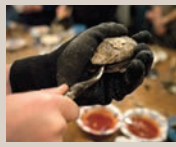


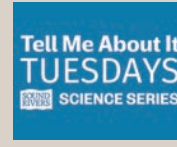
From children swimming in the clear, calm water at the old Milburnie Dam in Raleigh (*inset*) to friends chatting on Oriental's public dock on a turbulent, wide river (*below*), the Neuse River is a precious resource for millions of people.



**OYSTER ROAST 2022: Your favorite fundraiser returns!**  
page 3



**IT'S A WRAP: 5th Swim Guide season in the books**  
page 4



**VIRTUAL SCIENCE: New lineup of Tell Me About It Tuesdays**  
page 8



**CAFO CATASTROPHE: Sound Rivers calls out environmental disaster at biogas facility**  
page 11

# CURRENTS

Sound Rivers' Quarterly Newsletter | Volume 8, No. 3 | Fall 2022

## NEUSE RIVER

*named American Rivers'*

# RIVER OF THE YEAR

**F**ifty years ago, the Neuse River was in trouble. Polluted by textile mills and other manufacturing, sewage, runoff from both cities and farms, the Clean Water Act came to the Neuse's rescue, spurring the long process of cleaning up the river.

On the 50th anniversary of the Clean Water Act, the Neuse River is a prime example of the successes made possible through this groundbreaking, water-saving legislation. It's also a testament to the many challenges that remain.

And that's why American Rivers selected the Neuse as its River of the Year.

"River of the Year is a celebration of the value an iconic American river provides to the communities

that depend on it. The Neuse River has been at the forefront of resto-

*"There are numerous success stories that can be told across the entire watershed, and there is a core set of people that passionately advocate for the river in those places where more work is needed. It is a jewel that the whole country should know about."*

*Peter Raabe  
Director, Southeast Region,  
American Rivers*

in the federal Clean Water Act, as well as showing the continuing need for the Clean Water Act to be refined, to deliver on the promise of clean water for communities of color that have faced systemic environmental injustice and continue to bear the brunt of river pollution and increased flooding," said Peter Raabe, director of American Rivers' southeast region. "There are numerous success stories that can be told across the entire watershed and there is a core set of people that passionately advocate for the river in those places where more work is needed. It is a jewel that the whole country should know about."

ration efforts that have their roots

**See RIVER of the YEAR**  
Continued on Page 5

# RIVER TALK

*A note from Executive Director Heather Deck*



Fall is here and cooler weather is coming, making it the perfect time of a year for an Oyster Roast!

Yes, after a two-year pandemic pause, the Oyster Roast is making a triumphant return. We're looking forward to delicious, steamed oysters served under the stars, local craft beer, live music and lots of fun for Sound Rivers' 35th-annual Oyster Roast. Tickets are already on sale at [soundrivers.org](http://soundrivers.org) – get yours before the Early Bird discount expires! Read more about our signature fundraising event on Page 3.

In August, your Pamlico-Tar Riverkeeper, Jill Howell, and Neuse Riverkeeper Samantha Krop teamed up to break a big pollution story in Wayne County. During a routine monitoring flight of the Neuse River watershed, Sam flew over a swine biogas facility and observed significant earthwork being done near the waste lagoons. You can learn about the environmental disaster she uncovered and why Sound Rivers is demanding North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality do its job to protect your waterways in our Riverkeeper Reports on Page 8.

Our popular Swim Guide program has had a successful fifth year; Sound Rivers and our dedicated interns and volunteers have expanded the program to monitor throughout the summer

more than 50 locations on the Neuse and Tar-Pamlico, from Falls Lake to Oriental. Between results texted directly to phones, posted to social media and on our website, posted online and printed by media outlets across both watersheds and broadcast on Public Radio East, we're reaching tens of thousands of

*I want to acknowledge the honor of the Neuse River being named River of the Year by American Rivers – an honor that belongs to all of you who care for our waterways. While we celebrate the recognition, we also know there's so much work to be done.*

people a week. See what the cleanest – and dirtiest – sites were in 2022 on Page 4-5.

After a summer of heading up Swim Guide, Clay Barber, Sound Rivers program director, is back to work on stormwater management projects at partnering schools in our watersheds. With new grants from the Harold H. Bate Foundation and Bosch Community Foundation, Clay's in the planning phase for some really

cool, useful, projects that you can read about on page 11.

