



Henderson County Farmland Preservation Taskforce

Monday, June 10, 2024 - 6:00 PM
King Street Meeting Room
100 N. King Street, Hendersonville, NC 28792

Agenda

1. Call Meeting to Order
2. Adjustment and Approval of Agenda
3. Public Comment
4. Approval of May 30, 2024 Meeting Minutes
5. Guest Speakers
 - a. Ariel Zijp, Farmland Preservation Manager – Buncombe County Soil & Water
 - i. Avni Naik, Farmland Preservation Coordinator – Buncombe County Soil & Water
 - b. Ryan Manning, Farmland Preservation Program Coordinator – NC Foundation for Soil & Water Conservation
6. Continued Discussion – Taskforce Goals & Outcomes
7. Next Meeting: July 8, 2024
8. Adjourn

**Henderson County
Farmland Preservation Taskforce: May 30, 2024**

The Farmland Preservation Taskforce held a meeting on May 30, 2024, at 6:00 PM in the King Street Meeting Room located at 100 N. King Street.

Taskforce Member	Present	Absent
Commissioner Rebecca McCall, Chair	✓	
Commissioner David Hill, Chair	✓	
Hunter Marks – Planning Board	✓	
Danny McConnell – Soil & Water Conservation District		✓
Gary Steiner – NC Cooperative Extension		✓
Jimmy Cowan – NC Farm Bureau	✓	
Joffrey Merrill – AgHC	✓	
Randy Newman – Hendersonville Board of Realtors	✓	
Jason Edney – At large	✓	
Justin Patwin – At large	✓	
Linda Pryor – At large	✓	
Alan Ward – At large	✓	
Danielle McCall – At large	✓	

Also present:

Chris Todd, Business & Community Development Director
 Autumn Radcliff, Planning Director
 Liz Hanson, Planner I
 Jonathan Wallin, Soil & Water Conservation District
 April Hoyt, Soil & Water Conservation District
 Dr. Terry Kelley, NC Cooperative Extension
 Kieran Roe, Conserving Carolina
 Tom Fanslow, Conserving Carolina
 Jeffrey Darnell, NC Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services

Commissioner Rebecca McCall, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Adjustment and Approval of Agenda:

Commissioner David Hill requested Agenda Item C and B switch order. Taskforce member Randy Newman moved to approve the minutes as amended. Motion carried.

Public Comment:

There was no public comment for this meeting.

Adjustment and Approval of May 13, 2024, Meeting Minutes:

Taskforce member Randy Newman moved to approve the May 13, 2024, Meeting Minutes as presented. Motion carried.

Discussion:

The Taskforce heard from several guest speakers during the meeting.

The Task force had previously requested Evan Davis from the NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (NC DACS), to attend as a guest speaker. Mr. Davis provided a presentation (virtually) on Agricultural Conservation Easements and the NC Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund (ADFPTF). Mr. Davis provided a comprehensive overview of how Agricultural Conservation Easements function and the role of NC DACS and the NC ADFPTF in preserving agricultural land throughout the state of North Carolina. After Mr. Davis's presentation the Taskforce had the opportunity to ask questions and gain more information. Mr. Davis remained on the Microsoft Teams call for the duration of the meeting to be available for any more questions from the Taskforce.

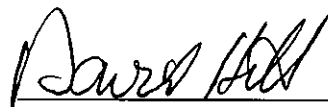
The Taskforce also previously requested representatives from Conserving Carolina to present on their expertise and experience in Conservation Easements. Tom Fanslow, Land Protection Director for Conserving Carolina, presented first, followed by Kieran Roe, Executive Director of Conserving Carolina. Mr. Fanslow provided an overview of Conserving Carolina as an entity, their service area, past conservation projects, and their role in Agricultural Conservation Easements. An example budget for an Agricultural Conservation project, led by Conserving Carolina, was also presented to the Taskforce. Taskforce members had an opportunity to pose questions to Mr. Fanslow and Mr. Roe after their presentations.

Commissioner Hill suggested continuing the remaining agenda items at a future meeting due to time constraints.

Next Meeting:

The taskforce will meet on June 10th at 6:00 PM in the King St Meeting Room at 100 N. King Street. The Taskforce requested Staff to arrange guest speakers from the Buncombe County Soil and Water Conservation District and the NC Foundation for Soil and Water Conservation, to present at the June 10, 2024, meeting.

Commissioner Hill motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:58 PM. Motion carried.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Hill", is written over a horizontal line.

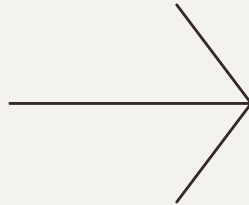
Commissioner Rebecca McCall, Chair and Commissioner David Hill, Chair
Henderson County Farmland Preservation Taskforce

100 N. King St

Hendersonville, NC

Farmland Preservation Taskforce

June 10, 2024
6:00 PM



Agenda

01

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02

Approval & Adjustment
of Agenda

03

Public Comment

04

Approval of May
30th Minutes

05

Guest Speakers

06

Continued Discussion

07

Adjourn



A close-up, slightly blurred photograph of a field of golden wheat. The stalks are densely packed and have a warm, yellowish-gold hue. A white rectangular box is positioned in the lower right quadrant of the image, containing the text "Guest Speakers" in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

