

**North Carolina State Technical Advisory
Committee Teleconference Minutes
9:00am to 12:00 – March 23, 2022
Moderator, Julius George**

9:00 to 9:10 **Call to Order, Julius George, NRCS**
Welcome to everyone to the NCSTA meeting today.

9:10 to 9:20 **Welcome from State Conservationist, Timothy Beard, NRCS**
Agency employees will return to the office by May 2nd, but supervisors will report into the office by April 18th. Changes to USDA NRCS management team have changed and NC now has some new management positions. Mr. Ryan McCloud is acting State Resource Conservationist (Rafael Vega has accepted a position in Greensboro Tech Center) and Joshua Hammond is our new Public Affairs Specialist for North Carolina. Also, employees are now able to travel and go out in the field to various sites. Reinforcement of all input from everyone is appreciated which helps in all subcommittees and NCSTAC understand what subjects are running smoothly and new projects and initiatives presented.

9:20 to 9:30 **Summary from State Technical Advisory Sub-Committee for Forestry and Wildlife – Ryan McCloud, NRCS**

Recap of Forestry and Wildlife Subcommittee meeting on February 9, 2022.

- Utilized to foster partnership and recommendation on Forestry and Wildlife within NC and forestland uses.
- FY21 technical assistance program and implementation of conservation practices stated below:
 - Wildlife Habitat Planting.
 - Riparian Forest Buffer.
 - Structures for Wildlife.
- NC was able to identify several resource concerns on thousands of acres located on forestlands that improved wildlife habitat.

Climate Smart Agriculture and Forestry (CSAF)

- Several producers across the country have experienced climate impact such as severe storms, floods, drought, and wildfires.
- USDA has developed a strategic plan to address these climate impacts. Using CSAF and it will address carbon sequestration and Greenhouse Gas Emissions. NC has identified priority resource concerns (RC) as seen below on the slide below. These core and supporting practices are used to implement on forestry land and improve the climate in NC and across the U.S.


The slide is titled "Climate Smart Agriculture and Forestry (CSAF)" and features the USDA logo at the top left. It is divided into several sections:

- Priority resource concerns categories:** A table with two columns listing various concerns.

• Air Quality Emissions	• Concentrated Erosion
• Soil Quality Limitations	• Field Sediment, Nutrient and Pathogen Loss
• Degraded Plant Condition	• Wind and Water Erosion
• Terrestrial Habitat	
- Core Practices:** A list of practices including Riparian Forest Buffer (391), Riparian Herbaceous Cover (390), Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment (380), and Tree and Shrub Establishment (612).
- Supporting Practices:** A list of practices including Forest Stand Improvement (666), Wildlife Habitat Planting (420), Hedgerow Planting (422), Brush management (314), Herbaceous Weed Control (315), Mulching (484), and Tree & Shrub Site Preparation (490).
- Image:** A photograph of a red skid steer loader working in a forest.
- Footer:** Includes the text "n = NRCS, Temple, TX" and the "Natural Resources Conservation Service" logo with the website "nrcs.usda.gov".


North Carolina Coastal Federation (NCCF)

- FY2022 NRCS is piloting for creating and restoring oyster restoration.
- Provide reef habitat and filter feeding to improve oyster population on the NC coast.
- Options through the conservation practice(s) that are known as artificial refuction that improves water quality, oyster spat (larvae), define, attach, and grow, on the supply shell.
 - Restoration of using planted oyster shells or faming new sites.
 - Enhance an existing site where planting of exiting oyster shells.



Oyster Restoration Pilot

- The purpose and goal are to work with aquaculture oyster growers in implementing conservation practices to restore the functions and values of oyster reefs while improving water quality and encouraging the development of wildlife habitat.
- Two options: providing shell on a new site or shell on existing identify sites.




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Conservation Activity Plan (CAP) Evolution


- NRCS conservation activities below are carried out by TSPs or other third-party service providers. These activities have been organized and renamed into three categories, CPAs; DIAs; and CEMAs. (Refer to slide below.)
- ✚ Evolution into conservation planning activity.
 - An activity that results in a conservation plan consistent with steps 1 thru 9 of the planning processes; documents decision, identifies practices to identify resource concerns. This is formerly known as a Planning CAP.
 - ✚ Designing implementation activity.
 - Allows for the specific practice design, management description or other instructions that allows a client to implement a conservation practice or system.
 - This is consistent with step 8 in the conservation practice.
 - Formerly known as a Practice CAP.
 - ✚ Conservation evaluation and monitoring activity.
 - Evaluating, monitoring, testing or other assessment for a specific purpose to complete the practice implementation requirement in consistent of the Step 9 of the CP process.



