropriate preventive or remedial enforcement action authorized by this Part against any person who violates any minimum statewide water supply watershed management requirement.

(g) Civil Penalties. – A local government that fails to adopt a local water supply watershed protection program as required by this section or willfully fails to administer or enforce the provisions of its program in substantial compliance with the minimum statewide water supply watershed management requirements shall be subject to a civil penalty pursuant to G.S. 143-215.6A(e). In any area of the State that is not covered by an approved local water supply watershed protection program, any person who violates or fails to act in accordance with any minimum statewide water supply watershed management requirement or more stringent management requirement adopted by the Commission for a critical water supply watershed established pursuant to this section shall be subject to a civil penalty as specified in G.S. 143-215.6A(a)(7). The clear proceeds of civil penalties provided for in this section shall be remitted to the Civil Penalty and Forfeiture Fund in accordance with G.S. 115C-457.2.

(h) Planning Grants to Local Governments. – The Secretary may make annual grants to local governments for the purpose of assisting in the development of local water supply watershed protection programs. The Secretary shall develop and administer generally applicable criteria under which local governments may qualify for such assistance. Such criteria shall give priority to local governments that are not then administering zoning ordinances in affected water supply watershed areas.

(i) Every State agency shall act in a manner consistent with the policies and purposes of this section, and shall comply with the minimum statewide water supply watershed management requirements adopted by the Commission and with all water supply watershed management and protection ordinances adopted by local governments.

§ 143-215.8B. Basinwide water quality management plans

(a) The Commission shall develop and implement a basinwide water quality management plan for each of the 17 major river basins in the State. In developing and implementing each plan, the Commission shall consider the cumulative impacts of all of the following:

(1) All activities across a river basin and all point sources and nonpoint sources of pollutants, including municipal wastewater facilities, industrial wastewater systems, septic tank systems, stormwater management systems, golf courses,

farms that use fertilizers and pesticides for crops, public and commercial lawns and gardens, atmospheric deposition, and animal operations.

(2) All transfers into and from a river basin that are required to be registered under G.S. 143-215.22H.

(b) Each basinwide water quality management plan shall:

(1) Provide that all point sources and nonpoint sources of pollutants jointly share the responsibility of reducing the pollutants in the State's waters in a fair, reasonable, and proportionate manner, using computer modeling and the best science and technology reasonably available and considering future anticipated population growth and economic development.

(2) If any of the waters located within the river basin are designated as nutrient sensitive waters, then the basinwide water quality management plan shall establish a goal to reduce the average annual mass load of nutrients that are delivered to surface waters within the river basin from point and nonpoint sources. The Commission shall establish a nutrient reduction goal for the nutrient or nutrients of concern that will result in improvements to water quality such that the designated uses of the water, as provided in the classification of the water under G.S. 143-214.1(d), are not impaired. The plan shall require incremental progress toward achieving the goal. In developing the plan, the Commission shall determine and allow appropriate credit toward achieving the goal for reductions of water pollution by point and nonpoint sources through voluntary measures.

(c) The Commission shall review and revise its 17 basinwide water quality management plans at least every 10 years to reflect changes in water quality, improvements in modeling methods, improvements in wastewater treatment technology, and advances in scientific knowledge and, as need to support designated uses of water, modifications to management strategies.

(d) As a part of the report required pursuant to G.S. 143-355(p), the Commission and the Department shall each report on or before November 1 of each year on an annual basis to the Environmental Review Commission on the progress in developing and implementing basinwide water quality management plans and on increasing public involvement and public education in connection with basinwide water quality management planning. The report to the Environmental Review Commission by the Department shall include a written statement as to all concentrations of heavy metals and other pollutants in the surface waters of the State that are identified in the course of preparing or revising the basinwide water quality management plans.

(e) A basinwide water quality management plan is not a rule and Article 2A of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes does not apply to the development of basinwide water quality management plans. Any water quality standard or classification and any requirement or limitation of general applicability that implements a basinwide water

quality management plan is a rule and must be adopted as provided in Article 2A of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes.

§ 143B-282. Environmental Management Commission – creation; powers and duties.

[. . .]

(c) The Environmental Management Commission shall implement the provisions of subsections (d) and (e) of 33 U.S.C. § 1313 by identifying and prioritizing impaired waters and by developing appropriate total maximum daily loads of pollutants for those impaired waters. The Commission shall incorporate those total maximum daily loads approved by the United States Environmental Protection Agency into its continuing basinwide water quality planning process.

(d) The Environmental Management Commission may adopt rules setting out strategies necessary for assuring that water quality standards are met by any point or nonpoint source or by any category of point or nonpoint sources that is determined by the Commission to be contributing to the water quality impairment. These strategies may include, but are not limited to, additional monitoring, effluent limitations, supplemental standards or classifications, best management practices, protective buffers, schedules of compliance, and the establishment of and delegations to intergovernmental basinwide groups.

.0272 JORDAN WATER SUPPLY NUTRIENT STRATEGY: FERTILIZER MANAGEMENT

The following is the management strategy for controlling land-applied nutrients in the Jordan watershed, as prefaced in Rule .0262 of this Section.

(1) **PURPOSE.** The purpose of this Rule is to protect the water supply uses of Jordan Reservoir and of designated water supplies throughout the Jordan watershed by managing the application of nutrients, both inorganic fertilizer and organic nutrients, to lands in the Jordan watershed. The requirements of this Rule are to be fully implemented within three years from the effective date as set out in Item (6) of this Rule.

(2) **APPLICABILITY.** This Rule shall apply to the application of nutrients on:

(a) Cropland areas in the Jordan watershed for commercial purposes;

(b) Commercial ornamental and floriculture areas and greenhouse production areas in the Jordan watershed;

(c) Golf courses, public recreational lands, road or utility rights-of-way, or other commercial or institutional lands where any such land, or

combination of such lands, under common management in the watershed totals at least five acres; and

(d) Any lands in the Jordan watershed where a hired applicator, as defined in 15A NCAC 02B .0202(4), who does not own or lease the lands applies nutrients to a total of at least five acres per year.

(3) REQUIREMENTS. Application of nutrients to lands subject to this Rule shall be in accordance with the following requirements:

(a) Application shall be made either:

(i) By an applicator who has completed nutrient management training pursuant to Item (4) of this Rule; or

(ii) Pursuant to a nutrient management plan that meets the requirements of Item (5) of this Rule.

(b) With the exception of residential homeowners, a person who hires an applicator to apply nutrients to the land that they own or manage in the Jordan watershed shall either:

(i) Ensure that the applicator they hire has attended and completed nutrient management training pursuant to Item (4) of this Rule; or

(ii) Ensure that the applicator they hire follows a nutrient management plan that has been developed for the land that they own or manage pursuant to Item (5) of this Rule.

(4) NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT TRAINING. To demonstrate compliance with this Rule through the nutrient management training option, the applicator shall have a certificate indicating completion of training provided by either the Cooperative Extension Service or the Division. Training certificates shall be kept on-site or be produced within 24 hours of a request by the Division. Training shall be sufficient to provide participants with an understanding of the value and importance of proper management of nitrogen and phosphorus, and the water quality impacts of poor nutrient management, and the ability to understand and properly carry out a nutrient management plan.

(5) NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT PLANS. Nutrient management plans developed to comply with this rule shall meet the following requirements:

(a) Nutrient management plans for cropland, excluding those for application of Class A bulk, and Class B wastewater residuals, regulated under 15A NCAC 02T .1100 and septage application regulated under 15A NCAC 13B .0815 through .0829, shall meet the standards and

specifications adopted by the NC Soil and Water Conservation Commission, including those found in 15A NCAC 06E .0104 and 15A NCAC 06H .0104, which are incorporated herein by reference, including any subsequent amendments and editions to such rules that are in place at the time that plans are approved by a technical specialist as required under Sub-Item (5)(e) of this Rule.

(b) Nutrient management plans for application of Class A bulk, and Class B, wastewater residuals regulated under 15A NCAC 02T .1100 and septage application regulated under 15A NCAC 13B .0815 through .0829 shall meet the standards and specifications adopted by the NC Soil and Water Conservation Commission in 15A NCAC 06E .0104, including any subsequent amendments and editions to such rule that are in place at the time that plans are approved by the permitting agency. This compliance includes addressing the phosphorus requirements of US Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service Practice Standard 590 regarding Nutrient Management.

(c) Nutrient management plans for lands identified in Sub-Item (2)(c) of this Rule shall follow the applicable guidance contained in the most recent version of North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service publications "Water Quality and Professional Lawn Care" (NCCES publication number WQWM-155), "Water Quality and Home Lawn Care" (NCCES publication number WQWM-151), or "Water Quality for Golf Course Superintendents and Professional Turf Managers" (NCCES publication number WQWM-156 Revised) as appropriate for the activity. The above-referenced guidelines are hereby incorporated by reference including any subsequent amendments and editions. Copies may be obtained from the Division of Water Quality, 512 North Salisbury Street, Raleigh, North Carolina 27604 at no cost. Nutrient management plans may also follow other guidance distributed by land-grant universities for turfgrass management as long as it is equivalent to or more stringent than the above-listed guidelines.

(d) Nutrient management plans for ornamental and floriculture production shall follow the Nutrient Management section of the most recent version of the Southern Nursery Association guidelines promulgated in "Best Management Practices A BMP Guide For Producing Container and Field Grown Plants". Copies may be obtained from the Southern Nursery Association, 1827 Powers Ferry Road SE, Suite 4-100, Atlanta, GA 30339-8422 or from www.sna.org. The materials related to nutrient management plans for ornamental and floriculture production are hereby incorporated by reference including any subsequent amendments and editions. Copies are available for inspection at the Department of Environment and Natural Resources Library, 512 North Salisbury Street, Raleigh, North Carolina 27604. Nutrient management plans for

ornamental and floriculture production may also follow other guidance distributed by land-grant universities for such production as long as it is equivalent or more stringent than the above-listed guidelines.

(e) The nutrient management plan shall be approved in writing by an appropriate technical specialist, as defined in 15A NCAC 06H .0102(9), as follows:

(i) Nutrient management plans for cropland using either inorganic or organic nutrients, except those using biosolids or septage, shall be approved by a technical specialist designated pursuant to the process and criteria specified in rules adopted by the Soil and Water Conservation Commission for nutrient management planning, including 15A NCAC 06H .0104, excepting Sub-Item (a)(2) of that Rule.

(ii) Nutrient management plans for lands identified in Sub-Item (2)(c) of this Rule, ornamental and floriculture production shall be approved by a technical specialist designated by the Soil and Water Conservation Commission pursuant to the process and criteria specified in 15A NCAC 06H .0104 excepting Sub-Item (a)(2) of that Rule. If the Soil and Water Conservation Commission does not designate such technical specialists, then the Environmental Management Commission shall do so using the same process and criteria.

(f) Persons with approved waste utilization plans that are required under state or federal animal waste regulations are deemed in compliance with this Rule as long as they are compliant with their approved waste utilization plans.

(g) Nutrient management plans and supporting documents must be kept on-site or be produced within 24 hours of a request by the Division.

(6) COMPLIANCE. The following constitute the compliance requirements of this Rule:

(a) For proposed new application of Class A bulk, and Class B, wastewater residuals pursuant to permits obtained under 15A NCAC 02T .1100 or its predecessor, and septage application pursuant to permits obtained under 15A NCAC 13B .0815 through .0829, all applications for new permits shall be made according to, and subsequent nutrient applications shall comply with, the applicable requirements of this Rule as of its effective date.

(b) For existing, ongoing application of residuals and septage as defined in this Item, beginning one year after the effective date of this Rule, all applications for renewal of existing permits shall be made according to, and subsequent nutrient applications shall comply with, the applicable requirements of this Rule.

(c) For all other application with the exception of the application of residuals and septage as defined in this Item, the requirements of this Rule shall become effective three years after its effective date and shall apply to all application of nutrients on lands subject to this Rule after that date.

(d) Persons who fail to comply with this Rule are subject to enforcement measures authorized in G.S. 143-215.6A (civil penalties), G.S. 143-215.6B (criminal penalties), and G.S. 143-215.6C (injunctive relief).

3) N.C. Gen Stat § 143-215.3(a)(1); 15A N.C.A.C. 02B.0239

§ 143-215.3. General powers of Commission and Department; auxiliary powers

(a) Additional Powers. – In addition to the specific powers prescribed elsewhere in this Article, and for the purpose of carrying out its duties, the Commission shall have the power:

(1) To make rules implementing Articles 21, 21A, 21B, or 38 of this Chapter.

[. . .]

