



N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources

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NORTH CAROLINA SELECTED FOR NATIONAL DRINKING WATER PROTECTION PROJECT

RALEIGH – North Carolina has been selected as one of three states to participate in a national drinking water protection project designed to align state water quality protection, land use programs and policy decisions to better protect drinking water sources.

“Protecting North Carolina’s drinking water resources is vital to this state’s future,” said Jessica Miles, chief of the Public Water Supply Section in the Division of Environmental Health. “Having access to national experts will give North Carolina an extraordinary opportunity to better reach local officials and effectively support their drinking water protection initiatives.”

As part of the project, the N.C. Source Water Assessment and Protection Program (SWAPP) has assembled a team of committed partners. This team will receive technical assistance from national experts in watershed protection, land conservation and local government interactions. The state and national project teams will then identify incentives and develop strategies to support and enable drinking water protection at the local level.

North Carolina’s participation in the project, titled “Enabling Source Water Protection: Aligning State Land Use and Water Protection Programs,” is slated to begin in next month and continue through February 2010.

The project was created and funded by the Environmental Protection Agency. It is administered by the Trust for Public Land and the Smart Growth Leadership Institute, in partnership with the Association of State Drinking Water Administrators and the River Network.

The state’s Source Water Assessment and Protection Program resulted from 1996 Amendments to the Safe Drinking Water Act. As part of this program, the state’s Public Water Supply Section developed an interactive mapping application that delineates drinking water source boundaries, inventories potential contaminant sources and rates the susceptibility of nearly 9,300 public drinking water sources for potential contamination.

Since its formation, the program has assisted local government entities in protecting their drinking water sources. A recent and notable example includes efforts in Lincoln County, where stakeholders identified land conservation as a major priority.

“The Source Water Assessment and Protection Program made the acquisition and conservation of a 116-acre nature preserve in Lincoln County a total success,” said Dave Cable, executive director of Catawba Lands Conservancy. “The staff’s assistance and leadership were instrumental in helping our team create a watershed protection plan and in raising awareness of the watershed’s vulnerabilities. The partnership among the SWAPP, community leaders and Catawba Lands Conservancy was the winning ticket.”

For an overview of the project, visit <http://www.landuseandwater.org>. For details about North Carolina’s participation in the project, please contact Jay Frick at (919) 715-0827 or by e-mail at jay.frick@ncmail.net.

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