

WATERSHED PROTECTION REGULATIONS BY CLASSIFICATION

WATERSHED CLASSIFICATION	LOT SIZE FOR HOUSE/MANUFACTURED HOME	LOT COVERAGE FOR BUSINESSES/INDUSTRY, ETC.
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WS-II: Maiden, Allen and Indian Creeks

Critical area:

Maiden Creek
Allen Creek

1 house per 2 acres
1 house per 2 acres

6% coverage on lot
6% coverage on lot

Protected area:

Maiden Creek
Allen Creek
Indian Creek

1 house per acre
house per acre
1 house per acre

12% coverage on lot
12% coverage on lot
12% coverage on lot

WS-III: Jacobs Fork

Critical area:

1 house per acre

12% coverage on lot

Protected area:

1 house per half acre

24% coverage on lot

WS-IV: Lake Norman, Lake Lookout Shoals and South Fork

Critical area:

1 house per half acre

24% coverage on lot

Protected area:

1 house per half acre
or
15,000 sq ft w/o
curb & gutter but w/ public
water or sewer

24% coverage on lot
with curb & gutter
or
36% coverage on lot
w/o curb & gutter

- A 30 foot buffer is required next to all streams or lakes. This buffer area must stay in grass, trees, etc. and no buildings are allowed. A special exception is made for Lake Norman to allow piers and boathouses.
- WS-II & WS-III protected areas have a 10%/70% bonus permit option available
- In a WS-IV watershed only, the watershed regulations only have to be met if you grade an acre of land or more.
- WS-IV Planned Developments have high density option available

NOTE: THE UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE (UDO) CONTAINS LAND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS FOR CATAWBA COUNTY. WHERE THEY EXIST, THE MOST RESTRICTIVE RULE APPLIES. REFER TO CATAWBA COUNTY'S UDO FOR SPECIFIC RULE LANGUAGE.

WATER SUPPLY WATERSHED PROTECTION

In 1989, the North Carolina General Assembly passed the NC Water Supply Watershed Protection Act which required the NC Environmental Management Commission (EMC) to adopt revised water supply classifications and develop a set of minimum state rules to protect sources of drinking water supplies for local governments. These rules, passed by the EMC after statewide public hearings, require local governments to adopt and enforce water supply protection plans and ordinances. The final rules adopted by the EMC address how much area can be developed or built-upon. The State established different levels of watersheds dependent on how developed the watershed was at that time. The watersheds rank from a WS-I, which is essentially an undeveloped watershed, to a WS-V, which is the most developed watershed. The amount of development permitted in each watershed depends upon its watershed classification.

Catawba County has a range of watersheds from WS-II through a WS-IV. Lake Norman has been designated a WS-IV watershed. Property in a WS-IV watershed is subject to the regulations only when more than an acre of land is graded (N.C. Erosion and Sedimentation Control Act requirements). Residential lots that are existing lots of record are grandfathered in and will not have to meet any watershed regulations but must meet all zoning regulations where they apply. New residential lots in a WS-IV watershed must be 20,000 square feet (note: where more restrictive zoning regulations apply, the higher standard must be met). Non-residential lots in a WS-IV watershed must meet a built-upon area requirement of 24%; which includes all buildings, paving, gravel areas. A buffer must be maintained within 30 feet from the water. In most cases, building setbacks will be the same. The buffer area specifically allows for water dependent structures such as boathouses, piers, etc.