



N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources

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State environmental agency starts water quality sampling at John H. Kerr Reservoir

RALEIGH –The N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources has started sampling water quality at the upper end of the John H. Kerr Reservoir in Virginia as part of the state agency’s ongoing response to the coal ash spill in Eden.

Including the Kerr reservoir, DENR is now sampling water quality at five locations – one upstream and four downstream of the coal ash spill. DENR is coordinating its sampling at the Kerr reservoir in Virginia with the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality.

“The recent warmer weather underlines the importance of accurately characterizing water quality in the Dan River, a beautiful and vital resource,” said Tom Reeder, director of the N.C. Division of Water Resources. “By adding Kerr Lake to our sampling plan, we are extending our understanding of the effects of the spill and will be better able to determine a strategy for the long-term cleanup of the Dan River.”

DENR started conducting water quality sampling in the Dan River within hours of being notified of the coal ash spill and will continue sampling to assess the long-term health of river for as long as it takes. In addition to Kerr reservoir, the agency continues to conduct downstream water quality sampling at Draper Landing, the Virginia state line and Milton, Va., and upstream sampling at N.C. Hwy. 14. The agency is also sampling sediment near the site of the spill in Eden and at a location near Danville. DENR expects to release the latest results of water quality sampling soon and will continue to release other results as they are available.

The Kerr reservoir site, which is east of South Boston, Va., is roughly 80 river miles from the site of the coal ash spill in Eden. Staff with the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality has seen layers of gray ash on the surface of the Dan River just before the headwaters of Kerr Lake, near the new water quality sampling site.

DENR regularly updates a web page with the latest information on the coal ash spill, including a timeline of events, at <http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/guest/dan-river-spill>.

Meanwhile, downstream municipalities that receive water supplies from the Dan River, including Danville (closest to the spill site) and South Boston, Va., report that water is safe to drink after normal drinking water treatment processes.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service staff reported Monday that they have not directly observed any sick or dead fish or wildlife in the Dan River. Staff with the service also reported Monday that a few residents reported seeing dead turtles at two Virginia parks, and the service’s biologists visited both of those sites but didn’t find any carcasses. One dead turtle the service was provided will be sent this week to a wildlife veterinarian for examination.

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