Sound Rivers' staff has said goodbye to another summer crop of interns – Megan, Maddie and Maia. The trio did a wonderful job coordinating all the moving parts of Swim Guide and tackling Trash Trouts installations and clean-outs. Read what they got out of their internships on Page 5.

We've got a great line-up of events this Fall – don't miss the event calendar on Page 10. We hope to see all of you at all of them, so we can thank you, in-person for your amazing support!

Finally, I want to acknowledge the honor of the Neuse River being named River of the Year by American Rivers – an honor that belongs to all of you who care for our waterways. While we celebrate the recognition, we also know there's so much work to be done. We'll continue to work alongside you and our partners to continue the forward momentum toward waterways that are fishable, drinkable and swimmable for all!

Sincerely,

Heather Deck  
Sound Rivers Executive Director

# THE OYSTER ROAST



The best Oyster Roast in eastern North Carolina is back! We'll be shucking under the stars in Washington on Nov. 12, so bring your appetite for all-you-can-eat steamed oysters, chili, chowder and more.

"We're just glad to be able to get together, in-person, with all the people who so generously support Sound Rivers' work. It's a great opportunity to say 'Thank you,' and it's always such a good time," said Sound Rivers' Executive Director Heather Deck.

Tickets went on sale Sept. 12 at the Early Bird price of \$60 per ticket for members (\$65 for non-members). After Oct. 12, tickets can be purchased for \$65 per ticket for members (\$70 for non-members), but if you're buying your ticket at the door on the night of the event, the cost will be \$70 per ticket for members (\$75 for non-members).

"We usually sell out far in advance of the date, so it's worth it to

go ahead and get tickets – not only do you get a discount, but it ensures you'll actually get a ticket," Heather said.

For four decades, the Oyster Roast has not only become Sound Rivers' signature fundraising event, it's also become of signature event for the City of Washington. With steamed oysters served on plywood tables – strung with thousands of lights overhead – on the Civic Center grounds outside and live music by the Adam Decker Trio on the stage inside, frosty brews provided by Tarboro Brewing Company, Two Rivers Alehouse (Washington) and Duck Rabbit Brewery (Farmville) and a list of silent auction items ranging from driftwood sculpture and stained-glass by local artists to a guided fishing trips and fabulous vacation stays, the Oyster Roast has maintained its reputation as a great party for a great cause.

One change to the event is that bidders for items in the Silent Auc-

tion will be bidding online.

"We had such success with the online auction for the last two years that we've decided to keep it online," said Sound Rivers' Office Administrator Grace Lekson. "We're going to open up the auction two weeks prior to the event like we did last year and the year before, and the night of the Oyster Roast, you'll still be able to see items in person, but all bidding is going to be happening online."

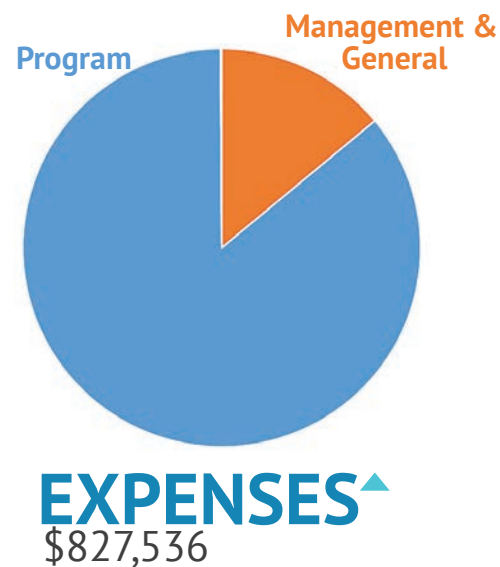
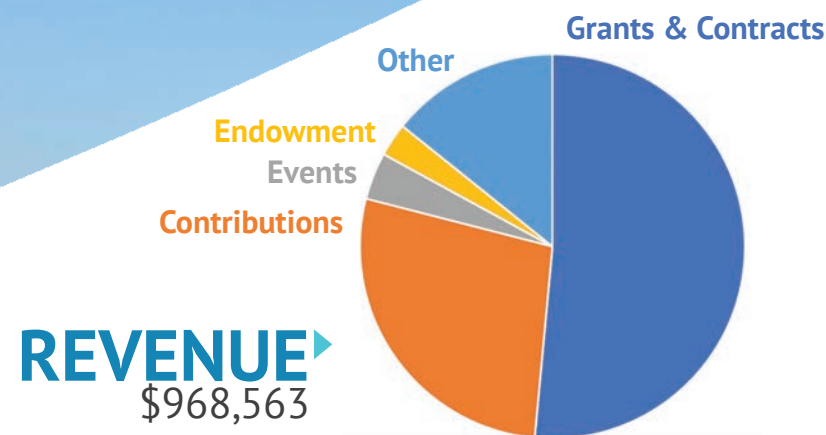
Direct access to bidding on specific items during the Oyster Roast will happen via a QR code and smartphones. For those unfamiliar with the technology, there will be tech-savvy volunteers available to assist. Bidding will close at 8:30 p.m.

