

Path Forward Committee (PFC) Meeting Agenda
March 7, 2023, 9:30 AM to 12:00 PM
Butner Town Hall

Materials related to the PFC Meeting will be placed on the UNRBA website unless noted otherwise on the [UNRBA Meetings Page](#).

I. Opening Comments, Agenda Review/Revisions — Co-Chairs Michelle Woolfolk and Terry Hackett

II. Modeling and Regulatory Support Project Budget Amendment for FY2023

Item Summary (Forrest Westall): Finalizing the watershed and lake models required extensive reviews and discussions with the subject matter experts and DWR modeling staff. In addition, code modifications were required for the WARMF Lake model to accurately simulate nutrient releases from the sediments in the lake. These code modifications also require a training of DWR modeling staff to expedite their model review. The modeling team held a workshop on February 6, 2023, with DWR and UNRBA members interested in running the WARMF model to train users on the new model interface and the set up for Falls Lake. As a result of these additional efforts and to maintain the necessary project schedule, the modeling team requested, and the Board approved in January the allocation of reserve funding for this purpose. A contract amendment has been developed for FY2023 for \$180,000. The draft amendment to the contract and scope of work was distributed to the PFC prior to this meeting for review. The amendment provides additional funds to run scenarios with the lake models and provide documentation of the development, calibration, and scenario results. [The PFC will consider the amendment for recommendation to the Board for approval at their March 15th meeting.](#)

III. Modeling and Regulatory Support Status

Item Summary (Alix Matos): The Watershed Analysis Risk Management Framework (WARMF) model for the Falls Lake watershed has been calibrated for stream flows and water quality and the draft modeling report submitted to the Modeling and Regulatory Support Workgroup (MRSW) for review. The modeling team held a training for DWR staff and UNRBA members interested in running the WARMF model on February 6th. The modeling team is compiling and responding to comments to prepare a draft for review by the PFC followed by formal submittal to DWR. The next version of the report will include results of watershed model sensitivity analyses and scenarios that are being evaluated with the watershed model. This version will likely be reviewed by the MRSW in March and the PFC in April. The lake modeling report is under development, and it will include the results of the lake sensitivity and scenario evaluations. The PFC will review the additional results of the watershed and WARMF Lake scenarios and sensitivity analyses during the meeting; previous results were shared at the [February PFC meeting](#).

Two of the three lake water quality models (WARMF Lake and Environmental Fluid Dynamics Code (EFDC)) have been calibrated for water quality and approved by the MRSW at their [January 2023 meeting](#). Both models are being used to evaluate the impacts of sensitivity analyses and scenarios on lake water quality. Some of this information was presented at the February PFC meeting and updates will be provided in March.

The third lake model is the Statistical/Bayesian/Decision Support model which is based on an extensive data base dating back to the 1990s. The Technical Advisors Workgroup (TAW) met on January 31st to review

several datasets that have been compiled and merged for Falls Lake. The remaining datasets were reviewed by the TAW in February. The subject matter experts and third-party reviewers funded by the NC Policy Collaboratory began review of the input data and categorization in February. Correlations and relationships among the data sets will begin to be discussed by the TAW and third-party reviewers in March. We will share preliminary results with the PFC in April and May.

IV. Gathering Data from Local Governments to Support the Cost Benefit Analysis

Item Summary (Alix Matos): An important component of the re-examination is understanding the costs of past and possible future actions in the watershed as well as the benefits in terms of nutrient load reductions and improvements in lake water quality. To support this cost-benefit analysis, we are requesting information from the PFC as described during the [February PFC meeting](#). Please email initial information to amatos@brwnald.com and ashley@brindlecreek.com and copy Forrest.Westall@mcgillassociates.com. Structured data requests will follow after existing data and reports have been reviewed and compiled.

V. Developing Recommendations for a Revised Nutrient Management Strategy and a Petition for a Site-Specific Chlorophyll-a Water Quality Standard

Item Summary (Forrest Westall): During the November, December, and January PFC meetings, the PFC discussed concepts and principles under consideration for inclusion in the UNRBA's recommendations for a revised Falls Lake Strategy/Revised Falls Lake Rules. These discussions were used to develop a preliminary draft document that describes the concepts and principles. This document was provided to the PFC ahead of this meeting for discussion today.

As a reminder, the UNRBA has met with DEQ and DWR leadership to discuss coordination efforts to finalize the models, develop a revised nutrient management strategy, and develop a petition for site specific criteria. We have continued to remind DWR that they would identify a contact for site-specific chlorophyll-a standard development, and they have filled their vacant standards management position, but have not yet identified a specific staff member as the main point contact. John Huisman remains the primary DWR contact for work on an updated strategy. Forrest has discussed this with John recently and offered to meet with the leadership of the Water Planning Section to emphasize the importance of engaging the DWR standards program in the work of the UNRBA. This ongoing engagement will allow DWR staff responsible for the review of a request for a revision to the standard to better understand the work of the UNRBA and how it relates to the need for a revised standard. The UNRBA will continue to identify opportunities to work with other stakeholders as we move through this development process. The subject matter experts continue to evaluate other State's site-specific standards for chlorophyll-a and nutrient-related standards. The UNRBA continues to work with Dr. Marty Lebo to complete his work and integrate his results into the site-specific standard evaluation, statistical modeling, and regulatory support efforts.

