

**North Carolina's Discharge Monitoring Coalition Program –
NPDES Coalition based instream monitoring: old requirements, new cooperation,
better water quality assessment**

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Biographical Sketch of Author

Lauren Elmore has worked with the North Carolina Division of Water Quality as their discharge monitoring coalition coordinator for the past 2 years. Previously Lauren has worked for a wide range of organizations including the State of Oregon, a local government, a wastewater/stormwater utility, and Radian Corporation an environmental consulting firm. Her experience has covered a wide range of issues including water supply, wastewater, non-point source pollution reduction, industrial pollution prevention, developing chemical and biological water quality monitoring efforts, TMDL development and implementation, stormwater monitoring, BMP evaluation, and permit compliance.

Abstract

The North Carolina Division of Water Quality (DWQ) has combined NPDES monitoring requirements with watershed based monitoring to create an effective program for assessing water quality. Permit holders voluntarily develop a monitoring program with the DWQ allowing the coordination of instream monitoring activities to reduce duplication and provide assessment of larger watershed conditions. In exchange for participation in the discharge monitoring coalition, members are exempted from their NPDES permit's instream monitoring requirements. Data collection, reporting, and laboratory oversight are implemented and managed by the discharger association. All requirements are documented in a Memorandum of Agreement between the Division of Water Quality and the individual permit holders. A single coalition coordinator position within DWQ is able to facilitate the collection of water quality data at over 200 monitoring locations on a monthly basis.

The basic intent of the program is to evaluate the instream impact of member dischargers and produce quality ambient data that is readily available in electronic format. This program is used to evaluate compliance with water quality standards and document water quality changes. The monitoring program is designed to evaluate coalition interests and watershed specific issues. Participation in a discharge monitoring coalition also has the potential to save permit holders money.