



# Meeting Notes

**Yadkin-Pee Dee Water Management Group**

12:00 PM - 2:30PM, February 15, 2024

Hybrid: Zoom and at Salisbury-Rowan Utilities

## AGENDA

- Welcome
- Presentations and Updates
- Business Items
- Roundtable Discussion
- Next Steps & Adjourn

## WELCOME

Jim Behmer called the meeting to order at 12:03; attendees introduced themselves by name and organization.

## MEETING ATTENDEES

A quorum was confirmed with the following 14 representatives from 10 member organizations in attendance.

### Member Attendees

Charlotte Water		
City of Albemarle		
City of Concord	Kevin Plemmons	
City of Kannapolis	Alex Anderson	Gerald Faulkner
City of Monroe	David Rankin	Amy Cook
City of Statesville		
Cube Yadkin Generation	Joyce Foster	
Davidson County		
Davidson Water, Inc.	Ron Sink	
Davie County		
Duke Energy	John Crutchfield	Jeff Lineberger
Montgomery County		
Rowan County		
Salisbury-Rowan Utilities	Jim Behmer	
Town of Wilkesboro	Sam Call	
Union County	Hyong Yi	
WSACC		
WS/FC Utility Commission	Alan Fowler	Chris Triplett

### Non-Member Attendees

Speaker: Dr. Gary Freeze

Speaker: Mark Wineka

Yadkin Riverkeeper: Edgar Miller, Stephanie Stephens

NC Land & Water Fund/Robertson Family Foundation: Jason Walser

HDR: Sara Yeh, Audri Baker

YADKIN RIVER BASIN HISTORY

Attendees enjoyed three presentations on the history of the river basin. A recording of the three presentations will be posted on the YPDWMG website along with a map provided by Dr. Gary Freeze and slides provided by the Yadkin Riverkeeper.

**A Cultural History of the Yadkin River** by Dr. Gary Freeze, retired history professor at Catawba College

Dr. Freeze distributed a map of the Yadkin Basin from the 1770s and provided a summary of the early history of the region from the 1740s through 1900. Settlers initially came seeking the readily available rich land for raising crops and cattle and the area along the tributaries became heavily settled. By the 1800s, depletion of the land and the inability to master the river as a navigable trade route forced settlers westward. The arrival of railroads in the 1850s spurred new growth and set the stage for the development of industry in place of agriculture. The advent of hydroelectric power further promoted growth in the region.

KEY MESSAGE – Remember the original grasslands with rich black soil and the river ran black in contrast with how things are today where the river runs red or yellow.

**A River Runs Through Us** by Mark Wineka, author and retired journalist from the Salisbury Post

Mr. Wineka reviewed his experience immersing himself in the Yadkin River in 1997, gathering stories which came together as the book *A River Runs Through Us* and forming impressions of the river itself. The stories ran from July 20-25, 1997, in the Salisbury Post and chronicled a 16-mile canoe trip along the river along with conversations with environmental and utility experts, regulatory personnel, and residents including one family who took daily water samples of the Yadkin River for 40 years. Copies of the book may be available through Amazon or eBay, or through local resources such as the Three Rivers Land Trust or Catawba College.

KEY MESSAGE – Awareness of how powerful and hard-working the river is and how important our responsibility is to protect it from ourselves.

**Recent Observations and Challenges Facing the Yadkin in 2024** by Edgar Miller, Yadkin Riverkeeper

Mr. Miller provided a slide presentation about the Yadkin Riverkeeper (YRK) organization and Yadkin River watershed. As the fourth largest watershed on the east coast, the Yadkin travels 230 miles across North Carolina and has the highest concentration of documented fish weirs in the United States. The presentation highlighted several key sites, both historical and current, and shared a list of 2024 YRK priorities including water quality monitoring and community events such as lake/stream cleanups and paddle events.

The YRK is sponsoring a presentation by Randell Jones, local Daniel Boone historian, entitled *The Yadkin River – A Watershed of History*. The event will take place on March 21 at Lewisville’s Mary Alice Warren Community Center and will highlight the role of the Yadkin River in the settlement of the North Carolina Piedmont and the role the Yadkin played in the founding of the United States.

KEY MESSAGE – The river as a resource is extremely important, we need to work together to do more to protect it.

CITY OF CONCORD WATER SUPPLY/IBT CONSIDERATIONS

Kevin Plemmons discussed the challenges of having the Rocky River classified as a subbasin of the Yadkin River Basin, which results in any water crossing that boundary being considered an interbasin transfer (IBT). In conjunction with the loss of safe yield resulting from two droughts of record (50-year and 100-year) happening within the past 20 years, ensuring adequate water supply for the growing region is a priority. The City of Kannapolis is in a similar situation spurred by county level planning. A major focus of current legislation is IBT; Concord would like the legislation to

reclassify the Rocky River as part of the Yadkin River Basin. However, the legislative process is complex due to competing interests. For example, Cape Fear basin users may have a different perspective on how sub-basins are incorporated into other basins.

#### *WATER RESOURCES PLAN UPDATE*

Sara Yeh reviewed the results of the Phase 4a Performance Measures Sheet future conditions modeling completed for the Water Resources Plan (WRP) and presented a proposed task order for Phase 4B. The key activities recommended for Phase 4B are strategic communications support and future planning scenarios analysis.

