Clean Water Act Section 205(j) Grant

North Carolina

2025 Grant Projects

W Kerr Scott Watershed Restoration Plan ($76,000)
High Country Council of Governments
High County Council of Governments will develop a 9-element restoration plan for an area spanning two 12-digit HUCs. This area comprises almost the entirety of the W Kerr Scott Reservoir as well as approximately 7 miles of the Yadkin River. The goal of the project is to address the Chlorophyll A impairment and improve water quality in the reservoir through development of a document that addresses all 9 elements of an EPA watershed restoration plan. The plan will provide local agencies with a strategy to implement targeted improvement efforts and establish eligibility for 319 grant funding, with the ultimate goal of removal of the Reservoir from the 303(d) list.

Jack's Creek Green Stormwater Infrastructure Engineering ($115,700)
Mid-East Commission
This project will complete engineering/design for 4 green stormwater infrastructure projects in the City of Washington that were identified in the Jack's Creek 9-Element Watershed Restoration Plan. Designed practices include a stream restoration, constructed wetland, shoreline repair and buffer restoration, and a wet pollutant removal swale. In addition, this project will study potential solutions to the trash problem in Jack's Creek, which will complement the recently installed trash traps. The project will also include a public educational element to be led by Sound Rivers.

Town of Garner and NCSU Water Quality Sampling Investigation for Three Key Tributaries to Swift Creek ($30,308)
Central Pines Regional Council
Central Pines Regional Council and the Town of Garner are working with NC State University Biological and Agricultural Engineering Department (CAAE) to explore ways to improve the water quality going into Lake Benson, the Town's drinking water supply. This project will provide funding to sample three tributaries for analyses by CAAE. All data will be submitted to NCDEQ using the NCDEQ data submittal checklist for 303d assessments. The objective is to determine the nature, extent, and cause of water quality problems in these tributaries that lead to an essential water supply resource, Lake Benson. Ultimately this will allow the Town to work with partners to scope and fund water quality improvement projects.

Newport Regional Wetland Master Plan and Design ($104.488)
Eastern Carolina Council
This pilot project addresses long-standing stormwater permit failures in the Newport River Watershed where three interconnected stormwater permits issued in 1995 have lapsed, creating unmaintained systems, untreated runoff, and unauthorized discharges that threaten water quality and shellfish harvesting. This project will integrate both existing problems and new growth into a sustainable system. Outcomes include restored water-quality protections, relief from stormwater liabilities for landowners, and a model that other communities can use to resolve inherited stormwater permit issues.

Coastal Leadership Institute to Strengthen Coastal Watershed Planning ($45,442)
Eastern Carolina Council
The Coastal Leadership Institute is a six-month program that will build leadership capacity across North Carolina's coastal communities. Each year, it will bring together 20–25 local government staff, planners, nonprofit leaders, agency professionals, and business representatives to explore key coastal issues and strengthen practical leadership skills. Through workshops, field visits, and peer learning, participants will engage with topics such as coastal science, growth and development, natural resource management, resilience planning, and coastal policy. Water quality and community resilience will be emphasized throughout, including focused sessions on stormwater, wetlands, and living shorelines. Funding will support outreach and curriculum development to ensure strong participation by local governments and regional planning organizations. By cultivating a connected network of informed leaders, the program will help communities integrate water quality and resilience strategies into future planning and decision-making.

Carolina Beach Stormwater Flow & Material Mapping ($66,900)
Cape Fear Council of Governments
This project will create a comprehensive, geo-referenced map of Carolina Beach's stormwater system to help protect water quality in the Cape Fear and White Oak watersheds. As severe rain events and high tides increasingly cause flooding, contaminated runoff—including chemicals, petroleum products, and bacteria—enters the stormwater network and can mix with the sanitary sewer system, posing risks to both ecosystems and public health. Because the Town lacks detailed information on stormwater flow directions and infrastructure materials, it cannot accurately trace pollutants or implement effective response measures. By hiring a licensed subcontractor to conduct a full system survey, the project will equip the Town with the tools needed to better manage and mitigate pollution events. The resulting map will support cleaner water, healthier natural resources, and improved protection for recreation, tourism, and local fisheries.

MONARCH (Microplastics Observation Network for Analysis, Research, Community, and Health): Pilot Phase ($70,000)
Centralina Regional Council
Mecklenburg County Storm Water Services is launching the pilot phase of the MONARCH program to establish baseline microplastics monitoring in the McDowell Creek Watershed and Mountain Island Lake, a key drinking water source in the Catawba River Basin. Beginning in January 2026, monthly sampling at eight freshwater and atmospheric deposition sites will

measure microplastics and E. coli to assess concentrations and potential correlations. Sampling will occur at confluence zones, upstream and downstream of the McDowell Wastewater Treatment Plant, at influent and effluent points, across multiple lake sites, and at two atmospheric monitoring locations. Outcomes include a baseline dataset, increased technical expertise, and a scalable model for long-term monitoring. Findings will be shared publicly and will support regional water quality planning, aligning with Mecklenburg County's goals to enhance environmental stewardship and improve water quality.

Expansion of the Harmful Algal Bloom Local Government Toolkit Cohort Program ($41,449.45)
Albemarle Commission Council of Governments
The Albemarle Commission is using 205(j) funding to strengthen regional capacity for water quality planning and harmful algal bloom (HAB) response across the Albemarle region. Building on long-standing partnerships and recommendations from major regional planning efforts, this project will expand the Commission's role in coordinating and supporting water-quality initiatives. Central to the proposal is the HAB Toolkit, currently developed by NC State University, the State Resilience Office, and Albemarle Pamlico National Estuary Partnership (APNEP), which provides practical guidance and communication resources for local governments and health agencies. The project adds a HAB Cohort Program modeled after the state's extreme-heat planning cohort. This multi-week virtual learning community will train local officials, help them apply the Toolkit, foster peer learning, and guide the development of customized local HAB response plans. Together, the Toolkit and Cohort Program will build knowledge, coordination, and resilience, enabling communities to respond more effectively to harmful algal blooms.

Upper Rocky River Watershed Nutrient Monitoring ($54,903)
Central Pines Regional Council
Central Pines Regional Council and its partners will conduct comprehensive nutrient monitoring at ten sites in the Upper Rocky River watershed to assess water quality and identify sources of nutrient and fecal contamination. Quarterly sampling through 2026 and early 2027—including targeted monitoring during major rain events—will measure nitrogen, phosphorus, fecal coliforms, turbidity, and chlorophyll-a at reservoir locations. Preliminary sampling indicates widespread E. coli presence, underscoring the need for updated data; the last regional nutrient assessment occurred 20 years ago. The resulting dataset, reported to NCDEQ, will clarify site-specific impairments, support targeted follow-up sampling for potential listings, inform future nutrient standards, and help educate upstream contributors about their impact on downstream water quality.