

DENR: Dan River Insects Downstream Of Coal Ash Spill Appear To Be Thriving

By Administrator

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RALEIGH, (SGRToday.com) - A late October sample of Dan River water shows that aquatic insect communities in an area downstream from the Feb. 2 coal ash spill appear to be doing well.

The test was conducted the N.C. Division of Water Resources on Oct. 28. The sample looked at benthic macroinvertebrates, or small insects and other invertebrate animals that live on or near the bottom of the Dan River. Benthic macroinvertebrate species diversity and population estimates provide an excellent indicator of the overall health of a body of water.

“This is the first testing we have done designed to specifically gauge the ecological health and biodiversity downstream of the spill site after Feb. 2,” said Tom Reeder, director of the N.C. Division of Water Resources in a statement. “Since the coal ash spill, we have been concerned about the health of the creatures living in the Dan River. We are pleasantly surprised but still cautiously optimistic about these results and are continuing to conduct several types of tests as part of our ongoing health assessment of the river. Certainly, this is very good news for anyone concerned about the ecological health of the Dan River.”

Evaluating this animal community’s species diversity and relative pollution tolerance is a long-standing, scientifically defensible measure used to indicate the overall biological condition of a body of water. This method of sampling is routinely used to determine if waters are impaired under the Clean Water Act and also to rate of the quality of the waters.