Guest Speakers

Ariel Zijp

Farmland Preservation Manager

Buncombe County

Soil & Water Conservation District

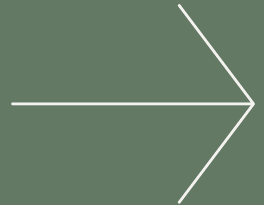


Avni Naik

Farmland Preservation Coordinator

Buncombe County

Soil & Water Conservation District





Buncombe County Farmland Preservation Program

Presented by

Ariel Zijp & Avni Naik

Buncombe County Soil and Water Conservation District

Buncombe County Agricultural and Land Resources Department





History of the Program

- 1989- Farmland Preservation Ordinance
- 1989 - Farmland Preservation Program
- 2005 - County budgeted funds for easements
- 2007 - Farmland Protection Plan adopted
- 2008 - County hired a Farmland Preservation Coordinator

Guiding Plans That Support Our Work

- **Farmland Preservation Ordinance** - guiding document that allows for the:
 - Creation of the Agricultural Advisory Board that oversees the Farmland Preservation Program
 - Rules and processes around our programs (easements, VAD/EVAD, etc.)
- **Farmland Protection Plan** -allows for local leaders to set priorities and goals for farmland preservation (update every 5-10 yrs)
- **Strategic Plan** - justify budget tied to goals
- **Comprehensive Plan** -helps plan future land use



Buncombe County Ag & Land Resources Department

BC Soil & Water Conservation District

BC NC State Extension

Agricultural
Advisory
Board

BCSWCD Board

Land
Conservation
Advisory Board

Evaluates FPP
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to Commissioners

Holds FPP
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Formed by BOC to
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- Recommendations on the Farmland Preservation Program and agricultural issues to the County Commissioners
- 9 county residents, minimum of five of the Board members must be actively engaged in farming with regional representation.
- Focus Areas: farm and forestland
- Serves as an advisory role for the Buncombe County Farmland Preservation Program and helps select and vet easement projects

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- Evaluates conservation easement projects brought forth by nonprofit land trust partners and makes recommendations to County Commissioners
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- Land Trust partners are so valuable & helpful to spread the county funding and maximize land protection
 - Leveraging staff power
 - Leveraging Funding
 - Leveraging Acreage



Farmland Preservation Program – Staff Responsibilities

- Two full-time staff
- Landowner outreach & field visits
- Conservation easement management
 - Grant applications for easement funding
 - Coordinate contractors & all easement due diligence
 - Recording keeping – landscape, etc.
 - Annual monitoring
- Board coordination
 - Agricultural Advisory Board
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- Facilitate VAD/EVAD program
 - Annual renewals & keeping data up to date
- Agritourism programs
- Agricultural community events
- Facilitate Open Space Bond easement funding



Ariel Zijp,
Farmland Preservation Manager



Avni Naik,
Farmland Preservation
Coordinator



What type of property do we conserve?

Conservation Values:

- Prime agricultural soils
- Water quality – streams, springs, rivers, watersheds
- Unique species
- Wildlife habitat
- Historic importance
- Scenic viewshed

Other factors we consider:

- Size of property
- Close to other protected lands
- Active working farm
- Century farm
- Legal access

We have an evaluation system for AAB Projects & a system for LCAB projects



Two Types of Easements

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How do we fund our easement projects?



Easement Acquisition Funds

- Grant Funds –
 - NCDA ADFPTF
 - USDA ACEP ALE
- County Funds –
 - County budget
 - Open Space Bond

Transaction Costs

- Buncombe County
- NCDA ADFP for supplemental costs

Funding source is determined after considering:

