

Annual Report to the NC Chapter of the American Fisheries Society
Activities of the Environmental Concerns Committee
February 2012

The Environmental Concerns Committee (ECC) has the following to report to the North Carolina Chapter of the American Fisheries Society (chapter):

1. The ECC welcomed Jacob Rash with the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission as a new member.
2. The ECC continues to track and review information about several important issues such as “rock snot”. Issues being tracked are highlighted on [the chapter’s ECC website](#) where, as always, additional suggestions from the chapter membership can be submitted.
3. In conjunction with the chapter president, the ECC offered comments on Senate Joint Resolution 430 and Senate Bill 709 to Governor Beverly Perdue, President Pro Tempore of the Senate Phil Berger, and Speaker of the House of Representatives Thom Tillis. These pieces of legislation address uranium ore mining in southwestern Virginia and promote onshore and offshore gas and oil exploration and extraction in North Carolina, respectively. Both pieces of legislation have provisions for evaluating the potential effects of these mining activities on North Carolina’s natural environment. The comments encourage careful consideration of the potential ramifications on the state’s economically important fisheries. Comparable comments were sent to the NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources which is charged with studying the environmental implications of the gas and oil bill. [The comments are posted.](#)
4. Executive Order 13563 “Improving Regulation and Regulatory Review”, issued in 2011, mandated that federal agencies evaluate regulatory burdens and efficiencies. In accordance with that E.O., the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which regulates wetland impacts under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, sought comments on its regulations. In conjunction with the chapter president, the ECC offered comments on Retrospective Review under Executive Order 13563 by supporting “Draft Guidance on Identifying Waters Protected by the Clean Water Act”. In brief, the guidance clarifies what are considered regulated waters based on defensible criteria and opinions from recent Supreme Court cases. Comments from the chapter focused on the importance of streams and wetlands that are physically far from traditionally navigable waters, but nonetheless biologically important to North Carolina’s fisheries. [The comments are posted.](#)

Respectfully submitted,



David McHenry, ECC Chair