**ACTION:** Review Water Resources Plan Phase 4B proposal and decide on path forward.

#### **Possible Grant Applications to Consider**

Ms. Yeh provided a slide presentation detailing the top four funding opportunities identified by the WRP project team: North Carolina Land & Water, Duke Energy Foundation, Coca-Cola Foundation and Robertson Family Foundation. Members discussed the options and agreed submitting an application to the North Carolina Land & Water Fund by the March 1 deadline was feasible since most of the documentation was previously developed. HDR was assigned to coordinate this effort. Letters of support will be requested from members and the YRK; Union County confirmed they would provide a letter.

Members discussed how to process any funds received through grants and concluded establishing an ad-hoc committee would be appropriate as needed to review and oversee expenditure of any funds received.

**ACTION:** HDR to prepare NC Land & Water Grant application for Board approval and submittal prior to March 1.

**ACTION:** Request letters of support from Member organizations for NC Land & Water Grant application

#### *SC RIVER BASIN COUNCIL UPDATE*

No report.

John Crutchfield noted the US Geological Survey has encountered difficulties due to various accounting issues with groundwater inputs for groundwater modeling. They will be exploring an alternative to empirically look at all monitoring wells in South Carolina, look at trends and management strategies, and develop a groundwater analysis. USGS hopes to have results this summer and issue a draft analysis this fall. The surface water model did not show any shortages in a 50-year projection.

#### **BUSINESS ITEMS**

##### *APPROVAL OF DECEMBER MEETING MINUTES*

Comments on the draft minutes were displayed for attendees to review. No additional comments were made.

- **MOTION:** Approve December 2023 minutes as amended; motion carried.

##### *NON-PROFIT MANAGEMENT SUPPORT TEAM INTRODUCTION*

HDR has been selected to provide program management services following the transition of the YPDWMG to an official non-profit organization. Audri Baker introduced herself and her role with HDR and highlighted her experience providing similar support to the Yadkin-Pee Dee River Basin Association and the Catawba-Wateree Water Management Group over the past decade. In addition to Ms. Yeh and Ms. Baker, Nicola Hill, Water Management Consultant with HDR, will provide key project support.

## SECRETARY TREASURER REPORT

David Czerr was not able to attend but provided a profit/loss a monthly report for January 2024 and a summary for January thru December 2023. Ms. Yeh reviewed the income categories on the 2023 summary and explained the services category represents funds transferred from the previous bank account handled by Winston-Salem to a new non-profit checking account with Wells Fargo. The non-profit account was set up by Fountainworks and is still connected with them. Members supported setting up a new, fully independent account for the YPDWMG.

**ACTION:** Explore options to set up fully independent banking account(s) for the YPDWMG.

## ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

- The Catawba-Wateree Water Management Group is holding its Annual Water for All Summit on March 28. Details and tickets are available on the CWWMG website.
- Winston-Salem has just wrapped up an algae study, testing effectiveness of filters. The results were inconclusive. Temperature made an impact. There were no detects on PFAS components from the UCMR5 (yet). The plant under construction is anticipated to begin treating water in June; chemical costs seem to be stabilizing.
- Duke Energy has mainly been dealing with high water inflow events in the past few months and has moved on from drought conditions. Duke Energy was able to test the new inflatable gates at Blewett Falls and the gates performed well to allow water release.
- Union County's new intake on Lake Tillery began drawing water Monday, 2/12. The county will officially take over the new Yadkin Water Treatment plant from the construction team on Monday 2/19. Union County commissioners have decided to take fluoride out of the water at this plant, which Union County owns and operates. This presents a challenge because South Carolina is not making this change, so water coming from the Catawba-River Water Treatment Plant, jointly owned and operated with Lancaster County Water & Sewer District will continue to have fluoride. Professional spokespersons and organizations have spoken out at public hearings on the benefits of fluoridating water.
- Concord cited recent volatility in the construction market. Frequent rebids are being required because bidders are not providing the required forms or are not completing them correctly. In addition, bids for small projects are coming much higher than estimates. They have had some success receiving bids that were below cost estimate for larger projects.
- Attendees discussed efforts to address harmful algal blooms. The YRK is looking at various options including ultrasound technology focused specifically on black algae and lyngbya. Wilkesboro has tried two sonic devices with mixed results. Lake Norman groups have had some success getting classification changes for harmful algal blooms to be a part of the Aquatic Nuisance Species program.

## NEXT STEPS

Next steps include the following tasks:

- **ACTION:** Review Water Resources Plan Phase 4B proposal and decide on path forward.
- **ACTION:** HDR to prepare NC Land & Water Grant application for Board approval and submittal prior to March 1.
- **ACTION:** Request letters of support from Member organizations for NC Land & Water Grant application
- **ACTION:** Explore options to set up fully independent banking account(s) for the YPDWMG.

## CLOSING ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next meeting will be in Winston-Salem. Members are encouraged to share ideas for topics or presentations.

- **MOTION:** Motion to adjourn; motion carried. Mr. Behmer adjourned the meeting at 2:33 pm.