- Bargain-sale vs. donation
- Grant eligibility/competition



Common Transaction cost amounts

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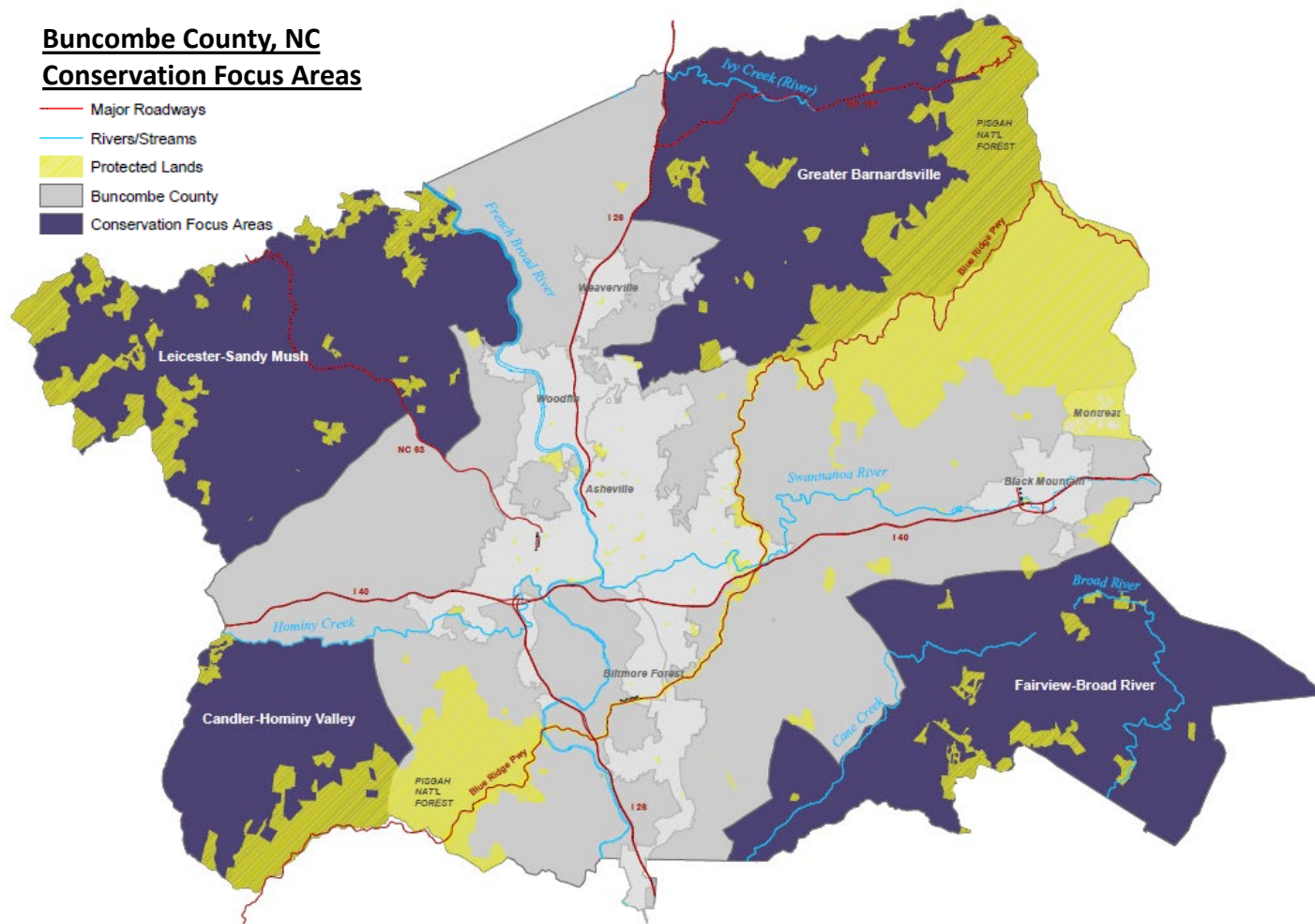
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Survey	\$12,000 - \$45,000
Baseline Documentation Report	\$3,500 or in kind
Forest Management Plan	\$1,500
Environmental Assessment	\$2,500
Legal Fees	\$4,000 - \$7,000
Closing Costs	\$500 - \$1,500



Buncombe County, NC

Conservation Focus Areas

- Major Roadways
- Rivers/Streams
- Protected Lands
- Buncombe County
- Conservation Focus Areas



Consider: Which areas do we want to focus our conservation efforts on? Where is our agriculture concentrated vs. where does it make sense for development to occur?

Commissioners 2022 Goal:

**“Buncombe County
will help conserve
20% of the
county’s total acres
by 2030.”**



Other tools to
protect farms
and
agricultural
viability:



