Questions concerning the WDIR in general or with regards to a specific inspection should be addressed to the Structural Pest Control Division of the North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services.
What happens if evidence of wood-destroying insects is found?

When a PCO finds evidence of wood-destroying insects (such as termite tubes or cast wings, damage or exit holes from wood-boring beetles etc.) he must report its presence and specific location on the WDIR. The report must clearly indicate whether or not the insects have been or are in the wooden members. If no evidence of treatment exists in the case of subterranean termites, the PCO may submit a bid to treat the structure. However, this is secondary to the object of the report, i.e., to report the infestation. His job is to tell you, or your (his) client, that the wood-destroying insect infestation is present. His obligation is then fulfilled. It is up to the seller or buyer to contract for a treatment if necessary. If a treatment is performed, a copy of the written agreement and warranty, if any, must be attached to the WDIR. Treatment options vary depending on the insect found, the extent of the damage, whether a previous treatment has been performed, and whether or not a warranty is desired. Powdery post beetle, old house borer and other wood-boring beetle infestations can be treated by an application of a liquid insecticide to the surface of infested timbers, by controlling excessive moisture in the timbers, or by fumigating the entire structure (rarely recommended). Prior treatments for these insects are difficult or impossible to establish. Subterranean termites are typically dealt with by applications of liquid pesticides to the soil and voids in masonry foundations, denying the termites access to the structure, or by the installation of termite bait systems. A liquid treatment may be a complete treatment or a spot treatment. If a prior treatment has been performed, or if a warranty is not desired, a spot treatment may be satisfactory. However, if the termite infestation is widespread or a warranty is required, a complete treatment of the structure is usually recommended. Termites have the advantage of requiring much less pesticide and work by eliminating or suppressing the termite colony itself. They may, however, take longer to control the infestation and require the payment of quarterly or annual fees to maintain the protection plan. The buyer and seller should discuss these options and agree on a treatment plan before the treatment is performed.

Where should the evidence of wood-destroying insects be found?

If the WDIR indicates the wood-destroying insects are in the wooden members, it must be assumed there is some damage. Ordinarily, a PCO is neither prepared nor qualified to evaluate the extent of damage to a structure. A building expert should make the necessary repairs. The repair invoice may be attached to the WDIR. A PCO should not be expected or required to be a quality control inspector for carpenters, plumbers, etc. This is not his area of expertise or the purpose of the WDIR. Furthermore, the issuance of a subsequent report indicating "no evidence" in such circumstances would be a violation of the structural pest control rules and could be considered to be fraud. Most homes in North Carolina in excess of 10-15 years old will have some evidence of wood-destroying insects and could well have been damaged by such insects. Lending institutions and buyers need to realize that a "clear" report is not to be sought. The function of the WDIR is to report the presence of all visible evidence of wood-destroying insect infestation. If damage is present, it is the buyer's responsibility to ensure that it is repaired or evaluated, and acknowledged as of no structural consequence by a qualified contractor or engineer. Just as an individual is willing to buy a used car with a few dents; so a homeowner, lender, etc., must be willing to accept some wood-destroying insect damage in an older home.

Conclusion

The potential buyer depends on this report to help in the decision-making process on the real estate purchase and obviously would be quite upset if misled by an improperly completed report. A so-called "clear" report is not mandatory in order for the transaction to be completed. The most important thing to remember is that the report must be, as required by law, a true indication of the presence or absence of evidence of wood-destroying insects. The report should be obtained early in the transaction and be read carefully by all concerned parties, paying particular attention to the introductory statements on the report and conditions governing the inspection.