



**Upper Neuse River Basin Association (UNRBA) Board of Directors (BOD) Meeting Agenda
September 20, 2023, 9:30 AM to Noon
Butner Town Hall with remote access option (see last page)**

Materials related to this BOD Meeting have been placed on the UNRBA website unless noted otherwise on the [Meeting page](#). See items under the September 20, 2023, meeting date. A direct link to the meeting presentation is provided [here](#).

- I. **Opening—Sig Hutchinson, Chair**
 - A. **Introductions, note board member changes and announcements**
 - B. **Roll call for quorum**
 - C. **Identification of any conflicts**
 - D. **Review and approval of agenda**
 - E. **2022 990 tax return was submitted to the Board for their review**
- II. **Action Items of UNRBA Board of Directors**
 - A. **Approval of [June 21, 2023 Draft Board Minutes](#)**
 - B. **Approval of the [Treasurer's Report](#)**
 - C. **Approval of Funding for Updating the UNRBA Technical Website**

Item Summary (Forrest Westall): The UNRBA has been setting aside funding to update the Association's technical website where data, documents, and meeting history are provided. The software used to develop the website (Drupal) is in version 7 and cannot be upgraded. The new version is 10, and the website will have to be updated using this version. The Lower Neuse Association and Neuse River Compliance Association are in the process of upgrading their website (80-85% complete). The contractor working on their update would provide support to the UNRBA. We have significant funding in the budget we have been carrying but will likely need approximately \$10,000 from contingency to cover the total cost of the upgrade. [We are asking the Board to authorize the Executive Director to cover this cost and bring a contract back to the Board in November to have the site updated.](#)

D. Approval of the Concepts and Principles Document and Consensus Principles II for Consideration by Member Governing Bodies

Item Summary (Forrest Westall): The UNRBA has been working for the past year on recommendations for the revised nutrient management strategy referred to as the UNRBA Concepts and Principles document. The final version of this document was provided to the Board for review on September 13, 2023; a previous draft was provided to the Board for review and input in June 2023. The final document represents numerous reviews and input including from the UNRBA Path Forward Committee (PFC), NC Division of Water Resources (DWR), NC Department of Transportation, NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, and representatives of agriculture and environmental advocacy groups.

The UNRBA Concepts and Principles document has been used to develop a focused set of consensus principles for re-adoption of the Falls Lake Rules called Consensus Principles II. This document has been reviewed by the UNRBA legal group and the PFC. At the September 5, 2023, meeting, the PFC approved submittal of Consensus Principles II and the companion document, UNRBA Concepts and Principles, to the UNRBA Board. [The UNRBA will consider approval of these two documents at the September 20, 2023, Board meeting.](#)

Once approved by the UNRBA Board, the governing bodies of the UNRBA members will be asked to endorse the Consensus Principles II at their meetings in October and November. The goal is for all UNRBA member governing bodies to concur with Consensus Principles II for submittal to the State following the UNRBA Board meeting on November 15, 2023. The UNRBA Board will approve submittal of the Consensus Principles II and the Concepts and Principles to the NC Department of Environmental Quality/DWR, the Environmental Management Commission, and the NC General Assembly in December 2023. If additional time is needed after November 15, 2023, to secure the approvals, a virtual UNRBA Board meeting has been scheduled for December 13, 2023, to consider approval of these documents.

A regulatory forum is being planned for spring 2024 to discuss the next steps in the rules readoption process. Following submittal of the UNRBA and NC Collaboratory reports and recommendations in December 2023, we anticipate that DWR will begin to formulate a plan for readoption of the rules. We continue to seek engagement with DWR on that process and, as already mentioned to DWR, work cooperatively with them as the new rules are drafted. DWR has been very positive in their feedback.

The UNRBA will continue to identify opportunities to work with other stakeholders as we move through this process and begin coordinating, collaborating, and supporting DWR in the rules review process in January. The UNRBA continues to develop information to support a potential site-specific chlorophyll-a standard for Falls Lake and is working with Dr. Marty Lebo to integrate his results into the site-specific standard evaluation, statistical modeling, and regulatory support efforts.