**Education & Business
Support**



Land Access



Conserve Land

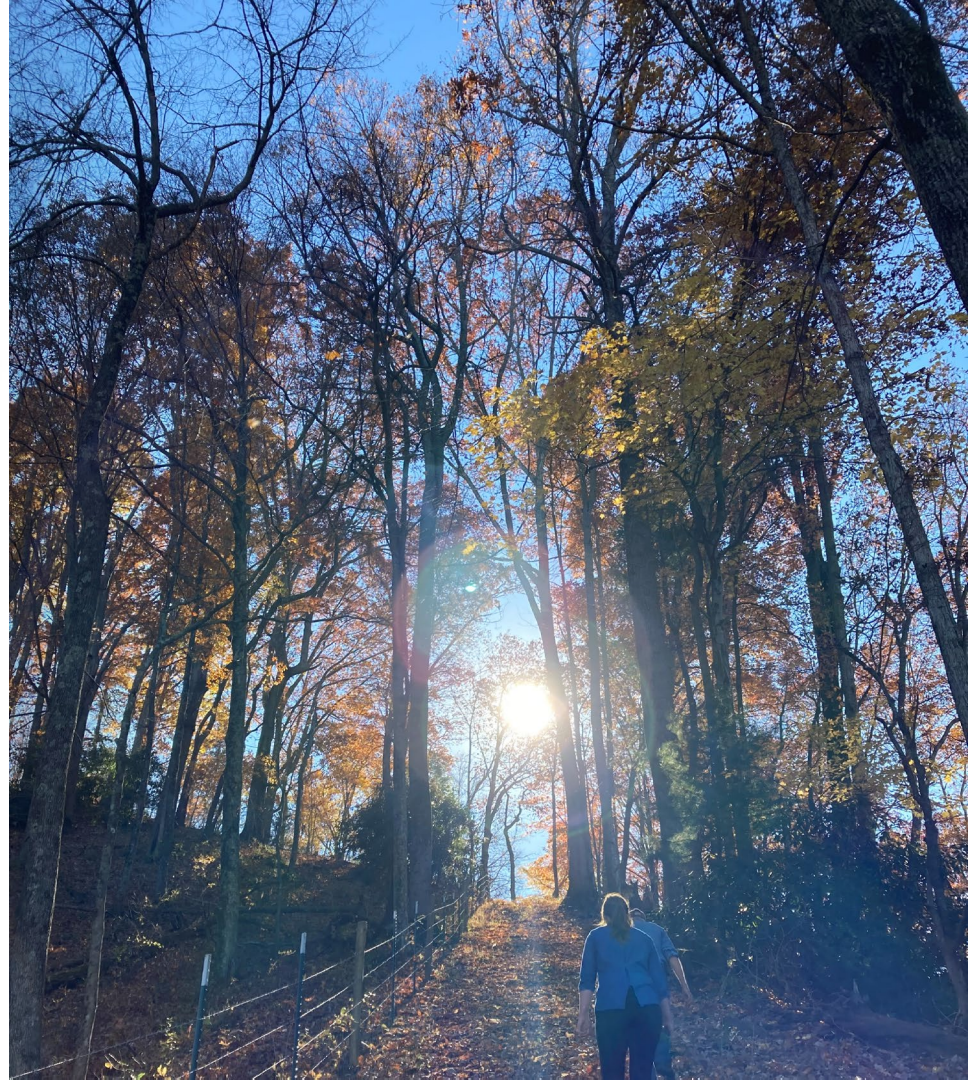


**Succession & Estate
Planning**

Education & Business Support	Land Access	Conserve Land	Farm Succession Planning/Estate Planning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop series to inform ag community - easements, tax programs, cost-share etc. • New landowner guide - PUV • Friends of Agriculture Events • Equipment rentals & Equip Demos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NC Farmlink • Incubator Farm • Partnering protecting lands with local land trusts • Buy-protect-sell model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation easements • VAD/EVAD • Increasing funding sources – open space bond, Agricultural growth zone • Prioritizing regions & types of parcels for conservation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging farmers and landowners to plan • Cost-share Program for professional services (ASAP) • Becoming Certified Farmland Succession Coordinator • Succession/Estate Planning Workshop Series

Recommended Next Steps for Henderson

- Create a full-time Farmland Preservation Coordinator position
- Put reoccurring easement funding into your county budget for transaction costs
- Apply for Grant funds
- Update Farmland Protection Plan
- Create Conservation Focus Areas to prioritize funding
- Act Now! With significant Farmland loss there isn't much time to waste



Questions?



Ariel Zijp, Farmland Preservation Manager
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Avni Naik, Farmland Preservation Coordinator
Avni.Naik@buncombecounty.org
828-250-4792

June 10, 2024

Ryan Manning

Farmland Preservation Program Coordinator

NC Foundation for Soil & Water Conservation



Preserving Farmland with Conservation Easements

NC Foundation for Soil and Water Conservation
NCDA-ADFPTF



Threats to Farmland

- By 2040, NC is 2nd in the nation for loss of farmland-AFT
- NC loses about 55 acres a day
- NC is on track to lose over 1 million acres, roughly 12%
- 48% of the conversion on Henderson's most productive land
- Henderson stands to lose:
 - Best Case Scenario-7,600 acres=23%
 - Worst Case Scenario-16,900 acres=51%
 - Most Likely Scenario-13,200 acres=40%

Ag Census-2017 to 2022

- 2017-Henderson:
 - 455 farms
 - 41,099 acres
 - Average Farm Size=90 acres
 - Total MV of Ag \$77,375,507
- 2022-Henderson:
 - 520 farms
 - 32,743 acres
 - Average Farm Size=63 acres
 - Total MV of Ag \$103,390,000
 - Domestic Tourism (2020)- \$253,700,000



Why We Need Ag



- Preserve rural character and lifestyle
- Local food production, supply, and access
- Open and green space
- Diverse economy and workforce
- Lower cost of community services and utilities infrastructure
- Natural resource conservation
- Wildlife habitat
- Carbon sequestration
- Less impervious surface/flood resiliency



Question: What can be done about it?

Answer: Farmland Preservation

- VAD/EVAD
- Conservation Agreements
- PUV
- Term Easements
- Permanent Easements
- Cost-Share programs
- Buy/Protect/Sell Programs
- Farm Succession Sessions/Estate Planning
- Farmland Protection Plan
- Ag Growth Zones

Why Conservation Easements?

- Agricultural easements are a tool to help farmers stay viable
- Agricultural easements tend to increase surrounding property values, thereby adding to the tax base
- Agricultural easements generally do not remove property from the tax base anymore than the property being in PUV does
- Agricultural easements are a nice middle-ground of limited development, agricultural operations, land conservation and financial compensation
- 2008 COCS showed that for every \$1 spent on residential areas, the county receives \$0.86, a net loss
- Same study showed that for every \$1 spent on agricultural areas, the county receives \$1.03, a net gain even in spite of PUV


How to Establish a Farmland Preservation Program

- ▶ Decide who is going to be doing the work-County, SWCD or Land Trust?
- ▶ If not the county or SWCD, what role, if any, will you play?
- ▶ If the county or SWCD, create a new position or use existing resources?
- ▶ How will it be funded? How much will it be funded?
- ▶ Legal representation/legal defense fund? Stewardship?



