
University of Pennsylvania
Institute for Environmental Studies
Presents



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Water Quality Trading in the
Tar-Pamlico Basin

As the search for the most cost-effective solutions to water quality problems gains momentum, living examples are evaluated for insights that can be applied elsewhere. In North Carolina, a nutrient strategy was launched in 1990 to recover the estuary draining the Tar-Pamlico River Basin. The strategy has since gained national attention, largely for its trading design, as an innovative approach to nutrient management.

In the continental U.S., the Albermarle-Pamlico estuarine system is second only to the Chesapeake in both size and productivity. Its hydrology is uniquely characterized by wind-driven tides and a chain of barrier islands that limit exchange with the open ocean. Over the last three decades, three major rivers feeding the estuary have struggled with nutrient-driven water quality impairments. In the mid- to late 1980's, one of these systems, the estuarine Pamlico River, witnessed a strong increase in fish kill events, fish diseases, crab walks, loss of submerged vegetation, and other signs of stress.

Today, all measures point to sizable improvements in the Pamlico estuary. The newest phase of the strategy, adopted in April 2005, sets an ambitious clean-up deadline of 2013 for the entire estuary. Major stakeholders, the dischargers and the agricultural community, are pleased with progress. Yet not a single point-to-nonpoint source trade has taken place. Is this a successful program? How has North Carolina used this experience elsewhere? Are there lessons for others?

Date: December 7, 2005
Time: NOON - 1:30 pm
Place: Carolyn Hoff Lynch Auditorium
On the Penn campus: Chemistry Building:
34th & Spruce Sts. (enter on 34th St)

NO REGISTRATION REQUIRED

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NO FOOD OR DRINK PERMITTED IN THE AUDITORIUM
