

Appendix A: Terminology

Basin:	The watershed of a major river system. There are 17 major river basins in North Carolina of which the French Broad is one. From “French Broad River Basinwide Water Quality Plan”; May 2000; NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources.
Buffer Zone:	Strips of natural areas such as forest or grasses between a body of water and a land disturbing activity such as agriculture, construction, or forestry
Drainage Area:	The total surface area, upstream of a point on a stream, where the water from rain, snowmelt, or irrigation which is not absorbed into the ground, flows over the ground surface, back into streams, to finally reach a certain point
Erosion:	The process of detaching, transporting and depositing soil and rock material by water, wind or gravity (sometimes called geologic erosion)
Evaporation:	The process by which liquid water becomes vapor
Evapotranspiration:	The summation of both evaporation and transpiration from a site
Flood (hydrologic):	Any level of a natural water body that exceeds its “normal” banks
French Broad River Basin:	Another way to say French Broad River watershed
French Broad River Watershed:	All the land whose runoff flows, eventually, to the French Broad River
GIS:	Geographic Information System, a system for digitally storing and manipulating geographical information
Hydrograph:	A graph of the stage (height of water) over time
Hydrologic Cycle:	The cycling of water from the earth to the atmosphere and back again
Infiltration:	The process by which water passes through the soil



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Non-Point Source Pollution:	Pollution that is washed into rivers, lakes, and streams from runoff during rainfall events. Sediment is the largest non-point source pollutant in North Carolina
Overland Flow:	Runoff flowing over the ground surface. Strictly, the water flowing over the ground surface that has not ever infiltrated the soil
Percolation:	The advance of water through the soil
Permeability:	The rate at which water moves through the soil
Point Source Pollution:	Water pollution that is introduced into rivers, lakes, or streams directly from a single source, such as a pipe
Pollutant:	Any substance that reduces the quality of biological habitats
Pollution:	Any physical, chemical, or biological change that adversely affects the health, survival, or activities of living organisms or alters the environment in undesirable ways
Precipitation:	Any form of water flowing from the atmosphere to the earth
Retention:	Water that is held on the land surface and does not runoff
Runoff:	Water leaving the land (this may occur at the surface, subsurface or both)
SCM:	Stormwater Control Measures; practices or measures that allow us to protect water quality from pollutants such as sediment while still continuing activities such as construction, forestry, and agriculture. Practices help control run off and erosion from running into streams; SCMs may include constructed wetland, rain barrels, rain gardens, and other measures.
Sediment:	Solid particulate matter, mineral or organic, that has been or is being moved by water, air, gravity, or ice from its origin. Sediment typically consists of clay, silt or sand-sized particles



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Sedimentation:	Deposition of soil or rock material that has been transported by water, wind or gravity
Topsoil:	The upper layer of soil. This layer holds most of a soil's nutrients and is the most productive layer of soil. Topsoil is the layer of soil that is usually lost due to accelerated erosion. It takes 500 years to replace one inch of topsoil
Transpiration:	The process by which liquid water in a plant becomes vapor and leaves the plant through its leaves or stems
Turbidity:	The "cloudiness" or discoloration of a body of water. Turbidity is caused by the suspension of solid particles such as clays in rivers, lakes, and streams
Vegetation:	The plants that cover the land surface
Watershed:	All the land that sheds water passing through a defined point

