

## 2-Minute Tuesday: David Merryman, Catawba riverkeeper

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*Eight months have passed since a conservation group called American Rivers labeled the Catawba River as America's most endangered river for 2008. Frustrated by what they view as a lack of urgency, area conservationists are stepping up their calls for action. Catawba Riverkeeper David Merryman talked about the efforts in an interview Monday with The Herald.*

### What's the first thing that needs to happen?

We need surface water permitting. If people are sucking water out of our river, we need to know how much, and when they're doing it.

Right now, we're treating our rivers like they're a continuous supply and we can just suck out as much as we want. A permitting process would allow us to actually recognize how much water is in the river, and how much we can take out.

### Has there been any progress in the past eight months?

Next to none. We did get a Scenic River designation (from Gov. Mark Sanford). That does bring with it some recognition that we do have an absolutely gorgeous resource right here in our backyard. It also provides a plan for how we can keep it that way. While it is a highlight, it really has no teeth.

### What can you tell us about your group's other ongoing efforts?

Our Muddy Water Watch program trains citizens on how to inspect construction sites and the erosion control measures that are in place. It's the No. 1 problem in Carolinas rivers.

When you go in and clear a site for development, you're changing all of the surface water movement.

A lot of (developers) do a good job right at the beginning. It's very important the (measures) be maintained.



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**Do any paddling in the winter?**

In some of the upper portions of Lake Wylie, there are some great spots. You can really get out there now and not worry about a boat wake flipping you.

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