If you are interested in volunteering to help out with Sound Rivers' biggest fundraiser of the year, please email [grace@soundrivers.org](mailto:grace@soundrivers.org) or call the Washington office at 252-946-7211.

# FISCAL YEAR 2021-22

Our wins are your wins, and 2021-22 was a win! Sound Rivers had a clean audit for Fiscal Year 2021-22 and, once again, we're in the black.

Here's a look at how your gifts were used over the past year – we could not do it without you. Thanks to all your contributions and support, we're able to carry out the work to protect your waterways, with the goal to make them fishable, swimmable and drinkable for all.



(Note: Less than 1% of Sound Rivers' expenses is dedicated to fundraising, which is not a large enough percentage to show up on this chart.)

## SWIM GUIDE celebrates a 5th year

Swim Guide's fifth season came to end Labor Day weekend with more than 800 samples taken and tested from popular recreational spots from Falls Lake to Oriental.

This year, Sound Rivers' Program Director Clay Barber and water-quality interns Maia, Megan and Maddie had to regroup when it became clear conditions had changed on the lower Neuse and Pamlico rivers.

"We saw higher salinity levels farther upriver and early in the

season," Clay said.

From Chocowinity Bay east on the Pamlico River and Upper Broad Creek east on the Neuse River, samples had to be diluted with deionized water to reduce the salinity to prevent false positives and narrow in on the test bacteria.

"We had to dilute our samples and test for bacteria that can survive in saltier water," Clay said.

Swim Guide was expanded this year, increasing to 52 sites; the five sites on Lake Royale the farthest upstream Sound Rivers has ever

tested on the Tar River – and to good results.

"Lakes are showing up cleaner than the rivers – Falls Lake, incredibly clean; Lake Royale, incredibly clean; Wildwood Park, also clean. ... And Falls Lake is very clean because there is a very healthy, protective buffer all around it," Clay said.

Tune in to October's Tell Me About It Tuesdays for an analysis of the entire Swim Guide season, but in the meantime, take a look at some of 2022's quick stats below!

## Interns head back to school after successful Swim Guide summer



(Top) Maia Schweikert assists Pamlico-Tar Riverkeeper Jill Howell during New Bern Trash Trout installation; (middle) Maddie Garrison eyes a full Trash Trout before a clean out; (bottom) Megan Long fills IDEXX trays with Swim Guide samples.

In May, Sound Rivers welcomed aboard three water-quality interns – Megan, Maddie and Maia – who got an education in water quality, Trash Trouts and more this summer.

"Although I was only working with Sound Rivers for a couple of months, I gained so much insight into the possibilities for my future, as well as developing my professional skillset," Maia said. "I greatly enjoyed engaging with the communities around the Neuse River Basin and making a difference through the Swim Guide program, as well as creating educational videos and participating in research with Neuse Riverkeeper Samantha Krop."

The interns headed up the Swim Guide program this summer, each coordinating volunteers to sample, transporting and testing those samples, then reporting the results – Maddie, on the Tar-Pamlico; Maia, on the Upper Neuse; and Megan, on the Lower Neuse, in addition to a variety of other projects.

"They helped us monitor more sites and work with more volunteers than we've ever had in our Swim Guide program. It wouldn't be possible without them," said Clay Barber, Sound Rivers' program director.

