



N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Release: Immediate
Date: March 18, 2014

Contact: Jamie Kritzer; Susan Massengale
Phone: 919-707-8602; 919-810-5996

Testing of latest water quality samples near coal ash spill similar to earlier results

RALEIGH – The state’s latest batch of water quality samples collected downstream of the Dan River coal ash spill show that levels of aluminum and iron continue to drop compared to samples collected last month, although aluminum still exceeds state surface water standards at all locations.

The state has been testing the water in the Dan River for up to 28 heavy metals. Initial tests taken in the days after the spill showed levels of several heavy metals – arsenic, aluminum, copper and iron – were above surface water quality standards. But arsenic and copper levels dropped and have remained within surface water quality standards, except for Feb. 20-21 during high flows possibly caused by a winter storm. At that time, copper was above the state standard at two sampling location, the Virginia Line and Milton, N.C. Mercury concentrations also exceeded state standards at those locations on Feb. 19-20; however, mercury was within state standards on Feb. 21.

“Samples we’re collecting are not violating state water quality standards for arsenic or other key ingredients to coal ash, but the long-term health of the Dan River remains a concern as we move forward with a long-range cleanup plan for the river,” said Tom Reeder, director of the N.C. Division of Water Resources.

The latest samples collected March 5 show iron is within state surface water quality standards at all three locations downstream of the Dan River spill in Eden. The March 5 samples collected by staff with the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources show that aluminum exceeds state surface water standards. It’s worth noting, too, that samples collected upstream of the spill – in the opposite direction from where the coal ash was headed – also show aluminum levels exceed surface water standards. State officials say one reason is that aluminum is a common element found in sediments in the Dan River basin so exceedences are not uncommon.

DENR staff members have been testing water quality in the Dan River since the state agency was notified of the coal ash spill Feb. 3.

The state’s test results are similar to the results of water quality sampling conducted at the same locations by the Environmental Protection Agency. The samples were collected at three downstream locations – Draper Landing, Milton, N.C. and the Virginia line – and an upstream site at N.C. Highway 14.

State water quality sampling results can be found on DENR’s webpage devoted to the coal ash spill at:
<http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/guest/lab-results>.

Latest on cleanup of the Dan River coal ash spill

A team that includes staff from DENR, the EPA, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Duke Energy, is developing a long-range plan to recover large deposits of coal ash in the Dan River. Officials have removed a large deposit of coal ash identified near the outfall where the spill occurred and the team is focused on removal of a large coal ash deposit in the Dan River near Danville, behind the Schoolfield Dam at the city’s water treatment plant.

###

Jamie Kritzer, Public Information Officer
Phone: (919) 707-8602
<http://www.facebook.com/ncdenr>
1601 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1601
<http://www.facebook.com/ncdenr>

Jamie.Kritzer@ncdenr.gov
Facebook:

RSS feed: <http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/opa/news-releases-rss>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/NCDENR>

Jamie Kritzer, Public Information Officer
Phone: (919) 707-8602
<http://www.facebook.com/ncdenr>
1601 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1601
[RSS](#)

Jamie.Kritzer@ncdenr.gov
Facebook:

RSS feed: [http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/opa/news-releases-](http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/opa/news-releases-rss)

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/NCDENR>