Waccamaw RIVERKEEPER® Program
Protecting the Waccamaw River Watershed

You can change the world from your own backyard!

Christine Ellis
Waccamaw Riverkeeper

A program of

Licensed by

Winyah Rivers Foundation
Serving the rivers of the Winyah Bay Watershed • WinyahRivers.org

Waterkeeper Alliance Member
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Member of the Waterkeeper® Alliance

A grassroots organization with local Waterkeeper programs nationally and internationally

“…dedicated to preserving and protecting YOUR WATER from pollution.”

182+ programs worldwide and growing!

www.waterkeeper.org
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Sponsor of the Waccamaw RIVERKEEPER® Program, we are a 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit organization.

Our mission:

“to protect, preserve, monitor and revitalize the health of the lands and waters of the greater Winyah Bay watershed.”

www.winyahrivers.org
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SC Subbasins

Pee Dee Basin

Greater Winyah Bay Watershed
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Coastal plain river, traveling 140+ miles, draining 1100 sq miles

Headwaters in swamps of Brunswick & Columbus Counties, NC

Joins the AIWW near Bucksport, SC then discharges to Winyah Bay

Historically, culturally & ecologically important
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Lake Waccamaw

A Carolina Bay
Permanently inundated
(check dam at outlet)

Lake Waccamaw State Park
Outstanding Resource Waters
Several endemic, rare species
Recreational uses
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Waccamaw River

A black water system
- naturally low in pH and oxygen

Historically, culturally and ecologically important
- home to several endemic and rare species

Recreational uses
- boating, fishing, swimming, etc.
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Waccamaw River – a beautiful, blackwater river

Color is due to tannins, other pigments that leach out of vegetation in the extensive wetlands adjoining the river

Naturally acidic (low pH) due to the presence of tannic acids

Naturally low in oxygen due to abundance of organics
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Winyah Bay

3rd largest estuary on the eastern seaboard
Confluence of the Waccamaw, Pee Dee, Black & Sampit Rivers
Developed in colonial times as a seaport and center for rice culture & timbering
Important & productive ecosystem with unique plant and animal communities
A collaborative voice for nature

The Arch is a unique geological feature of uplifted sand & limestone

Stretches north-south from Cape Lookout to Cape Romain and west beyond Fayetteville

Gives rise to unique natural communities, a diversity of plants and animals, and 22 plant and 19 animal species endemic to the region
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Watershed-wide Projects

Water Quality Monitoring

A citizen-based effort to monitor water quality
Partnership with Waccamaw Watershed Academy of CCU
Established effort in SC, 12 sites, 35+ volunteers
Expansion into NC underway
Illicit discharge detection and follow-up
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Waccamaw River Volunteer Monitoring Project

Funding Partners:

✓ US Environmental Protection Agency
✓ City of Conway
✓ Horry County
✓ Georgetown County
✓ International Paper

Project Administration:

✓ Waccamaw Watershed Academy
✓ Waccamaw Riverkeeper® Program
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**Objectives:**
1. Address NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) Phase II program measures for public education and involvement
2. Assist in illicit discharge detection
3. Increase geographic and temporal coverage of water quality monitoring to assist in development of site specific water quality standards

**What do we monitor for?**
- Conductivity
- pH
- Dissolved Oxygen
- Turbidity
- Nutrients
- E. coli

[www.coastal.edu/envsci/vm_data.html](http://www.coastal.edu/envsci/vm_data.html)
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Education & Outreach

Waccamaw Conference

Held annually, this conference brings together the public and scientific experts to discuss how to protect the watersheds of the greater Winyah Bay.

Saturday, February 28, 2009

Coastal Waccamaw
Stormwater Education Consortium

A consortium of education providers to help local municipalities meet their stormwater requirements.

Our goal: to develop & implement effective, outcomes-based stormwater education/outreach programs to meet federal requirements & satisfy local environmental & economic needs.
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Advocacy

- River Cleanups
  - Anti-litter campaigns

- Threats to Water Quality
  - Illicit discharges
  - Encroachment

- Impaired Waters
  - Mercury, Bacteria, DO

- Wetlands Protections
  - Isolated wetlands

- Water Quantity Threats
  - Upstream uses
  - Efficiency
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How do we protect this valuable resource?

Waccamaw Riverkeeper and Citizen Volunteers
- advocate compliance with environmental laws
- respond to citizen complaints
- identify problems with affect the water body and devise appropriate remedies
- educate the public and advocate for the public’s right to protect and defend the environment
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The path to clean water begins in our own backyards!

- Residential landscaping
  - Recycle or properly dispose of chemicals
- Reduce pollutants
  - Recycle or properly dispose of chemicals
  - Maintain septic systems
  - Properly dispose of pet wastes
  - Avoid contaminating storm drains with detergents & oils from cars
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Our message:
We’re serious about protecting our watershed and our right to a clean and ample supply of water!