



University helps study river pollution

MEGAN O'BRIEN
FEATURES EDITOR

The Lower Cape Fear River Program (LCFRP) recently completed its fifth year of sampling 35 locations throughout the Cape Fear, Black and Northeast Cape Fear watersheds. Various groups of river users, including streamside factories, environmental groups, and municipalities fund the study.

State law requires streamside industries to monitor the amount of pollutants and environmental change their presence causes.

"By being a part of the program, these industries pay a sum of money for a neutral group, the university, to analyze it for them," research associate professor Dr. Mike Mallin said.

This year's study is considered a baseline for other years, as was 1997, because there weren't any hurricanes in this area. These years are considered "normal" and other years will be compared with them.

The samples found that nine stations fell in the non-supporting category for low dissolved oxygen levels, and 10 stations were only partially supporting. This means that 54 percent of the stations had dissolved oxygen levels below five parts per million 11 to 25 percent of the time, with higher levels possible in the non-sup-

porting areas. All aquatic organisms need dissolved oxygen, but five parts per million is the lowest amount of oxygen in the river that will support most species of fish.

"If you dump human or animal waste in the river, bacteria like to feed on it," Mallin said. "If there's a large amount of waste, the bacteria will multiply rapidly and use up dissolved oxygen levels so much that it can result in a fish kill."

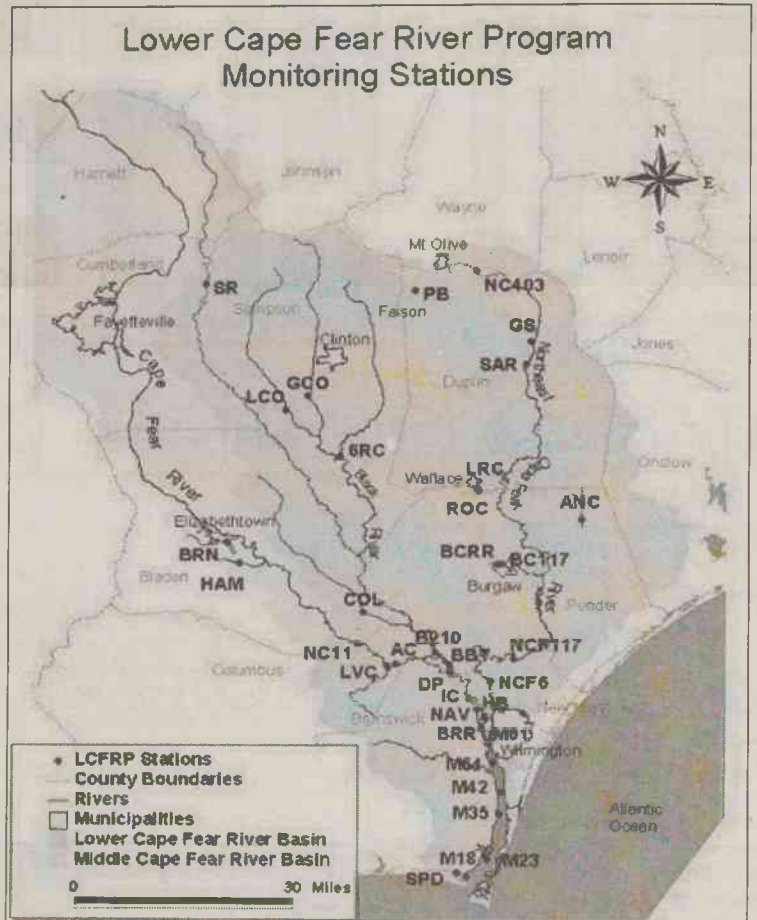
Algal blooms and toxic *Pfiesteria*, bacteria found in the Neuse River, were not problems in the Cape Fear River and estuary.

Overall, the abundance of bottom organisms and fish show resiliency to hurricanes, but the number of bottom (benthic) organisms has been decreasing over the past four years in the lower estuary, and the number of summer-fall fish species has dropped from 70 in 1997 to 55 in 1999.

The results from the study will be sent to the state and used in reports in conjunction with data from the middle and upper Cape Fear River Programs as well.

"I would like to see mandatory vegetative buffer zones along the whole river," Mallin said. "It's been done in other places. There's no reason why it can't be done here."

The vegetative buffer zones would absorb many of the run-off chemicals from lawns, roads and streamside industries.



Artists' Inventory Sale at St. John's this Saturday

The sale will include professional artists from all over North Carolina as well as university students and faculty. The sale will be held at the Cowan House of St. John's Museum of Art on Saturday, Nov. 11 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Pregnant? Need Help?

~Confidential~

Free Pregnancy Test & Counseling

24 Hour Hotline

"We're here because we care."

Life Line Pregnancy Center

CALL TODAY: 392-0001 or (800) 705-4237 - 24 hrs

925 S. Kerr Ave. (Plum Tree Office Plaza), Wilmington

social circles

-ah good things come round again.

earrings and bangles available
in gold and silver

only at...



The Jewelry & Accessories
125 Military Camp Road
The Domain
Open Mon - Sat 10 - 6