

## **Community draws closer to water reclamation facility**

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The N.C. Division of Water Quality issued a permit Friday that allows Cary, Apex and Morrisville, through the Western Wake Regional Water Reclamation Facility, to discharge treated wastewater into the Cape Fear River.

The facility, which is to be located in New Hill, will provide wastewater treatment and disposal for Cary, Apex and Morrisville. Cary will be responsible for compliance with permit requirements.

Construction of the first phase of the facility is anticipated to be complete by January 2013.

The permit, issued by the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System – or NPDES – program, allows 18 million gallons per day of treated wastewater to be discharged into the Cape Fear River, with future expansion to 30 million gallons per day. The permit includes limits for nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrogen.

The permit also requires that the partners participate in a study of nutrients in the Cape Fear River and submit to DWQ a surface water monitoring and modeling plan regarding nutrients and chlorophyll-a. Plans for the Western Wake Regional Water Reclamation Facility were developed in part to satisfy requirements of an interbasin agreement approved by the Environmental Management Commission, or EMC, in 2001.

At that time, the EMC allowed Cary, Apex and Morrisville to increase water withdrawals from Haw River and Jordan Lake, in the Cape Fear River basin, and discharge treated wastewater into the Neuse River basin. As part of that agreement, the towns were required to develop a plan to return treated wastewater to the same river basin they used as a drinking water source – the Cape Fear.

The Western Wake Regional Reclamation Facility was proposed in response to that requirement. A public hearing to gather comments on the proposed permit was held Sept. 28 and comments were collected through Oct. 12, 2010. To view the approved NPDES permit, visit the DWQ website at <http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/wq> and scroll down to the Hot Topics section of the page.