.0239 NEUSE RIVER BASIN: NUTRIENT SENSITIVE WATERS MANAGEMENT STRATEGY: NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT

The following is the management strategy for nutrient management in the Neuse River Basin:

(1) The following persons shall obtain a certificate, issued within five years of the effective date of this Rule by the Cooperative Extension Service or the Division of Water Quality, verifying completion of training and continuing education in nutrient management. Within one year from the effective date of this Rule, the Division of Water Quality, in cooperation with the Cooperative Extension Service, shall conduct a sign-up process for persons wishing to take the nutrient management training. If these persons fail to obtain the nutrient management certificate, they are required to develop and properly implement

nutrient management plans for the lands where they apply fertilizer within five years of the effective date of this Rule:

(a) Applicators who in a calendar year apply fertilizer to cropland areas, including row and vegetable crops, floriculture areas, ornamental areas and greenhouse production areas, that together comprise at least 50 acres and persons responsible for managing cropland areas, as described in Sub-Item (1)(a) of this Rule, that together comprise at least 50 acres;

(b) Applicators who in a calendar year apply fertilizer to a golf course, recreational land areas, right-of-way, or other turfgrass areas that together comprise at least 50 acres, and persons responsible for managing the turfgrass aspects of lands, as described in Sub-Item (1)(b) of this Rule, that together comprise at least 50 acres; and

(c) Commercial applicators who apply fertilizer to at least 50 total acres per year of lawn and garden areas in residential, commercial, or industrial developments, and persons responsible for managing the lawn and garden aspects of lands, as described in Sub-Item (1)(c) of this Rule, that together comprise at least 50 acres.

(2) If the persons listed in Sub-Items (1)(a)-(c) of this Rule do not attend and complete within five years of the effective date of this Rule a nutrient management training program administered by the Cooperative Extension Service, their nutrient management plans shall meet the following requirements:

(a) Nutrient management plans for cropland shall meet the standards and specifications of the USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service or the standards and specifications adopted by the NC Soil and Water Conservation Commission. Written approval from a technical specialist designated pursuant to rules adopted by the Soil and Water Conservation Commission must be obtained by the applicator certifying that a nutrient management plan meeting these standards has been developed for the lands where they apply fertilizer.

(b) Nutrient management plans for turfgrass, floriculture, ornamental and greenhouse production application of nutrients shall meet recommended guidelines in the following documents or other recommended guidelines from land-grant universities to minimize nutrient loss to waters in the Neuse River Basin. Nutrient management plans for turfgrass shall follow the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service (NCCES) guidelines in "Water Quality And Professional Lawn Care"; NCCES publication number WQMM-155 or "Water Quality And Home Lawn Care"; NCCES publication number WQMM-151. Copies may be obtained from the Division of Water Quality, 512 North Salisbury Street, Raleigh, North Carolina 27626 at no cost. Nutrient management plans for nursery crops

and greenhouse production shall follow the Southern Nurserymen's Association guidelines promulgated in "Best Management Practices Guide For Producing Container-Grown Plants". Copies may be obtained from the Southern Nurserymen's Association, 1000 Johnson Ferry Road, Suite E-130, Marietta, GA 30068-2100 at a cost of thirty-five dollars (\$35.00). These materials related to nutrient management plans for turfgrass, nursery crops and greenhouse production are hereby incorporated by reference including any subsequent amendments and editions and are available for inspection at the Department of Environment and Natural Resources Library, 512 North Salisbury Street, Raleigh, North Carolina. The Division of Water Quality shall develop model plans in consultation with the Cooperative Extension Service, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Division of Soil and Water Conservation, and the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and approved by the Director of the Division of Water Quality within one year of the effective date of this Rule. The model plans shall provide a description of the type of information to be included in the plans for source of nutrients, the amount of nutrient applied, the placement of nutrients, and the timing of nutrient applications. Written approval from a technical specialist designated pursuant to rules adopted by the Environmental Management Commission must be obtained by the applicator certifying that a nutrient management plan meeting these standards has been developed for the lands where they apply fertilizer.

(c) For nutrient management plans developed under Sub-Items (2)(a) and (2)(b) of this Rule using dry poultry litter from animal waste management systems involving 30,000 or more birds, dry poultry litter shall be applied at agronomic rates for nitrogen based on realistic yield expectations derived from waste nutrient content, crop and soil type, or yield records.

(d) Nutrient management plans and supporting documents must be kept on-site or be producible within 24 hours of a request by the Division of Water Quality.

(e) Nutrient management plans may be written by the applicator or a consultant to the applicator.

(3) Applicators and commercial applicators subject to Item (2) of this Rule who do not develop a nutrient management plan or do not apply nutrients in accordance with a nutrient management plan meeting the specifications in Item (2) are in violation of this Rule and are subject to enforcement measures authorized in G.S. 143-215.6A (civil penalties), G.S. 143-215.6B (criminal penalties), and G.S. 143-215.6C (injunctive relief).

(4) Residential landowners and other individuals applying fertilizer to less than 50 acres per year shall to the maximum extent practical apply fertilizer to

residential, commercial, industrial, turfgrass, and cropland areas at rates recommended by the Cooperative Extension Service.

4) N.C. Gen. Stat. §§ 143-214.5, .8B, 143B-282(c)—(d); 15A N.C.A.C. 02B.0236, .0238, .0255, .0256, .0264, .0280

§ 143-214.5. Water supply watershed protection

(a) Policy Statement. – This section provides for a cooperative program of water supply watershed management and protection to be administered by local governments consistent with minimum statewide management requirements established by the Commission. If a local government fails to adopt a water supply watershed protection program or does not adequately carry out its responsibility to enforce the minimum water supply watershed management requirements of its approved program, the Commission shall administer and enforce the minimum statewide requirements. The reduction of agricultural nonpoint source discharges shall be accomplished primarily through the Agriculture Cost Share Program for Nonpoint Source Pollution Control.

(b) Development and Adoption of Water Supply Watershed Classifications and Management Requirements. – The Commission shall adopt rules for the classification of water supply watersheds and that establish minimum statewide water supply watershed protection requirements applicable to each classification to protect surface water supplies by (i) controlling development density, (ii) providing for performance-based alternatives to development density controls that are based on sound engineering principles, or (iii) a combination of both (i) and (ii). The Commission may designate water supply watersheds or portions thereof as critical water supply watersheds and impose management requirements that are more stringent than the minimum statewide water supply watershed management requirements. The Commission may adopt rules that require that any permit issued by a local government for a development or construction activity conducted by that local government within a designated water supply watershed be approved by the Department prior to issuance. Any variance from the minimum statewide water supply watershed management requirements must be approved by the Commission prior to the issuance of a permit by a local government. Except as provided by G.S. 153A-347 and G.S. 160A-392, the power to implement this section with respect to development or construction activities that are conducted by State agencies is vested exclusively in the Commission.

(c) Classification of Water Supply Watersheds. – The Commission shall assign to each water supply watershed in the State the appropriate classification with the applicable minimum management requirements. The Commission may reclassify water supply watersheds as necessary to protect future water supplies or improve protection at existing water supplies. A local government shall not be required to submit a revised water supply watershed protection program to the Commission earlier than 270 days after it receives notice of a reclassification from the Commission.

(d) Mandatory Local Programs. – The Department shall assist local governments to develop water supply watershed protection programs that comply with this section. Local government compliance programs shall include an implementing local ordinance and shall provide for maintenance, inspection, and enforcement procedures. As part of its assistance to local governments, the Commission shall approve and make available a model local water supply watershed management and protection ordinance. The model management and protection ordinance adopted by the Commission shall, at a minimum, include as options (i) controlling development density, (ii) providing for performance-based alternatives to development density controls that are based on sound engineering principles, and (iii) a combination of both (i) and (ii). Local governments shall administer and enforce the minimum management requirements. Every local government that has within its jurisdiction all or a portion of a water supply watershed shall submit a local water supply watershed management and protection ordinance to the Commission for approval. Local governments may adopt such ordinances pursuant to their general police power, power to regulate the subdivision of land, zoning power, or any combination of such powers. In adopting a local ordinance that imposes water supply watershed management requirements that are more stringent than those adopted by the Commission, a county must comply with the notice provisions of G.S. 153A-343 and a municipality must comply with the notice provisions of G.S. 160A-384. This section shall not be construed to affect the validity of any local ordinance adopted for the protection of water supply watersheds prior to completion of the review of the ordinance by the Commission or prior to the assumption by the Commission of responsibility for a local water supply watershed protection program. Local governments may create or designate agencies to administer and enforce such programs. The Commission shall approve a local program only if it determines that the requirements of the program equal or exceed the minimum statewide water supply watershed management requirements adopted pursuant to this section.

(d1) A local ordinance adopted to implement the minimum statewide water supply watershed management requirements applicable to agriculture and silviculture activities shall be no more restrictive than those adopted by the Commission. In adopting minimum statewide water supply watershed management requirements applicable to agriculture activities, the Commission shall consider the policy regarding agricultural nonpoint source discharges set out in subsection (a) of this section. The Commission may by rule designate another State agency to administer the minimum statewide water supply watershed management requirements applicable to agriculture and silviculture activities. If the Commission designates another State agency to administer the minimum statewide water supply watershed management requirements applicable to agriculture and silviculture activities, management requirements adopted by local governments shall not apply to such activities.

(d2) A local government implementing a water supply watershed program shall allow an applicant to average development density on up to two noncontiguous properties for purposes of achieving compliance with the water supply watershed development standards if all of the following circumstances exist:

(1) The properties are within the same water supply watershed. If one of the properties is located in the critical area of the watershed, the critical area property shall not be developed beyond the applicable density requirements for its classification.

(2) Overall project density meets applicable density or stormwater control requirements under 15A NCAC 2B .0200.

(3) Vegetated buffers on both properties meet the minimum statewide water supply watershed protection requirements.

(4) Built upon areas are designed and located to minimize stormwater runoff impact to the receiving waters, minimize concentrated stormwater flow, maximize the use of sheet flow through vegetated areas, and maximize the flow length through vegetated areas.

(5) Areas of concentrated density development are located in upland areas and, to the maximum extent practicable, away from surface waters and drainageways.

(6) The property or portions of the properties that are not being developed will remain in a vegetated or natural state and will be managed by a homeowners' association as common area, conveyed to a local government as a park or greenway, or placed under a permanent conservation or farmland preservation easement unless it can be demonstrated that the local government can ensure long-term compliance through deed restrictions and an electronic permitting mechanism. A metes and bounds description of the areas to remain vegetated and limits on use shall be recorded on the subdivision plat, in homeowners' covenants, and on individual deed and shall be irrevocable.

(7) Development permitted under density averaging and meeting applicable low density requirements shall transport stormwater runoff by vegetated conveyances to the maximum extent practicable.

(8) A special use permit or other such permit or certificate shall be obtained from the local Watershed Review Board or Board of Adjustment to ensure that both properties considered together meet the standards of the watershed ordinance and that potential owners have record of how the watershed regulations were applied to the properties.

(e) Assumption of Local Programs. – The Commission shall assume responsibility for water supply watershed protection, within all or the affected portion of a water supply watershed, if a local government fails to adopt a program that meets the requirements of this section or whenever a local government fails to adequately administer and enforce the provisions of its program. The Commission shall not assume responsibility for an approved local water supply watershed protection program until it or its designee notifies the

local government in writing by certified mail, return receipt requested, of local program deficiencies, recommendations for changes and improvements in the local program, and the deadline for compliance. The Commission shall allow a local government a minimum of 120 days to bring its program into compliance. The Commission shall order assumption of an approved local program if it finds that the local government has made no substantial progress toward compliance. The Commission may make such finding at any time between 120 days and 365 days after receipt of notice under this subsection by the local government, with no further notice. Proceedings to review such orders by the Commission shall be conducted by the superior court pursuant to Article 4 of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes based on the agency record submitted to the Commission by the Secretary.

(f) State Enforcement Authority. – The Commission may take any appropriate preventive or remedial enforcement action authorized by this Part against any person who violates any minimum statewide water supply watershed management requirement.

(g) Civil Penalties. – A local government that fails to adopt a local water supply watershed protection program as required by this section or willfully fails to administer or enforce the provisions of its program in substantial compliance with the minimum statewide water supply watershed management requirements shall be subject to a civil penalty pursuant to G.S. 143-215.6A(e). In any area of the State that is not covered by an approved local water supply watershed protection program, any person who violates or fails to act in accordance with any minimum statewide water supply watershed management requirement or more stringent management requirement adopted by the Commission for a critical water supply watershed established pursuant to this section shall be subject to a civil penalty as specified in G.S. 143-215.6A(a)(7). The clear proceeds of civil penalties provided for in this section shall be remitted to the Civil Penalty and Forfeiture Fund in accordance with G.S. 115C-457.2.

(h) Planning Grants to Local Governments. – The Secretary may make annual grants to local governments for the purpose of assisting in the development of local water supply watershed protection programs. The Secretary shall develop and administer generally applicable criteria under which local governments may qualify for such assistance. Such criteria shall give priority to local governments that are not then administering zoning ordinances in affected water supply watershed areas.

(i) Every State agency shall act in a manner consistent with the policies and purposes of this section, and shall comply with the minimum statewide water supply watershed management requirements adopted by the Commission and with all water supply watershed management and protection ordinances adopted by local governments.

§ 143-215.8B. Basinwide water quality management plans

(a) The Commission shall develop and implement a basinwide water quality management plan for each of the 17 major river basins in the State. In developing and

implementing each plan, the Commission shall consider the cumulative impacts of all of the following:

(1) All activities across a river basin and all point sources and nonpoint sources of pollutants, including municipal wastewater facilities, industrial wastewater systems, septic tank systems, stormwater management systems, golf courses, farms that use fertilizers and pesticides for crops, public and commercial lawns and gardens, atmospheric deposition, and animal operations.

