



The Neuse is Named

The Neuse River is named by English Explorer Arthur Barlowe after the Neusiok people, one of several Native American nations that settled along the Neuse in present day Raleigh. Neuse means “peace”. The Tuscarora tribe call this river the “gotano” which means “pine in water.”

(Today the Coharie Nation, a state-recognized nation, are decedents of the Neusiok people)



The Tuscarora War

A war between European settlers and the Tuscarora and other Native American Nations erupts on the banks of the Neuse River after years of growing trade tensions. Ultimately, the Tuscarora are defeated in a battle at Fort Neoheroka where 950 Native Americans die. Many survivors migrate north to rejoin the Iroquois League, while others migrate to South Carolina to fight in the Yamasee War.



Smithfield Becomes a Town

Smithfield becomes the “first” town in Johnston County, settled mostly by subsistence farmers. Smith’s Ferry route on the Neuse River becomes one of the state’s first sites for receiving and storing tobacco to be shipped downriver, more than a century before tobacco becomes a booming industry.



The Plight of the Longleaf Pine

The Longleaf pine, North Carolina's state tree, is an important resource cultivated for its wood and resin, used to make tar, pitch, and turpentine for European naval ships. These products are sent downstream on the Cape Fear and Neuse rivers to the Atlantic. Fire suppression and livestock grazing prevent the longleaf from continuing to reproduce in its historic range.

(After 2 centuries of harvesting this tree, less than 3% of its original acreage remains.)



New Bern-Craven County Public Library

The Rise of the Lumber Industry

New Bern, North Carolina's first state capitol, becomes one of the largest lumber centers in the South, with 16 operational lumber mills at its peak. The success of this industry was made possible in part by New Bern's proximity to the Neuse River, where longleaf pine and other trees could be sent downstream for processing.



Creation of Falls Lake

The 28 mile-long Falls Lake Reservoir is created after a dam is erected on the Neuse River by the Army Corps of Engineers. This reservoir has two main purposes: to create a regional drinking water supply for the growing region and help prevent flooding. Other potential benefits include recreation opportunities and helping protect water quality downstream during droughts.



Clean Water Responsibility Act

Due to nutrient levels in the Neuse and other rivers, the North Carolina state legislature passes the Clean Water Responsibility Act, preventing any new construction of large-scale hog farms for the next decade. The moratorium was extended 5 years later.

Neuse Nutrient-Sensitive Waters Strategy

Ordered by House Bill 1339, ratified June 1996

Administrative rules adopted December 1997

Goal: 30% reduction of nitrogen within five years

Established by committee of informed
scientists as the level that, if achieved,
would likely have detectable water quality
improvement.

The “Neuse Rules”

In response to high levels of pollution in the waterways, the NC state legislature passes a set of new regulatory laws. The “Neuse Rules” become one of the first river basin management plans in the U.S. to measure both point and non-point source pollutants. The rules also require land owners to plant 50 ft. riparian buffers along waterways and require 10 major cities to limit stormwater runoff in new developments.



