



# Fall Report

## Fracking fight only just beginning for N.C.

### Moratorium silver lining of pro-fracking bill

In July, a mistaken vote helped the Republican leadership pass legislation to pave the way for fracking in North Carolina. But, responding to opposition from Environment North Carolina and many others, the bill's proponents included an indefinite moratorium on the controversial form of drilling.

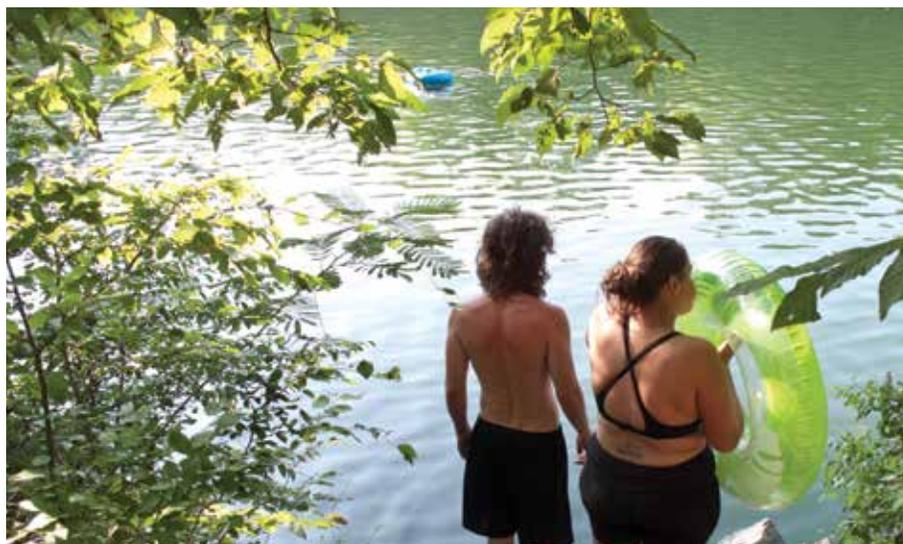
"This bill was rushed through, despite all the harms fracking has caused to drinking water around the country," said Environment North Carolina Director Elizabeth Ouzts. "But the fight here is far from over. In fact, it's just beginning."

Fracking is a drilling process where sand and chemicals are injected into wells to fracture surrounding rock to extract natural gas. Deposits are estimated to be in 15 North Carolina counties, and gas companies have already bought leases to drill near the Deep River in Chatham, Moore and Lee.

Last spring, an analysis from the state's environmental agency documented the extent to which fracking has contaminated water supplies and waterways around the country. Officials found that roughly 460,000 people who get their drinking water from private underground wells could be impacted. Jordan Lake, Falls Lake, and other waters could also suffer.

### State laws long prohibited fracking

North Carolina state laws had previously prohibited two key aspects of fracking: underground chemical injection and horizontal drilling. The legislation



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▲ *Fracking threatens treasured N.C. waterways such as Eno River, pictured above.*

approved this summer lifted those prohibitions and created an industry-friendly commission to oversee fracking.

Environment North Carolina had campaigned vigorously against the new law, recruiting thousands to call and email the governor and their lawmakers. Our efforts, those of our allies, and an unprecedented outpouring of citizen advocacy

helped win the governor's veto, opposition from numerous lawmakers, and, most important of all, a moratorium on permitting fracking wells that can only be lifted by another vote of the Legislature.

"As long as the evidence shows that fracking can't be done safely, we'll advocate that the moratorium remain in place," said Ouzts.



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### more inside

*Bill ignoring sea level rise threatens the Outer Banks; Update on Jordan Lake development; North Carolina's potential for wind power, and more.*



## To our members

Margaret Hartzell joined Environment North Carolina in 2006, starting with a campaign to repower the state with renewable energy such as wind and solar power. Her organizing helped achieve the Southeast's first clean energy standard, protections for the Horsepasture River in Western North Carolina, and the passage of legislation to safeguard our beaches against offshore drilling. This fall, we'll all be sad to see her leave staff.

However, I'm glad to introduce a new face to the organization: Dave Rogers. A Durham resident, Dave brings 11 years of advocacy and organizing experience—most recently as the Assistant National Canvass Director for the Fund for the Public Interest. He joins Environment North Carolina as our Field Director, and I'm excited to work with him as we continue to embark on campaigns to preserve our state's open places and keep our air and water clean.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Ouzts, State Director



## Recent action

### We can power N.C. with clean wind power

Clean energy is hitting a milestone this fall, breaking 50 gigawatts of installed wind energy in the United States—enough to power up to 15 million homes. But we're still far from realizing our potential, especially in North Carolina, where we have enough offshore wind supplies to meet all of our state's energy needs.

Equipped with the Renewable Energy Production Tax Credit, the wind industry has been able to lower the cost of wind power by more than 90 percent. But this and other incentives to spur wind energy are set to expire at the end of the year. If Congress doesn't act to extend production and investment tax credits for wind power, the wind industry will lose 37,000 jobs, and North Carolina will have to wait even longer for clean, homegrown energy generated off its coast.

This summer, Environment North Carolina and its national federation recruited 215 businesses, environmental groups, and elected officials to urge the Obama administration to continue encouraging responsible offshore wind development and to support the extension of critical tax credits.

### On climate change, ignorance is not bliss

The General Assembly's much-mocked bill that would force state leaders to ignore—until 2016—scientific predictions that sea levels could rise by more than three feet in the next century, has become law.