(2) All transfers into and from a river basin that are required to be registered under G.S. 143-215.22H.

(b) Each basinwide water quality management plan shall:

(1) Provide that all point sources and nonpoint sources of pollutants jointly share the responsibility of reducing the pollutants in the State's waters in a fair, reasonable, and proportionate manner, using computer modeling and the best science and technology reasonably available and considering future anticipated population growth and economic development.

(2) If any of the waters located within the river basin are designated as nutrient sensitive waters, then the basinwide water quality management plan shall establish a goal to reduce the average annual mass load of nutrients that are delivered to surface waters within the river basin from point and nonpoint sources. The Commission shall establish a nutrient reduction goal for the nutrient or nutrients of concern that will result in improvements to water quality such that the designated uses of the water, as provided in the classification of the water under G.S. 143-214.1(d), are not impaired. The plan shall require incremental progress toward achieving the goal. In developing the plan, the Commission shall determine and allow appropriate credit toward achieving the goal for reductions of water pollution by point and nonpoint sources through voluntary measures.

(c) The Commission shall review and revise its 17 basinwide water quality management plans at least every 10 years to reflect changes in water quality, improvements in modeling methods, improvements in wastewater treatment technology, and advances in scientific knowledge and, as need to support designated uses of water, modifications to management strategies.

(d) As a part of the report required pursuant to G.S. 143-355(p), the Commission and the Department shall each report on or before November 1 of each year on an annual basis to the Environmental Review Commission on the progress in developing and implementing basinwide water quality management plans and on increasing public involvement and public education in connection with basinwide water quality management planning. The report to the Environmental Review Commission by the Department shall include a written statement as to all concentrations of heavy metals and other pollutants in the

surface waters of the State that are identified in the course of preparing or revising the basinwide water quality management plans.

(e) A basinwide water quality management plan is not a rule and Article 2A of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes does not apply to the development of basinwide water quality management plans. Any water quality standard or classification and any requirement or limitation of general applicability that implements a basinwide water quality management plan is a rule and must be adopted as provided in Article 2A of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes.

§ 143B-282. Environmental Management Commission – creation; powers and duties.

[. . .]

(c) The Environmental Management Commission shall implement the provisions of subsections (d) and (e) of 33 U.S.C. § 1313 by identifying and prioritizing impaired waters and by developing appropriate total maximum daily loads of pollutants for those impaired waters. The Commission shall incorporate those total maximum daily loads approved by the United States Environmental Protection Agency into its continuing basinwide water quality planning process.

(d) The Environmental Management Commission may adopt rules setting out strategies necessary for assuring that water quality standards are met by any point or nonpoint source or by any category of point or nonpoint sources that is determined by the Commission to be contributing to the water quality impairment. These strategies may include, but are not limited to, additional monitoring, effluent limitations, supplemental standards or classifications, best management practices, protective buffers, schedules of compliance, and the establishment of and delegations to intergovernmental basinwide groups.

.0236 NEUSE RIVER BASIN-NUTRIENT SENSITIVE WATERS MANAGEMENT STRATEGY: AGRICULTURAL NITROGEN LOADING REDUCTION

All persons engaging in agricultural operations in the Neuse River Basin, including those related to crops, livestock, and poultry, shall collectively achieve and maintain a 30 percent net total nitrogen loading reduction from the cumulative average 1991-1995 nitrogen loadings. In addition to requirements set forth in general permits for animal operations issued pursuant to G.S. 143-215.10C, these Rules apply to all livestock and poultry operations, regardless of size, in the Neuse River Basin. A management strategy to achieve this reduction is specified in Rule .0238 of this Rule.

.0238 NEUSE RIVER BASIN-NUTRIENT SENSITIVE WATERS MANAGEMENT STRATEGY: AGRICULTURAL NITROGEN REDUCTION STRATEGY

The following requirements apply to all persons in the Neuse River Basin who engage in agricultural operations. Agricultural operations are activities which relate to the production of crops, livestock, and poultry.

(1) All persons engaging in agricultural operations in the Neuse River Basin shall collectively achieve and maintain a 30 percent net total nitrogen loading reduction from the cumulative average 1991-1995 nitrogen loadings within five years from the effective date of this Rule. Persons subject to this Rule are provided with two options for meeting the requirements of this Rule. The first option is to sign-up for and participate in implementing a collective local strategy for agricultural nitrogen reduction as described in Item (7) of this Rule. This option allows site-specific plans to be developed for those operations where further nitrogen reduction practices are necessary to achieve the collective reduction goal. The second option requires the implementation of standard Best Management Practices as specified in Item (8) of this Rule. Failure to meet requirements of this Rule may result in imposition of enforcement measures as authorized by G.S. 143-215.6A(civil penalties), G.S. 143-215.6B (criminal penalties), and G.S. 143-215.6C (injunctive relief).

(2) Formation and membership of the Basin Oversight Committee. The Environmental Management Commission shall delegate to the Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources the responsibility of forming a Basin Oversight Committee.

(a) The Secretary shall solicit one nomination for membership on this Committee from each of the following agencies:

(i) Division of Soil and Water Conservation,

(ii) United States Department of Agriculture- Natural Resources Conservation Service,

(iii) North Carolina Department of Agriculture,

(iv) North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service, and

(v) Division of Water Quality.

(b) The Secretary shall also solicit one nomination that represents environmental interests, one nomination that represents agricultural interests, and one from the scientific community with experience related to water quality problems in the Neuse River Basin.

(c) The Secretary, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, shall appoint members of the Basin Oversight Committee from the nominees provided in Sub-Items (2)(a) and (2)(b) of this Rule. Members

shall be appointed for a term not to exceed five years and shall serve at the pleasure of the Secretary. The United States Department of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service member shall serve in an "ex-officio" non-voting capacity and shall function as a technical program advisor to the Committee.

(3) Role of the Basin Oversight Committee. The Environmental Management Commission shall delegate the following responsibilities to the Basin Oversight Committee.

(a) Develop a tracking and accounting methodology, as described below, for evaluating total nitrogen loading from agricultural operations and progress toward reaching the total nitrogen net loading reduction from the implementation BMPs within the Neuse River Basin. The accountability methodology must demonstrate how the nitrogen loading reduction can be met collectively by implementing best management practices approved by the Soil and Water Conservation Commission that include, but are not limited to, water control structures, riparian area establishment, and nutrient management.

(b) Submit a draft accountability process in accordance with the requirements in Sub-Items (3)(a) and (3)(c) of this Rule to the Environmental Management Commission for review within six months after the effective date of the rule and the final accountability process to the Environmental Management Commission for approval within one year after the effective date of the rule. The Environmental Management Commission shall approve the accountability process if it meets requirements in Sub-Items (3)(a) and (3)(c) of this Rule. If the Basin Oversight Committee fails to submit an approvable accountability process to the Environmental Management Commission, then the Environmental Management Commission may accept alternative accountability process proposals within 15 months of the effective date of this Rule. If the Environmental Management Commission fails to receive an approvable accountability process, then the Environmental Management Commission may require all agricultural operations to follow the standard Best Management Practices option as specified in Item (8) of this Rule.

(c) Include in the accountability process a method to accurately track implementation of BMPs, including location and type of BMPs; to estimate nitrogen reductions from BMP implementation; to quantify increases or decreases in nitrogen loading due to changes in land use, modified agricultural activity, or atmospheric nitrogen loading, based on the best available scientific information; to ensure operation and maintenance of BMPs, including year round management for water control structures; to address life expectancy of BMPs; and a method to ensure maintenance of the nitrogen net loading reduction after the initial

five years of this Rule, including substitute BMPs to replace expired practices and additional BMPs to offset new sources of nitrogen.

(d) Calculate a separate total nitrogen loading for agricultural lands in the Neuse River Basin above and below New Bern based on the average of 1991-1995 conditions. Based on this loading, calculate a separate 30 percent net reduction. Loading calculations must include atmospheric emissions and deposition of nitrogen from agricultural lands based on the best available scientific information. Allocate to counties or watersheds, as allowed in Sub-Item (4)(a) of this Rule, within the Neuse River Basin their portion of the calculated nitrogen loading reduction from agricultural operations, including any division of the reduction between specific categories of agricultural operations. Each county or watershed may not have to reduce individually its nitrogen loading by 30 percent; however, the nitrogen loading reduction from all counties or watershed above New Bern shall collectively meet their total nitrogen reduction and all counties or watersheds below New Bern shall collectively meet their total nitrogen reduction. If the Basin Oversight Committee fails to allocate the nitrogen loading reductions from agricultural operations to counties or watersheds within the Neuse River Basin, the Environmental Management Commission may assign the agricultural nitrogen reductions based on the approved accountability process as described in Sub-Items (3)(a) and (3)(c) of this Rule.

(e) Review, approve and summarize county nitrogen reduction strategies and present these strategies to the Environmental Management Commission for approval within two years from the effective date of this Rule.

(f) Review, approve and summarize local nitrogen reduction annual reports and present these reports to the Environmental Management Commission each October. Information to be included in the Annual Report is described in Item (5)(d) of this Rule.

(4) Formation and membership of the Local Advisory Committees. The Environmental Management Commission shall delegate to the Directors of the Division of Water Quality and Division of Soil and Water Conservation the responsibility of forming Local Advisory Committees.

(a) The Directors shall form Local Advisory Committees in each county (or watershed specified by the Basin Oversight Committee) within the Neuse River Basin. The Directors shall solicit nominations for membership on the Local Advisory Committee from each of the following local agencies:

(i) Soil and Water Conservation District,

(ii) United States Department of Agriculture- Natural Resources Conservation Service,

(iii) North Carolina Department of Agriculture,

(iv) North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service,

(v) North Carolina Division of Soil and Water Conservation, and

(vi) The Directors shall also solicit at least two nominations that represents a local farmer in the county watershed.

The Soil and Water Conservation District may be designated by the Basin Oversight Committee as the lead agency on the Local Advisory Committee.

(b) The Environmental Management Commission and Soil and Water Conservation Commission shall appoint members of Local Advisory Committee from the nominees provided in Sub-Item (4)(a) of this Rule and shall be appointed for a term not to exceed five years and shall serve at the pleasure of the Commissions.

(5) Role of the Local Advisory Committees. The Environmental Management Commission shall delegate the following responsibilities to employees of the Department who are members of the Local Advisory Committees and employees of the Division of Soil and Water Conservation or its designee. These employees shall act with advice from the Local Advisory Committees.

(a) Conduct a sign-up process for persons wishing to voluntarily implement the local nitrogen reduction strategy as specified in Item (7) of this Rule. This sign-up process shall be completed within one year following the effective date of this Rule.

(b) Develop local nitrogen reduction strategies that meet the nitrogen loading reduction goal for agricultural operations assigned by the Basin Oversight Committee. The local strategies shall be designed to achieve the required nitrogen loading reduction within five years from the effective date of this Rule. A matrix of best management practice options, which account for stream order, floodplain width, and regional variations in soil types and topography, may be used in developing the local nitrogen reduction strategies. Local nitrogen reduction strategies must specify the name and location of participant agricultural farming operations, BMPs which will be required as part of the plan, estimated nitrogen reduction, schedule for BMP implementation, and operation and maintenance requirements. If the Local Advisory Committee fails to develop the local nitrogen reduction strategy, the Environmental Management Commission

may develop the strategy based on the tracking and accounting method approved by the Environmental Management Commission.

(c) Submit an annual report to the Basin Oversight Committee each May on net total nitrogen loading reductions from agricultural operations, the implementation of BMPs for nitrogen control, and progress towards the total nitrogen loading reduction requirements in the Neuse River Basin above and below New Bern.

(d) Include in the annual report, at a minimum, documentation on the BMPs implemented (including type and location), their costs, documentation of any expired contracts for BMPs, estimated nitrogen net loading reductions achieved as a result of those BMPs, any increases or decreases in nitrogen loading resulting from changes in land use or modified agricultural-related activity, discussion of operation and maintenance of BMPs, and a summary of the estimated load from agricultural operations for the previous year, and any modifications to the accounting methodology. Information shall be provided in the annual report on the status of BMP implementation and estimated total nitrogen reduction by all agricultural operations within the Neuse River Basin in each county or watershed. The annual report shall also be summarized separately for cropland, livestock and poultry activities.

(6) Options for meeting the collective total nitrogen net loading reduction requirement. Each agricultural operation in the Neuse River Basin shall have two options for meeting the requirements of this Rule. The options are to either implement a local nitrogen reduction strategy, specified by Item (7) of this Rule, or implement standard Best Management Practices specified by Item (8) of this Rule.

(7) Local nitrogen reduction strategy option. All persons subject to this Rule that choose to implement the county nitrogen reduction plan must complete the sign-up process that will be conducted per the requirements of Item (5)(a) of this Rule. This sign-up process will be completed within one year from the effective date of this Rule. If a person subject to this Rule does not complete the sign-up process, he shall be subject to implementation of Best Management Practices as specified in Item (8) of this Rule. Persons who choose to participate in the local nitrogen reduction strategy must commit and implement their portion of the plan within five years of the effective date of this Rule. A person may withdraw from the local nutrient reduction strategy up until the time that the local strategy is finalized by the Local Advisory Committee and the person signs the specific plan for his property, which represents his commitment to implement the plan within five years of the effective date of the rules. After a person has made the commitment to implement the local strategy by signing the plan for his property, then such persons may not withdraw from the local nitrogen reduction strategy during the initial five-year period. The local nitrogen reduction strategy is not

required to be more stringent than the standard best management practice option provided that the net nitrogen reduction goals are met collectively; however, the Local Advisory Committees may develop strategies that achieve reductions of greater than 30 percent.