III. Status Reports and Informational Items

A. Evaluation of a Site-Specific Chlorophyll-a Water Quality Standard

Item Summary (Forrest Westall): The UNRBA has met with DEQ and DWR leadership to discuss coordination efforts to finalize the UNRBA models, develop a revised nutrient management strategy, and develop a petition for site specific criteria. At the most recent meeting on June 22, 2023, three priorities were established: revise the Falls Lake rules, establish a site-specific water quality assessment methodology for Falls Lake, establish a site-specific chlorophyll-a standard for Falls Lake. DWR has provided a contact for site-specific chlorophyll-a standard development. John Huisman remains the primary DWR contact for work on an updated strategy. As stated in the Consensus Principles II, the UNRBA does not recommend delaying rule revisions while a site-specific assessment methodology or chlorophyll-a standard are being developed because this will limit and delay ongoing implementation efforts in the watershed. The subject matter experts continue to evaluate other State's site-specific standards for chlorophyll-a and nutrient-related standards. The UNRBA continues to work with Dr. Marty Lebo to complete his work and integrate his results into the site-specific standard evaluation, statistical modeling, and regulatory support efforts.

B. Modeling and Regulatory Support (MRS):

Item Summary (Alix Matos): The [Final Draft UNRBA Watershed Modeling Report](#) has been distributed to the UNRBA PFC, Modeling and Regulatory Support Workgroup (MRSW), participants of the UNRBA 2023 Technical Stakeholders Workshop, DWR, and interested stakeholders. This report will be finalized for submittal in December 2023 to DWR. The associated modeling files have already been submitted to DWR.

The three lake water quality models (WARMF Lake, Environmental Fluid Dynamics Code (EFDC), and a Statistical/Bayesian model) are being developed considering the information generated by the watershed model

(stream flows, nutrient concentrations, and delivered loads to Falls Lake). Both WARMF Lake and EFDC have been calibrated for water quality in Falls Lake with approval by the MRSW and used to evaluate model scenarios. The lake model report is under development. An EFDC model training is being scheduled for October or November. The modeling effort has included extensive vetting through identified SMEs, third-party reviewers, our membership representatives, and DWR.

The datasets for the statistical model have been compiled and are being evaluated to address questions about the relationships among precipitation, nutrient loading, chlorophyll-a, and satisfaction with designated uses. This model will inform the revised rules and the petition for a site-specific chlorophyll-a standard. The modeling team has engaged the third-party model reviewers for the statistical modeling and will continue to reach out to Collaboratory-funded researchers to consider and supplement the extensive database developed by the UNRBA, our members, and DWR.

C. Economic Analysis

Item Summary (Forrest Westall): As recommended in the [Framework for a Reexamination Strategy of Stage II of the Falls Nutrient Strategy](#), the UNRBA planned to supplement monitoring and modeling efforts and development of the UNRBA recommendations for a revised nutrient management strategy with a cost-benefit analysis (CBA). The CBA would update the DWR Fiscal Analysis by comparing modeling scenarios and nutrient management actions that would meet the chlorophyll-a standard in Falls Lake. However, monitoring data and calibrated models revealed that none of the scenarios investigated would comply with the chlorophyll-a standard as currently applied. As no reasonable means of meeting the standard was identified, a formal CBA of nutrient management strategy alternatives could not be conducted during the development of the UNRBA recommendations. Rather, the recommendations focus on an investment-based, joint compliance approach that focuses on watershed health and incremental improvements rather than attainment of the current chlorophyll-a standard. However, the UNRBA will support DWR in developing a more thorough economic analysis during the rule revision process to evaluate impacts of rule language and alternative strategies as needed. The UNRBA continues to compile information from the local governments and other stakeholders to support this effort and to understand the costs of past and possible future actions in the watershed as well as the environmental, ecological, and societal benefits.

D. Communications

Item Summary (Forrest Westall): The UNRBA held a Technical Stakeholders Workshop on August 1, 2023. Over 70 people participated either online or in person. Attendees included UNRBA members, subject matter experts, staff from four non-governmental environmental organizations, six State agencies, two federal agencies, one local chamber of commerce, organizations representing agriculture, and staff from EPA Region 4. Participants provided feedback on the recommendations for the revised nutrient management strategy which have been incorporated into the final draft distributed to the PFC.

The UNRBA continues to coordinate with DWR on preparations for the rules review process, potential modifications to the water quality assessment methods, and development of a site-specific chlorophyll-a criteria for Falls Lake. Additional meetings to gather input from NC Collaboratory staff, researchers, and representatives of NGOs are being planned.