VI. Recommended Budget for FY 2024

Item Summary (Forrest Westall): As discussed at the January 2023 Board Meeting, it is recommended that the UNRBA continue with its budget and dues at the current FY 2023 level. The UNRBA will be working on its recommendations for a revised Nutrient Management Strategy during the first half of the next fiscal year (FY 2023-2024) and will need funding for Modeling and Regulatory Support. Additionally, we anticipate feedback from DEQ/DWR about our recommendations and close coordination with the agency as they plan their actions leading up to a readoption of the Falls Lake Rules. There will be additional scenarios and modeling support to address any DWR questions and to assist them in moving forward as quickly as possible

on a revised strategy. Since this support will be something of an unknown, we are preparing a contract for FY 2024 that will include specific support, but with a significant component of the budget as reserve so we can respond to more specific needs as they emerge. Because we have had to use \$180,000 of our reserves to fund remaining Modeling and Regulatory Support for the remainder of this fiscal year, we need to replace that reserve with next FY's budget. At this point, in addition to regulatory support the UNRBA may need additional policy development support or legal support to see that the Association's recommendations are acted on and that proper revisions to the strategy are included in the readopted rules.

VII. Communications Support

Item Summary (Forrest Westall): As previously summarized, there are several efforts of outreach underway, including ongoing engagement with DWR as noted above. The UNRBA is holding a session at WRRRI's Annual Conference the afternoon of March 23rd; this session will present the key findings from the UNRBA monitoring and modeling studies and include a participatory session to hear feedback on the draft recommendations for a revised nutrient management strategy. The UNRBA is planning a joint symposium with the NC Policy Collaboratory on April 19, 2023, which will also include a participatory session to hear feedback on the draft recommendations for a revised nutrient management strategy; registration notices for this event have been distributed. Following WRRRI and the Symposium, the UNRBA is planning a workshop with DWR, NC Policy Collaboratory staff and researchers, and NGOs to discuss stakeholder feedback on the concepts for a revised nutrient management strategy. A Technical Stakeholder Workshop is planned for fall 2023 that will provide a more in-depth review of the materials presented at the March and April sessions and discuss updated recommendations for the revised nutrient management strategy based on feedback from WRRRI, the Symposium, and the workshop with DWR, NC Policy Collaboratory staff and researchers, and NGOs. Coordination with the NC Policy Collaboratory and their Falls Lake researchers is very important and will need to continue in 2023. The Collaboratory's report on their Falls Lake work is also due at the end of 2023.

We have discussed expansion of outreach efforts through our Board Directors, PFC members and their elected and leadership representatives remains a priority. We continue to seek input from our membership, including the locally elected officials, on opportunities to reach out to important local stakeholders, including the public living in the jurisdictions. The Executive Director will continue to reach out to local government staff to identify needs and support staff with implementation of the IAIA Program and participation in developing the revised nutrient management strategy. The UNRBA website has been updated to include a separate tab for IAIA which includes a copy of the UNRBA Bylaws, IAIA Program Document, IAIA press releases, and the Year 1 annual report.

A regulatory forum is planned for spring 2024 to discuss the next steps in the rules readoption process. Following submittal of the UNRBA and NC Policy Collaboratory reports and recommendations in December 2023, we anticipate that DWR will begin to formulate a plan for readoption of the rules. We hope to engage with DWR on that process and, as already mentioned to DWR, work cooperatively with them as the new rules are drafted.

American Rivers is planning a “Neuse River of the Year” event for the upper part of the basin. The UNRBA is planning a press release to coincide with the timing of the event. This press release will also reference the successes of Year 1 of the IAIA.

The “open” nature of all UNRBA meetings remains a key component of a transparent communications approach. We encourage member representatives and interested individuals to speak up about ideas and opportunities to communicate our work and the importance of our recommendations on a revised strategy and a site-specific standard.

VIII. Other Status Items

Item Summary (Forrest Westall): Brief statements on ongoing activities:

- Intensive work and coming deadlines make it important to manage expectations and resources— Recommendations are due at the end of 2023.
- Ongoing DEQ/DWR Items—DWR Neuse Watershed Model information session announced for March 6th (2-4pm); delivery factors for WWTP, etc.

IX. Closing Comments— Co-Chairs Michelle Woolfolk and Terry Hackett

Next BOD Meeting: March 15, 2023, 9:30 AM to Noon

Next PFC Meeting: April 4, 2023, 9:30 AM to Noon
 (Start time may be adjusted; no MRSW is planned for April)

This schedule may be revised, and notices will be provided about any change.

Remote Access Instructions for the MRSW and PFC Meetings

This meeting will open 10 minutes prior to the official meeting start time to allow for users to test equipment and ensure communication methods are functioning.

Equipment Type	Access Information	Notes
Computers with microphones and speakers	Join Microsoft Teams Meeting Please mute your microphone unless you want to provide input.	Press control and click on this link to bring up Microsoft Teams through the internet. You can view the screen share and communicate through your computer’s speakers and microphone.
Computers without audio capabilities, or audio that is not working	Join Microsoft Teams Meeting (888) 404-2493 Passcode: 371 817 961# Please mute your phone unless you want to provide input.	Follow instructions above. Turn down your computer speakers, mute your computer microphone , dial the number through your phone and enter the passcode.
Phone only	(888) 404-2493 Passcode: 371 817 961#	Dial the toll-free number and enter the passcode. Please mute your phone unless you want to provide input.

Remote Access Guidelines

- If you dial in through your phone, mute your microphone, and turn down your speakers to avoid feedback.
- Unless you are speaking, please mute your computer/device microphone or phone microphone to minimize background noise.