Conservation Activity Plans (CAP) evolution CPA, DIA, and CEMA's

NRCS conservation activities include planning, design, implementation, and monitoring tasks carried out by technical service providers (TSP) or other third-party service providers (Providers) for NRCS conservation program purposes. NRCS has reorganized and renamed Conservation Activity Plans (CAPs) into three new categories—Conservation Planning Activities CPA, Design and Implementation DIA, and Conservation Evaluation and Monitoring Activities CEMA. NRCS divided these activities to clarify which phase of the NRCS conservation planning process the TSP/Provider will be supporting.

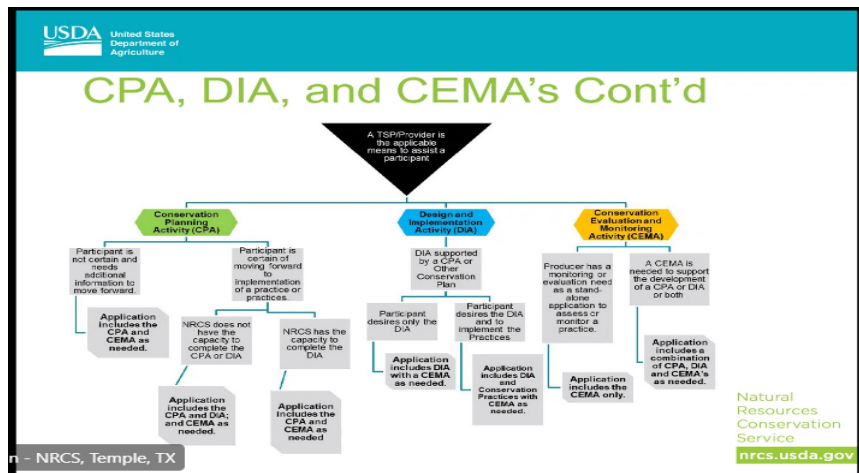
CPAs	DIAs	CEMAs
Code 106 – Forest Management Plan	160 – Prescribed Burning Design and Implementation Activity	216 – Soil Health Testing
102 – Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP)	159 – Grazing Management Design and Implementation Activity	228 – Agricultural Energy Assessment



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The framework on how the plan and process for TSP Providers in using the transitions CAP Plan into the CPA, DIA and CEMA. (Refer to slide below.)



Q/A:

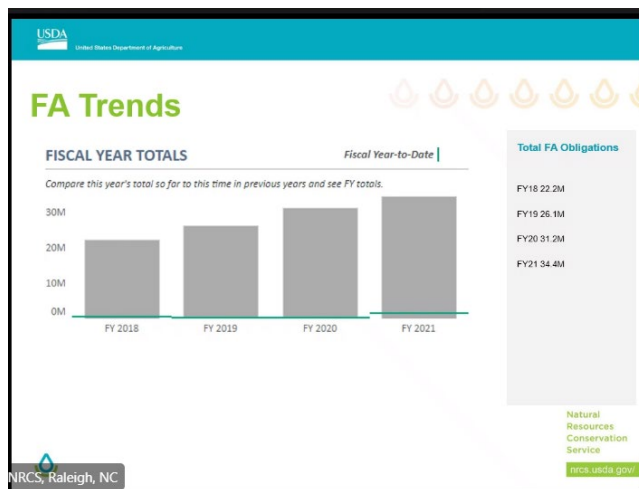
David Williams – How much participation in the Oyster program and participant on the outreach in this project? Response by Julius – The program is a new pilot and because there was an interest by a few producers the initiative started. This project is still real new next FY2023 the agency will be able to do more outreach.

9:30 – 9:40

FY2021 Allocations and Obligations – Jeb Minarik, NRCS

Where are the funds going last fiscal years and moving forward?

- FY2018 thru FY2021 the funding has been very well funded and used.
- FY2022 – allocated \$34.4M.
- Additional \$17M has been requested.



FY2021

- Total contracts = 660
- Total amount paid for FY2021 = \$9.2M same as 26.7% of funding
- The following slide indicated the breakdown of each program and its funding, contracts, and acres.



