

RESOLUTION ON REDUCTION OF SEDIMENT CONTRIBUTIONS TO SURFACE WATERS OF NORTH CAROLINA

North Carolina Chapter of the American Fisheries Society

Adopted 5 February 2004 by a membership vote of yes

WHEREAS, sediment is considered the most important cause of water pollution in the United States¹ and the number one physical pollutant in North Carolina waters (North Carolina 2002 303(d) Impaired Waters List); and

WHEREAS, disturbance of soil by agricultural, silvicultural, and development activities increases sediment loads in surface waters and construction is considered the most damaging phase of the development cycle to aquatic resources²; and

WHEREAS, deposited soil particles can smother eggs and larvae of fishes and degrade benthic habitat for other aquatic fauna, including imperiled freshwater mussel species; and

WHEREAS, suspended sediments can modify temperatures and decrease oxygen levels in surface waters by reducing light transmission and plant productivity and by providing a particle surface area for microbial breakdown of organic material; and

WHEREAS, many pollutants such as heavy metals and pesticides adhere to soil particles and are thereby transported into surface waters; and

WHEREAS, regulation of non-point source pollution through the Clean Water Act of 1977 has been delegated to state and local governments; and

WHEREAS, riparian buffers and other Best Management Practices can significantly reduce the introduction of sediment to streams; and

WHEREAS, inspection and enforcement of sediment control practices are often cited as severely lacking, and frequent inspections will increase compliance; and

WHEREAS, the American Fisheries Society acknowledges: “The regulation of land use and associated land management practices has been identified as the only effective means of controlling nonpoint-source pollutants.”³; and

WHEREAS, the American Fisheries Society recommends: “Incentives should be provided for the application of ecologically sound land-use practices in mining, agriculture, silviculture, construction, urban development, and other nonpoint source categories that reduce

¹ Waters, T. F. 1995. Sediment in streams: sources, biological effects, and control. American Fisheries Society Monograph 7, Bethesda, Maryland.

² Brown, W., and D. Caraco. 2000. Muddy water in – muddy water out? Watershed Protection Techniques 2(3):393–403.

³ AFS policy statement #3 NPS.

or minimize nonpoint-drainage, in order to maintain or enhance aquatic resources and provide for maximum water conservation.”³; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that based on the best scientific information available, it is the position of the North Carolina Chapter of the American Fisheries Society (NCAFS) which includes fisheries professionals from throughout North Carolina’s academic institutions, state and federal management agencies, and private institutions, that:

1. the North Carolina General Assembly encourage additional incentives for implementation of agricultural, silvicultural, and development Best Management Practices,
2. the North Carolina General Assembly allocate funding for additional permanent staff with the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources to ensure that all sedimentation and erosion control ordinances and laws are enforced,
3. the North Carolina General Assembly fully support rules enacted by the Environmental Management Commission that protect sensitive aquatic environments including those: (1) containing state or federally listed endangered, threatened, or special concern species, (2) designated by the North Carolina Environmental Management Commission as Outstanding Resource, High Quality, Trout, Swamp, or Nutrient Sensitive waters, and (3) designated by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission or North Carolina Marine Fisheries Commission as trout waters, anadromous fish spawning waters, or nursery areas,
4. the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources review Best Management Practice standards every 5 years and make revisions based upon new information on the control of sedimentation and other non-point source pollutants,
5. the Environmental Management Commission encourage minimum wooded riparian buffer widths be extended to 100 ft on each side of perennial streams and 50 ft of wetlands and intermittent streams across the state to provide more effective control of sediment and enhance riparian processes and functions^{4,5}, and
6. the North Carolina Chapter will establish a professional workgroup to evaluate the effectiveness of Best Management Practices in the protection of fisheries resources and encourage the implementation of the most effective practices.

⁴ North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission. August 2002. Guidance Memorandum to Address and Mitigate Secondary and Cumulative Impacts to Aquatic and Terrestrial Wildlife Resources and Water Quality.

⁵ Wake County Watershed Management Plan. January 2003. Available: <http://projects.ch2m.com/WakeCounty/> (January 2004).