



N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources

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State hosting public meeting on assessment of improving groundwater levels in coastal plain

RALEIGH – A draft report from the N.C. Division of Water Resources shows significant improvements in groundwater levels in some areas of the 15-county Central Coastal Plain Capacity Use Area, although other areas are still slow to recover.

An April 16 meeting will give the public its first opportunity to comment on the state's draft assessment report. The public meeting is at 12:45 p.m. in the auditorium of the Lenoir Community College Administration Building in Kinston. People can also comment by writing to the address provided below by June 1.

The Central Coastal Plain Capacity Use Area was established in 2002 to address groundwater level declines, aquifer dewatering and saltwater encroachment in a 15-county area of the central coastal plain. When deep aquifers are depleted, pressure levels can drop below the top of the aquifer and cause dewatering, which can harm the ability of the aquifer to produce water. Also, saltwater will encroach on freshwater sources if well fields pump too much, which could cost towns more money to remove the saltwater so it can be used as drinking water.

Since the implementation of the program, there have been significant rebounds in groundwater levels in this area. The improvements to groundwater levels in the area came about because communities in the area started relying upon shallower aquifers and surface water sources, instead of deeper aquifers.

Public water systems in the area are required to reduce their reliance on the deeper aquifers and phase in the alternative sources of water until 2018.

The N.C. Division of Water Resources is required to prepare a report every five years assessing the groundwater and the effectiveness of decreased groundwater withdrawals in the area. The area includes Beaufort, Carteret, Craven, Duplin, Edgecombe, Greene, Jones, Lenoir, Martin, Onslow, Pamlico, Pitt, Washington, Wayne and Wilson counties.

The division will collect public comments about their draft assessment report. The division encourages public participation and comments to improve the report. People can review the draft assessment report at www.ncwater.org/CCPCUA2013assessment.

The division is required to produce a final assessment report for submission to the N.C. Environmental Management Commission at its September meeting.

To register for the April 16 meeting, go to www.ncwater.org/CCPCUA2013assessment. If you are unable to attend in person, you can follow the meeting on your computer by logging in to <https://denr.ncgovconnect.com/dwr/>.

People are also welcome to mail comments to Gabrielle Chianese, 1611 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, N.C. 27699-1611. Comments will be accepted until June 1.

For more information, please contact the division's Ground Water Management Branch at 919-707-9008.

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