

South Carolina SWPBA 2014 Newsletter

The Aquatic Biology section of SCDHEC has continued to be very busy in the 2014 year with numerous studies, both continuing ones as well as new ones, being undertaken. The section is very excited to announce a new hire as well, Michelle Drewry, who has started working in both the fish tissue and chlorophyll a programs.

Macroinvertebrate Program

Over the course of winter and summer sampling the macroinvertebrate program sampled 63 sites in the 2014 year.

The Southeastern Monitoring Network sampling that was begun in 2013 has continued this year by revisiting the same four mountain sites this past spring.

In addition to the usual creeks that are sampled, this summer a large river study was begun. For 2014 the Santee Basin was the focus and numerous sites along six rivers were sampled. Many of these included locations above and below dams to get a comparison of their affect. Sampling so far has yielded some unique new findings, including an enormous population of invasive Japanese snails on the Wateree River just below Wateree dam.

In the upcoming years the focus will move on to other river basins throughout the state.

Fish Tissue Program

The SCDHEC continues to conduct ambient fish tissue monitoring state-wide, the data of which are used to update statewide advice. Additional sites and species have been collected over the past several years in response to the discovery of PCBs in the Catawba-Wateree watershed. Contamination in fish tissue has been found in several large reservoirs in both North Carolina and South Carolina. The source remains unknown.

A project nearing completion is one that has been funded through the CDC called Mercury in Fish and Small-pond Health (MyFish). This project involved a survey of small artificial reservoirs in SC with the goal of producing a predictive model to estimate level of Hg in game-fish living in human constructed reservoirs that are less than 100 acres. The resulting web based tool allows citizens to obtain consumption advice for largemouth bass and bream that are caught from these mostly privately owned ponds.

SC has an American Alligator hunting season and, working with the SCDNR, DHEC has been able to obtain over 100 alligator meat samples. Testing is complete for

most samples with metals and organic chemicals. This project is ongoing, with results expected to be published early next year.

Other activities include permit reviews related to 316 activities and following discussions on potential changes related to this program.

Chlorophyll a Program

The chlorophyll a program has continued as usual, running May through October with samples from all over the state being brought in. As of this year Michelle Drewry will be overseeing the program.

Nonpoint Source Program

The Nonpoint Source (NPS) Program has continued its sampling runs throughout the state collecting parameters from creeks, rivers, and swamps. An extensive site list sampled monthly has ensured long-term monitoring of numerous locations. *E. coli* has been the main parameter sampled for at the majority of the sites, but certain sites included nitrogen, phosphorus, dissolved oxygen, temperature, ph, and turbidity in collections as well.