(8) Standard best management practice option. If a person subject to this Rule does not complete the sign-up process for implementation of the local nitrogen reduction strategy, then he shall implement the following best management practices within four years following the effective date of this Rule.

(a) A forested riparian area, as described in Sub-Item (8)(a)(i)-(ii) of this Rule, is required on all sides of surface waters in the Neuse River Basin (intermittent streams, perennial streams, lakes, ponds and estuaries) as indicated on the most recent versions of U.S.G.S. 1:24,000 scale (7.5 minute quadrangle) topographic maps or other site-specific evidence. Design and installation of the forested riparian area shall be such that, to the maximum extent possible, sheet flow of surface water is achieved. Any activities that would result in water quality standard violations or disrupt the structural or functional integrity of the forested riparian area are prohibited. The protected riparian area shall have two zones as follows:

(i) Zone 1 shall be undisturbed forest. Zone 1 begins at the top of bank for intermittent streams and perennial streams without tributaries and extends landward a distance of 30 feet on each side of the waterbody, measured horizontally on a line perpendicular to the waterbody. For all other waterbodies, Zone 1 begins at the top of bank or the mean high water line and extends landward a distance of 30 feet, measured horizontally on a line perpendicular to the waterbody. Forest vegetation of any width that exists in Zone 1 as of July 22, 1997 must be preserved and maintained in accordance with Sub-Items (8)(a)(i)(A)-(E) of this Rule. The application of fertilizer in Zone 1 is prohibited. The following practices and activities are allowed in Zone 1:

(A) Natural regeneration of forest vegetation and planting vegetation to enhance the riparian area if disturbance is minimized, provided that any plantings shall primarily consist of locally native trees and shrubs;

(B) Selective cutting of individual trees of high value in the outer 20 feet of Zone 1, provided that the basal area of this outer 20-foot wide area remains at or above 75 square feet per acre and is computed according to the following method. Basal area of this outer 20-foot wide area shall be computed every 100 feet along the stream to ensure even

distribution of forest vegetation and shall be based on all trees measured at 4.5 feet from ground level. No tracked or wheeled equipment is allowed in Zone 1 except at stream crossings which are designed, constructed and maintained in accordance with Forest Practice Guidelines Related to Water Quality (15A NCAC 1J .0201 - .0209);

(C) Horticulture or silvicultural practices to maintain the health of individual trees;

(D) Removal of individual trees which are in danger of causing damage to dwellings, other structures, or the stream channel; and

(E) Removal of dead trees and other timber cutting techniques necessary to prevent extensive pest or disease infestation if recommended by the Director, Division of Forest Resources and approved by the Director, Division of Water Quality.

(ii) Zone 2: begins at the outer edge of Zone 1 and extends landward a minimum of 20 feet as measured horizontally on a line perpendicular to the waterbody. The combined minimum width of Zones 1 and 2 shall be 50 feet on all sides of the waterbody. Vegetation in Zone 2 shall consist of a dense ground cover composed of herbaceous or woody species which provides for diffusion and infiltration of runoff and filtering of pollutants. The following practices and activities are allowed in Zone 2 in addition to those allowed in Zone 1: Periodic mowing and removal of plant products such as timber, nuts, and fruit is allowed on a periodic basis provided the intended purpose of the riparian area is not compromised by harvesting, disturbance, or loss of forest or herbaceous ground cover. Forest vegetation in Zone 2 may be managed to minimize shading on adjacent land outside the riparian area if the water quality function of the riparian area is not compromised.

(iii) The following practices and activities are not allowed in Zone 1 and Zone 2:

(A) Land disturbing activities and placement of fill and other materials, other than those allowed in Items (8)(a)(i) and (8)(b) of this Rule;

(B) New development;

(C) New on-site sanitary sewage systems which use ground absorptions;

(D) Any activity that threatens the health and function of the vegetation including, but not limited to, application of fertilizer or chemicals in amounts exceeding the manufacturer's recommended rate, uncontrolled sediment sources on adjacent lands, and the creation of any areas with bare soil.

(iv) Timber removal and skidding of trees in the riparian area shall be directed away from the water course or water body. Skidding shall be done in a manner to prevent creation of ephemeral channels perpendicular to the water body. Any tree removal must be performed in a manner that does not compromise the intended purpose of the riparian area and is in accordance with the Forest Practices Guidelines Related to Water Quality (15A NCAC 1J .0201-.0209).

(b) The following waterbodies and land uses are exempt from the riparian area requirement:

(i) Ditches and manmade conveyances, other than modified natural streams, which under normal conditions do not receive drainage waters from any tributary ditches, canals, or streams, unless the ditch or manmade conveyance delivers runoff directly to waters classified in accordance with 15A NCAC 2B .0100;

(ii) Ditches and manmade conveyances other than modified natural streams which are used exclusively for drainage of silvicultural land or naturally forested areas. All forest harvesting operations shall be in compliance with North Carolina's Forest Practices Guidelines Related to Water Quality;

(iii) Areas mapped as perennial streams, intermittent streams, lakes, ponds or estuaries on the most recent versions of United States Geological Survey 1:24,000 scale (7.5 minute quadrangle) topographic maps where no perennial, intermittent waterbody, or lakes, ponds or estuaries exists on the ground;

(iv) Ponds and lakes created for animal watering, irrigation, or other agricultural uses that are not part of a natural drainage way that is classified in accordance with 15A NCAC 2B .0100;

(v) Water dependent structures as defined in 15A NCAC 2B .0202 provided that they are located, designed, constructed and

maintained to provide maximum nutrient removal, to have the least adverse effects on aquatic life habitat and to protect water quality;

(vi) The following uses may be allowed where no practical alternative exists. A lack of practical alternatives may be shown by demonstrating that, considering the potential for a reduction in size, configuration or density of the proposed activity and all alternative designs, the basic project purpose cannot be practically accomplished in a manner which would avoid or result in less adverse impact to surface waters. Also, these structures shall be located, designed, constructed, and maintained to have minimal disturbance, to provide maximum nutrient removal and erosion protection, to have the least adverse effects on aquatic life and habitat, and to protect water quality to the maximum extent practical through the use of best management practices:

(A) Road crossings, railroad crossings, bridges, airport facilities, and utility crossings may be allowed if conditions specified in Sub-Item (8)(b)(vi) of this Rule are met;

(B) Stormwater management facilities and ponds, and utility construction and maintenance corridors for utilities such as water, sewer or gas, may be allowed in Zone 2 of the riparian area as long as the conditions specified in Sub-Item (8)(b)(vi) of this Rule are met and they are located at least 30 feet from the top of bank or mean high water line. Additional requirements for utility construction and maintenance corridors are listed in Sub-Item (8)(b)(vi) of this Rule.

(vii) A corridor for the construction and maintenance of utility lines, such as water, sewer or gas, (including access roads and stockpiling of materials) may run parallel to the stream and may be located within Zone 2 of the riparian area, as long as no practical alternative exists and they are located at least 30 feet from the top of bank or mean high water line and best management practices are installed to minimize runoff and maximize water quality protection to the maximum extent practicable. Permanent, maintained access corridors shall be restricted to the minimum width practicable and shall not exceed 10 feet in width except at manhole locations. A 10 feet by 10 feet perpendicular vehicle turnaround is allowed provided they are spaced at least 500 feet apart along the riparian area;

(viii) Stream restoration projects, scientific studies, stream gauging, water wells, passive recreation facilities such as

boardwalks, trails, pathways, historic preservation and archaeological activities are allowed; provided that they are located in Zone 2 and are at least 30 feet from the top of bank or mean high water line and are designed, constructed and maintained to provide the maximum nutrient removal and erosion protection, to have the least adverse effects on aquatic life and habitat, and to protect water quality to maximum extent practical through the use of best management practices. Activities that must cross the stream or be located within Zone 1 are allowed as long as all other requirements of this Item are met;

(ix) Stream crossings associated with timber harvesting are allowed if performed in accordance with the Forest Practices Guidelines Related to Water Quality (15A NCAC 1J.0201-.0209); and

(x) In addition to exceptions included in Sub-Item (8)(b)(i)-(ix), canals, ditches, and other drainage conveyances are exempt from the riparian area requirement if both water control structures with a water control structure management plan and a nutrient management plan, are implemented on the adjacent agricultural land according to the standards and specifications of the USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service or the standards and specifications adopted by the NC Soil and Water Conservation Commission. The water control structures and nutrient management practices must provide equivalent protection and directly affect the land and waterbodies draining into the waterbody exempted from the riparian area requirement. To the maximum extent practical, water control structures shall be managed to maximize nitrogen removal throughout the year. A technical specialist designated pursuant to rules adopted by the Soil and Water Conservation Commission must provide written approval that the nutrient management and water management plans meet the standards and specifications of the USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service or the standards and specifications adopted by the NC Soil and Water Conservation Commission. If the nutrient management plans and water management plans are not implemented, then a riparian area pursuant to this Section is required.

(c) The following are modifications to the riparian area requirements.

(i) On agricultural land where either water control structures with a water control structure management plan, or a nutrient management plan is implemented according to the standards and specifications of the USDA - Natural Resources Conservation

Service or the standards and specifications adopted by the NC Soil and Water Conservation Commission, then a 20-ft forested or a 30-ft vegetated buffer is required. The water control structures or nutrient management practices must provide equivalent protection and directly affect the land and waterbodies draining into the waterbody with a modified buffer requirement. To the maximum extent practical, water control structures shall be managed to maximize nitrogen removal throughout the year. A technical specialist designated pursuant to rules adopted by the Soil and Water Conservation Commission must provide written approval that the nutrient management plan meets the standards and specifications of the USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service or the standards and specifications adopted by the NC Soil and Water Conservation Commission.

(ii) A vegetated riparian area may be substituted for an equivalent width of forested riparian area within 100 feet of tile drainage.

(iii) Where the riparian area requirements would result in an unavoidable loss of tobacco allotments (7 CFR 723.220(c) and the BMPs of controlled drainage or nutrient management are not in place, forest cover is required only in the first 20 feet of the riparian area.

(d) Maintenance of Zones 1 and 2 is required in accordance with this Rule.

(i) Sheet flow must be maintained to the maximum extent practical through dispersing concentrated flow and re-establishment of vegetation to maintain the effectiveness of the riparian area.

(ii) Concentrated runoff from new ditches or manmade conveyances must be dispersed into sheetflow before the runoff enters Zone 2 of the riparian area. Existing ditches and manmade conveyances, as specified in Sub-Item (8)(b)(ii) of this Rule, are exempt from this requirement; however, care shall be taken to minimize pollutant loading through these existing ditches and manmade conveyances from fertilizer application or erosion.

(iii) Periodic corrective action to restore sheet flow shall be taken by the landowner if necessary to impede the formation of erosion gullies which allow concentrated flow to bypass treatment in the riparian area.

(e) Periodic maintenance of modified natural streams such as canals is allowed provided that disturbance is minimized and the structure and function of the riparian area is not compromised. A grassed travelway is allowed on one side of the waterbody when alternative forms of maintenance access are not practical. The width and specifications of the travelway shall be only that needed for equipment access and operation. The travelway shall be located to maximize stream shading.

(f) Where the standards and management requirements for riparian areas are in conflict with other laws, regulations, and permits regarding streams, steep slopes, erodible soils, wetlands, floodplains, forest harvesting, surface mining, land disturbance activities, development in Coastal Area Management Act Areas of Environmental Concern, or other environmental protection areas, the more protective shall apply.

(g) The Environmental Management Commission acknowledges that best management practices under the standard management practice option of this Rule do not fully address nitrogen loading, including atmospheric emissions and deposition, from animal operations. As information becomes available on nitrogen loadings from animal operations and best management practices to control these loadings, other best management practices from animal operations may be required by the Commission as necessary to achieve equivalent reduction in nitrogen loadings therefrom. These additional best management practices shall be required if deemed necessary to achieve a net total nitrogen loading reduction from the animal operations based on average 1991-1995 conditions.

.0255 TAR-PAMLICO RIVER BASIN - NUTRIENT SENSITIVE WATERS MANAGEMENT STRATEGY: AGRICULTURAL NUTRIENT LOADING GOALS

All persons engaging in agricultural operations in the Tar-Pamlico River Basin, including those related to crops, horticulture, livestock, and poultry, shall collectively achieve and maintain certain nutrient loading levels. A management strategy to achieve this reduction is specified in Rule .0256 of this Section. These Rules apply to livestock and poultry operations above certain size thresholds in the Tar-Pamlico River Basin, in addition to requirements for animal operations set forth in general permits issued pursuant to G.S. 143-215.10C. The nutrient loading goals to be met collectively by the persons specified here are as follows:

- (1) a 30 percent total nitrogen net loading reduction from 1991 loading from agriculture to the basin; and
- (2) no net increase in total phosphorus loading over 1991 levels.

