

**TABLE 4-10
BLEWETT FALLS RECREATIONAL FACILITIES USE**

Recreational Resource Types		Total Miles/Acres	Facility Capacity (Percentage Use)
BOATING	Access Areas (Unimproved)	N/A	10
	Boat Ramps (Improved)	N/A	10
	Boat Launching Lanes	N/A	10
FISHING	Tailwater Fishing Facilities	N/A	40
	Fishing Piers	N/A	50
CAMPS	Camping Areas	2 Acres	10

Source: Progress Energy FERC Form 80, March 27, 1997.

4.9 Land Use and Aesthetics

Regional Land Use

The creation of the Uwharrie Lakes has resulted in an evolution in land use and development in proximity to the lakes from primarily agricultural and natural-resource-based to that supporting a recreation-based economy as well. The growing population along U.S. Interstate 85 and U.S. Interstate 40 from Charlotte to Raleigh-Durham known as the Piedmont Crescent has had an effect on land use in the area. In addition, there has been an increase in population of approximately 10 percent in the surrounding four counties surrounding the Project since 1990. Table 4-11 provides the population for surrounding four counties.

**TABLE 4-11
POPULATION BY COUNTY 1990-2000**

	1990	2000	Percent Change
Anson	23,474	25,275	7.7
Montgomery	23,346	26,822	14.9
Richmond	44,518	46,564	4.6
Stanly	51,765	58,100	12.2
Total	143,103	156,761	9.5

Source: U.S. Census.

Land use patterns are primarily forest and agricultural land as shown in Table 4-12. Deciduous and evergreen forestland make up the largest percentage of land cover for all four counties.

**TABLE 4-12
PERCENT OF COUNTY LAND COVER**

Land Cover	Anson	Montgomery	Richmond	Stanly
Developed	0.52	0.53	1.01	1.40
Cultivated	11.35	4.04	10.78	14.04
Grasslands/Pasture	9.85	8.90	4.63	32.75
Shrubland	3.17	3.02	3.91	0.75
Deciduous Forests	23.64	44.34	23.16	36.99
Evergreen Forests	36.26	27.61	48.68	6.89
Mixed Forests	13.77	9.24	6.16	4.50
Water	1.14	2.31	1.33	2.60
Sand/Gravel	0.30	0.15	0.33	0.07

Source: (ASU 1999).

Although the region has rich agricultural traditions, farming continues to decline as an occupation. The trend is that more residents are commuting out of their communities to work. The pressure of urban development is leading to the development of large tracts of land and loss of forested lands. Subdividing these large tracts of land for individual and community residential development is increasing in the Piedmont region. Statistics provided by the USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) indicate that during the 10-year period from 1982 to 1992, there was a 46 percent decrease in cultivated and uncultivated croplands. It is likely that some of this cropland was converted to pastureland and to urban and built-up areas (NCDENR 2002a).

Today, less than 20 percent of the North Carolina Piedmont is in row crops such as corn, tobacco and soybeans. In the mid-1930s, by comparison, nearly 50 percent of the Piedmont was rowcropped. There have been some small increases in pastureland and forestland over the same period. The past 60 years has, however, seen a rapid increase in the amount of land used for urban and residential development, with almost 20 percent of the Piedmont now being used for these purposes. Cropland has been almost entirely replaced by urban and suburban development in some parts of the Yadkin River Basin (Duke University 1997).

