

Little River Reservoir Project

In 1992, the State of North Carolina classified the Little River watershed as Water Supply-II (WS-II), which is one of the most pristine classifications. Little River Water Supply Watershed is intended for use as a water source for Eastern Wake County. The Blue Ribbon Committee on the Future of Wake County recommended accelerating construction of the reservoir, ahead of the planned 2025 date. Local officials are hopeful the regulatory permitting process can be completed within the next 10 years and construction of the reservoir in the succeeding 2 1/2 years.

Representatives from Raleigh, Rolesville, Wendell, Wake Forest, Zebulon, and Wake County formed the Little River Workgroup to draft an inter-local agreement (ILA) for protection of the Little River Water Supply Watershed in anticipation of the development of the Little River Reservoir. Implementing the ILA will help protect the water supply and shorten the permitting process for the reservoir.

The goal of the ILA is to protect surface water supplies by controlling development density and urban-style development in environmentally sensitive areas and to mutually agree on municipal Urban Service Area boundaries in the watershed. If necessary or appropriate, involved parties of the ILA will work together to implement more stringent requirements in order to provide additional water quality protection or to achieve regulatory permitting for construction of the Little River Reservoir.

The following concepts/principles were integrated into an inter-local agreement:

Recommended ILA Provisions

- Future development - Limit development in the watershed to residential development. Exception - Non-residential development permitted in Non-urban Activity Centers in accordance to the Wake County Land Use Plan and the approving jurisdiction's development regulations.
- Maximum of one (1) dwelling unit per three (3) acres in the critical area of the Little River Watershed. Critical area is defined as the area within-one-half mile plus 300 feet from the water edge of the proposed reservoir's full pool elevation.
- Maximum of one (1) dwelling unit per one (1) acre in the non-critical area.
- Annexation in both the critical and non-critical areas of the watershed is prohibited after the Urban Services Area boundaries are established.
- Addition of all tributaries in the reservoir to the County's Open Space Acquisition corridor priority list.
- Impervious surface limits are 6% maximum in the critical area and 12% maximum in the non-critical area for all uses.
- Extension of water and/or sewer lines in both the critical and non-critical areas of the watershed is prohibited, except as necessary to protect the public health, safety, and for existing developed properties only.
- 100-foot wide undisturbed stream buffers.
- Development in the 100-year floodplain of the Little River Watershed is prohibited; this does not include development of greenways and public parks.
- Reservoir uses – limited recreational uses pertaining to fishing and boating. Swimming is prohibited.