.0256 TAR-PAMLICO RIVER BASIN-NUTRIENT SENSITIVE WATERS MANAGEMENT STRATEGY: AGRICULTURAL NUTRIENT CONTROL STRATEGY

(a) **PURPOSE.** The purpose of this Rule is to set forth a process by which agricultural operations in the Tar-Pamlico River Basin will collectively limit their nitrogen and phosphorus loading to the Pamlico estuary. The purpose is to achieve and maintain a 30 percent reduction in collective nitrogen loading from 1991 levels within five to eight years and to hold phosphorus loading at or below 1991 levels within four years of Commission approval of a phosphorus accounting methodology.

(1) **PROCESS.** This Rule requires farmers in the Basin to implement land management practices that collectively, on a county or watershed basis, will achieve the nutrient goals. Local committees and a Basin committee will develop strategies, coordinate activities and account for progress.

(2) **LIMITATION.** This Rule may not fully address the agricultural nitrogen reduction goal of the Tar-Pamlico Nutrient Sensitive Waters Strategy in that it does not address atmospheric sources of nitrogen to the Basin, including atmospheric emissions of ammonia from sources located both within and outside of the Basin. As better information becomes available from ongoing research on atmospheric nitrogen loading to the Basin from these sources, and on measures to control this loading, the Commission may undertake separate rule-making to require such measures it deems necessary from these sources to support the goals of the Tar-Pamlico Nutrient Sensitive Waters Strategy.

(b) **APPLICABILITY.** This Rule shall apply to all persons engaging in agricultural operations in the Tar-Pamlico River Basin except certain persons engaged in such operations for educational purposes. Persons engaged for educational purposes shall be those persons involved in secondary school or lesser grade-level activities that are a structured part of an organized program conducted by a public or private educational institution or by an agricultural organization. Educational activities shall not include research activities in support of commercial production. For the purposes of this Rule, agricultural operations are activities that relate to any of the following pursuits:

(1) The commercial production of crops or horticultural products other than trees. As used in this Rule, commercial shall mean activities conducted primarily for financial profit.

(2) Research activities in support of such commercial production.

(3) The production or management of any of the following number of livestock or poultry at any time, excluding nursing young:

(A) 20 or more horses;

(B) 20 or more cattle;

(C) 150 or more swine;

(D) 120 or more sheep;

(E) 130 or more goats;

(F) 650 or more turkeys;

(G) 3,500 or more chickens; or

(H) A number of any single species or combination of species of livestock or poultry that exceeds 20,000 pounds of live weight at any time.

(4) Certain tree-harvesting activities described and defined as follows.

(A) The one-time harvest of trees on land within a riparian buffer described in 15A NCAC 02B .0259 that was open farmland on September 1, 2001. This one-time harvest of trees may be conducted within one tree cropping interval only under a verifiable farm plan that received final approval from a local agricultural agency on or after September 1, 2001 and that expressly allowed the harvest of trees no earlier than 10 years after the trees are established and the return of the land to another agricultural pursuit.

(B) The one-time harvest of trees on land within a riparian buffer described in 15A NCAC 02B .0259 that had trees established under an agricultural incentive program as of September 1, 2001.

(C) All tree harvesting described in Subparagraphs (b)(4)(A) and (b)(4)(B) of this Rule shall comply with Forest Practices Guidelines Related to Water Quality codified at 15A NCAC 01I. The nutrient removal functions that were provided by trees prior to their harvest shall be replaced by other measures that are implemented by the owner of the land from which the trees are harvested.

(D) The following definitions shall apply to terms used in Subparagraphs (b)(4)(A) through (b)(4)(C) of this Rule.

(i) "Agricultural incentive program" means any of the following programs and any predecessor program to any of the following programs:

(I) Agriculture Cost Share Program for Nonpoint Source Pollution Control established by G.S. 143-215.74.

(II) Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program established by 7 C.F.R. Part 1410 (January 1, 2001 Edition) and 15A NCAC 06G .0101 through 15A NCAC 06G .0106.

(III) Conservation Reserve Program established by 7 C.F.R. Part 1410 (January 1, 2001 Edition).

(IV) Environmental Quality Incentives Program established by 7 C.F.R. Part 1466 (January 1, 2001 Edition).

(V) Wetlands Reserve Program established by 7 C.F.R. Part 1467 (January 1, 2001 Edition).

(VI) Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program established by 7 C.F.R. Part 636 (January 1, 2001 Edition).

(ii) "Local agricultural agency" means the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service, the Farm Services Agency of the United States Department of Agriculture, the Natural Resources Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture, a Soil and Water Conservation District created pursuant to G.S. 139-5, or their successor agencies.

(iii) "Open farmland" means the footprint of land used for pasture or for crops or horticultural products other than trees. Open farmland may contain scattered trees if an open canopy existed on September 1, 2001 as determined from the most recent aerial photographs taken prior to September 1, 2001 for the Farm Services Agency of the United States Department of Agriculture.

(iv) "Tree" means a woody plant with a diameter equal to or greater than five inches when measured at a height of four and one-half feet above the ground.

(v) "Tree cropping interval" means the time required to establish and grow trees that are suitable for harvesting. The tree-cropping interval shall be set out in the farm plan and shall be no less than 10 years after the trees are established.

(c) METHOD FOR RULE IMPLEMENTATION. This Rule shall be implemented through a cooperative effort between a Basin Oversight Committee and Local Advisory Committees in each county or watershed. The membership, roles and responsibilities of these committees are set forth in Paragraphs (f) and (g) of this Rule. Committees' activities shall be guided by the following constraints:

(1) The Commission shall determine whether each Local Advisory Committee has achieved its nitrogen reduction goal within five years of the effective date of this Rule, and its phosphorus loading goal within four years of the date that a phosphorus accounting method is approved by the Commission, both based on the accounting process described in Paragraphs (f) and (g) of this Rule. Should the Commission determine that a Local Advisory Committee has not achieved its nitrogen goal within five years, then the Commission shall require additional BMP implementation as needed to ensure that the goal is met within eight years of the effective date of this Rule. The Commission shall similarly review compliance with the phosphorus goal four years after it approves a phosphorus accounting method, and shall require additional BMP implementation as needed to meet that goal within an additional three years from that date. All persons subject to this Rule who have not implemented BMPs in accordance with an option provided in Subparagraphs (d)(1) or (d)(2) of this Rule shall be subject to such further requirements deemed necessary by the Commission for any Local Advisory Committee that has not achieved a nutrient goal.

(2) Should a committee not form or not follow through on its responsibilities such that a local strategy is not implemented in keeping with Paragraph (g) of this Rule, the Commission may require all persons subject to this Rule in the affected area to implement BMPs as set forth in Paragraph (e) of this Rule.

(d) **OPTIONS FOR MEETING RULE REQUIREMENTS.** Persons subject to this Rule shall register their operations with their Local Advisory Committee according to the requirements of Paragraph (g) of this Rule within one year of the effective date of this Rule. Such persons may elect to implement any BMPs they choose that are recognized by the Basin Oversight Committee as nitrogen-reducing BMPs within five years of the effective date of this Rule. Persons who implement one of the following two options within five years of the effective date of this Rule for nitrogen-reducing BMPs and within four years of the date that a phosphorus accounting method is approved by the Commission shall not be subject to any additional requirements that may be placed on persons under Paragraph (c) of this Rule. Persons subject to this Rule shall be responsible for implementing and maintaining the BMPs used to meet the requirements of this Rule for as long as they continue their agricultural operation. If a person ceases an operation and another person assumes that operation, the new operator shall be responsible for implementing BMPs that meet the requirements of this Paragraph.

(1) Option 1 is to implement site-specific BMPs that are accepted by the Local Advisory Committee as fully satisfying a person's obligations under this Rule based on BMP implementation needs identified in the local nutrient control strategy required under Subparagraph (g)(3) of this Rule and on nutrient reduction efficiencies established by the Basin Oversight Committee as called for under Subparagraphs (f)(2) and (f)(3) of this Rule.

(2) Option 2 is to implement standard BMPs that persons subject to this Rule choose from the alternatives established pursuant to Paragraph (e) of this Rule.

(e) **STANDARD BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (BMPs).** Standard BMPs shall be individual BMPs or combinations of BMPs that achieve at least a 30 percent reduction in nitrogen loading and no increase in phosphorus loading relative to conditions that lack such BMPs. Standard BMPs shall be established for the purposes of this Rule by one of the following processes:

(1) The Soil and Water Conservation Commission may elect to approve, under its own authorities, standard BMP options for the Tar-Pamlico River Basin based on nutrient reduction efficiencies established by the Basin Oversight Committee pursuant to Subparagraph (f)(3) of this Rule and using criteria for nitrogen- and phosphorus-reducing BMPs as described in rules adopted by the Soil and Water Conservation Commission, including 15A NCAC 06E .0104 and 15A NCAC 06F .0104. One purpose of this process is to provide persons subject to this Rule the opportunity to work with the Soil and Water Conservation Commission in its development of standard BMP options; or

(2) In the unlikely event that the Soil and Water Conservation Commission does not approve an initial set of standard BMP options for the Tar-Pamlico River Basin within one year of the effective date of this Rule, then the Environmental Management Commission may approve standard BMP options within eighteen months of the effective date of this Rule. In that event, the standard BMP options approved by the Commission shall be designed to reduce nitrogen and phosphorus loading, as specified at the beginning of Paragraph (e) of this Rule, from agricultural sources through structural, management, or buffering farming BMPs or animal waste management plan components.

(f) **BASIN OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE.** The Basin Oversight Committee shall have the following membership, role and responsibilities:

(1) **MEMBERSHIP.** The Commission shall delegate to the Secretary the responsibility of forming a Basin Oversight Committee within two months of the effective date of this Rule. Members shall be appointed for five-year terms and shall serve at the pleasure of the Secretary. Until such time as the Commission determines that long-term maintenance of the nutrient loads is assured, the Secretary shall either reappoint members or replace members every five years. The Secretary shall solicit nominations for membership on this Committee to represent each of the following interests, and shall appoint one nominee to represent each interest. The Secretary may appoint a replacement at any time for an interest in Parts (f)(1)(F) through (f)(1)(J) of this Rule upon request of representatives of that interest:

(A) Division of Soil and Water Conservation;

- (B) United States Department of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service (shall serve in an "ex-officio" non-voting capacity and shall function as a technical program advisor to the Committee);
- (C) North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services;
- (D) North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service;
- (E) Division of Water Quality;
- (F) Environmental interests;
- (G) Basinwide farming interests;
- (H) Pasture-based livestock interests;
- (I) Cropland farming interests; and
- (J) The scientific community with experience related to water quality problems in the Tar-Pamlico River Basin.

(2) ROLE. The Basin Oversight Committee shall:

- (A) Develop a tracking and accounting methodology pursuant to Subparagraph (f)(3) of this Rule. A final nitrogen methodology shall be submitted to the Commission for approval within one year after the effective date of this Rule. A final methodology for phosphorus shall be submitted at the earliest date possible as determined by the Basin Oversight Committee with input from the technical advisory committee described in Part (f)(2)(D) of this Rule.
- (B) Identify and implement future refinements to the accounting methodology as needed to reflect advances in scientific understanding, including establishment of nutrient reduction efficiencies for BMPs.
- (C) Appoint a technical advisory committee within 6 months of the effective date of this Rule to inform the Basin Oversight Committee on rule-related issues. The Basin Oversight Committee shall direct the committee to take the following actions at a minimum: monitor advances in scientific understanding related to phosphorus loading, evaluate the need for additional management action to meet the phosphorus loading goal, and report its findings to the Basin Oversight Committee on an annual basis. The Basin Oversight Committee shall in turn report these findings and its recommendations to the Commission on an annual basis following the effective date of this Rule, until such time as the Commission, with input from the Basin Oversight Committee, determines

that the technical advisory committee has fulfilled its purpose. The Basin Oversight Committee shall solicit nominations for this committee from the Division of Soil and Water Conservation, United States Department of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service, North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service, Division of Water Quality, environmental interests, agricultural interests, and the scientific community with experience related to the committee's charge.

(D) Review, approve and summarize county or watershed local strategies and present these strategies to the Commission for approval within two years after the effective date of this Rule.

(E) Establish minimum requirements for, review, approve and summarize local nitrogen and phosphorus loading annual reports as described under Subparagraph (g)(5) of this Rule, and present these reports to the Commission each October, until such time as the Commission determines that annual reports are no longer needed to assure long-term maintenance of the nutrient goals.

(3) ACCOUNTING METHODOLOGY. The Basin Oversight Committee shall develop an accounting methodology that meets the following requirements:

(A) The methodology shall quantify baseline total nitrogen and phosphorus loadings from agricultural operations in each county and for the entire basin.

(B) The methodology shall include a means of tracking implementation of BMPs, including number, type, and area affected.

(C) The methodology shall include a means of estimating incremental nitrogen and phosphorus reductions from actual BMP implementation and of evaluating progress toward the nutrient goals from BMP implementation. The methodology shall include nutrient reduction efficiencies for individual BMPs and combinations of BMPs that can be implemented toward the nitrogen and phosphorus goals.