How to Establish a FP Program cont'd

- ▶ SWCD
 - ▶ G.S. 139 empowers districts to hold easements
 - ▶ Numerous districts statewide hold easements
 - ▶ Cost-share programs are somewhat like “temporary easements”
 - ▶ Have existing relationships with farmers
 - ▶ Has the conservation/agricultural expertise
 - ▶ Local board can set direction for land protection priorities
 - ▶ Establishing a dedicated position for FP is one thing all of the successful programs have in common
 - ▶ Examples: Buncombe, Polk, Wake, Cabarrus, Hyde



Haywood Farmland Preservation Program 2008-2023

- ▶ 2008-Participated in ADFP Cycle II, participated in every subsequent cycle
- ▶ 2008-County funds established to support FP program
- ▶ 2008-Farmland Protection Plan
- ▶ 2011-Developed ranking form as interest exceeded applicant spots
- ▶ 2015-Part time FP position established
- ▶ 2017-Full-time FP position established
 - ▶ Position was responsible for VAD/EVAD program, CE program through NCDA/NRCS, CE programs otherwise, grants for FP
- ▶ 2023-21 closed easements with ADFP/NRCS-7 easements under contract-5 easements applications approved
- ▶ 32 easements-2,398 acres-\$5.6 million grant funds



Haywood Cont'd

- Open application period until October
- Ranking through October
- Presentation of results to Ag Advisory Board in early November
- November to December deadline, submission of applications
- Generally, ADFP only, 3 NRCS apps through the years
- District was responsible for BDR, EA, Stewardship, all admin
- District would split funds for project appraisals percentages
- County attorney for legal representation
- Haywood had no stewardship fund*

How to Establish a FP Program cont'd

- ▶ Other county departments-Parks and Rec, Environmental, etc
 - ▶ Counties can of course hold easements; many already hold an assortment of them
 - ▶ Keeps direction of priorities local
 - ▶ A number of counties statewide hold ag easements
 - ▶ Allows for some costs to be incorporated into existing position's responsibilities
 - ▶ Examples: Chatham, Orange, Durham



How to Establish a FP Program cont'd

► Partnerships

- By partnering with a land trust or other non-profit a county can create a program to share the responsibility and workload
- Qualified non-profits can and do hold easements statewide
 - Working Lands Trust-33 easements, 18,000 acres approx.
- Wealth of experience and expertise by land trust staff
- Partners can potentially bring other private funders to the table
- Have the capacity and time to administer the program
- Examples: Chatham and Union
- Working Lands Trust, Conserving Carolina, Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy, etc

Funding Methods Throughout NC



COUNTY
ALLOCATION



BONDS



PUV
ROLLBACK



PARTNER
FUNDERS



County Allocations

- ▶ Numerous counties statewide fund programs through staffing and budget appropriations
 - ▶ Alamance-supporting funding through SWCD staff
 - ▶ Buncombe-staff and county funding
 - ▶ Cabarrus-staff
 - ▶ Chatham-staff and county funding
 - ▶ Haywood-staff and county funding
 - ▶ Hyde-special revenue fund
 - ▶ Orange-staff and county funding
 - ▶ Polk, Rockingham, Wake, Johnston, Union and others



Bonds

- ▶ Buncombe-2022 passed a \$30 million-dollar Open Space Bond, a portion of which is dedicated to conservation easements
 - ▶ \$750,000 annually
- ▶ Chatham-2020 Article 46 local sales tax passes, established the Chatham County Agricultural Preservation & Development Trust Fund
 - ▶ \$325,000 annually



PUV Rollback

Alamance-
\$167,000-\$186,000
annually

Cabarrus-\$125,000
annually

Harnett-None
currently, though
planning for PUV
rollback

Johnston-FY2025 will
be the first year,
amount unknown

Wake-\$4million last
couple of years, on
track for the same
amount FY2025

Union-\$960,000
FY2024, another
\$960,000 due in
FY2025

Funding Partners



- NCDCA - Agricultural Development & Farmland Preservation Trust Fund
- USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service
- US Department of Defense
- Private Funding

Independently and through joint projects, these and other agencies partner with the land trusts to fund the acquisition of conservation easements to conserve high-priority lands across the state

Common Concerns and Questions

- ▶ What's the nature and cost of the easement holder's obligations?
 - ▶ How to provide for this?
- ▶ What happens if the easement holder folds?
- ▶ What happens if an easement is violated?
- ▶ Eminent domain?
- ▶ What's the stewardship aspect?
- ▶ What's the timeline look like?



The image shows four woven baskets filled with apples. The apples are a mix of red and yellow varieties, some with green leaves still attached. The baskets are arranged in a slightly overlapping pattern, with the top-left and top-right baskets being more prominent. The background is a dark, textured surface, possibly a wooden table or floor. The overall lighting is soft and natural, highlighting the texture of the apples and the weave of the baskets.

Cont. Taskforce Goals

Taskforce Goal Topics



Conservation
Easements



Succession/Estate
Planning



Seller & Buyer
Connections



Financial
Information



VAD Expansion



Farmer Resources



Total Revenue	\$ 502,275	\$ 503,482	\$ 29,650	-94.1%
Revenue % of Expenditure	58%	50%	6%	

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES:

1	Decrease in Operating costs and anticipated Revenues due to grant funding received in FY24
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UNFUNDED BUDGET REQUESTS:

		\$ REQUEST	TRE
1	NEW Farmland Preservation Program Coordinator - Salary & benefits	\$76,051	\$0.00031
2	Vehicle for Farmland Preservation Program Coordinator	\$51,824	\$0.00021
3	Equipment / additional costs for Farmland Preservation Program Coordinator	\$29,250	\$0.00012

PLANNING
115491

MISSION: To plan for growth to sustain and enhance the quality of life for Henderson County residents.

