



N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources

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Public comment period starts on proposed stream and wetlands impacts for coal ash reuse projects *Public hearings also planned for April*

RALEIGH – Environmental officials announced Thursday the start of the public comment period for a state water quality certification that is one of the requirements before coal ash can be reused in open-pit clay mines in central North Carolina.

The N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources announced the opening of the 60-day public comment period on the water quality certification in newspapers in Lee and Chatham counties. The state agency also announced public hearings to be held in April. The public comment periods for these projects allow for public participation and are required as part of the Coal Ash Management Act of 2014.

The water quality certification is one of three state environmental permissions Green Meadow, LLC and Charah, Inc. will need to carry out the projects. The two companies applied to DENR in the fall to take coal ash now stored at Duke Energy facilities and reuse the ash to reclaim open-pit clay mines at a site near Moncure (Brickhaven Mine in Chatham County) and a second site in Sanford (Colon Mine in Lee County). In addition to the water quality certification, DENR staff members are reviewing applications for mining permit modifications and structural fill permit applications, and expect to make drafts of those permits available to the public later this month.

The projects will also require a federal 404 permit that regulates the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States, including wetlands. For the state water quality certificate, the Division of Water Resources in DENR will be collecting public comments on permanent impacts to streams and wetlands that may occur if the federal 404 permit to use coal ash in the mines is approved.

As part of the federal permitting process, the state is evaluating proposed permanent impacts to federally protected streams and wetlands at both mines.

For the proposed water quality certification, send written comments to: 401 Permitting, 1617 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, N.C., 27699-1617. Comments also may be submitted by email to: PublicComments@ncdenr.gov. Please include “401” in the email’s subject line. Written comments may be sent before or after the hearings if they are received by 5 p.m. May 16. The application is online at: <http://its.enr.state.nc.us/Weblink8/0/fol/257726/Row1.aspx>.

Contact Beverly Strickland (919-807-6350) for assistance with the website. The application is also on file at the DWR Central Office and may be inspected with an appointment during normal business hours (8 a.m.-5 p.m.) at 512 North Salisbury St., Raleigh. For questions or to schedule an appointment, contact Jennifer Burdette at jennifer.burdette@ncdenr.gov or 919-807-6364.

The two public hearings the state announced Thursday will be used to gather comments on all state-required approvals – the water quality certificate, structural fill permits and mining permit modifications. The hearings will be from 6-9 p.m. with sign-up for speakers beginning at 5 p.m. Hearing dates and locations are:

- April 13 at the Dennis A. Wicker Civic Center, 1801 Nash St., Sanford.
- April 16 at the Chatham County Historic Courthouse, 40 East Chatham St., Pittsboro.

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