(D) The methodology shall allow for future refinements to the nutrient baseline loading determinations, and to the load reduction accounting methodology.

(E) The methodology shall provide for quantification of changes in nutrient loading due to changes in agricultural land use, modifications in agricultural activity, or changes in atmospheric nitrogen loading to the extent allowed by advances in technical understanding.

(F) The methodology shall include a method to track maintenance of the nutrient net loads after the initial eight years of this Rule, including tracking of changes in BMPs and additional BMPs to offset new or increased sources of nutrients from agricultural operations.

(g) LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEES. The Local Advisory Committees shall have the following membership, roles, and responsibilities:

(1) MEMBERSHIP. A Local Advisory Committee shall be appointed as provided in this Paragraph in each county (or watershed as specified by the Basin Oversight Committee) within the Tar-Pamlico River Basin. As directed by S.L. 2001, c. 355, the Local Advisory Committees shall be appointed on or before November 1, 2001. They shall terminate upon a finding by the Environmental Management Commission that the long-term maintenance of nutrient loads in the Tar-Pamlico River Basin is assured. Each Local Advisory Committee shall consist of:

(A) One representative of the local Soil and Water Conservation District;

(B) One local representative of the United States Department of Agriculture- Natural Resources Conservation Service;

(C) One local representative of the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services;

(D) One local representative of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service;

(E) One local representative of the North Carolina Division of Soil and Water Conservation; and

(F) At least five, but not more than 10 farmers who reside in the county or watershed.

(2) APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS. The Director of the Division of Water Quality and the Director of the Division of Soil and Water Conservation of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources shall jointly appoint members described in Subparagraphs (g)(1)(A), (g)(1)(B), (g)(1)(D), and (g)(1)(E) of this Rule. As directed by S.L. 2001, c. 355, the Commissioner of Agriculture shall appoint the members described in Subparagraphs (g)(1)(C) and (g)(1)(F) of this Rule from persons nominated by nongovernmental organizations whose members produce or manage significant agricultural commodities in each county or watershed. Members of the Local Advisory Committees shall serve at the pleasure of their appointing authority.

(3) ROLE. The Local Advisory Committees shall:

(A) Conduct a registration process for persons subject to this Rule. This registration process shall be completed within one year after the effective date of this Rule. It shall obtain information that shall allow Local Advisory Committees to develop local strategies in accordance with Subparagraph (g)(4) of this Rule. At minimum, the registration process shall request the type and acreage of agricultural operations, nutrient-reducing BMPs implemented since January 1, 1992 and their operational status, and the acres affected by those BMPs. It shall provide persons with information on requirements and options under this Rule, and on available technical assistance and cost share options;

(B) Designate a member agency to compile and retain copies of all individual plans produced to comply with this Rule;

(C) Develop local nutrient control strategies for agricultural operations, pursuant to Subparagraph (g)(4) of this Rule, to meet the nitrogen and phosphorus goals assigned by the Basin Oversight Committee. The nitrogen component of the control strategy shall be submitted to the Basin Oversight Committee no later than twenty-three months from the effective date of this Rule. The phosphorus component of the control strategy shall be submitted within one year of the date that the Commission approves a phosphorus accounting methodology as described in Part (f)(2)(A) of this Rule;

(D) Ensure that any changes to the design of the local strategy will continue to meet the nutrient goals of this Rule; and

(E) Submit annual reports to the Basin Oversight Committee, pursuant to Subparagraph (g)(5) of this Rule, each May until such time as the Commission determines that annual reports are no longer needed to assure long-term maintenance of the nutrient goals.

(4) LOCAL NUTRIENT CONTROL STRATEGIES. The Local Advisory Committees shall be responsible for developing county or watershed nutrient control strategies that meet the following requirements. If a Local Advisory Committee fails to submit a nutrient control strategy as required in Part (g)(3)(C) of this Rule, the Commission may develop one based on the accounting methodology that it approves pursuant to Part (f)(2)(A) of this Rule.

(A) Local nutrient control strategies shall be designed to achieve the required nitrogen reduction goals within five years after the effective date of this Rule, and to maintain those reductions in perpetuity or until such time as this Rule is revised to modify this requirement. Strategies shall be designed to meet the phosphorus loading goals within four years of the date that the Commission approves a phosphorus accounting methodology as described in Part (f)(2)(A) of this Rule.

(B) Local nutrient control strategies shall specify the numbers and types of all agricultural operations within their areas, numbers of BMPs that will be implemented by enrolled operations and acres to be affected by those BMPs, estimated nitrogen and phosphorus reductions, schedule for BMP implementation, and operation and maintenance requirements.

(C) Local nutrient control strategies may prioritize BMP implementation to establish the most efficient and effective means of achieving the nutrient goals.

(5) ANNUAL REPORTS. The Local Advisory Committees shall be responsible for submitting annual reports for their counties or watersheds. Annual reports shall be submitted to the Basin Oversight Committee each May until such time as the Commission determines that annual reports are no longer needed to assure long-term maintenance of the nutrient goals. Annual reports shall quantify progress toward the nutrient goals with sufficient detail to allow for compliance monitoring at the farm level. The Basin Oversight Committee shall determine reporting requirements to meet these objectives. Those requirements may include information on BMPs implemented by individual farms, proper BMP operation and maintenance, BMPs discontinued, changes in agricultural land use or activity, and resultant net nutrient loading changes.

.0264 JORDAN WATER SUPPLY NUTRIENT STRATEGY: AGRICULTURE

This Rule sets forth a process by which agricultural operations in the Jordan watershed will collectively limit their nitrogen and phosphorus loading to the Jordan Reservoir, as prefaced in Rule 15A NCAC 02B .0262. This process is as follows:

(1) PURPOSE. The purposes of this Rule are to achieve and maintain the percentage reduction goals defined in Rule 15A NCAC 02B .0262 for the collective agricultural loading of nitrogen and phosphorus from their respective 1997-2001 baseline levels, to the extent that best available accounting practices will allow. This Rule aims to achieve the goals set out in 15A NCAC 02B .0262 within six to nine years, as set out in Sub-Item (5)(b) of this Rule. Additionally this Rule will protect the water supply uses of Jordan Reservoir and of designated water supplies throughout the Jordan watershed.

(2) PROCESS. This Rule requires accounting for agricultural land management practices at the county and subwatershed levels in the Jordan watershed, and implementation of practices by farmers in these areas to collectively achieve the nutrient reduction goals on a county and subwatershed basis. Producers may be eligible to obtain cost share and technical assistance from the NC Agriculture Cost Share Program and similar federal programs to contribute to their counties' nutrient reductions. A Watershed Oversight Committee, and if needed Local

Advisory Committees, will develop strategies, coordinate activities, and account for progress.

(3) **LIMITATION.** This Rule may not fully address significant nutrient sources relative to agriculture in that it does not directly address atmospheric sources of nitrogen to the Jordan watershed from agricultural operations located both within and outside of the Jordan watershed. As better information becomes available from ongoing research on atmospheric nitrogen loading to the Jordan watershed from these sources, and on measures to control this loading, the Commission may undertake separate rule-making to require such measures it deems necessary from these sources to support the goals of the Jordan Reservoir Nutrient Sensitive Waters Strategy.

(4) **APPLICABILITY.** This Rule shall apply to all persons engaging in agricultural operations in the Jordan watershed, including those related to crops, horticulture, livestock, and poultry. This Rule applies to livestock and poultry operations above the size thresholds in this Item in addition to requirements for animal operations set forth in general permits issued pursuant to G.S. 143-215.10C. Nothing in this Rule shall be deemed to allow the violation of any assigned surface water, groundwater, or air quality standard by any agricultural operation, including any livestock or poultry operation below the size thresholds in this Item. This Rule does not require specific actions by any individual person or operation if the county or counties in which they conduct operations can collectively achieve their nutrient reduction targets, in the manner described in Item (5) of this Rule, within six years of the effective date of this Rule. For the purposes of this Rule, agricultural operations are activities that relate to any of the following pursuits:

(a) The commercial production of crops or horticultural products other than trees. As used in this Rule, commercial shall mean activities conducted primarily for financial profit.

(b) Research activities in support of such commercial production.

(c) The production or management of any of the following number of livestock or poultry at any time, excluding nursing young:

(i) 5 or more horses;

(ii) 20 or more cattle;

(iii) 20 or more swine not kept in a feedlot, or 150 or more swine kept in a feedlot;

(iv) 120 or more sheep;

- (v) 130 or more goats;
- (vi) 650 or more turkeys;
- (vii) 3,500 or more chickens; or
- (viii) Any single species of any other livestock or poultry, or any combination of species of livestock or poultry, that exceeds 20,000 pounds of live weight at any time.

(5) METHOD FOR RULE IMPLEMENTATION. This Rule shall be implemented initially by a Watershed Oversight Committee and, if needed, through a cooperative effort between the Watershed Oversight Committee and Local Advisory Committees in each county. The membership, roles and responsibilities of these committees are set forth in Items (7) and (8) of this Rule. Committees' activities shall be guided by the following constraints:

(a) Within three years after the effective date of this Rule, the Watershed Oversight Committee shall provide the Commission with an initial assessment of the extent to which agricultural operations in each subwatershed have achieved the nitrogen goals identified in Item (1) of this Rule through activities conducted since the baseline period. The Watershed Oversight Committee shall use the accounting process described in Items (7) and (8) of this Rule to make its assessment. Should the Commission determine at that time that a subwatershed nitrogen goal has not been achieved, then Local Advisory Committees shall be formed in that subwatershed according to Item (8) of this Rule to further progress toward the goal by developing local strategies to guide implementation.

(b) For any subwatershed identified in Sub-Item (5)(a) of this Rule as not having achieved its nitrogen goal within three years, the Commission shall within six years after the effective date of this Rule again determine, with input from the Watershed Oversight Committee, whether the subwatershed has achieved its nitrogen goal. Should the Commission determine at that time that a subwatershed has not achieved its goal, then it shall require additional best management practice (BMP) implementation as needed to ensure that the goal is met within nine years after the effective date of this Rule. The Commission may also consider alternative recommendations from the Watershed Oversight Committee based on its assessment of the practicability of agricultural operations meeting the subwatershed goal. Should the Commission require some form of individual compliance, then it shall also subsequently approve a framework proposed by the Watershed Oversight Committee for allowing producers to obtain credit through offsite measures. Such offsite measures shall meet the requirements of 15A NCAC 02B .0273(2) (4). The Commission shall review compliance with the phosphorus goals within six

years of the effective date and shall require additional BMP implementation within any subwatershed as needed to meet its goal within an additional three years from that date.

(c) Should a committee called for under Sub-Item (5)(a) of this Rule not form nor follow through on its responsibilities such that a local strategy is not implemented in keeping with Item (8) of this Rule, the Commission shall require all persons subject to this Rule in the affected area to implement BMPs as needed to meet the goals of this Rule.

(6) **RULE REQUIREMENTS FOR INDIVIDUAL OPERATIONS.** Persons subject to this Rule shall adhere to the following requirements:

(a) If the initial accounting required under Sub-Item (5)(a) of this Rule determines that agricultural operations have not already collectively met the nitrogen reduction goals, persons subject to this Rule shall register their operations with their Local Advisory Committee according to the requirements of Item (8) of this Rule within four years after the effective date of this Rule. Within six years after the effective date of this Rule, such persons are not required to implement any specific BMPs but may elect to contribute to the collective local nutrient strategy by implementing any BMPs they choose that are recognized by the Watershed Oversight Committee as nitrogen-reducing or phosphorus-reducing BMPs.

(b) Should a local strategy not achieve its goal after six years, operations within that local area may face specific implementation requirements, as described under Sub-Item (5)(b) of this Rule.

(c) Producers may generate nitrogen loading reduction credit for sale to parties subject to or operating under other nutrient strategy rules in the Jordan watershed under either of the following circumstances and only pursuant to the conditions of Sub-Item (7)(b)(vii) of this Rule and 15A NCAC 02B .0273:

(i) If the subwatershed in which they implement nitrogen-reducing practices has achieved its nitrogen goal.

(ii) At any point during the implementation of this Rule, a pasture-based livestock operation that implements an excluded buffer BMP on part or all of its operation may sell that portion of the nitrogen reduction credit attributed to the buffer restoration aspect of the practice, while the credit attributed to the exclusion aspect shall accrue to the achievement or maintenance of the goals of this Rule.

(7) **WATERSHED OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE.** The Watershed Oversight Committee shall have the following membership, role and responsibilities:

(a) MEMBERSHIP. The Director shall be responsible for forming a Watershed Oversight Committee within two months of the effective date of this Rule. Until such time as the Commission determines that long-term maintenance of the nutrient loads is assured, the Director shall either reappoint members or replace members at least every six years. The Director shall solicit nominations for membership on this Committee to represent each of the following interests, and shall appoint one nominee to represent each interest except where a greater number is noted. The Director may appoint a replacement at any time for an interest in Sub-Items (7)(a)(vi) through (7)(a)(x) of this Rule upon request of representatives of that interest:

(i) Division of Soil and Water Conservation;

(ii) United States Department of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service (shall serve in an "ex-officio" non-voting capacity and shall function as a technical program advisor to the Committee);

(iii) North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services;

(iv) North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service;

(v) Division of Water Quality;

(vi) Three environmental interests, at least two of which are residents of the Jordan watershed;

(vii) General farming interests;

(viii) Pasture-based livestock interests;

(ix) Equine livestock interests;

(x) Cropland farming interests; and

(xi) The scientific community with experience related to water quality problems in the Jordan watershed.