Megan and Maddie took part in Trash Trout cleanouts on Jack's Creek in Washington, then organized volunteers for another clean-out and trash audit. Maia had plenty of field work – traveling to New Bern from Raleigh to help with the installation of the Trash Trout on Duffyfield Canal and PFAs sampling with Neuse Riverkeeper Sam Krop – as well as office work, with the creation of a guide sheet for public hearing participation.

"Working at Sound Rivers, I got hands-on experience in both the lab and the field, and I learned a lot about current issues threatening the region," Maddie said. "I had the opportunity to meet people who are passionate protecting their rivers, both at Sound Rivers and in the community."

Clay introduced all three to storm-water control measures with a visit to the constructed wetlands at Jaycee Park in Greenville and Beaufort County Community College in Washington, and rainwater-harvesting cisterns feeding into the football-field irrigation system at Epiphany School in New Bern.

"I learned a lot of things from this internship – it has helped me grow as a student and a person," Megan said. "It helped me learn more about the environmental side of public health, which was really great!"

The interns proved to have not only a passion for the environment but resilience. The first week of Swim Guide, results were unusual for locations closer to the Pamlico Sound on both the Neuse and Pamlico rivers.

"Increased salinity from the lack of rain meant we needed to test for enterococci instead of E. coli and had to learn a whole new process of diluting samples to make that happen," Clay said.

Megan heads back to her final year East Carolina University, majoring in public health with a concentration in community health; Maddie returned to ECU as a junior, majoring in biology; and Maia will graduate from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill with a degree in environmental studies, and social and economic justice.

## SWIM STATS

### 100% PASS

**TAR-PAMLICO:** Woodstock Point\*, Plum Point, Blount's Bay, Cypress Landing, River Road (Tarboro), Yankee Hall, Port Terminal, Lake Royale (4 sites, except Clubhouse Beach)

**UPPER NEUSE:** Hickory Hill, Beaver Dam, Ledge Rock, Rolling View, Highway 50, Barton Creek, Falls of the Neuse

**LOWER NEUSE:** Oak Bluff Road, Highway 11 (Kinston), Core Creek\*, Cowpen Landing, Spring Garden, Pollocksville

\*site was not sampled for the duration of the summer

### <75%

**UPPER NEUSE:** Buffalo Road, Poole Road, Clayton River Walk, Smithfield Town Commons, Neuse Golf Club

**TAR-PAMLICO:** Dinah's Landing at Goose Creek, Pamlico Plantation

**LOWER NEUSE:** Black Beard Sailing Club, Slocum Creek, Lawson Park

## TOP 3 DIRTIEST SITES 2022

- 1 SLOCUM CREEK  
Havelock/Lower Neuse
- 2 CLAYTON RIVER WALK  
Clayton/Upper Neuse
- 3 BUFFALO ROAD  
Raleigh/Upper Neuse



**RIVER OF THE YEAR**  
Continued from page 1



# RIVER OF THE YEAR



## A WAYS TO GO

While there have been successes along the Neuse, the Clean Water Act has not lived up to its full potential here.

It's been under this rule of law that the rise of the CAFO (concentrated animal feeding operation) industry has thrived, and, in some places, polluted groundwater, surface water and air quality, negatively impacting the health of rural communities.

"It's never been used in a way that lessens the burdens of frontline communities. We are still failing massively in that low-income and communities of color continue to bear the brunt of pollution and flooding that's exacerbated by climate change," Samantha said, noting that this applies to not only the Neuse, but the Tar-Pamlico, as well. "States and the federal government have fairly broad authority to fix

that. They have the ability to address this situation, but they don't in any meaningful way."

Pamlico-Tar Riverkeeper Jill Howell agrees, adding that the anti-degradation clause in the Clean Water Act requires waterbodies to meet the use they're intended for, but what's not taken into consideration is cumulative impacts, such as non-point sources of pollution – stormwater runoff, sewage spills caused by flooding, aging infrastructure or both combined, spills from confined animal feeding operations into local waterways.

"Things like that are hard to catch and hard to assess because they're so disparate," Jill said. "We are not addressing the cumulative impacts and that's where the law fails – they fail at looking at all of it together."

(Clockwise from top left) A duckling explores at Union Point Park, New Bern; children play in the clear water of the Neuse along the Neuse Greenway in Raleigh; a forest of cypress knees line a stream leading to the river at Cliffs of the Neuse State Park; commercial fishing boats line the docks at Oriental's harbor; Neuse Riverkeeper Samantha Krop clears trash from a Sound Rivers' Trash Trout on Duffield Canal in New Bern; a flock of geese feed in the free-flowing river at the site of the old Milburnie Dam.