Forest lands (both private and federal forests) cover approximately 51 percent of the basin. Federal forestlands (approximately 2 percent) are located within the Pee Dee Wildlife Refuge,

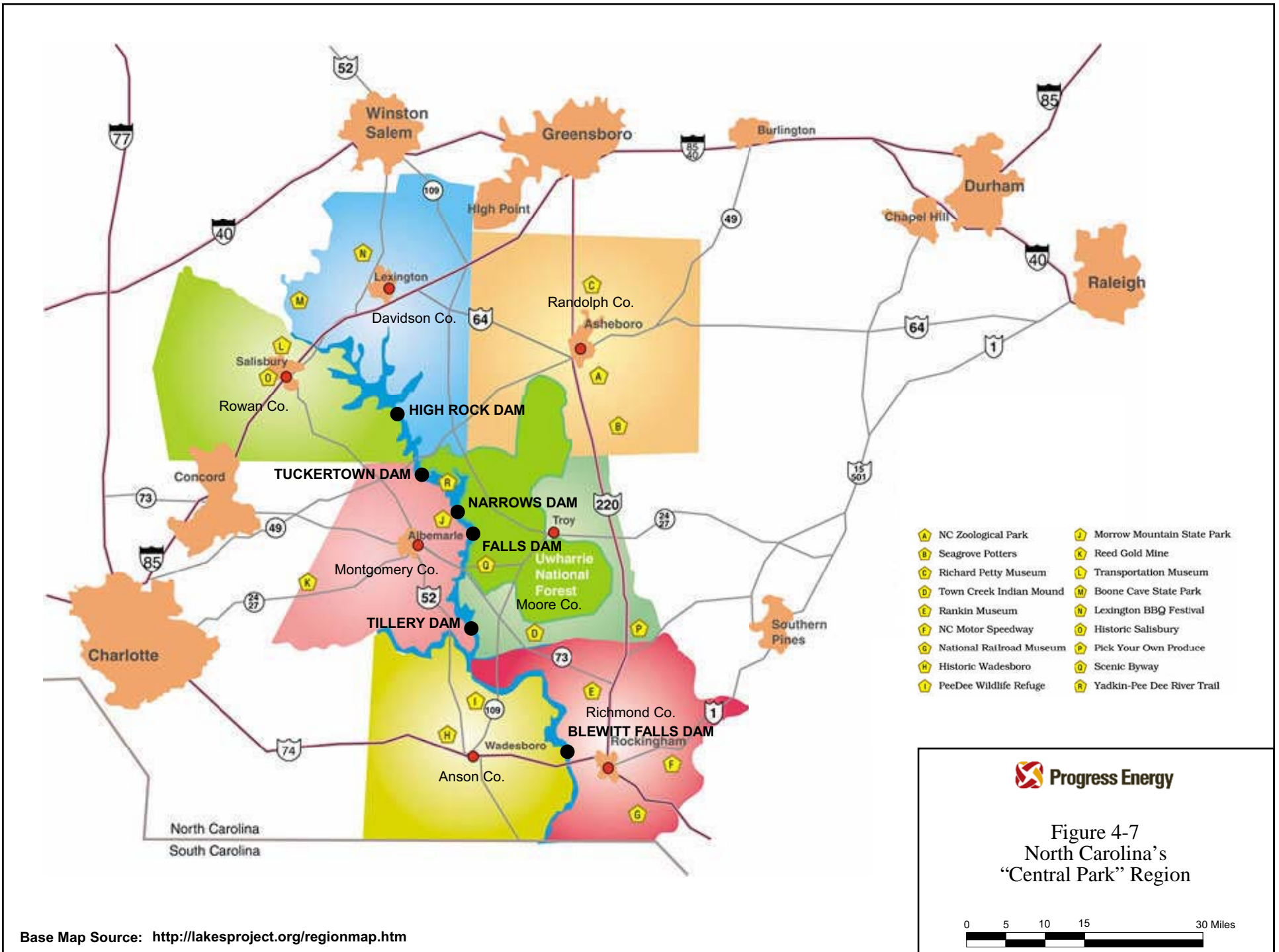
the Uwharrie National Forest, and the Blue Ridge Parkway. Agriculture (including cultivated and uncultivated cropland and pastureland) covers approximately 30 percent of the land area (NCDENR 2002a).

