



N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources

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INITIATIVE WINS NATIONAL AWARD FOR RIVER BASIN PLANNING

RALEIGH -- An innovative plan to offset growth, development and loss of wildlife habitat in the Pasquotank River basin has earned a national award for the state Ecosystem Enhancement Program.

The National Association of Environmental Professionals Tuesday gave its annual Environmental Excellence Award to EEP for the Pasquotank River Local Watershed Plan, completed in 2003 in a collaboration between EEP, local residents, resource professionals and private-sector partners. The award came during NAEP's annual meeting in Alexandria, Va.

"This award is a testimony to the partnerships, innovation and teamwork that drive EEP's work across the state," said NCDENR Secretary Bill Ross. "The initiative joins forces to develop solutions to challenges affecting degraded or threatened waterways, focusing on opportunities that respond to local needs."

Local watershed planning is a comprehensive planning effort initiated by EEP to investigate all sources of pollution or degradation in a local watershed, and recommend a comprehensive strategy for improving water quality. EEP has completed or is carrying out local planning in 22 watersheds statewide.

EEP collaborated on the Pasquotank plan with Decision Support Professionals Inc. of Kill Devil Hills. The firm performed the technical watershed assessment for the plan, which is designed to evolve with changing conditions in the river basin.

Founded in July 2003, EEP combined an existing wetlands-restoration initiative by the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources with ongoing environmental efforts by the N.C. Department of Transportation. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers joined as a sponsor.

EEP is housed in NCDENR. A majority of the funding for the initiative originates from the N.C. Board of Transportation in existing dollars allocated to the state for offsetting unavoidable environmental impacts from transportation-infrastructure improvements and other economic development.

Information on the Pasquotank River Local Watershed Plan is available on EEP's website at www.nceep.net/services/lwps/Pasquotank/pasquotank.htm.

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