## A CLEAN WATER FUTURE

Like American Rivers, Sound Rivers celebrates the Neuse's progress, but important work is still ahead. The Neuse River shows both what's possible with strong federal clean-water safeguards and how those safeguards must do a better job to create a just, equitable, climate-resilient future for the millions who rely on the river for drinking water, water to fish in and water to swim in.

With the U.S. Supreme Court considering limiting the reach of the Clean Water Act, federal clean-water protections could be in jeopardy.

"We still need to defend the Clean Water Act. We don't want to live in a world where it's gone because strong federal clean water laws are essential," Jill said. "Now is not the time to turn back the protections to clean water."

Not now, and not ever – for this year's River of the Year and every American river.

# NEW Tell Me About It Tuesdays

Tell Me About It Tuesdays is back. This season, we're shifting the focus of our virtual science series, taking it internal with guest appearances by Neuse Riverkeeper Samantha Krop, Pamlico-Tar Riverkeeper Jill Howell, Sound Rivers' Program Director Clay Barber and Staff Scientist Katy Hunt who will provide an insider's view into the issues and projects they're working on. Join us

on the second Tuesday of each month and discover the work behind the scenes at Sound Rivers!

All episodes are held at 7 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month (but we are taking a break the month of December). Email [info@soundrivers.org](mailto:info@soundrivers.org) to sign up for the Zoom presentation, or visit [soundrivers.org](http://soundrivers.org) to sign up via the form on the event's page!

## OCT. 11



### THE SCIENCE BEHIND SWIM GUIDE:

Join Clay as he delves into the science of Swim Guide sampling and testing and what this summer's results revealed about the Neuse and Tar-Pamlico waterways.



## NOV. 8

### NEUSE RIVER RISING REVISITED:

Sam and Jill will recap their ambitious 10-day kayak paddle in late September and early October. Learn about conditions on the Neuse from Smithfield to New Bern, who they met along the way and more of their adventures!

## FEB. 9

**TRASH TROUTING:** Sound Rivers' Staff Scientist Katy Hunt presents Trash Trouts—what they do and how they're an invaluable part of a state-wide project to learn how plastics break down in your waterways.



## JAN. 9

**STORMY STRATEGIES:** Clay takes the host's seat again in January to talk about the really cool stormwater projects he's working on. Partnering with local schools throughout both watersheds, Clay is transforming campus landscapes, one stormwater project at a time.

Join us virtually on the second Tuesday of every month or **join us in person** at any of the upcoming events below!

## UPCOMING EVENTS | Find out more at [soundrivers.org](http://soundrivers.org)!

### EASTSIDE DURHAM OYSTER FEST

WHEN: OCT. 22, 2 PM

WHERE: THE WINE FEED, Durham

A celebration of our great neighborhood and city with wine, fresh NC oysters and beer."

### 'A SOUND RIVER' SCREENING

WHEN: Oct. 24, 6 PM

WHERE: Willis Building, ECU

Join Sound Rivers and ECU's Water

Resources Center staff for a screening of Sound Rivers' 40th-anniversary short film celebrating Sound Rivers' history of environmental activism as told by the voices of Sound Rivers. Q&A will follow!

### 35TH-ANNUAL OYSTER ROAST

WHEN: Nov. 12, 5 PM (VIP), 6 PM

(General admission)

WHERE: WASHINGTON CIVIC CENTER

Great music, great company, great

auction items, great beer and, most importantly, GREAT steamed oysters. Tickets on sale now!

### MULBERRY HOUSE TAP TAKEOVER

WHEN: NOV. 17, 6 PM

WHERE: MULBERRY HOUSE, Washington

Sound Rivers' partners Tarboro Brewing Company will be taking over the tap at the Mulberry House's Sky Bar; proceeds will be donated to Sound Rivers!



(Left) Adding an irrigation system fed by a rainwater-harvesting cistern to the school's greenhouse is the next project slated for West Craven High School; (below) an abundance of vegetables has been the payoff for WCHS's cistern-irrigated, raised-bed vegetable garden constructed in 2021.



