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## Guidelines for Debris/Sediment Removal in NC Streams and Wetlands After a Natural Disaster/Catastrophic Event

Revised October 2024

The N.C. Division of Water Resources (DWR), in conjunction with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), provides this guidance for sediment and debris removal from streams, channels, other drainageways and wetlands in the aftermath of a hurricane, tornado, flooding, tropical storm, or other natural disaster or catastrophic event.

1. Removal of debris is allowed. It shall be limited to the removal of vegetation and trash, construction and residential materials washed into a stream or wetlands. Uprooted stumps directly in the channel may be pulled from the ground (no excavation) but shall include no more than minimal amounts of soil attached to the roots. Debris removal is restricted to that associated with hurricanes, tornados, major flooding, tropical storms, or other natural disasters and catastrophic weather events.
2. Excavation of soil or sediment from streams, channels, other drainage ways and wetlands **may require approval**. Contact your local USACE and DWR Offices (contacts are provided at the end of this document).
3. State Riparian Buffer Rules must be complied with when conducting storm debris removal.
4. Debris shall be disposed of on uplands, outside of any state-required riparian buffer and stabilized with vegetative cover where feasible. Debris placed in wetlands may require authorization; consult with DWR or USACE prior to placing debris into wetlands.
5. Heavy equipment should be kept out of streams to the maximum extent practical. Equipment with long arms to reach into stream, hydraulic excavators equipped with a mechanical thumb or grapple attachment, loaders, winches mounted on equipment that have rubber tires or tracks, portable winches and chain saws are preferred.
6. Heavy equipment should be kept out of wetlands whenever possible. Manual removal or equipment with long arms to reach into wetlands are preferred. If heavy equipment must be used in wetlands, best management practices must be in place to minimize soil disturbance, compaction and pollution. Equipment should be placed on mats, refueling should be done outside of wetlands, routine checks for fluid and leaks should be



conducted.

7. Where necessary, trees may be cut for access to work sites. Tree removal in the riparian buffers should be minimized to only what is necessary for access. Mechanized land clearing in wetlands shall be minimized as much as practical. Crossing a stream to access the opposite bank is permissible, but the crossing sites shall be selected to minimize damage to the streambank and aquatic habitat.
8. In the event of a spill of petroleum products or any other hazardous waste, immediately contact the North Carolina Emergency Management Center at (800) 858-0368. Management of such spills shall comply with provisions of the [North Carolina Oil Pollution and Hazardous Substances Control Act](#).
9. The landowner, responsible party, and/or contractee will be responsible to routinely inspect the work and ensure that all of the previously listed conditions are met.
10. A representative of the Division of Water Resources may periodically inspect the work for compliance with these conditions and to ensure that water quality and wetland standards are not being violated. Deviations from these conditions or violations of water quality standards will likely result in the cessation of work until the problem is resolved.

### Division of Water Resources

Counties	Contact
Anson, Bladen, Cumberland, Harnett, Hoke, Montgomery, Moore, Richmond, Sampson, Scotland	Fayetteville Regional Office 910-433-3300
Chatham, Durham, Edgecombe, Franklin, Granville, Halifax, Johnston, Lee, Nash, Northampton, Orange, Person, Vance, Wake, Warren, Wilson	Raleigh Regional Office 919-791-4200
Beaufort, Bertie, Camden, Chowan, Craven, Currituck, Dare, Gates, Greene, Hertford, Hyde, Jones, Lenoir, Martin, Pamlico, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Pitt, Tyrrell, Washington, Wayne	Washington Regional Office 252-946-6481
Brunswick, Carteret, Columbus, Duplin, New Hanover, Onslow, Pender	Wilmington Regional Office 910-796-7215
Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Swain, Transylvania, & Yancey	Asheville Regional Office 828-296-4500



Alexander, Cabarrus, Catawba, Cleveland, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Rowan, Stanly, & Union	Mooresville Regional Office 704-663-1699
Alamance, Alleghany, Ashe, Caswell, Davidson, Davie, Forsyth, Guilford, Randolph, Rockingham, Stokes, Surry, Watauga, Wilkes, & Yadkin	Winston-Salem Regional Office 336-776-9800

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Counties	Contact
Alamance, Caswell, Chatham, Durham, Franklin, Granville, Guilford, Johnston, Lee, Montgomery, Moore, Orange, Person, Randolph, Richmond, Rockingham, Vance, Wake, Warren	Raleigh Regulatory Field Office 919-554-4884
Beaufort, Bertie, Camden, Chowan, Craven, Currituck, Dare, Edgecombe, Gates, Greene, Halifax, Hertford, Hyde, Jones, Lenoir, Martin, Nash, Northampton, Pamlico, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Pitt, Tyrell, Washington, Wayne, Wilson	Washington Regulatory Field Office 910-251-4610
Bladen, Brunswick, Carteret, Columbus, Cumberland, Duplin, Harnett, Hoke, New Hanover, Onslow, Pender, Robeson, Sampson, Scotland	Wilmington Regulatory Field Office 910-251-4811
Ashe, Alexander, Alleghany, Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Mitchell, McDowell, Madison, Polk, Rutherford, Surry, Swain, Transylvania, Watauga, Wilkes, Yadkin, Yancey	Asheville Regulatory Field Office 828-271-7980
Anson, Cabarrus, Catawba, Cleveland, Davidson, Davie, Forsyth, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Rowan, Stanly, Stokes, Union	Charlotte Regulatory Field Office 704-510-1441