(b) ROLE. The Watershed Oversight Committee shall:

(i) Develop tracking and accounting methods for nitrogen and phosphorus loss. Submit methods to the Water Quality Committee of the Commission for approval based on the standards set out in

Sub-Item (7)(c) of this Rule within two years after the effective date of this Rule;

(ii) Identify and implement future refinements to the accounting methods as needed to reflect advances in scientific understanding, including establishment or refinement of nutrient reduction efficiencies for BMPs;

(iii) Within three years after the effective date of this Rule, collect data needed to conduct initial nutrient loss accounting for the baseline period and the most current year feasible, perform this accounting, and determine the extent to which agricultural operations have achieved the nitrogen loss goal and phosphorus loss trend indicators for each subwatershed. Present findings to the Water Quality Committee of the Commission;

(iv) Review, approve, and summarize local nutrient strategies if required pursuant to Sub-Item (5)(a) of this Rule and according to the timeframe identified in Sub-Item (8)(c)(ii) of this Rule. Provide these strategies to the Division;

(v) Establish requirements for, review, approve and summarize local nitrogen and phosphorus loss annual reports as described under Sub-Item (8)(e) of this Rule, and present these reports to the Division annually, until such time as the Commission determines that annual reports are no longer needed to fulfill the purposes of this Rule. Present the annual report six years after the effective date to the Commission. Should that annual report find that a subwatershed has not met its nitrogen goal, include an assessment in that report of the practicability of producers achieving the goal within nine years after the effective date, and recommendations to the Commission as deemed appropriate;

(vi) Obtain nutrient reduction efficiencies for BMPs from the scientific community associated with design criteria identified in rules adopted by the Soil and Water Conservation Commission, including 15A NCAC 06E .0104 and 15A NCAC 06F .0104; and

(vii) Investigate and, if feasible, develop an accounting method to equate implementation of specific nitrogen-reducing practices on cropland or pastureland to reductions in nitrogen loading delivered to streams. Quantify the nitrogen credit generated by such practices for purposes of selling or buying credits. Establish criteria and a process as needed for the exchange of nitrogen credits between parties meeting the criteria of either Sub-Item (5)(b) or Sub-Item (6)(c) of this Rule with parties subject to or operating under other

nutrient strategy rules in the Jordan watershed pursuant to the requirements of 15A NCAC 02B .0273. Approve eligible trades, and ensure that such practices are accounted for and tracked separately from those contributing to the goals of this Rule.

(c) ACCOUNTING METHODS. Success in meeting this Rule's purpose will be gauged by estimating percentage changes in nitrogen loss from agricultural lands in the Jordan watershed and by evaluating broader trends in indicators of phosphorus loss from agricultural lands in the Jordan watershed. The Watershed Oversight Committee shall develop accounting methods that meet the following requirements:

(i) The nitrogen method shall quantify baseline and annual total nitrogen losses from agricultural operations in each county, each subwatershed, and for the entire Jordan watershed;

(ii) The nitrogen and phosphorus methods shall include a means of tracking implementation of BMPs, including number, type, and area affected;

(iii) The nitrogen method shall include a means of estimating incremental nitrogen loss reductions from actual BMP implementation and of evaluating progress toward and maintenance of the nutrient goals from changes in BMP implementation, fertilization, individual crop acres, and agricultural land use acres;

(iv) The nitrogen and phosphorus methods shall be refined as research and technical advances allow;

(v) The phosphorus method shall quantify baseline values for and annual changes in factors affecting agricultural phosphorus loss as identified by the phosphorus technical advisory committee established under 15A NCAC 02B .0256(f)(2)(C). The method shall provide for periodic qualitative assessment of likely trends in agricultural phosphorus loss from the Jordan watershed relative to baseline conditions;

(vi) Phosphorus accounting may also include a scientifically valid, survey-based sampling of farms in the Jordan watershed for the purpose of conducting field-scale phosphorus loss assessments and extrapolating phosphorus losses for the Jordan watershed for the baseline period and at periodic intervals; and

(vii) Aspects of pasture-based livestock operations that potentially affect nutrient loss and are not captured by the accounting methods

described above shall be accounted for in annual reporting by quantifying changes in the extent of livestock-related nutrient controlling BMPs. Progress may be judged based on percent change in the extent of implementation relative to subwatershed percentage goals identified in Rule .0262 of this Section.

(8) LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEES. Local Advisory Committees required by Sub-Item (5)(a) of this Rule shall be formed for each county within the applicable subwatershed within three years and three months after the effective date of this Rule, and shall have the following membership, roles, and responsibilities:

(a) MEMBERSHIP. A Local Advisory Committee shall be appointed as provided for in this Item. It shall terminate upon a finding by the Commission that it is no longer needed to fulfill the purposes of this Rule. Each Local Advisory Committee shall consist of:

(i) One representative of the county Soil and Water Conservation District;

(ii) One representative of the county office of the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service;

(iii) One representative of the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services whose regional assignment includes the county;

(iv) One representative of the county office of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service;

(v) One representative of the North Carolina Division of Soil and Water Conservation whose regional assignment includes the county; and

(vi) At least two farmers who reside in the county.

(b) APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS. The Director of the Division of Water Quality and the Director of the Division of Soil and Water Conservation of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources shall appoint members described in Sub-Items (8)(a)(i), (8)(a)(ii), (8)(a)(iv), and (8)(a)(v) of this Rule. The Director of the Division of Water Quality, with recommendations from the Director of the Division of Soil and Water Conservation and the Commissioner of Agriculture, shall appoint the members described in Sub-Items (8)(a)(iii) and (8)(a)(vi) of this Rule from persons nominated by nongovernmental organizations

whose members produce or manage agricultural commodities in each county. Members of the Local Advisory Committees shall serve at the pleasure of their appointing authority.

(c) **ROLE.** The Local Advisory Committees shall:

(i) Conduct a registration process for persons subject to this Rule. This registration process shall be completed within 48 months after the effective date of this Rule. The registration process shall request the type and acreage of agricultural operations. It shall provide persons with information on requirements and options under this Rule, and on available technical assistance and cost share options;

(ii) Develop local nutrient control strategies for agricultural operations, pursuant to Sub-Item (8)(d) of this Rule, to meet the nitrogen and phosphorus goals of this Rule. Strategies shall be submitted to the Watershed Oversight Committee no later than 46 months after the effective date of this Rule;

(iii) Ensure that any changes to the design of the local strategy will continue to meet the nutrient goals of this Rule; and

(iv) Submit reports to the Watershed Oversight Committee, pursuant to Sub-Item (8)(e) of this Rule, annually until such time as the Commission determines that annual reports are no longer needed to fulfill the purposes of this Rule.

(d) **LOCAL NUTRIENT CONTROL STRATEGIES.** Local Advisory Committees shall develop county nutrient control strategies that meet the following requirements. If a Local Advisory Committee fails to submit a nutrient control strategy required in Sub-Item (8)(c)(ii) of this Rule, the Commission may develop one based on the accounting methods that it approves pursuant to Sub-Item (7)(b)(i) of this Rule. Local strategies shall meet the following requirements:

(i) Local nutrient control strategies shall be designed to achieve the required nitrogen loss reduction goals and qualitative trends in indicators of agricultural phosphorus loss within six years after the effective date of this Rule, and to maintain those reductions in perpetuity or until such time as this Rule is revised to modify this requirement.

(ii) Local nutrient control strategies shall specify the numbers, acres, and types of all agricultural operations within their areas, numbers of BMPs that will be implemented by enrolled operations

and acres to be affected by those BMPs, estimated nitrogen and phosphorus loss reductions, schedule for BMP implementation, and operation and maintenance requirements.

(e) ANNUAL REPORTS. The Local Advisory Committees shall be responsible for submitting annual reports for their counties to the Watershed Oversight Committee until such time as the Commission determines that annual reports are no longer needed to fulfill the purposes of this Rule. The Watershed Oversight Committee shall determine reporting requirements to meet these objectives. Those requirements may include information on BMPs implemented by individual farms, proper BMP operation and maintenance, BMPs discontinued, changes in agricultural land use or activity, and resultant net nitrogen loss and phosphorus trend indicator changes.

.0280 FALLS RESERVOIR WATER SUPPLY NUTRIENT STRATEGY: AGRICULTURE

This Rule sets forth a staged process, as prefaced in 15A NCAC 02B .0275, by which agricultural operations in the Falls watershed will collectively limit their nitrogen and phosphorus loading to the Falls Reservoir. This process is as follows:

- (1) PURPOSE. The purposes of this Rule are to achieve and maintain the percentage reduction objectives defined in 15A NCAC 02B .0275 for the collective agricultural loading of nitrogen and phosphorus from their respective 2006 baseline levels, to the extent that best available accounting practices will allow, in two stages. Stage I shall be 10 years and Stage II shall be 15 years, as set out in Item (5) of this Rule. Additionally this Rule will protect the water supply uses of the Falls Reservoir.
- (2) PROCESS. This Rule requires accounting for agricultural land management practices at the county level in the Falls watershed, and implementation of practices by farmers to collectively achieve the nutrient reduction objectives on a watershed basis. Producers may be eligible to obtain cost share and technical assistance from the NC Agriculture Cost Share Program and similar federal programs to contribute to their counties' nutrient reductions. A Watershed Oversight Committee and Local Advisory Committees will develop strategies, coordinate activities, and account for progress.
- (3) LIMITATION. This Rule does not fully address significant agricultural nutrient sources in that it does not directly address atmospheric sources of nitrogen to the Falls watershed from agricultural operations located both within and outside of the Falls watershed. As better information becomes available from ongoing research on atmospheric nitrogen loading to the Falls watershed from these sources, and on measures to control this loading, the Commission may

undertake separate rule-making to require such measures it deems necessary from these sources to support the objectives of the Falls Nutrient Strategy.

(4) APPLICABILITY. This Rule shall apply to all persons engaging in agricultural operations in the Falls watershed, including those related to crops, horticulture, livestock, and poultry. This Rule applies to livestock and poultry operations above the size thresholds in this Item in addition to requirements for animal operations set forth in general permits issued pursuant to G.S. 143-215.10C. Nothing in this Rule shall be deemed to allow the violation of any assigned surface water, groundwater, or air quality standard by any agricultural operation, including any livestock or poultry operation below the size thresholds in this Item. This Rule shall not apply to dedicated land application sites permitted under 15A NCAC 02T .1100. This Rule does not require specific actions by any individual person or operation if agriculture in the Falls watershed can collectively achieve its Stage I nutrient reduction objectives, in the manner described in Item (5) of this Rule, by calendar year 2020. If the Stage I nutrient reduction objectives are not met by calendar year 2020, Stage II of implementation shall require specific actions by individuals and operations. For the purposes of this Rule, agricultural operations are activities that relate to any of the following pursuits:

(a) The commercial production of crops or horticultural products other than trees. As used in this Rule, commercial shall mean activities conducted primarily for financial profit.

(b) Research activities in support of such commercial production.

(c) The production or management of any of the following number of livestock or poultry at any time, excluding nursing young:

(i) Five or more horses;

(ii) 20 or more cattle;

(iii) 20 or more swine not kept in a feedlot, or 150 or more swine kept in a feedlot;

(iv) 120 or more sheep;

(v) 130 or more goats;

(vi) 650 or more turkeys;

(vii) 3,500 or more chickens; or

(viii) Any single species of any other livestock or poultry, or any combination of species of livestock or poultry that exceeds 20,000 pounds of live weight at any time.

(5) METHOD FOR RULE IMPLEMENTATION. This Rule shall be implemented in two stages and through a cooperative effort between the Watershed Oversight Committee and Local Advisory Committees in each county. The membership, roles and responsibilities of these committees are set forth in Items (7) and (8) of this Rule. Committee's activities shall be guided by the following:

(a) In Stage I, agriculture shall achieve a collective 20 percent reduction in nitrogen loading and a 40 percent reduction in phosphorus loading relative to the 2006 baseline by calendar year 2020.

(b) In Stage II, beginning in calendar year 2021 agriculture shall achieve a collective 40 percent reduction in nitrogen loading and a 77 percent reduction in phosphorus loading relative to the 2006 baseline by calendar year 2035.

(c) By January 15, 2013, the Watershed Oversight Committee shall provide the Commission with an initial assessment of the extent to which agricultural operations in the Falls watershed have achieved the Stage I nitrogen and phosphorus reduction objectives identified in Item (1) of this rule through activities conducted since the baseline period. The Watershed Oversight Committee shall use the accounting process described in Items (7) and (8) of this rule to make its assessment.

