

Catawba Wateree Integrated Water Resources Plan

Funded by: Catawba Wateree Water Management Group

Project Lead/PI: Brenton McCloskey, Director of Strategic Development and Communications

Job title

Environmental Economics Graduate Research Fellow

Contract type

Start date: September 3, 2024

Contract type: Hourly

Length of contract: 4 months, with potential to extend into Spring Semester

Hourly rate: Up to 8 hrs/wk at \$19/hr

Project description

Utilities, municipalities, and counties are at a crossroads; not only must they face external stressors due to climate change (e.g. extreme events with increasing frequency and intensity), but they must also address aging infrastructure, population shifts (densification and shrinking cities), and additional pressure on networks already over-capacity. Funding and financing to address these challenges poses a significant challenge. Understanding the impacts of infrastructure investments is important to the decision making process as is understanding the impacts of water rate increases.

The Water Center is seeking support for a project focused on the Catawba Wateree Watershed, which starts in North Carolina and flows through South Carolina. There are several reservoirs in this watershed that are managed by Duke Energy for power generation as well as 18 drinking water utilities that form the Catawba Wateree Water Management Group (CWWMG). They are embarking on an integrated water resources plan and want to include an economic evaluation in that planning process. The Water Center has committed to provide 3 possible approaches to this evaluation for the management group to consider. The approaches would help the stakeholders better understand the value of water quality protection investments that have been made over the past 10 years and the potential value of future investments with particular emphasis on managing for climate change.

Project Outcomes / Responsibilities

Catawba Wateree Watershed Economic Evaluation (ROI analysis)

- Support the Water Center Team to confirm a methodology for estimating costs and benefits (including environmental/ecosystem benefits) for use in an ROI analysis of selected Integrated Watershed Resource Plan (IWRP) recommendations of the Catawba Wateree Watershed;
- Assist the Water Center Team in drafting an ROI analysis of selected recommendations;
- Facilitation of meetings via the Zoom platform;

- Literature/desk review;
- Schedule meetings, draft reports, present findings.

The ideal candidate will

- Be a current University of Pennsylvania student
- Be located on campus for the majority of the fellowship
- Hold a B.S. in economics or environmental economics (other disciplines welcomed with technical experience; undergraduates with relevant experience will also be considered)
- Experience with administrative support (emails, virtual meeting management, coordinating meetings, etc.)
- Strong communication skills
- Understanding of water utilities or water/wastewater infrastructure is highly desired

To apply

Submit a cover letter and resume via email to Emma Denison at emmade@sas.upenn.edu with a subject line of “Environmental Economics Graduate Research Fellow”. Review of applications will occur on a rolling basis; applications will be accepted until the position is filled. Questions can also be sent to the email address above.