

Executive Summary

The NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is the lead stewardship agency for the preservation and protection of North Carolina's natural resources. The organization, which has offices from the mountains to the coast, administers regulatory programs designed to protect air quality, water quality, and the public's health. DENR works to protect fish, wildlife and wilderness areas. DENR also offers technical assistance to businesses, farmers, local governments and the public and encourages responsible behavior through education programs provided through DENR facilities and the state's school system. The agency's activities range from helping to make sure drinking water is safe to managing state parks and forests for safe and enjoyable outdoor recreation experiences. DENR's activities strive to enhance the quality of life available to all North Carolinians and our visitors.

Personnel and Budget

DENR currently employs 3,364 people. DENR's wide-ranging responsibilities are reflected in the large number and variety of its employees' 440 different job classifications. Its broad mission is also reflected in the distribution of its employees — 59% of DENR's employees work in various regional offices, parks, state forests, and other locations outside Wake County.

The Authorized General Fund budget for DENR (as of October, 2000) for State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2000-2001 totals \$263,337,956 in requirements. The budget consists of \$101,172,349 in receipts and \$162,165,607 in state appropriations. The receipts are comprised of a variety of federal grants and fees. Approximately 58% of the operating budget is expended for personnel costs. These costs include salaries, fringe benefits, holiday and shift premium pay, longevity, and compensation to board members to whom the Department must pay a per diem. Approximately 70% of all personnel related costs are supported by state appropriations. Operational expenditures include items such as supplies, travel, aid to counties, and grants to non-state entities. There are approximately 390 positions supported by dedicated funds in special budget codes.

Structure

The Department is comprised of 22 divisions divided into three key areas: nine environmental protection divisions; eight natural resource divisions; and five administrative divisions. In addition, the Secretary's Office includes three offices: the Customer Service Center, Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs, and Public Affairs. Additional details on DENR's divisions is included in Chapter 4.

Environmental protection divisions include: Air Quality; Coastal Management; Environmental Health; Land Resources; Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance; Radiation Protection; Waste Management; Water Quality; and Water Resources.

Natural resources divisions include: NC Aquariums; Office of Environmental Education; Forest Resources; Marine Fisheries; NC Museum of Natural Sciences; Parks and Recreation; Soil and Water Conservation; and the NC Zoological Park.

Administrative divisions include: Budget, Planning and Analysis; Office of the Controller; Human Resources; Information Technology Services; and Purchase and Services.

Policies and Programs

The Department supports many programs and has implemented policies to balance the impacts on our environment with the demands of a healthy economy. Some of these include the Clean Air Plan, Neuse River Buffer Rules, the Million Acre Initiative, Environmental Excellence, and Sedimentation Control. In addition, the Department has taken numerous management actions to support the efficient and effective delivery of DENR programs and services. Several key policy/management issues and upcoming legislative issues are described in Chapter 5 of this book.

Important Issues for Next Administration

The Department is also involved in a number of ongoing issues and projects, many of which will require close attention by the next administration. Chapter 6 includes several issues that will require possible immediate action or monitoring due largely to their legal or budgetary ramifications.