The research in question, conducted by state-appointed scientists, concludes that rising sea levels pose a particular threat to North Carolina—with our 301 miles of coastline and fragile barrier islands—like the Outer Banks.

"NC-20," a special interest group with ties to the fossil fuel industry, pushed legislators to outlaw the scientists' findings, along with any legislation to protect coastal communities. Environment North Carolina had urged Gov. Perdue to veto the measure, but she allowed it to become law without her signature.



# One step forward, two steps back for Jordan Lake

In an unprecedented bipartisan vote, the state Senate shot down a proposal from the N.C. House to fast-track the proposed 167-acre development project near Jordan Lake, in Durham.

This project, called “751 South,” has been the subject of lawsuits, energetic citizen organizing and even the formation of a “Super PAC” to aid pro-751 South candidates during the May primary. If approved, the project would be built near the most polluted part of Jordan Lake, where it is fed by the already-troubled New Hope Creek.

## \$1 million a year for 10 years

In February, the Durham City Council dealt a blow to the project when it unanimously rejected a request by developers to provide city water services to the project. The City of Durham estimated the project would cost Durham taxpayers \$1 million dollars a year for 10 years before seeing increased revenue.

But in the final week of the legislative session, 751 South allies convinced N.C. House Rules Chairman Rep. Tim Moore (Cleveland) to insert language into an unrelated bill that would require Durham to provide water services to the project after all.

The bill passed the House largely on party lines before the N.C. Senate, with Environment North Carolina’s support, defeated the legislation. In particular, leadership from Sens. Richard Stevens (Wake) and Josh Stein (Wake) helped derail the project.

## Jordan Lake cleanup plan weakened

While a majority of senators helped protect Jordan Lake from 751 South, they weren’t able to stop passage of legislation that begins to unravel the Jordan Lake cleanup plan, which is critical to the lake’s future health.

Hedging bets that the bill that promoted 751 South would be defeated, Senate lead-

ers secured language in two other bills to roll back Jordan Lake protections.

Three years ago, Environment North Carolina pushed for the restoration plan for the Triangle reservoir that draws a million visitors each year and provides drinking water for more than 300,000.

The law passed in 2009 was designed to reduce pollution that spurred algae blooms and increased drinking water treatment costs from existing developments near the lake—and to limit pollution from new strip malls and subdivisions.

Back then, the Senate passed the cleanup plan unanimously. But this year, in the session’s 11th hour, developers pushed lawmakers to give them two more years before they are required to limit pollution from new projects.

The less the law asks of developers, the bigger burden is placed on local governments and taxpayers, who pay to support pollution remedies that are up to seven times more expensive.



Wikimedia Commons User: Dcrljr

▲ New Hope Creek, tributary to Jordan Lake



Peter Kreder, Creative Commons

## 2012 Elections

### Environment North Carolina supports environmental defenders

*Looking back on the accomplishments of President Obama, we see real change and real progress.*

*We see cleaner cars on the road—cars that are saving oil and reducing carbon pollution. That’s because President Obama increased the miles per gallon standards not once, but twice, during his first term.*

*We see strong new standards in place that will significantly reduce mercury, soot and smog pollution from power plants; standards that could save 46,000 lives a year.*

*We see historic levels of investment in, and commitment to, clean energy, with wind and solar power production doubled following record federal investments in clean energy by President Obama.*

*While President Obama has charted a course forward for a clean environment, our state General Assembly has moved to take us backward.*

*In the past two years, state lawmakers have paved the way for fracking, eroded protections for waters like Jordan Lake, and slashed land conservation funds.*

*In an election already overrun with money from Big Oil and their allies we need to make sure that the White House, Congress, and our General Assembly have champions that will stand up for us and fight for the same environmental values we share.*

*That’s why Environment North Carolina supports Barack Obama for President and Walter Dalton for Governor. For more information on our endorsements in the November 6 election, visit our website.*

[www.environmentnorthcarolina.org](http://www.environmentnorthcarolina.org)

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### Environment North Carolina

#### Our mission

We all want clean air, clean water and green spaces. But it takes independent research and tough-minded advocacy to win concrete results for our environment, especially when powerful interests stand in the way of environmental progress.

That's the idea behind Environment North Carolina. We focus exclusively on protecting North Carolina's air, water and green spaces. We speak out and take action at the local, state and national levels to improve the quality of our environment and our lives.

## Protection for 13,500 acres and counting

In the last seven years, more than 13,500 acres of forests and farmlands have been permanently protected around the Blue Ridge Parkway, according to a new report issued in May by Environment North Carolina Research & Policy Center and the Land for Tomorrow Coalition.

The report, "Securing North Carolina's Future: A Five-Year Plan for Investing in our Land, Water and Quality of Life," also sets a goal of preserving an additional 20,000 acres surrounding the Parkway and other scenic biways in the next five years, along with nearly 400,000 acres of forests, farmlands, stream buffers, parks and other critical open spaces and natural areas.

In good news for the Parkway, this year, lawmakers removed restrictions on the state's largest land conservation program—the Clean Water Management Trust Fund. However, they also slashed funding overall by 60 percent from 2010 levels.



Photo: David Ray / ITNC

### research

#### Securing North Carolina's Future

A Five-Year Plan for Investing in Our Land, Water and Quality of Life

Read the full report online at:  
[EnvironmentNorthCarolinaCenter.org](http://EnvironmentNorthCarolinaCenter.org)