

Annual Lake James Watershed Symposium

Watershed Protection through Education and Action

February 17, 2026 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM

The Barn at North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics- Morganton

Presented by

Lake James Environmental Association, Catawba Riverkeeper, Foothills Conservancy of North Carolina, and the NC School of Science and Mathematics-Morganton

Check-in (9:00-9:30 AM)

Welcome (9:30 AM) - Joanne Deyo (Lake James Environmental Association) and Christiane Burkins (NCSSM-Morganton)

Morning Sessions (9:30 AM- 12 PM) Moderator - Marshall Taylor (LJEA)

- **9:40 Celebrating our Accomplishments and Continued Progress** - Joanne Deyo (LJEA)
 - LJEA Annual Summary
- **9:50 Lake James Watershed Water Quality Update**
 - 2025 Data Review and Discussion - Ann Marie Traylor (Environmental Quality Institute)
- **10:10 Post-Helene Ecology in the Catawba River upstream of Lake James**
 - Turtles & Helene impacts on Catawba River ecology- Josh Holbrook (Montreat College)
 - Mercury in Kingfishers along the upper Catawba -Drake Fowler (Montreat College)
- **10:30 Bugs, Bugs, Bugs and their front yards** - Levi Reece (Reece Environmental Consulting)
- **10:45 Break**
- **11:00 Habitat Enhancement at Fonta Flora County Park** - Sarah Chabaane (Burke County), Lee Kiser, Cadence Davis, Gillian Freeze (LJEA)
- **11:20 Partners & Progress** - Moderator: Marshall Taylor (LJEA)
 - **11:20** LJEA/NCSSM Collaboration - Christiane Burkins (NCSSM)
 - **11:30** Data Analytics Mentorship Program and Accomplishments - Todd Bell (LJEA)
 - **11:45** Update from Duke Energy- Brett Hartis (Duke Energy)

Lunch (12 PM-1 PM)

Afternoon Sessions (1:00 PM- 4:30 PM) Moderator: Brandon Jones, Catawba Riverkeeper

- **1:00-1:20 Catawba Wateree Relicensing Coalition History and Updates**-Vicki Taylor (Executive Coordinator, CWRC)
- **1:20-2:00 Land Protection Updates in the Lake James Watershed**- Shane Prisby and Michael Gaffney (FCNC)
- **2:00 - 2:20 Overview of Nutrients and Algae in Lake James** - Mark Brenner (Warren Wilson College)
- **2:20 - Break**
- **2:35-3:30 Catawba Riverkeeper Updates**
 - **2:35-3:10 PM - Organizational Overview**- Brandon Jones (CRF) and **Northern Basin Updates** -Grant Buckner and Sophie McCarthy (CRF)
 - **3:10-3:25 PM- What Happened at the State Legislature in 2025?**- Ryan Carter (CRF)
- **3:30 Panel- Community Engagement** - Moderator: Joanne Deyo
- **4:15 PM Closing Statement** -Joanne Deyo (LJEA)