

Item Title: Endorsement of Consensus Principles II for Revision of Falls Lake Rules

Specific Action Requested:

That the Board of Commissioners endorses the Upper Neuse River Basin Association (UNRBA) Consensus Principles II for Revised Falls Lake Rules

Item Summary:

Purpose: The Upper Neuse River Basin Association has asked the governing board of each member government to endorse revised principles regarding water quality in the Falls Lake watershed.

Background: Falls Lake is a valuable regional resource, providing drinking water for 550,000 customers, recreation, and habitat to aquatic and terrestrial wildlife. Wake County is a member of the Upper Neuse River Basic Association (UNRBA), a collaboration of local governments promoting innovative approaches to water quality planning and management focusing on the Falls Lake watershed.

In 2011, due to concerns with technical feasibility and cost of meeting state-mandated nutrient reductions to address impaired water quality, the UNRBA began a re-examination process of the Falls Lake Nutrient Management Rules. Recently, the UNRBA issued a new set of principles addressing water quality rule recommendations in Falls Lake. These principles address environmental, financial, social and equitability factors. The UNRBA Board of Directors has asked all member governments to endorse the updated principles. Staff recommend the Board approve the new principles.

Board Goal: This action supports Growth and Sustainability Goal 3: Preserve and protect a clean and abundant water supply.

Fiscal Impact: No fiscal impact is anticipated with the requested action.

Additional Information:

On September 18, 2023, the UNRBA Executive Director presented to the Growth and Sustainability Committee on UNRBA's Recommendations for a Revised Falls Lake Nutrient Management Strategy. The Consensus Principles II consist of sixteen principles that summarize concepts for the Falls Lake rule revisions and include:

- Investment-based compliance
- Increased project flexibility

- Promotion of land conservation and preservation

These principles align with Wake County's growth and sustainability objectives by promoting projects and activities that address watershed health, economic and social equitability.

UNRBA intends to submit the new principles to the NC Department of Environmental Quality for incorporation into the revised Falls Lake Rules.

Attachments:

1. UNRBA Consensus Principles II Presentation
2. Resolution to adopt UNRBA Consensus Principles II
3. Concepts and Principles for the Upper Neuse River Basin Association (UNRBA) Recommendations for a Revised Falls Lake Nutrient Management Strategy