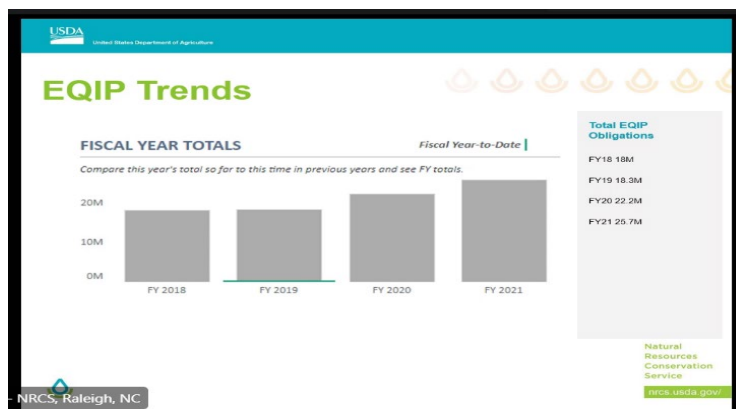
About three quarters of the funding was spent on EQIP.

- FY2021 over \$25M was obligated.
- FY2022 close to \$24M obligated and requested an additional \$10M.
- The more funds requested and obligated it shows NHQ that the monies are being used and additional funding is needed each FY.

Program	Total Contracts	Treated Acres	Total Obligation
RCPP-EQIP	5	416	0.5M
CSP-GCI	22	396	34K
CSP	121	40,826	8.2M
EQIP	512	52,257	25.7M
Total	660	93,895	34.4M


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NRCS, Raleigh, NC



FY2021 EQIP Livestock

- NHQ is wanting to see at least 50% of the funds to be spent on livestock practices.
- FY2021 over \$17M was spent in livestock for NC, which is at 66%.
- Livestock is the main item that NHQ is wanting to target.



NRCS, Raleigh, NC

Contracts:	204
Obligations:	\$17,073,075.50
Payments:	\$6,722,622.71
Contract Acres:	8,600.0

FY2021 EQIP Livestock

Forestry and Wildlife is also another item that need to be funded by 10%.

- Below is the FY2021 10% funding for EQIP Forestry and Wildlife.
- Over \$5.5M went to the wildlife fund pool.
- The practices codes above the Fund Pool table are very important because when these practices get funded the agency gets to place those into the 10% wildlife funding.
- FY2021 \$5.7M for Wildlife was 20% of NC's total obligations.
- The forestry pool at the very bottom if a general pool and does not include the longleaf pine. This is tracked at a national level.

FY2021 EQIP Forestry & Wildlife

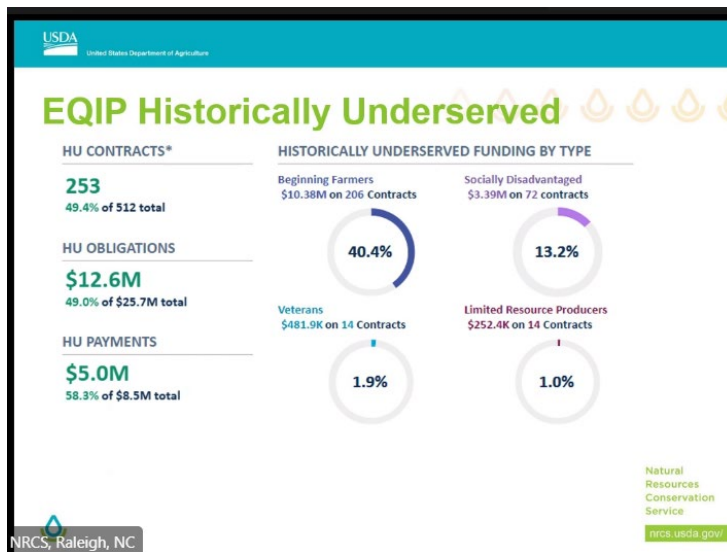
Fund Pool	Applications	Estimates	Contracts	Obligated
GWV	5	\$ 290,365	5	\$ 281,363
Helibender	7	\$ 411,183	4	\$ 290,275
LLPI Est.	58	\$ 1,331,309	30	\$ 627,227
LLPI Mgt.	38	\$ 976,651	20	\$ 729,084
WLFV Northern Bobwhite Quail Pine Savanna	1	\$ 2,200	1	\$ 2,154
Wildlife - Aquatic	0	-	0	-
Wildlife - Early Successional & Pollinator H	8	\$ 125,543	8	\$ 90,431
Wildlife - Forest	0	-	0	-
All other (includes a "wildlife" practice)			72	\$ 3,696,787
Total	117	\$ 3,137,251	140	\$ 5,717,321

*327, 390, 391, 395, 396, 420, 422, 472, 580,
643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 649, 657, 658, and 659
(blue denotes practices NC contracted)