## Projects an investment in the environment

Rain gardens. Constructing wetlands. Harvesting rainwater.

It's all in a day's work for Clay Barber, Sound Rivers' program director.

For the past three years, Clay has been charged with Sound Rivers' restoration work, made of stormwater control projects built in partnership with schools and government entities across the Neuse and Tar-Pamlico watersheds. High schools, middle schools, community colleges, a city-owned park — each selected has undergone a transformation that resolves runoff issues such as flooding, erosion and runoff streaming unfiltered into local waterways.

This time, Clay and West Craven High School's FFA Advisor and Environmental Educator William Shaw are teaming up for another rainwater-harvesting cistern, this one funded by a \$5,000 grant from the Harold H. Bate Foundation.

The first rainwater-harvesting cistern installed at West Craven High School had so much success, the school decided to install another one. Where the existing one is used to irrigate WCHS' raised-bed vegetable garden, the new one will be providing collected — and free — rainwater to irrigate the school's greenhouse, home to the plants grown for WCHS' annual plant-sale fundraiser.

"We want to install an overhead watering drip system in the greenhouse," Clay said.

The project is currently being assessed by Rainstorm Solutions.

Wayne County Community College will be another stormwater control measure recipient, this one funded by the state's 2020 Environmental Enhancement Grant.

"We'll be building two rain gardens and, potentially, a cistern system, and we've had Kris Bass Engineering assess and recommend maintenance tasks for their existing

stormwater control measures. That's a bonus part of our grant is access to engineering professionals," Clay said, referring to creating a recovery plan for the three existing stormwater projects on the campus — a large constructed wetland built by N.C. State University and two wet detention ponds.

West Craven Middle School's landscape is also under construction: as one rain garden is completed, another may be in the works, thanks to a \$27,000 grant to Sound Rivers from Bosch Community Foundation.

"We're excited about these new projects and continuing our partnerships and creating new ones," Clay said. "Every time, when we finish project, it's like watching a good investment in the environment come to fruition."

Join Clay online for Stormy Strategies, January's Tell Me About It Tuesdays, where he'll be walking viewers through some of these fascinating projects.

# RIVERKEEPER REPORTS

## Neuse Riverkeeper wades in on muddied waters of Lick Creek



In July, the Durham City-County Planning Commission unanimously shot down a request to rezone land for a 280-acre, 666-home project development – a win for local waterways.

When local residents reached out, Neuse Riverkeeper Samantha Krop went out in the field, investigating complaints of erosion and sedimentation caused by construction of 12 separate developments currently happening on land surrounding Lick Creek. Some of those same people who requested Sound Rivers' assistance spoke out against the proposal at the planning commission's meeting. According to Sam, only the developer and their lawyer spoke in favor.

"The public comments were largely focused on impacts of developments to Lick Creek and also the groundwater for a lot of the well-using residents nearby," Sam said.

After a rain, Lick Creek regularly turns red with soils washed into the creek. The creek is a tributary of Falls Lake Reservoir, a drinking water source for Wake County. According to Durham County Sediment Control, the soils in the area are very erosive and difficult to keep from running off into creeks. Add to that

260 construction projects in the county, it's difficult for the agency to keep up with those not in compliance.

Even the commissioners had reservations ranging from a lack of infrastructure – schools, roads, etc. – and lack of affordable units included in the proposal to the scale of tree removal/grading and that the area is on North Carolina's Natural Heritage Register for unique fauna in the mature hardwood forest on the property.

"I think the planning board made it clear that developers need to put the health of the watershed and the surrounding community at the forefront of future development proposals," Sam said. "It is heartening to see the Durham Planning Commission stand in support of the many impacted locals who raised legitimate concerns."

In mid-August, the same group of concerned residents who initially contacted Sam – now organized as Preserve Rural Durham – spoke out against the proposal of another 380-home development near the intersection of U.S. Highway 70 and Leesville Road. Durham City Council rejected the proposal, citing environmental concerns.



## RIVERKEEPERS demand investigation of major CAFO spill in Wayne Co.

A major spill of toxic foam at a Wayne County biogas facility polluted air, groundwater and surface water for weeks this summer, and the state agency charged with its regulation failed to notify the public.