Looking ahead....

July 8, 2024

- **Loren Hendrickson, Farmland Preservation Coordinator** – Wake County Soil & Water Conservation District
- **Chris Hirni, Land Conservation Manager** – Orange County Natural & Cultural Resources Division



June 10, 2024

Thanks!

Next Meeting:

July 8, 2024 @ 6:00 PM

King Street Meeting Room



Liz Hanson
ehanson@hendersoncountync.gov





Adjourn!!



Buncombe County Farmland Preservation Program

Presented by

Ariel Zijp & Avni Naik

Buncombe County Soil and Water Conservation District

Buncombe County Agricultural and Land Resources Department





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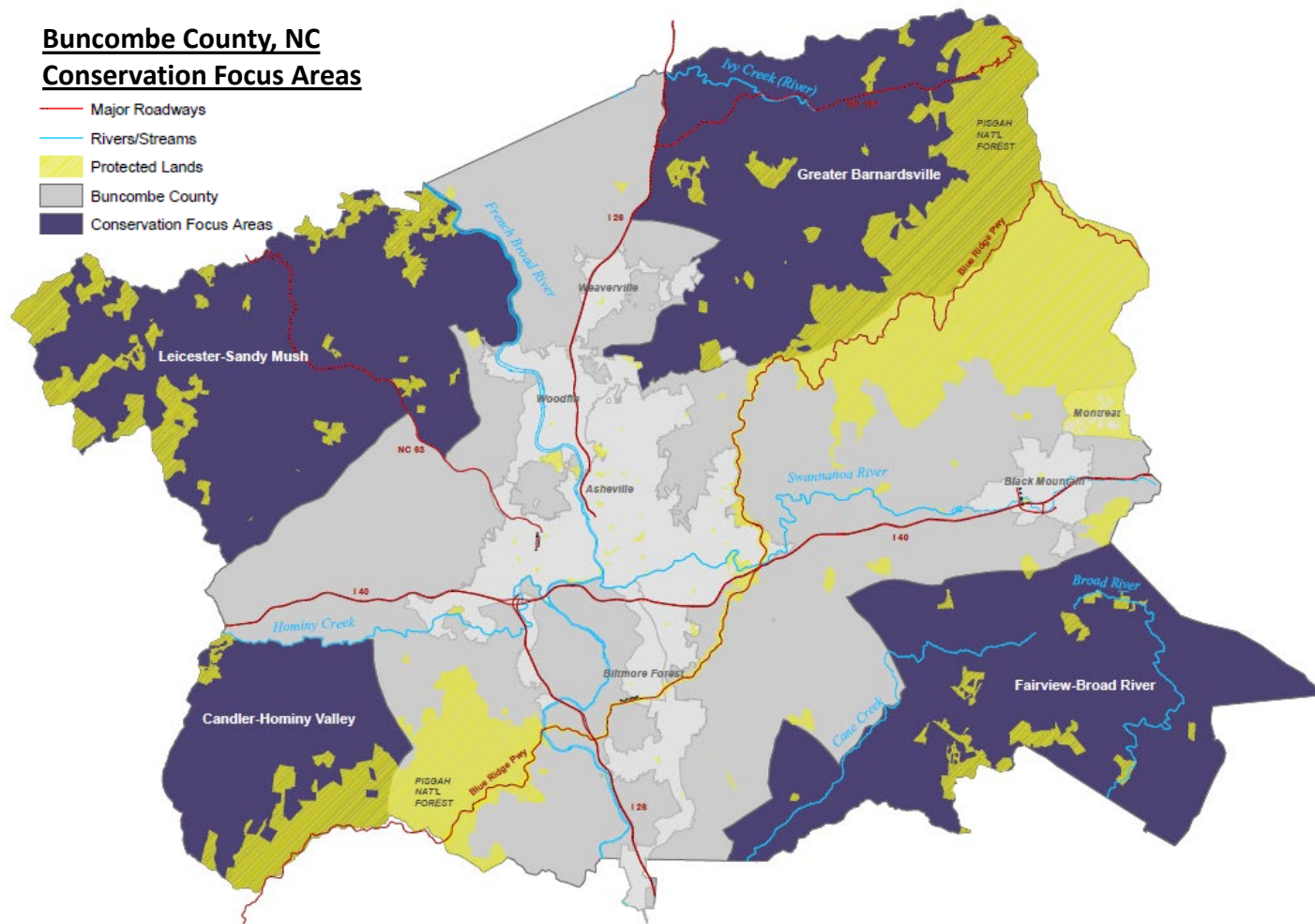
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Buncombe County, NC