Fund Pool	Applications	Estimates	Contracts	Obligated
Forestry (Combined)	157	\$ 3,964,948	43	\$ 1,176,895

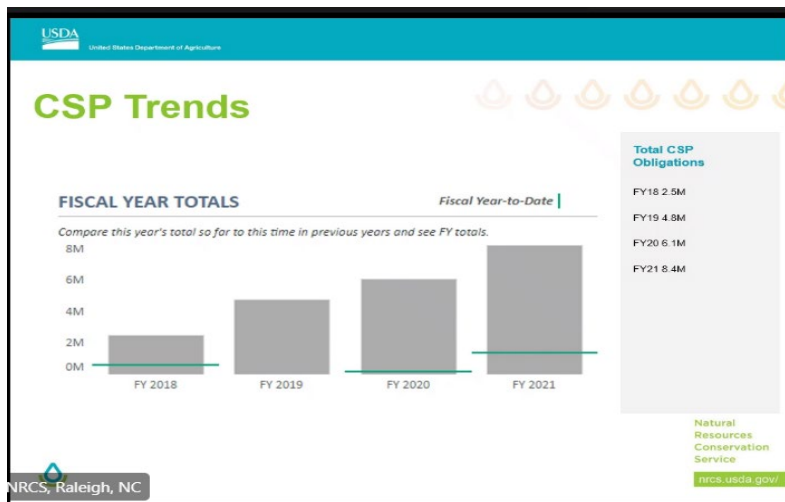
EQIP Historically Underserved (Refer to slide below.)

- Targets for the Beginning Farmers and Socially Disadvantaged Farmers are at 5% each.
- The targeted amounts are each exceeding the 5% funding.
- Also, refer on the table how much was funded for VF and LRF.



CSP Trends has about one quarter of funding dedicated to this program.

- Refer to the specifics on the right-hand side of allocations that was spent in FY2021.
- NC was one of the states that NHQ allocated most of the funds.
- NC receives funding for General Classic CSP.
- NC also received funding for Initiatives, such as Organic Initiative and LLPI.
- CSP contracts are funded for 5-years. (The participant is allowed to extend an additional 5 years before the contract reaches the 5-year mark.) This would be with additional renewal funding.
- NC has requested an additional \$7M in funding on top of the \$12M that has been requested.
- The green line reflects the amount already funded as of March 22, 2021, and then again on March 20, 2022. This is to show NHQ that the funding is being allocated and used.



Categories of CSP

- Agland – would be a participant that has pastureland/cropland.
- Specific funds are given for Organic and LLPI.
- Majority of obligations is in Forestry – Nonindustrial Private Forestland.
- Renewal – this is for participants who wanted to re-enroll those that had a 5-year contract into another 5-year contract.

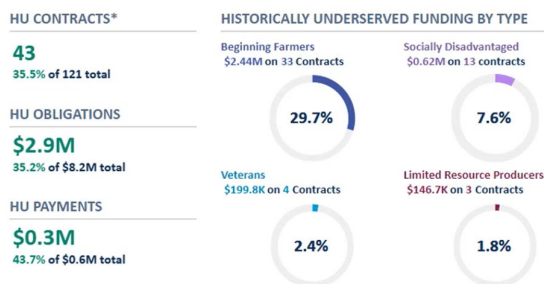
**FY2021
CSP by Category**

Category	Contracts	Obligations
Agland	19	1.2M
Organic	1	12k
Longleaf Pine	18	1.3M
NIPF	53	4.3M
Renewal	30	1.4M
Totals	121	8.2

CSP Historically Underserved

- Targets for the Beginning Farmers and Socially Disadvantaged Farmers are at 5% each.
- The targeted amounts are each exceeding the 5% funding.
- Also, refer on the table how much was funded for VF and LRF.
- NC has exceeded in all these items.

CSP Historically Underserved



Q/A:

Cathy Deerson

In the EQIP slide I am curious as to what kinds of contracts account for those other wildlife practices that makeup Wildlife 10%?

Response: Julius George - NRCS can capture any form of practices whether they be in any form of fund pools where Wildlife practices may have been contracted to count toward the 10% Wildlife mandate.

This may take place in some of the cropland pools, pasture pools, but mostly takes place in NRCS's Wildlife related pools. The practices that are located on the FY2021 EQIP Forestry & Wildlife slide at the top of the Forestry Fund Pool support wildlife. Due to the National Instruction capitalizes on these as well to show support of establish wildlife habitat as well as meeting that 10% mandate.

In CSP, can you speak generally to what account are the growth of the program of the last few years is more funding been requested each year because of the increase of demand or availability possible for us to enroll farmers?