White Oak Farms/Legacy Biogas has operated a biogas-collecting facility at the location since 2013, and though it has a long history of violations issued by North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality, the facility was allowed to continue to operate. Over Memorial Day weekend, that continued operation culminated in the rupture of the methane-capturing cap installed over a hog waste lagoon, covering a large area of the surrounding land with several feet of toxic foam that permeated the ground, entered the surface waters of Nahunta Swamp and released ammonia fumes described by one North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality inspector as overwhelming.

According to DEQ documentation, the spill continued for six weeks and the discharge took nearly two months to clean up by a firm specializing in environmental disasters. During that time, DEQ made no public announcement about a spill that created a public health risk from air, groundwater and surface-water pollution.

"This facility has a clear history of illegally discharging waste, and DEQ knew it. They failed to take meaningful action to prevent a major pollution event from happening, and failed to adequately notify the public," said Sound Rivers' Neuse Riverkeeper Samantha Krop. "This is people's drinking water; it's the water they swim in; it's the water they fish from – and the agency responsible for protecting it isn't doing its job. That's why we're calling for an independent investigation into this spill and public notification failure, as well as for an investigation into the inability of the current regulatory program to keep these disasters from happening."

(Left) Toxic foam oozed from a ruptured biogas digester cap at an industrial facility in Wayne County. The spill went on for weeks, contaminating groundwater, surface water and the air.

This spring, biogas technology was being touted as "clean, renewable energy" by industry representatives as DEQ was holding public hearings to determine what a general biogas permit would like – while the major pollution event in the Neuse watershed was proving this unproven technology may not be clean at all and raising serious questions about the technology of biogas, its impact on the environment, and whether NCDEQ has the expertise and knowledge to regulate biogas facilities.

Permitted biogas facilities cap hog waste lagoons to harness methane produced by the decomposition of the waste. According to DEQ, however, this facility had no hogs on site. Instead, the lagoon held a slurry of decomposing out-of-date meats from Smithfield Foods' facilities, hog parts and fluids left over from slaughtering and dead hogs from other facilities. The biogas being harnessed at this facility was from that slurry; the foam, a byproduct of its decomposition.

"Biogas generation with anaerobic digesters was green-lighted by DEQ with the issuance of a weak general permit in June, and industry has touted biogas as a green, renewable energy source without any environmental impacts. While we anticipate most biogas operations on hog CAFOs will only digest swine waste – not dead hogs and food waste – we are concerned that this could be

proposed in the future," said Sound Rivers' Pamlico-Tar Riverkeeper Jill Howell.

In early September, Sound Rivers, in partnership with the Southern Environmental Law Center, sent a letter to the director to NCDEQ's Division of Water Resources demanding an investigation into the issue.

"In the past five years, we've had three major disasters in the Neuse River basin involving swine facilities habitually violating their permits, which has led to these disasters. What the state is doing is not working, essentially. We will continue to follow through with this to ensure that laws around the expansion of swine facilities are complied with both by the agency and the facilities themselves," Jill said.

**"This is people's drinking water; it's the water they swim in; it's the water they fish from – and the agency responsible for protecting it isn't doing its job. That's why we're calling for an independent investigation into this spill and public notification failure, as well as for an investigation into the inability of the current regulatory program to keep these disasters from happening."**

– Samantha Krop  
Neuse Riverkeeper

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## *Looking for ways to support clean water?*

Your generous support is what keeps Sound Rivers working to protect your water, every day. There are many ways to support your Riverkeepers' work and here are a few!

- ▶ **Membership or One-Time Donation:** Make it easy at [soundrivers.org/donate!](http://soundrivers.org/donate!)
- ▶ **Sustaining Member:** Make your gift monthly – a little bit goes a long way!
- ▶ **Legacy Giving:** Including Sound Rivers in your estate planning is an incredible, and lasting, gift!
- ▶ **Gift of Stock:** There are a variety of benefits to donating stock, bonds and mutual funds directly to charity!
- ▶ **IRA Charitable Rollover:** Give annually to Sound Rivers to fulfill minimum distribution requirements and receive tax benefits! (\*Must be more than 70 1/2 years of age)
- ▶ **Half My DAF:** Make a donation and commit to spending down half the money in your Donor-Advised Fund.

Learn more about each of these ways to give at [soundrivers.org/donate!](http://soundrivers.org/donate!)



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Sign up for our weekly eNews at [soundrivers.org](http://soundrivers.org).