

Path Forward Committee (PFC) Meeting Agenda
September 5, 2023, 9:30 AM to 12:00 PM
Butner Town Hall

Materials related to the PFC Meeting will be placed on the UNRBA website unless noted otherwise: [UNRBA Meetings Page](#).

I. Opening Comments, Agenda Review/Revisions — Co-Chairs Michelle Woolfolk and Terry Hackett

II. Modeling and Regulatory Support Status

Item Summary (Alix Matos): The Watershed Analysis Risk Management Framework (WARMF) modeling report has been revised to address comments from the MRSW and DWR and to include the results of watershed scenarios. The Executive Director and Chair of the Modeling and Regulatory Support Workgroup (MRSW) have reviewed the revisions and responses to comments. A redline version of the report has been provided to the MRSW, DWR, and subject matter experts for review. A final, clean draft has been provided to these groups as well as the PFC and participants of the August 1st Technical Stakeholders Workshop. A final report will be submitted to DWR by December 2023. A final set of WARMF model files has been provided to DWR for review.

The lake modeling report is under development that will describe development, calibration, and modeling results of WARMF Lake, EFDC, and the Statistical/Bayesian/Decision Support model. The technical appendix for EFDC has been drafted and reviewed by the Executive Director and Chair of the MRSW. Once the main lake report has been drafted and reviewed by them, the main report and EFDC appendix will be provided to MRSW, DWR, and subject matter experts for review. The training for the EFDC model will be scheduled after these files have been distributed so trainees can review the materials prior to the training. This training had previously been scheduled for August 2, 2023, but had to be rescheduled to finalize file conversion so DWR can review the files without a proprietary tool.

III. FOCUS FOR TODAY'S MEETING: Developing Recommendations for a Revised Nutrient Management Strategy and a Petition for a Site-Specific Chlorophyll-a Water Quality Standard

Item Summary (Forrest Westall): The UNRBA has been working for the past several months on recommendations for the revised nutrient management strategy referred to as the UNRBA Concepts and Principles. The PFC has reviewed several drafts and an updated draft, incorporating all comments at that time, was provided to the PFC and Board in June. This draft was submitted to the PFC and the entire PFC email list. We received responses from several PFC members and some of our stakeholders. A final draft was produced and distributed on August 23rd. This draft represents numerous reviews and input. As of this agenda preparation, DWR has not yet provided comments on the drafts and has indicated they will provide comments on the August version. The PFC will discuss the August final draft, and the Executive Director will be seeking a recommendation for bringing it to the Board of Directors for consideration at the September 20, 2023, Board meeting. If there are any final revisions, these will be prepared in response to PFC input, and we will consider input from DWR via email with the PFC prior to submitting a final version to the Board on or about September 13th.

A public-facing, two-page summary has also been developed to expand outreach and invite additional feedback on the final draft Concepts and Principles document. This summary has been reviewed by the

Executive Director and PFC Co-Chairs. The final version has been distributed to the PFC and the Board. This document can be used by the local governments to distribute information to their mailing lists and to post to social media accounts.

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 (CPII). This document has been reviewed by the UNRBA legal group. The PFC has received the final draft of CPII and will discuss at the September 5th meeting. The PFC will be asked to recommend CPII for Board approval along with the Concepts and Principles document at the September 20th Board meeting. Once approved by the Board, the governing bodies of the UNRBA members will consider endorsing and executing the Consensus Principles II at their local meetings in October and November. We need for all local governing bodies to concur with CPII and bring those endorsements before the Board on November 15th. The UNRBA Board will then approve submittal of the Concepts and Principles and CPII to DEQ/DWR, the Environmental Management Commission, and General Assembly in December 2023. We want to complete this process in November. We have scheduled, if necessary, a virtual meeting for December 13, 2023, to consider approval of these documents.

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 petition for a 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.

IV. **Status of the Economic Analysis**

Item Summary (Alix Matos): 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.

V. **Communications Support**

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 has scheduled and will continue scheduling, as our members request, presentations at the meetings of UNRBA governing bodies to discuss the Concepts and Principles and CPII under their consideration. He presented earlier this year to the City of Durham Environmental Affairs Board and the City of Creedmoor Board of Commissioners. Presentations are scheduled for the Granville County Commissioners, Wake County Growth & Sustainability Committee, Durham County Commissioners, City of Raleigh Stormwater Committee, Durham City Council work session, and the Orange County Commissioners. We will discuss any needs identified for additional meetings. It is extremely important that the Boards and Commissions for our members endorse CPII for submittal in December. We will provide a draft resolution for you all to use in presenting it to your Boards and Commissions. We are looking to the PFC member representatives to make sure CPII is presented to its governing bodies for approval.

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.

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. As far as we know, 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.

VI. Other Status Items

Item Summary (Forrest Westall): Brief statements on ongoing activities:

- Intensive work and coming deadlines make it important to manage expectations and resources— Recommendations are due at the end of 2023.
- Ongoing DEQ/DWR Items—DWR Neuse Watershed Model; delivery factors for WWTP
- 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



VII. Closing Comments— Co-Chairs Michelle Woolfolk and Terry Hackett

Next BOD Meeting: September 20, 2023, 9:30 AM to Noon

Next PFC Meeting: October 3, 2023, 9:30 AM to Noon

This schedule may be revised, and notices will be provided about any change.

Remote Access Instructions for PFC Meetings

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: 371 817 961# 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.
Phone only	(888) 404-2493 Passcode: 371 817 961#	Dial the toll-free number and enter the passcode. Please mute your phone unless you want to provide input.

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.