

RALEIGH, (SGRToday.com) - The state's focus on addressing nutrients in estuaries, lakes, and rivers has received approval from the Environmental Protection Agency.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources announced the approval in a statement released Wednesday. Nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus are necessary in waterways to support the food cycle of many aquatic animals. However, excessive levels of nutrients can lead to algal blooms, fish kills, and taste and odor issues that result in increased drinking water treatment costs.

Many factors – including water temperature, available light, water depth and how long water stays in one location – can affect the impacts from nutrients to a water body.

The plan presents milestones for development of site-specific criteria for High Rock Lake (reservoir/lake) by 2018, for the Albemarle Sound (estuary) by 2020, and for the Middle Cape Fear River (river/stream) by 2021.

Also, the division is assembling a scientific advisory council to help the agency and stakeholders develop a management strategy for addressing nutrients in water bodies throughout North Carolina.