(d) If annual reporting following the 10th year of implementation indicates that agriculture has not collectively achieved its Stage I nitrogen and phosphorus reduction objectives identified in this Item, Stage II shall include specific implementation requirements for individual operators. Specifically, within five years of the start of Stage II, cropland operators shall establish vegetated riparian buffers adjacent to streams on all cropland where such buffers do not already exist. Additionally, pastured livestock operators shall establish excluded vegetated riparian buffers adjacent to streams where such excluded buffers do not already exist. Streams to which these requirements apply shall be those that meet the classification of intermittent or perennial streams using the September 2010 version of the *Identification Methods for the Origins of Intermittent and Perennial Streams Manual* published by the Division. Existing and newly established riparian buffers shall be a minimum of 20 feet in width with criteria further defined by the Watershed Oversight Committee.

The Commission may also consider alternative recommendations from the Watershed Oversight Committee based on the Committee's assessment of

the practicability of agricultural operations meeting the Stage I objectives. Should the Commission accept some alternative form of individual compliance, then it shall also subsequently approve a framework proposed by the Watershed Oversight Committee for allowing producers to obtain credit through offsite measures. Such offsite measures shall meet the requirements of 15A NCAC 02B .0282.

(e) Should a committee called for under Item (5) of this Rule not form nor follow through on its responsibilities such that a local strategy is not implemented in keeping with Item (8) of this Rule, the Commission shall require all persons subject to this Rule in the affected area to implement BMPs as needed to meet the objectives of this Rule.

(6) RULE REQUIREMENTS FOR INDIVIDUAL OPERATIONS. Persons subject to this Rule shall adhere to the following requirements:

(a) Persons subject to this Rule shall register their operations with their Local Advisory Committee according to the requirements of Item (8) of this Rule;

(b) Persons are not required to implement any specific BMPs in Stage I, with the exception of Sub-Item (d) of this Item, but may elect to contribute to the collective local nutrient strategy by implementing any BMPs they choose that are recognized by the Watershed Oversight Committee as nitrogen-reducing or phosphorus-reducing BMPs;

(c) The Division shall require that residuals application, animal waste application, and surface irrigation pursuant to permits issued under 15A NCAC 02T .1100, 15A NCAC 02T .1300, and 15A NCAC 02T .0500 respectively, to lands within the Falls watershed be done in a manner that minimizes the potential for nitrogen and phosphorus loading to surface waters by implementing the following measures:

(i) Animal waste application operators subject to the permitting requirements in this Sub-item shall meet Realistic Yield Expectation based nitrogen application rates and shall apply phosphorus in compliance with guidance established in the most recent version of North Carolina Agricultural Research Service's Technical Bulletin 323, "North Carolina Phosphorus Loss Assessment: I Model Description and II. Scientific Basis and Supporting Literature" developed by the Department of Soil Science and Biological and Agricultural Engineering at North Carolina State University. The Division shall modify all existing permits for affected lands to include these requirements upon their next renewal after effective date, and shall include these requirements in all new permits issued after effective date.

Permittees shall be required to comply with this condition upon permit issuance or renewal as applicable; and

(ii) Residual application and surface irrigation operators subject to the permitting requirements in this Sub-item shall meet Realistic Yield Expectation based nitrogen application rates and shall conduct and provide to the Division annual assessments of their soil test phosphorus index results and phosphorus loading rates. At such time as data quantifying the fate and transport of chemically bound phosphorus are made available, the Division may make recommendations to the Commission to consider whether revisions to the requirements of this Rule are needed and may initiate rulemaking or any other action allowed by law.

(d) Should a local strategy not achieve its Stage I objectives by calendar year 2020; operations within that local area shall face specific implementation requirements, as described under Sub-Item (5)(d) of this Rule.

(7) WATERSHED OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE. The Watershed Oversight Committee shall have the following membership, role and responsibilities:

(a) MEMBERSHIP. The Director shall be responsible for forming a Watershed Oversight Committee by March 15, 2011. Until such time as the Commission determines that long-term maintenance of the nutrient loads is assured, the Director shall either reappoint members or replace members at least every six years. The Director shall solicit nominations for membership on this Committee to represent each of the following interests, and shall appoint one nominee to represent each interest except where a greater number is noted. The Director of the Division of Water Quality may appoint a replacement at any time for an interest in Sub-Items (7)(a)(vi) through (7)(a)(x) of this Rule upon request of representatives of that interest or by the request of the Commissioner of Agriculture:

(i) Division of Soil and Water Conservation;

(ii) United States Department of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service (shall serve in an "ex-officio" non-voting capacity and shall function as a technical program advisor to the Committee);

(iii) North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services;

(iv) North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service;

- (v) Division of Water Quality;
- (vi) Three environmental interests, at least two of which are residents of the Falls watershed;
- (vii) General farming interests;
- (viii) Pasture-based livestock interests;
- (ix) Equine livestock interests;
- (x) Cropland farming interests; and
- (xi) The scientific community with experience related to water quality problems in the Falls watershed.

(b) ROLE. The Watershed Oversight Committee shall:

- (i) Develop tracking and accounting methods for nitrogen and phosphorus loading and submit methods to the Water Quality Committee of the Commission for approval based on the standards set out in Sub-Item (7)(c) of this Rule by March 15, 2012;
- (ii) Identify and implement future refinements to the accounting methods as needed to reflect advances in scientific understanding, including establishment or refinement of nutrient reduction efficiencies for BMPs;
- (iii) By January 15, 2013, collect data needed to conduct initial nutrient loading accounting for the baseline period and the most current year feasible, perform this accounting, and determine the extent to which agricultural operations have achieved the Stage I nitrogen loading objective and phosphorus loading trend indicators for the watershed and present findings to the Water Quality Committee of the Commission;
- (iv) Review, approve, and summarize local nutrient strategies if required pursuant to Sub-Item (5)(d) of this Rule and according to the timeframe identified in Sub-Item (8)(c)(ii) of this Rule. Provide these strategies to the Division;
- (v) Establish requirements for, review, approve and summarize local nitrogen and phosphorus loading annual reports as described under Sub-Item (8)(e) of this Rule, and present the report to the Division annually, until such time as the Commission determines that annual reports are no longer needed to fulfill the purposes of

Rule. Present a report in January 2014 to the Commission. Should that report find that agriculture in the watershed has not met its collective nitrogen or phosphorus objective, include an assessment in that report of the practicability of producers achieving the Stage I objective by calendar year 2020, and recommendations to the Commission as deemed appropriate;

(vi) Obtain nutrient reduction efficiencies for BMPs from the scientific community associated with design criteria identified in rules adopted by the Soil and Water Conservation Commission, including 15A NCAC 06E .0104 and 15A NCAC 06F .0104; and

(vii) Investigate and, if feasible, develop an accounting method to equate implementation of specific nutrient-reducing practices on cropland or pastureland to reductions in nutrient loading delivered to streams;

(viii) Quantify the nitrogen and phosphorus credits generated by such practices for the purpose of selling or buying credits; establish criteria and a process as needed for the exchange of nutrient credits between parties subject to this rule with each other or with parties subject to other nutrient strategy rules in the Falls lake watershed pursuant to the requirements of 15A NCAC 02B .0282; obtain approval from the Division for this trading program pursuant to the requirements of Rule .0282; approve eligible trades; and ensure that such credits traded for purposes of meeting this Rule are accounted for and tracked separately from those contributing to the objectives of other rules of the Falls nutrient strategy.

(c) ACCOUNTING METHODS. Success in meeting this Rule's purpose will be gauged by estimating percentage changes in nitrogen loading from agricultural lands in the Falls watershed and by evaluating broader trends in indicators of phosphorus loading from agricultural lands in the Falls watershed. The Watershed Oversight Committee shall develop accounting methods that meet the following requirements:

(i) The nitrogen method shall estimate baseline and annual total nitrogen loading from agricultural operations in each county and for the entire Falls watershed;

(ii) The nitrogen and phosphorus methods shall include a means of tracking implementation of BMPs, including number, type, and area affected;

(iii) The nitrogen method shall include a means of estimating incremental nitrogen loading reductions from actual BMP

implementation and of evaluating progress toward and maintenance of the nutrient objectives from changes in BMP implementation, fertilization, individual crop acres, and agricultural land use acres;

(iv) The nitrogen and phosphorus methods shall be refined as research and technical advances allow;

(v) The phosphorus method shall quantify baseline values for and annual changes in factors affecting agricultural phosphorus loading as identified by the phosphorus technical advisory committee established under 15A NCAC 02B .0256(f)(2)(C). The method shall provide for periodic qualitative assessment of likely trends in agricultural phosphorus loading from the Falls watershed relative to baseline conditions;

(vi) Phosphorus accounting may also include a scientifically valid, survey-based sampling of farms in the Falls watershed for the purpose of conducting field-scale phosphorus loading assessments and extrapolating phosphorus loading for the Falls watershed for the baseline period and at periodic intervals; and

(vii) Aspects of pasture-based livestock operations that potentially affect nutrient loading and are not captured by the accounting methods described above shall be accounted for in annual reporting to the extent that advances in scientific understanding reasonably allow. Such accounting shall, at a minimum, quantify changes in the extent of livestock-related nutrient controlling BMPs. Progress may be judged based on percent change in the extent of implementation relative to percentage objectives identified in Item (5) of this Rule.

(8) **LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEES.** Local Advisory Committees shall be formed for each county within the watershed by January 15, 2012, and shall have the following membership, roles, and responsibilities:

(a) **MEMBERSHIP.** A Local Advisory Committee shall be appointed as provided for in this Item. It shall terminate upon a finding by the Commission that it is no longer needed to fulfill the purposes of this Rule. Each Local Advisory Committee shall consist of:

(i) One representative of the county Soil and Water Conservation District;

(ii) One representative of the county office of the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service;

(iii) One representative of the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services;

(iv) One representative of the county office of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service;

(v) One representative of the North Carolina Division of Soil and Water Conservation whose regional assignment includes the county;

(vi) At least two farmers who reside in the county; and

(vii) One representative of equine livestock interests.

(b) APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS. The Director of the Division of Water Quality and the Director of the Division of Soil and Water Conservation of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources shall appoint members described in Sub-Items (8)(a)(i), (8)(a)(ii), (8)(a)(iv), and (8)(a)(v) of this Rule. The Director of the Division of Water Quality, with recommendations from the Director of the Division of Soil and Water Conservation and the Commissioner of Agriculture, shall appoint the members described in Sub-Items (8)(a)(iii) and (8)(a)(vi) of this Rule from persons nominated by nongovernmental organizations whose members produce or manage agricultural commodities in each county. Members of the Local Advisory Committees shall serve at the pleasure of their appointing authorities.

(c) ROLE. The Local Advisory Committees shall:

(i) Conduct a registration process for persons subject to this Rule. This registration process shall be completed by January 15, 2012. The registration process shall request at a minimum the type and acreage of agricultural operations. It shall provide persons with information on requirements and options under this Rule, and on available technical assistance and cost share options;

(ii) Develop local nutrient control strategies for agricultural operations, pursuant to Sub-Item (8)(d) of this Rule, to meet the nitrogen and phosphorus objectives of this Rule. Strategies shall be submitted to the Watershed Oversight Committee by July 2012;

(iii) Ensure that any changes to the design of the local strategy will continue to meet the nutrient objectives of this Rule; and

(iv) Submit reports to the Watershed Oversight Committee, pursuant to Sub-Item (8)(e) of this Rule, annually beginning in calendar year 2012 until such time as the Commission determines that annual reports are no longer needed to fulfill the purposes of this Rule.

(d) LOCAL NUTRIENT CONTROL STRATEGIES. Local Advisory Committees shall develop nutrient control strategies. If a Local Advisory Committee fails to submit a nutrient control strategy required in Sub-Item (8)(c)(ii) of this Rule, the Commission may develop one based on the accounting methods that it approves pursuant to Sub-Item (7)(b)(i) of this Rule. Local strategies shall meet the following requirements:

(i) Local nutrient control strategies shall be designed to achieve the required nitrogen loading reduction objectives and qualitative trends in indicators of agricultural phosphorus loading by calendar year 2020, and to maintain those reductions in perpetuity or until such time as this rule is revised to modify this requirement; and

(ii) Local nutrient control strategies shall specify the numbers, acres, and types of all agricultural operations within their areas, numbers of BMPs that will be implemented by enrolled operations and acres to be affected by those BMPs, estimated nitrogen and phosphorus loading reductions, schedule for BMP implementation, and operation and maintenance requirements.

(e) ANNUAL REPORTS. The Local Advisory Committees shall be responsible for submitting annual reports for their counties to the Watershed Oversight Committee until such time as the Commission determines that annual reports are no longer needed to fulfill the purposes of this Rule. The Watershed Oversight Committee shall determine reporting requirements to meet these objectives. Those requirements may include information on BMPs implemented by individual farms, proper BMP operation and maintenance, BMPs discontinued, changes in agricultural land use or activity, and resultant net nitrogen loading and phosphorus trend indicator changes. The annual reports in 2016 and 2026 shall address agriculture's success in complying with the load reduction requirements described in Items (5)(a) and (5)(b) of this Rule and shall include adjustments to address deficiencies to achieve compliance.

(f) PROGRESS. In 2016 the Division of Water Quality, in consultation with the Watershed Oversight Committee, shall submit a report to the

Commission gauging the extent to which reasonable progress has been achieved towards the Stage I objectives described in this Rule.