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Land Access



Conserve Land

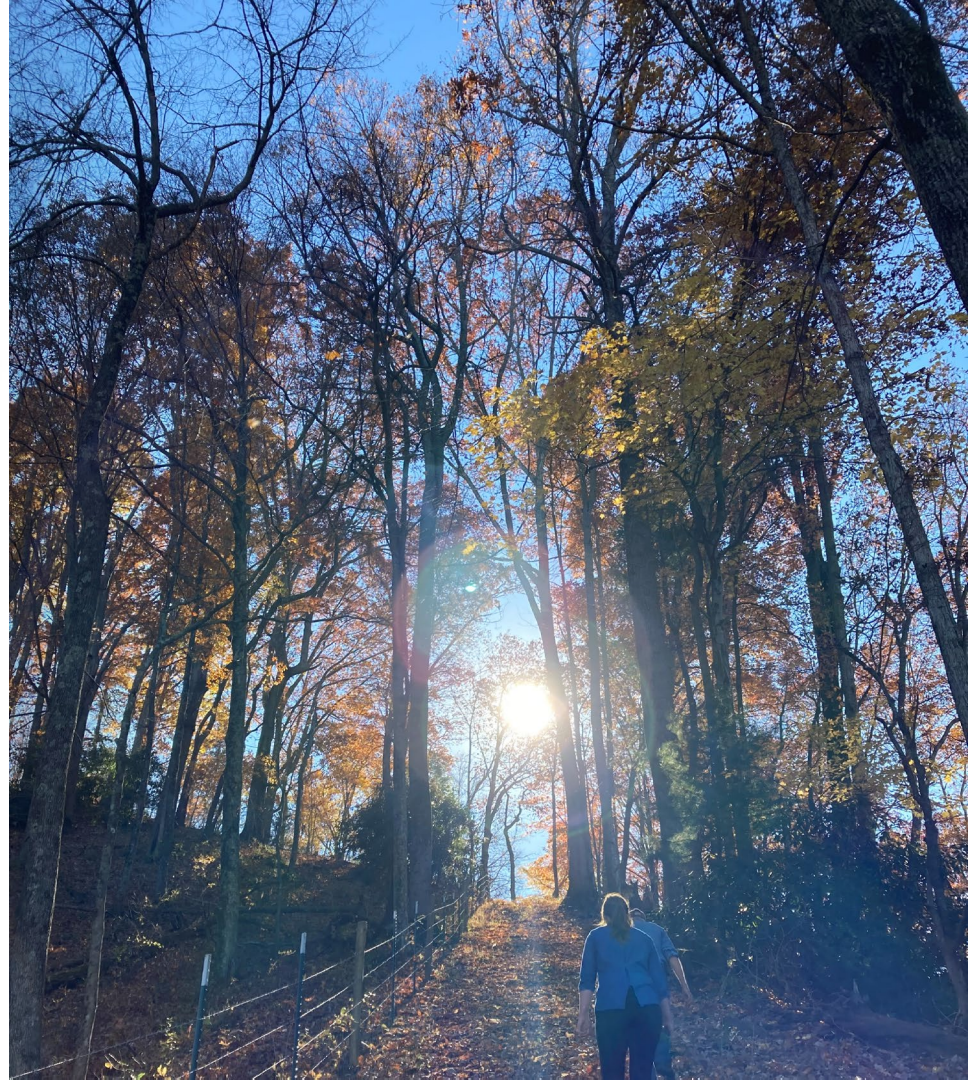


**Succession & Estate
Planning**

Education & Business Support	Land Access	Conserve Land	Farm Succession Planning/Estate Planning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop series to inform ag community - easements, tax programs, cost-share etc. • New landowner guide - PUV • Friends of Agriculture Events • Equipment rentals & Equip Demos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NC Farmlink • Incubator Farm • Partnering protecting lands with local land trusts • Buy-protect-sell model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation easements • VAD/EVAD • Increasing funding sources – open space bond, Agricultural growth zone • Prioritizing regions & types of parcels for conservation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging farmers and landowners to plan • Cost-share Program for professional services (ASAP) • Becoming Certified Farmland Succession Coordinator • Succession/Estate Planning Workshop Series

Recommended Next Steps for Henderson

- Create a full-time Farmland Preservation Coordinator position
- Put reoccurring easement funding into your county budget for transaction costs
- Apply for Grant funds
- Update Farmland Protection Plan
- Create Conservation Focus Areas to prioritize funding
- Act Now! With significant Farmland loss there isn't much time to waste



Questions?



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Preserving Farmland with Conservation Easements

NC Foundation for Soil and Water Conservation
NCDA-ADFPTF



Threats to Farmland

- By 2040, NC is 2nd in the nation for loss of farmland-AFT
- NC loses about 55 acres a day
- NC is on track to lose over 1 million acres, roughly 12%
- 48% of the conversion on Henderson's most productive land
- Henderson stands to lose:
 - Best Case Scenario-7,600 acres=23%
 - Worst Case Scenario-16,900 acres=51%
 - Most Likely Scenario-13,200 acres=40%

Ag Census-2017 to 2022

- 2017-Henderson:
 - 455 farms
 - 41,099 acres
 - Average Farm Size=90 acres
 - Total MV of Ag \$77,375,507
- 2022-Henderson:
 - 520 farms
 - 32,743 acres
 - Average Farm Size=63 acres
 - Total MV of Ag \$103,390,000
 - Domestic Tourism (2020)-
\$253,700,000



Why We Need Ag



- Preserve rural character and lifestyle
- Local food production, supply, and access
- Open and green space
- Diverse economy and workforce
- Lower cost of community services and utilities infrastructure
- Natural resource conservation
- Wildlife habitat
- Carbon sequestration
- Less impervious surface/flood resiliency



Question: What can be done about it?

