

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSISTANCE

NC DENR establishes a Customer Service Center



PURPOSE AND MISSION

Citizens, businesses, and government agencies should find it easier to obtain information on environmental permits, natural resource protection measures, state parks, and other environmental services. The North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has established a "one-stop information" source for questions or concerns on any of the Department's programs. Environmental professionals are available to assist through a toll-free help line at 1-877-623-6748 (1-877-NCENR4U) and or through its Web site: www.envhelp.org.

The mission of the Customer Service Center (CSC) is to provide prompt, accurate information on all State environmental and natural resource programs, services, and regulations. CSC answers a wide variety of questions, including permitting and regulatory issues previously handled by the Department's Environmental Permit Information Center (EPIC). The goal of the Center is to answer customer questions at the first point of contact.

The Customer Service Center will work to:



- Serve as a clearinghouse for information;
- Assist citizens and businesses interacting with the Department;
- Develop a resource network to address technical details;
- Produce fact sheets and guides to meet customer needs;
- Coordinate projects requiring multiple permits from within the Department.

CSC staff is very proud to present and build upon a central piece of a broader initiative to improve customer service throughout the Department. This initiative recognizes the importance of citizen input, the need for government to be more responsive to its people, and the opportunity to improve public accessibility of environmental and natural resource measures.

THE STAFF

Edythe McKinney directs the CSC in conjunction with the Small Business Assistance Program. With the Department 15 years, McKinney has been a strong advocate for CSC and has diligently worked toward the establishment of the Center.

Paul Clark, an environmental engineer for the CSC, began his career as a consultant in the private sector and later accepted a position with the Department's Division of Environmental Health. His experience also includes working with the Division of Water Quality's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Unit and the Pretreatment Unit.

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Lynn Daniel, an environmental specialist with the Center, began employment in the Washington Regional Office with the Department's Division of Water Quality and later transferred to the Division of Waste Management. The majority of her experience lies in the area of underground storage tank cleanup.

Pat Williamson recently joined the Customer Service Center. With state government 27 years, most of Williamson's work has been as a public information officer for a variety of agencies in DENR and the Department of Health and Human Services.

CSC'S RESPONSE TO HURRICANE FLOYD



A recent addition of CSC responsibilities has been to provide information on disaster recovery. The floods of Hurricane Floyd have created environmental and natural resource emergencies in excess of anything previously experienced. Since recovery measures began, CSC has advertised its toll-free number as a vital source of environmental information.

The Center has been working with the Department's program staff to keep information current and to determine public needs. More than 30 "frequently asked questions" have been developed and are available on the Center's Web site. Many volunteers within the Department staffed CSC phone lines during this time of reconstruction. The Center expects more than half of its time to be devoted towards recovery assistance during the next several weeks.



Left to right: Lynn Daniel, Edythe McKinney, Paul Clark, and Pat Williamson work the Customer Service Center hot line established in Raleigh as part of Floyd relief efforts by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

DENR'S HURRICANE RELIEF EFFORTS

DENR has assumed a leadership role in Hurricane Floyd recovery efforts. On the environmental front, DENR is coordinating debris removal, mosquito spraying, well testing, technical assistance to farmers and treatment plant operators, and other important areas to protect public health and the environment. Many DENR employees have also volunteered to provide a variety of services from organizing and delivering donations to actually cleaning the water-damaged homes for the residents of the flood-ravaged areas. By mid-October, more than 100 DENR employees had volunteered to assist and continue to assist with disaster relief and/or recovery activities. Hurricane recovery information is available at <http://www.p2pays.org/disaster/index.htm>. DENR's Response Coordination Center (RCC) can be contacted at (919) 715-3644.