



**US Army Corps
Of Engineers**
Wilmington District

PUBLIC NOTICE

Issue Date: 22 March, 2013

North Carolina Stream Assessment Method

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Wilmington District (District) is issuing this public notice to solicit comments on the Draft North Carolina Stream Assessment Method (NC SAM). NC SAM is a methodology for North Carolina streams that is intended to provide a rapid assessment of stream function based on an observation of indicators (metrics) within both the channel and the riparian zone. This methodology also helps meet the goals outlined in 33 CFR Part 332 – Compensatory Mitigation for Losses of Aquatic Resources, which establishes a preference for utilization of a functional or condition assessment to determine the level of mitigation required for impacts aquatic resources affected by Department of the Army permits.

NC SAM was developed by an interagency team of federal and state agency staff. The mission for the team was to develop an accurate, reproducible, rapid, observational, and science-based field method to determine the level of stream function relative to reference condition for each of 29 general categories of North Carolina streams. This user manual provides conceptual background information essential to implementing NC SAM. Each of the 25 metrics is described with examples to calibrate the user. A comprehensive glossary, as well as other detailed appendices, is included. It is intended for NC SAM to be used for project planning, alternatives analysis, compliance and enforcement, watershed planning, stream monitoring, and mitigation planning. This method was not developed for determining mitigation success on constructed stream sites. Details on the use and implementation of NC SAM will be developed separately by the regulatory agencies after this public notice and comment process.

Three separate files are included for review with this public notice, including the Draft User Manual, the Draft Rating Calculator, and a Stream Template. The user manual provides comprehensive instructions on the use of NC SAM. The Rating Calculator is used to determine the stream ratings from the data gathered during the assessment process, and the Stream Template is a file that is used by the ratings calculator to generate an output file with the results. Detailed instructions for the use of the rating calculator are included in Appendix K of the User Manual.

Written comments pertinent to the guidance will be received by the District until 5pm, April 22, 2013. Comments should be submitted to Mr. Todd Tugwell, US Army Corps of Engineers, 11405 Falls of Neuse Rd., Wake Forest, North Carolina, 27587, telephone (919) 846-2564.