Answer: Farmland Preservation

- VAD/EVAD
- Conservation Agreements
- PUV
- Term Easements
- Permanent Easements
- Cost-Share programs
- Buy/Protect/Sell Programs
- Farm Succession Sessions/Estate Planning
- Farmland Protection Plan
- Ag Growth Zones

Why Conservation Easements?

- Agricultural easements are a tool to help farmers stay viable
- Agricultural easements tend to increase surrounding property values, thereby adding to the tax base
- Agricultural easements generally do not remove property from the tax base anymore than the property being in PUV does
- Agricultural easements are a nice middle-ground of limited development, agricultural operations, land conservation and financial compensation
- 2008 COCS showed that for every \$1 spent on residential areas, the county receives \$0.86, a net loss
- Same study showed that for every \$1 spent on agricultural areas, the county receives \$1.03, a net gain even in spite of PUV

How to Establish a Farmland Preservation Program

- ▶ Decide who is going to be doing the work-County, SWCD or Land Trust?
- ▶ If not the county or SWCD, what role, if any, will you play?
- ▶ If the county or SWCD, create a new position or use existing resources?
- ▶ How will it be funded? How much will it be funded?
- ▶ Legal representation/legal defense fund? Stewardship?



How to Establish a FP Program cont'd

- ▶ SWCD
 - ▶ G.S. 139 empowers districts to hold easements
 - ▶ Numerous districts statewide hold easements
 - ▶ Cost-share programs are somewhat like “temporary easements”
 - ▶ Have existing relationships with farmers
 - ▶ Has the conservation/agricultural expertise
 - ▶ Local board can set direction for land protection priorities
 - ▶ Establishing a dedicated position for FP is one thing all of the successful programs have in common
 - ▶ Examples: Buncombe, Polk, Wake, Cabarrus, Hyde



Haywood Farmland Preservation Program 2008-2023

- 2008-Participated in ADFP Cycle II, participated in every subsequent cycle
- 2008-County funds established to support FP program
- 2008-Farmland Protection Plan
- 2011-Developed ranking form as interest exceeded applicant spots
- 2015-Part time FP position established
- 2017-Full-time FP position established
 - Position was responsible for VAD/EVAD program, CE program through NCDA/NRCS, CE programs otherwise, grants for FP
- 2023-21 closed easements with ADFP/NRCS-7 easements under contract-5 easements applications approved
- 32 easements-2,398 acres-\$5.6 million grant funds



Haywood Cont'd

- Open application period until October
- Ranking through October
- Presentation of results to Ag Advisory Board in early November
- November to December deadline, submission of applications
- Generally, ADFP only, 3 NRCS apps through the years
- District was responsible for BDR, EA, Stewardship, all admin
- District would split funds for project appraisals percentages
- County attorney for legal representation
- Haywood had no stewardship fund*

How to Establish a FP Program cont'd

- ▶ Other county departments-Parks and Rec, Environmental, etc
 - ▶ Counties can of course hold easements; many already hold an assortment of them
 - ▶ Keeps direction of priorities local
 - ▶ A number of counties statewide hold ag easements
 - ▶ Allows for some costs to be incorporated into existing position's responsibilities
 - ▶ Examples: Chatham, Orange, Durham



How to Establish a FP Program cont'd

► Partnerships

- By partnering with a land trust or other non-profit a county can create a program to share the responsibility and workload
- Qualified non-profits can and do hold easements statewide
 - Working Lands Trust-33 easements, 18,000 acres approx.
- Wealth of experience and expertise by land trust staff
- Partners can potentially bring other private funders to the table
- Have the capacity and time to administer the program
- Examples: Chatham and Union
- Working Lands Trust, Conserving Carolina, Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy, etc

Funding Methods Throughout NC



COUNTY
ALLOCATION



BONDS



PUV
ROLLBACK



PARTNER
FUNDERS



County Allocations

- ▶ Numerous counties statewide fund programs through staffing and budget appropriations
 - ▶ Alamance-supporting funding through SWCD staff
 - ▶ Buncombe-staff and county funding
 - ▶ Cabarrus-staff
 - ▶ Chatham-staff and county funding
 - ▶ Haywood-staff and county funding
 - ▶ Hyde-special revenue fund
 - ▶ Orange-staff and county funding
 - ▶ Polk, Rockingham, Wake, Johnston, Union and others



Bonds

- ▶ Buncombe-2022 passed a \$30 million-dollar Open Space Bond, a portion of which is dedicated to conservation easements
 - ▶ \$750,000 annually
- ▶ Chatham-2020 Article 46 local sales tax passes, established the Chatham County Agricultural Preservation & Development Trust Fund
 - ▶ \$325,000 annually



PUV Rollback

Alamance-
\$167,000-\$186,000
annually

Cabarrus-\$125,000
annually

Harnett-None
currently, though
planning for PUV
rollback

Johnston-FY2025 will
be the first year,
amount unknown

Wake-\$4million last
couple of years, on
track for the same
amount FY2025

Union-\$960,000
FY2024, another
\$960,000 due in
FY2025

Funding Partners



- NCDCA - Agricultural Development & Farmland Preservation Trust Fund
- USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service
- US Department of Defense
- Private Funding

Independently and through joint projects, these and other agencies partner with the land trusts to fund the acquisition of conservation easements to conserve high-priority lands across the state