The citizens from the seven counties in the region, including Anson, Richmond, Stanly, Montgomery, Rowan, Davidson, and Randolph, have taken a proactive approach to the future development of their region. A non-profit organization called the Yadkin-Pee Dee Lakes Project was established in 1994. The Yadkin-Pee Dee Lakes Project commissioned Appalachian State University and University of North Carolina - Charlotte to study the region's potential for developing a significant tourism economy of sustainable tourism based on the region's natural and cultural assets such as eco-tourism, agri-tourism, and heritage tourism (ASU 1999, UNCCH 1999). The study was commissioned with the idea that the region could become North Carolina's "Central Park" serving as a rural hub for outdoor recreation and tourism for local residents and the growing urban population of the Crescent Metro areas surrounding the region (ASU 1999).

After considering various alternatives, it was decided that the "Central Park" plan would combine local initiatives and low-impact development supplemented by festivals and special events as the goal to assist in future development of the area (ASU 1999). The plan will promote sustainable tourism so that the area may benefit from the added economic growth but retain the rural, natural, cultural and historic assets that will draw tourists to the "Central Park" area (Yadkin-Pee Dee Lakes Project 2002). The "Central Park" region is illustrated in Figure 4-7.

Lands Abutting the Project Boundary

- **Project Area Description** - The landscape around the project is rolling hills, forestland, and farmland. Pine and hardwood species are mixed within a secondary forest growth along the shoreline. Development of and maintenance to lands surrounding Lake Tillery within the Project boundary are managed by Progress Energy. Outside of the Project boundary, Federal and state authorities as well as local counties regulate land use and development.



On Lake Tillery, there are both year-round and seasonal homes and cottages. On Blewett Falls Lake, there are only a few homes and seasonal cottages. The Project area is accessible via a network of state roads.

There are a few federal- and state-managed lands in proximity and adjacent to the Project which has been previously discussed in this document. These include the Uwharrie National Forest, Morrow Mountain State Park, and the Pee Dee Wildlife Refuge.

- Uwharrie National Forest - The Uwharrie National Forest, comprised on 49,857 acres, is within the Yadkin-Pee Dee River basin. The forest is a prime recreation area for hiking, camping, mountain biking, and off-road vehicles. Commercial timber activities also occur within the forest. Timber harvesting activities within the forest typically require leaving vegetated riparian corridors of 100 to 400 ft along perennial streams (NCDENR 2002a).
- Morrow Mountain State Park - Morrow Mountain State Park is located in Stanly County. The park boundary encompasses approximately 4,742 acres. Recreational opportunities at the park include boating, camping, swimming, hiking and equestrian trails, and picnicking.
- Pee Dee Wildlife Refuge - Situated on the banks of the Pee Dee River in Anson and Richmond counties, the refuge contains 8,443 acres of bottomland hardwood forest and upland pine. The refuge contains several ponds and many creeks flow through the refuge lands. The primary refuge objective is to provide wintering habitat for Canada geese and ducks, and provide nesting sanctuary for wood ducks. The refuge provides habitat for migrating waterfowl, neotropical birds, amphibians, and mammals. The refuge also serves as a demonstration area for management and restoration of private lands, as well as a model for sound land stewardship.

Aesthetic Resources

One of the many interesting scenic characteristics of the Yadkin-Pee Dee River basin is its physiography and geology. The Piedmont region's center is marked by gently rolling, pine-dotted hills, with elevations ranging from 300 to 600 ft and gradually rising to 1,500 ft in the foothills. Piedmont topography is rolling with long ridgelines and well-rounded hills (NCDENR 2002). The Pee Dee River below Lake Tillery was rated by the NPS as having ORV designation for scenery. The ORV scenic designation is provided to rivers due to elements of landform, vegetation, water, color, and related factors that result in notable or exemplary visual features and/or attractions (NPS 2001).

Heading west from the center of the region are the Uwharrie Mountains, thought to be America's oldest mountain range. Remnants of an ancient chain of island volcanoes at the edge of an ocean that no longer exists, the mountains' peaks once exceeded 10,000 ft. Today, after 600 million years of erosion, their tallest point reaches 1,000 ft, making them ideal for hiking and mountain biking.