



## Carolinas Chapter Dinner/Meeting in Asheville

*The Carolinas Chapter of the  
Association of Environmental & Engineering Geologists presents*

Guest Speaker:



**Lisa Raleigh, PhD and Renee Fortner, PhD**  
RiverLink Executive Director and Watershed Resources Manager

### Promoting Clean Water + Climate Resiliency in the French Broad River Watershed

Dinner and Talk: 6:00-9:00 PM  
Thursday, October 5, 2023  
Hi-Wire Event Space, Asheville, North Carolina

#### Meeting Details

- Place:** Hi-Wire Event Space, 2B Huntsman Place in Asheville  
**Date:** Thursday, October 5, 2023  
**Time:** 6:00 PM socializing begins, 7:00 buffet dinner, 8:00 Lisa and Renee's talk  
**Cost:** AEG members \$35; non-members \$50; public-sector employees and teachers \$20.  
*Registration will be \$5 more at the door. Students free w/ college ID.*  
**Reservations:** Please make reservations by 6:00 PM on Friday, September 29, 2023 at  
<http://aegcarolinas.org/news/>  
**Meeting Drink Sponsors:** To be announced

**Continuing Education:** The NCBLG has preapproved AEG Carolinas to offer 1 CE credit for this presentation.

## **Abstract**

### ***Promoting Clean Water + Climate Resiliency in the French Broad River Watershed***

Executive Director, Lisa Raleigh, and Watershed Resources Manager, Renee Fortner will join us to share more about their work. Highlights will include their twenty year commitment to Karen Cragolin Park (named in honor of their founder and a former auto-crushing operation on the banks of the French Broad and subsequent brownfield) and their investment in over a decade of phytoremediation and the recent activation and connection of the first phase of this park. They will also discuss the Southside Stormwater Project, a community-driven project addressing the quality and quantity of stormwater runoff within a marginalized community. This recently completed project includes green stormwater infrastructure such as bioretention cells, regenerative stormwater conveyances, a stormwater wetland, and community amenities.

They will close the presentation with their commitment to promoting green infrastructure at both the individual and urban-development level and their focus on reducing the sediment load on the French Broad River.

### **About RiverLink**

RiverLink's mission is to promote the environmental and economic vitality of the French Broad River and its watershed. For thirty-five years, RiverLink has worked to improve watershed health and climate resilience, provide permanent public access to the river through conservation and recreation easements, reclaim contaminated lands for public use and enjoyment, empower over 1,000 volunteers each year, and annually educate over 3,000 students, as well as the public at large, about the importance of a healthy French Broad River (FBR) watershed.

Their commitment could not be more timely and relevant as the FBR watershed was recently valued at \$3.8 billion a year in economic revenue to the region and at the same time 19 miles of the main stem of the FBR (through Asheville) and several of its tributaries were classified as impaired for fecal coliform.

### **Lisa's Bio**

Lisa, a Montana native, resided in Colorado for the past 30 years before relocating to Asheville as Executive Director. Prior to joining RiverLink, she was a nonprofit fundraising consultant and spent eleven years as the Director of Advancement for Colorado Rocky Mountain School. Lisa also co-founded Backbone Media — an outdoor industry specialty PR firm — and is a trained hydrologist with a Ph.D. in Environmental Science from the University of Oklahoma.

Personally, Lisa is deeply committed to human rights and environmental issues. An international traveler passionate about most things outdoors, she is an avid trail runner, road biker, and climber. Lisa is the proud mom of daughters Sunni and Belle, both of whom were born in Cambodia, raised by Lisa and her husband Duane in the Colorado Rockies, and now are attending Smith College and Fort Lewis College, respectively. Lisa and Duane greatly look forward to immersing themselves in all that Asheville has to offer, and are eager to explore its natural amenities and outdoor pursuits.

Lisa is honored to be joining the RiverLink team given the organization's rich history and legacy promoting the environmental and economic vitality of the French Broad River and watershed and believes it is a tremendous responsibility, one that she looks forward to sharing with the talented and dedicated staff, Board, stakeholders, and community members.

### **Renee's Bio**

Renee grew up along the New River in Ashe County, N.C. where she spent most of her childhood exploring the woods and creek near her home. Her childhood experiences instilled an unwavering love of the outdoors and passion for conservation. Renee's interests eventually led her to Asheville where she pursued a Bachelor's Degree in Biology from UNC-Asheville and later an M.S. in Biology from East Carolina University.

Renee holds professional certificates in Stormwater BMP Inspection & Maintenance and Residential Rain Garden Design from N.C. State University. She is also a Board of Trustee for the Friends of Hominy Creek Greenway.

While living in Asheville, Renee has been drawn to the surrounding rivers, whether it was canoeing the French Broad, swimming in the Swannanoa, or rafting the Nolichucky where she and her husband Dave were married. As the Watershed Resources Manager, Renee is excited to apply her skills to the conservation of the surrounding rivers, which are vital both ecologically and economically to this area in which we live.