



## NEUSE RIVER BASIN REGIONAL COUNCIL

### Minutes for the May 30, 1997 meeting

The Neuse River Basin Regional Council meeting on May 30, 1997 was called to order by Vice Chairman Dr. John Costlow. He explained that Bill Ritchie had been nominated for chairman at the April meeting. It was moved we accept the election of Mr. Ritchie, Mr. Isley seconded this motion which then passed. Mr. Ritchie then expressed his desire that more members become involved, and that we publicize what we have done. He encouraged all members to attend the CCMP Forum June 5, 6, and 7th in New Bern.

Mr. Ritchie then introduced Steve Hicks, President of the New Bern Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Hicks then articulated the necessity for protecting the quality of life in Craven County, which is very dependent upon the health of the Neuse River. He feels that a balance must be found between industry, livestock and the military, and that local government should take the lead in trying to achieve this balance between economic enhancement and environmental protection. Business and industry are heavily dependent on a clean environment and we need to put in place a citizen monitoring program. He explained that a rapid response team is being set up, and that Steve Tedder and Dr. Ron Levine have both met with groups of concerned citizens. The business community is committed to protecting the Craven County environment. Mr. Hicks then emphasized the need for a citizen monitoring program so that current and correct information could be made public on a daily basis. He also supports land use planning so that infrastructure may be scheduled. He concluded by saying that "its good business to have clean water." Rick Dove thanked Mr. Hicks for his support and said that the "Neuse River has become the poster child for N.C. It is a state wide problem and what happens here will effect the state for years."

It was explained that citizen monitoring is being coordinated by the Soil and Water Conservation District in Wilson County. Dr. Costlow suggested a resolution recommending citizen monitoring in the other four river basins as well as ours. This prompted a general discussion of citizen monitoring programs in existence and the need for expansion.

Chairman Ritchie introduced General Jim Mead, the new Executive Director of the Neuse River Council of Governments. General Mead reported that the NRCOG and its nine county members have directed him to become involved and have asked that he try to gather factual information because there is a lot of confusion. He expressed enthusiasm for working with the NRBC on the pollution problems of the Neuse and seeking a solution. Dr. Costlow then suggested that perhaps the staff of the NRCOG could provide the support necessary for a citizen monitoring program. A general discussion followed about the role that NRCOG could play influencing legislative action. Mr. Isley asked Mr. Hicks if he thought growth in eastern N.C. would cause problems with permitting. Mr. Hicks responded that the type of industries he wants will have little impact, but he does see the need to adequately plan for increased population and infrastructure. Mr. Isley also commented that he thought that those who made recent "investigative reports" were fed

information that was extreme and deliberately made to make the situation look bad. Mr. Ritchie said it was in the public interest to make the river condition known but it was true that the media is only interested when it is "out of kilter."

Several members reported on attending the Non Point Source Team meetings in their areas. Mr. Isley asked if we can perhaps get some funding for our efforts as the Non Point Source Teams are going to attempt to do. Tom McGee said the Upper Neuse team is going to try to get funding from the Clean Water funds. Chairman Ritchie agreed to try to see if we can get some funding to cover expenses. Dr. Costlow said we needed to identify a project to be funded, or get funding for the Neuse COG to provide administrative support. He also learned of grants available from the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service, some of which are specifically for the restoration of Southern rivers.

Dr. Costlow has been developing the NRBRC Annual Report which he will submit to the council at the June meeting. He will also make a report about the NRBRC at the CCMP Forum in New Bern. Chairman Ritchie than reviewed the fact that we have received a great deal of education in the past year, representing many points of view. Boyd DeVough, DWQ, said we should soon have the recommendations of the hearing officers on the Neuse River Nutrient Management Plan. This is not finalized but should be out soon and he will send a summary of it to us as soon as he can. Rick Dove said the Governor will have to make some hard decisions on several major problems. Rick Dove feels that a 30% reduction won't fix the river, trading doesn't work, and DEHNR and DWQ should be fighting for the toughest regulations possible. Chairman Ritchie reminded everyone that a plan is only that until the legislature acts. A general discussion of municipal treatment plants and their expansion plans followed. Rick Dove asked that the resolution introduced at our last meeting be sent out so it can be acted on at our next meeting. He also said the public needs to know where there are problems on the river and this needs to be publicized. He also assured the group that the Neuse River Foundation will work closely with the new Rapid Response Team.

Meeting adjourned.

Minutes prepared by Caroline Parker, Secretary, NRBRC

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## SUGGESTED OUTLINE FOR NRBRC ANNUAL REPORT

### I. Objectives:

Summarize from Gov. Hunt's "Executive Order # 75"  
Allow for additional points from discussion of DRAFT by members

### II. Activities:

Provide, in Appendix I, list of members and representation  
List sequence of meetings  
Organizational activities ( election of officers, Sub-committees, etc.)  
Allow for additional points from discussion of DRAFT by members

### III. Accomplishments:

Summarize significant discussion from minutes  
Discussion on By Laws, decisions on voting, proxy, etc.;  
Include By Laws in Appendix II  
Copy of "Resolution" in Appendix III  
Briefing topics and rational  
    Silviculture  
    GIS  
    Agriculture  
Proposed tour of Neuse River (deferred-why)  
Allow for additional points from discussion of DRAFT by members

### IV. Recommendations:

Changes in role of NRBRC? Advisory to CWMTF Trustees?  
Organizational changes associated with changes in role?  
Development of closer relationship with DWQ (see letter to G.T.) for "fine-tuning"  
Improvement of mechanisms for communication with sponsoring groups  
Improvement of mechanisms for communication with private citizens (Brochure)  
Development of GIS program for NEUSE RIVER BASIN (NCCGIA) (see letter to M. Smith)  
Development of mechanisms for inter-agency communication( NCRA ? - see letter to Sec. L. Rimer)  
Planning for "Public Meetings" for citizens "feed-back"

~ need to develop  
a "network" -