1. SANTA FE RIVER

2. SAN MATEO CREEK

3. IOWA RIVER

4. UPPER DELAWARE RIVER

5. WHITE SALMON RIVER

6. NECHES RIVER

7. KINNICKINNIC RIVER

8. NEUSE RIVER

9. LEE CREEK

10. CHUITNA RIVER

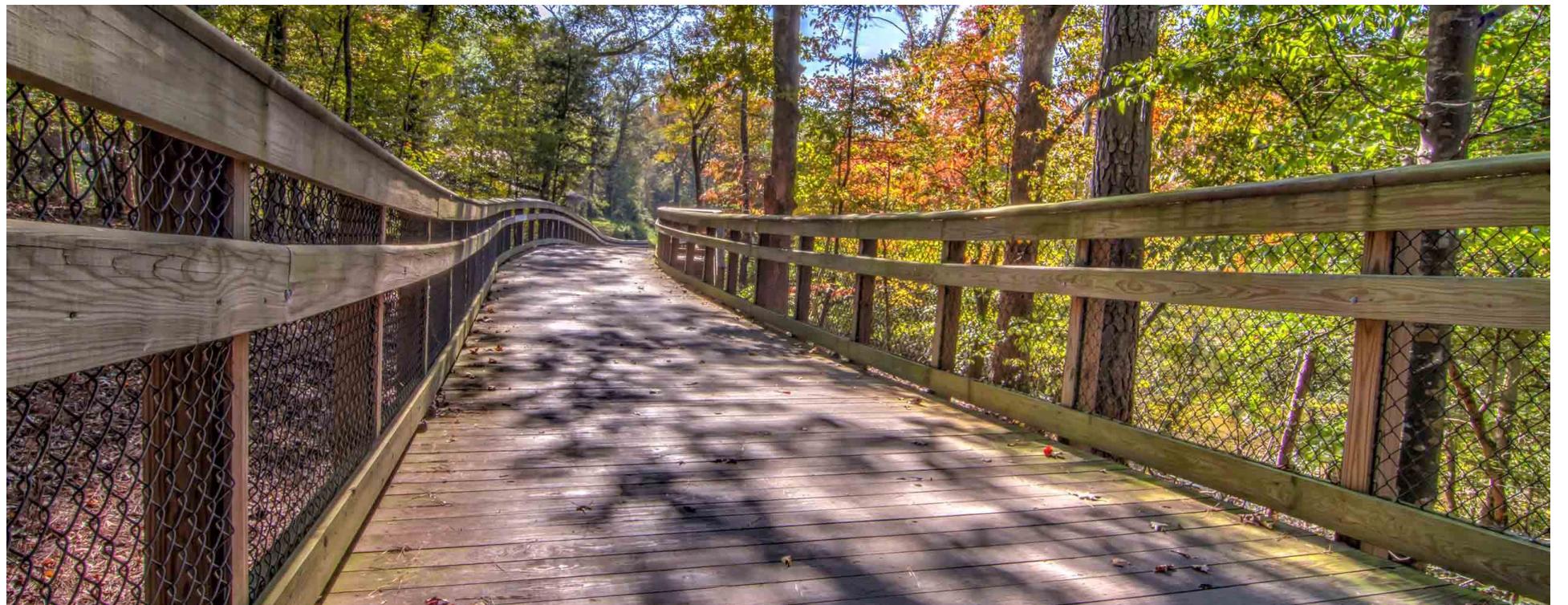
The Neuse Becomes Endangered

The Neuse River makes the American River's list of "America's Most Endangered Rivers" because of poorly planned development, urban sprawl and high levels of nitrogen, phosphorus, and ammonia from hog farms.



Threats to Falls Lake

Falls Lake makes the NC impaired waters list because of high levels of chlorophyll-a (an indicator of nutrient pollution). A drought the same year shrinks the size of the reservoir, threatening drinking water supply for hundreds of thousands of North Carolinians.



Neuse River Greenway

The Neuse River Greenway is finished, completing a 33-mile long asphalt trail along the river. This trail system is part of a larger Capital Area Greenway system and the Mountains-to-Sea Trail. The Neuse River Greenway provides an opportunity to recreate and experience the river ecosystem first-hand.



Hurricane Matthew

Hurricane Matthew causes flooding of 15 hog and chicken farm lagoons located in the Neuse and Cape Fear River Flood Plain, spewing millions of gallons of animal waste into the Neuse River and the Pamlico Sound downstream. This is the second 500-year flood caused by a hurricane in a 20-year timeframe.



Milburnie Dam Removal

The removal of the Milburnie dam restores the section of the Neuse River just south of Raleigh to its shallow, swift-moving state. The Neuse now flows from Falls Lake all the way to the Atlantic, making it one of the longest free-flowing rivers in the southeast. Fish such as the striped bass and the shad return to spawn in this section of river after being blocked for over 300 years.