



N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources

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CITY OF GASTONIA'S LONG CREEK WATER RESOURCES RECLAMATION FACILITY RECOGNIZED AS ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARD

RALEIGH – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources today recognized the city of Gastonia's Long Creek Water Resources Reclamation facility as one of three 2004 Environmental Stewards. The award recognizes the facility's superior environmental performance, commitment to continued reduction of its environmental impact, and demonstrated commitment to exceed compliance.

The city of Gastonia is the first municipality to achieve this recognition since the state's Environmental Stewardship Initiative, designed to promote and encourage superior environmental performance by North Carolina's regulated community, began in 2002. An "Environmental Steward" is an organization that has demonstrated environmental leadership through its commitment to exemplary environmental performance beyond what is required by regulation. As an Environmental Steward, the organization commits to reporting annually on its environmental performance.

"Gastonia's work in implementing a vigorous environmental management system has raised the bar for all other public agencies in North Carolina," said DENR Secretary William G. Ross Jr. "The city's successful management of environmental issues at the facility helps to further a healthy environment and a vibrant economy by moving beyond compliance and toward environmental sustainability."

A 10-member advisory workgroup appointed by Ross provides program direction and implementation and recommended that Gastonia's Long Creek facility be selected as an Environmental Steward. Advisory workgroup membership consists of individuals from industry, industry trade groups, environmental and citizen nongovernmental organizations, government, academia and small business. (Advisory workgroup members are listed on p. 2.)

Reasons cited by the advisory workgroup in its selection of Gastonia's Long Creek facility include:

- Gastonia's integration of environmental management into its core business operations through having the EMS serve as its business management system;
- Its practice of operating well below permitted limits and efforts to reduce collection system sewer blockages and influent mercury levels;
- Implementation of education programs for citizens on pollution issues; and
- The establishment of aggressive goals that include reducing chemical and electrical usage while maintaining compliance.

"The keys to Gastonia's success are the support of the city council and the city manager, employees working together for a common goal, and the foresight of DENR staff to encourage and to assist with the development and implementation of environmental programs such as ours," said Matthew W. Jordan, P.E., director of Public Works and Utilities.

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The ESI program has two other levels of participation and recognition: Environmental Partner and Rising Environmental Steward. The Environmental Partner level is designed for adoption by a broad range of organizations that are interested in beginning the process of developing a systematic approach to improving their environmental performance. Partners must demonstrate a commitment to maintain compliance, commit to establishing an environmental management system and set environmental performance goals.

The Rising Environmental Steward is designed for those organizations that have a mature EMS. In addition to demonstrating a mature EMS, Rising Environmental Stewards must set measurable environmental performance goals and demonstrate a commitment to go beyond compliance. The city of Gastonia Wastewater Treatment Division has two other sites, Crowders Creek Water Resources Reclamation Facility and the division's Biosolids Program, that have been named Rising Environmental Stewards. The ESI program currently has 40 Environmental Partners, eight Rising Environmental Stewards and five Environmental Stewards.

For more detailed information or to apply for the program, please visit the Environmental Stewardship Initiative Web site at <http://www.p2pays.org/esi> or contact John Burke of the N.C. Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance at (336) 249-1480 or john.burke@ncmail.net.

2004 Advisory Workgroup Members

Dr. Richard Andrews	UNC-Chapel Hill
Kristin Beck	Progress Energy
Jack Blackmer	Novozymes N.A.
Alan Briggs	Sustainable North Carolina
Jimmy Carter (chair)	DENR
Brig. Gen. Robert Dickerson	MCB Camp Lejune
Preston Howard Jr.	MCIC
Matt Jordan	City of Gastonia
Mike Nelson	Conservation Council of N.C.
Jane Preyer	Environmental Defense
Larry Spence	Ready Mixed Concrete