The Executive Director will continue scheduling and conducting, as our members request, presentations at the meetings of UNRBA member governing bodies or other groups/organizations to discuss the Concepts and Principles and CPII under consideration. We are all working to secure approval of CPII by all of the UNRBA governing bodies. He presented earlier this year to

- City of Durham Environmental Affairs Board
- City of Creedmoor Board of Commissioners
- Granville County Commissioners

Presentations by member representative or the Executive Director are scheduled as follows:

- Wake County Growth & Sustainability Committee, September 18th
- Town of Stem Commissioners, September 18th
- Durham County Commissioners, October 2nd
- Franklin County Commissioners, October 2nd
- Town of Wake Forest Commissioners, October 3rd
- City of Raleigh Stormwater Committee, October 5th
- Town of Butner Council, October 5th
- Person County Commissioners, October 16th
- Durham City Council, October 19th
- Orange County Commissions, November 2nd

Jurisdictional representatives for the Town of Hillsborough, City of Raleigh, and Wake County and are planning presentations to their governing bodies. We request that our member representatives provide to their governing bodies the resolution to support CPII following the September 20th UNRBA Board meeting.

The Executive Director also presented the UNRBA recommendations to the Redwood Ruritan Club in September. Jurisdictions should identify additional meetings where support from the UNRBA team is needed. It is extremely important that the Boards and Commissions for our members endorse CPII prior to the November 15th Board meeting to allow us to submit our recommendations in December. We have provided a draft resolution template for use in presenting Consensus Principles II to your Boards, Councils, and Commissions.

The Executive Director will continue to reach out to local government staff to identify needs and support staff with implementation of the IAIA Program and participation in developing the revised nutrient management strategy. Year 2 of the IAIA ended June 30th, and annual reports to DWR are due September 30th with a copy to UNRBA.

American Rivers is still planning a “Neuse River of the Year” event for the upper part of the basin. The UNRBA is planning a press release to coincide with the timing of the event. This press release will also reference the successes of the IAIA and note the efforts to provide consensus principles for a revised set of rules. Plans to develop videos and messaging for UNRBA members to distribute on their social media accounts is being planned to coincide with this event to streamline videography.

The “open” nature of all UNRBA meetings remains a key component of a transparent communications approach. We encourage member representatives and interested individuals to speak up about ideas and opportunities to communicate our work and the importance of our recommendations on a revised strategy and a site-specific standard.

E. Ongoing Discussions/Issues:

Item Summary (Forrest Westall):

- Intensive activity and management of expectations and resources—A lot to do
- Ongoing DEQ/DWR Items— Neuse Watershed Model Information Session / Delivery Factors for WWTP, etc.—we plan to address in our follow-up meetings with DEQ/DWR
- UNRBA provided a letter of support for a US Forest Service proposal for a research study on the impacts of prescribed burns on water quantity and water quality

F. Closing Comments—Board Members and Chair

Next Board Meeting November 15, 2023, from 9:30 to noon at the Butner Town Hall

Remote Access Instructions for UNRBA Board Meetings

This meeting will open 30 minutes prior to the official meeting start time to allow for users to test equipment and ensure communication methods are functioning.

Equipment Type	Access Information	Notes
Computers with microphones and speakers	Join Microsoft Teams Meeting Please mute your microphone unless you want to provide input.	Press control and click on this link to bring up Microsoft Teams through the internet. You can view the screen share and communicate through your computer’s speakers and microphone.
Computers without audio capabilities, or audio that is not working	Join Microsoft Teams Meeting (888) 404-2493 Passcode: sent morning of meeting Please mute your phone unless you want to provide input.	Follow instructions above. Turn down your computer speakers, mute your computer microphone , dial the number through your phone and enter the passcode. See note below on pass code
Phone only	(888) 404-2493 Passcode: sent morning of meeting Please mute your phone unless you want to provide input.	Dial the toll-free number and enter the passcode. The system continues to update the passcode because these meetings do not occur on a routine schedule. We will check the passcode the morning of the meeting and resend via email.

Remote Access Guidelines

- If you dial in through your phone, mute your microphone and turn down your speakers to **avoid feedback**
- Unless you are speaking, please mute your computer/device microphone or phone microphone to **minimize background noise**
- UNRBA meetings are open meetings; however, for this remote access meeting, please **limit the discussion to UNRBA Board Members** to facilitate moving through action items