



NORTH CAROLINA DIVISION OF  
POLLUTION PREVENTION AND  
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSISTANCE



# FOCUS

Providing pollution prevention assistance to North Carolina industries since 1984

## DENR Launches Initiative to Promote Superior Environmental Performance

The N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is looking for environmental partners to put into practice innovative approaches that meet or exceed regulatory requirements. On Earth Day, Secretary Bill Ross introduced DENR's new Environmental Stewardship Initiative (ESI) to "encourage North Carolina organizations to move beyond compliance and toward environmental sustainability by using a systematic approach to environmental performance." This voluntary program offers incentives to develop and implement programs that use pollution prevention and other resourceful methods to produce a better environment, conserve natural resources, and integrate environmental concerns into business decisions. Two levels of participation exist in this program.

The first level, Environmental Partner, is designed for a broad range of organizations that are interested in beginning the process to develop a systematic approach to improve environmental performance. A DENR Environmental Partner must:

- Not be under any environmental criminal indictment. DENR retains the right to reject an applicant following a compliance review;
- Document commitment to compliance;
- Set environmental performance goals that include pollution prevention;
- Commit to developing, implementing and maintaining an environmental management system (EMS) based on ISO 14001 or a functionally equivalent model; and
- Report annually on progress towards environmental performance goals, including net reductions in emissions and any reportable non-compliance events.

Environmental Partners will be eligible for:

- Technical assistance on developing an EMS, pollution prevention approaches, environmental management and treatment technologies, and achieving and maintaining compliance with local, state and federal regulations;
- Specialized training and networking opportunities;
- Access to Environmental Steward mentors;
- Recognition of program participation;
- Coverage by U.S. EPA and DENR self-reporting policies;
- Single point of contact within DENR; and

***"Stewardship of our state's natural resources is more critical than ever. This partnering program is an important step in improving the quality of North Carolina's environment and our overall quality of life."*** —Gov. Mike Easley

- Other benefits as deemed appropriate by the DENR secretary based on recommendations from the Advisory Workgroup.

The second level, Environmental Steward, is for organizations that have shown a commitment to exemplary environmental performance beyond what is required by law. To become a DENR Environmental Steward, the applicant must for each site:

- Set aggressive environmental performance goals;
- Have a functional EMS based on ISO 14001 or a functionally equivalent model;
- Not have had any significant violations in the preceding two years. DENR retains the right to reject an applicant following a compliance review;
- Report annually on progress towards environmental performance goals including net reductions in emissions and any reportable non-compliance events;
- Agree to be a mentor to Environmental Partner participants;
- Have a process for communicating with the local community on program activities and progress towards performance goals; and

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## POLLUTION PREVENTION HIGHLIGHT



### Acid Bath Enhancement Extends Plater's Bottom Line

A payback period for investing in new equipment, materials or technologies is usually viewed in terms of years and not weeks. However, according to David French, president of Amplate Inc., a payback period of just two weeks was realized after introducing a new acid bath extender into the facility's acid pickling tanks. Amplate, located in Charlotte, performs nickel, zinc and decorative chrome electroplating.

"We saved a ton of money and significantly reduced sludge shipped to the landfill," said French. This new system has saved Amplate over \$25,000 annually. Seven plating lines are using pickling acids that range in age from 12 to 24 months old that are performing like new. Amplate's reductions in waste generation and water conservation were achieved despite a fourfold increase in production.

Previously, a coagulant was used periodically in the acid pickle tanks to remove metal contaminants; however, organics would accumulate and eventually the acid baths would require disposal. To extend the length of its acid baths, Amplate tested PRO-pHx, an acid bath extender and decarboxylating agent, on its spent muriatic acid tank. With the new bath additive, the muriatic acid was restored to almost like-new condition. PRO-pHx is now used in the acid pickling and activating baths for plating of zinc, electrolytic nickels, electroless nickel, black oxide, decorative chrome and for passivation of stainless steel. In 1991, Amplate disposed

of 11,000 pounds of acid bath waste. Due to the new acid discharge and replacement system, acid waste disposal was zero in 2001!

Today, acid addition is necessary only to make-up for drag-out, evaporation and neutralization. Amplate reports that PRO-pHx:

- Extends acid life indefinitely;
- Eliminates new make-up costs;
- Significantly reduces disposal costs & regulatory burdens;
- Requires no down-time for acid disposal/replacement; and
- Eliminates organic build-up.

PRO-pHx appears to be a win-win product by extending acid bath life, minimizing the frequency of acid replacement, and decreasing the expense of hazardous waste handling and disposal.

Amplate has long been a leader in the plating industry and is known for its significant efforts to eliminate environmental impacts from facility operations, go beyond minimum environmental compliance regulations, and provide high quality plating services. In 1994, the company was recognized for Outstanding Achievement for Small Business in the Governor's Awards for Excellence in Waste Reduction. For more information contact David French at [davidfrench@amplate.com](mailto:davidfrench@amplate.com) or Ray Guerrein with Waste Reduction Partners at [r.guerrein@worldnet.att.net](mailto:r.guerrein@worldnet.att.net).

#### ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVE, from page 1

- Demonstrate how the EMS is integrated into its core business functions.

DENR Environmental Stewards will be eligible for all benefits available to Environmental Partners in addition to:

- Formal public recognition from the governor and the secretary of DENR that may include use of a program logo, an award ceremony, public announcements and press releases;
- Participation in the Environmental Stewardship Forum chaired by the secretary and key department policy makers. The forum will meet at least semiannually;
- Priority membership on the advisory workgroup;
- Established time frames for permit decisions. This does not change existing public comment opportunities;
- Consideration for regulatory innovations.

**Participant Eligibility:** Any site-specific regulated organization or entity whose activities impact the environment is eligible to participate. This includes but is not limited to manufacturers, businesses, agribusiness, service providers, government agencies, schools and nonprofits.

**Participant Selection:** An advisory workgroup appointed by the secretary will recommend acceptance into the program and review

the program annually. Workgroup membership consists of manufacturers, industry trade groups, small businesses and environmental and citizen nongovernmental organizations. This group will review applications and make a recommendation to the Secretary regarding program participants.

**Program Participation:** To remain in the program, Environmental Partners or Stewards must be committed to meeting environmental performance goals, strive for continual improvement, and demonstrate management commitment to meet (Partner) or exceed (Steward) compliance. At the end of three years in the program, DENR will conduct a review of each member to assess their progress toward meeting organization and overall program goals.

Organizations are accepted as Environmental Partners and Environmental Stewards for a period of five years after which they may apply for renewal. Based on reports from participants, a program summary will be prepared and presented to the governor on an annual basis.

To apply or for more detailed information, visit the ESI Web site at <http://www.p2pays.org/esi> or contact Beth Graves, ESI coordinator, at (919) 715-6506 or [beth.graves@ncmail.net](mailto:beth.graves@ncmail.net).







