



Catawba-Wateree Water Management Group

INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCES PLAN

A Shared Plan for a Stronger Water Future

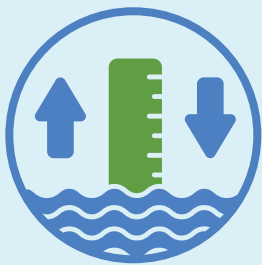
The Integrated Water Resources Plan (IWRP), prepared by the Catawba-Wateree Water Management Group (CWWMG), is a Basin-wide, science-based roadmap for managing both water supply reliability and water quality in the Catawba-Wateree River Basin. Developed collaboratively by water utilities, energy providers, and regional partners, the IWRP reflects a shared commitment to manage this interconnected system as one resource.

The third generation of Basin-wide planning, the IWRP builds on years of collaboration, data, and implementation. Past plans have led to real improvements in water use efficiency, drought response, and system coordination. The current IWRP continues that progress, providing practical, science-based recommendations to strengthen reliability, protect water quality, and support a growing region.

The Central Findings: Quantity and Quality

The IWRP identifies current and future water quantity and quality challenges and lays out a set of practical solutions and strategies to address these challenges on a Basin-wide scale.

The IWRP determined that the total water storage in the reservoir system is sufficient to meet water demands beyond 2100. **However, two key challenges remain:**



Reliable Access: Water is not always available where and when it is needed, particularly during drought conditions.

Limitations in water supply accessibility due to some raw water intake depths and current Low Inflow Protocol (LIP) and drought management strategies have been identified. The IWRP provides recommended potential strategies to address these challenges.



Water Quality: Water quality pressures are increasing.

Sedimentation is reducing storage capacity, nutrients and runoff are affecting source water, and treatment complexities and costs are increasing. The IWRP identifies recommended potential strategies and priority locations to address these challenges.

Why This Matters Now

Several trends are placing increasing pressure on the Basin:



Continued population and economic growth



Greater climate variability, including extreme rainfall and dry periods



Frequent and unpredictable droughts



Development pressures that impact watershed health and water quality

Demand is rising, conditions are becoming more variable, and protecting water quality is critical to long-term success.



What the IWRP Recommends

The IWRP lays out a set of practical actions to help the Basin work better over time as one connected system. The recommendations focus on a few key areas: improving how policies support regional water management, better coordinating growth and conservation decisions, making the most of existing infrastructure, and preparing more effectively for drought. **Together, these actions are meant to help communities make smarter decisions, protect water quality, and keep the system reliable as the region grows.**

A.

Policy and Regulatory Alignment

The IWRP identifies opportunities to improve how policies and regulations support basin-wide water management. Better policy alignment allows the region to act as one system, rather than as disconnected jurisdictions.

Key recommendations include:

- ≈ An all-hands-on-deck, same-page approach to riparian buffers across the Basin.
- ≈ Revise interbasin transfer (IBT) regulations to remove unintended barriers caused by subbasin delineations, enabling more flexible and practical water management within the same river basin.
- ≈ Designate a leadership-level champion within both NCDEQ and SCDES accountable for SC v. NC settlement agreement compliance.

B.

Planning and Coordination

The IWRP emphasizes stronger integration between land use planning, conservation, and water supply management. Growth is occurring throughout the Basin, and without coordination, development can negatively impact both water availability and water quality.

Key recommendations include:

- ≈ Establish a clearer, stronger system to evaluate whether source water protection strategies are actually working.
- ≈ Coordinate land conservation and water supply protection at the subbasin level – growth and protection cannot operate in silos.
- ≈ Elevate conservation as a shared regional priority, not just a communications effort.

C.

Technical and Program Actions

The IWRP includes a range of technical and operational improvements designed to increase efficiency and improve overall system performance. These recommendations prioritize getting more value out of the existing system before expanding infrastructure.

Key recommendations include:

- ≈ Build a coordinated, Basin-wide monitoring system so decisions are based on shared, reliable data.
- ≈ Use technical evaluation to guide buffer and protection policies.
- ≈ Improve system water use efficiency before expanding infrastructure – reduce water loss, optimize plants, and expand reuse.
- ≈ Plan for industrial and economic growth with eyes wide open to long-term water demand.
- ≈ Update reservoir and storage data so planning reflects reality.
- ≈ Tailor strategies to the unique needs and pressures of each subbasin.

D.

Drought Preparedness and Response

Drought remains one of the most significant risks to water supply reliability in the Basin. The IWRP builds on the region's existing LIP to strengthen how drought is managed.

Key recommendations include:

- ≈ Strengthen and act earlier under the LIP when drought conditions begin.
- ≈ Ensure all significant water users participate in LIP-driven drought response.
- ≈ Improve coordination across utilities and states during low-flow conditions.
- ≈ Update contingency plans and conduct exercises before drought conditions escalate.
- ≈ Prepare intake infrastructure for lower water levels.
- ≈ Prioritize drought-related investments based on risk and long-term resilience, not reaction.

IWRP Background

This work is built on two decades of regional planning.

Year	Milestone	Purpose & Outcome
2006	Comprehensive Water Supply Study	Identified that, without intervention, Basin demands could exceed supply by 2050.
2014	First Water Supply Master Plan	Established strategies to extend the Basin's safe yield well past 2100 and protect water quality and ecosystems.
2015	Water Supply Master Plan Amendment & Addendum	Refined projections and implementation steps, resetting the 10-year update clock to 2025.
2021	Renamed & Plan Update Kickoff	Rebranded as the IWRP and launched the current update cycle, including a series of Basin-wide stakeholder workshops to align the plan with emerging needs.
2025	Final IWRP Update	Updated plan and schedule for completion and publication, integrating workshop feedback, new modeling, and sustainability objectives.
Late 2026	Resolutions of Support	Member-agency boards will consider and adopt formal resolutions endorsing the 2025 IWRP, cementing it as the guiding framework of water management for the next decade.

More On the CWWMG and the Catawba-Wateree Basin

The CWWMG brings together 21 public water utilities in North and South Carolina plus Duke Energy, which owns and operates every reservoir along the river system. Working collectively, the CWWMG identifies, funds, and implements strategic initiatives that extend the Basin's capacity to meet community needs, while safeguarding its ecological health.

About the Catawba-Wateree Basin:



Approximately
2.2 M people



Spans North &
South Carolina



376 River miles



Extends to the confluence
of the Wateree and
Congaree Rivers



11 Interconnected
reservoirs



12 Hydropower
stations



Nuclear & fossil
power stations