Response: Julius George – There has been an increase for forestry, and this has a big effect the funding that is offered in reference to the various practices. There is a practice what has caused a tremendous increase is EC12 Carbon Sequestration practice. This practice through NRCS' outreach and consultants NRCS has been able to reach out to more landowners. This is to make sure that they are aware of this practice in programs. When NRCS is securing a CSP contract it is being secured within a 5-year span. This gives NRCS an opportunity to capture technical assistance that allows NRCS to pay employees and benefits, etc.

Response: Jeb Minarik emphasizes that the practices in blue on the FY2021 EQIP Forestry & Wildlife slide are the practices that were used in FY2021.

Keith Larek

Do you know how much money was requested in total?

Response: Julius George – In FY2022 an additional \$17M was requested. NRCS can request additional

funding in June 2022. By that time, NC is going to re-evaluate how much additional funds will be needed. A request of \$10M has been requested for EQIP and \$7M for CSP. In June another assessment will be completed to find out where NC can receive any additional funding.

Timothy Beard's additional comments: The NC NRCS recognizes that there is a great demand from landowners to utilize these programs. It is important to get the information out and doing a lot of outreach. NC NRCS receives comments that the applications are out there but are not accepted which in turn upsets the participant. NRCS needs to make sure that the participant should try to reapply but explain that there are many applications to need to be re-evaluated and obligated. Not all applications will be accepted. The final allocation has not been received yet. Some significant cuts have been made to some programs. NHQ has informed NC NRCS that not all programs will be funded.

9:40 to 10:00

New Programs to be Announced in FY 2022 – Julius George, NRCS

Urban Conservation Initiative

- Assist to Urban producers farming on small acres.
- NRCS is looking to assist individuals in rural areas in a high priority.
- Individual that are just outside the rural area within a 10-mile radius.

- According to the Census Bureau, an urbanized area contains a population of 50,000 or above. Population density is 1,000 persons per square mile, with adjacent territory of at least 500 persons per square mile. Urban clusters are, by comparison, less densely populated with populations between 2,500 and 50,000. Urban clusters are often identified with the populated areas around small towns and cities. Urban areas of either type may not adhere to municipal boundaries.
- The USDA website describes urban agriculture as, “City and suburban agriculture [that] takes the form of backyard, roof-top and balcony gardening, community gardening in vacant lots and parks, roadside urban fringe agriculture and livestock grazing in open space.” Among the types of foods grown are vegetables, mushrooms, medicinal and ornamental plants, and fruit trees. Animal and livestock options in urban agriculture include chickens, fish, goats, and honey bees.

The following table below show some of the practices offered in the Urban Initiative. These are specifically for addressing Urban and small farms.

FY2022 Urban Initiative Practices w/ Urban Scenarios			
199 - UA	Conservation Plan	Urban Farm - 0.5 acres or less	Number
317 - UA	Composting Facility	Urban-Small Farm Pad + Bins	SqFt
325 - UA	High Tunnel System	Contiguous US Snow (Gothic style peaked roof)	Square Feet
325 - UA	High Tunnel System	Contiguous US (Quonset style rounded roof)	Square Feet
325 - UA	High Tunnel System	Small High Tunnel, Intensive Sun	Sq Ft
327 - Pr/Wp/CS/UA	Conservation Cover	Pollinator Mix on Urban Sites	kSqFT
328 - Pr/Wp/CS/CIC/UA	Conservation Crop Rotation	Specialty Crop Rotations Urban or Small Scale	kSqFT
329 - Pr/Wp/CS/CIC/UA	Residue and Tillage Management - No-Till	Urban Small Scale No Till No Dig with Residue or Cover	kSqFT
340 - Pr/Wp/CS/CIC/UA	Cover Crop	Cover Crop - 1 acre or less	Acres
342 - UA	Critical Area Planting	Small Scale or Urban Field Permanent Cover	kSqFT
345 - CS/CIC/UA	Res & Tillage Mgmt., Reduced Tillage	Urban Small Scale Reduced Tillage with Residue or Cover	kSqFT
386 - CS/UA	Field Border	Small Scale Urban Field Border	kSqFT
558 - UA	Roof Runoff Structure	Urban high tunnel roof runoff trench drain and storage	LnFt
	570 Stormwater Runoff Control	Combination, Most common Best Management Practices	Ac
570 - UA	Stormwater Runoff Control	Rain Garden	SqFt
	570 Stormwater Runoff Control	Salt Fence	Ft
590 - Pr/Wp/CS/CIC/UA	Nutrient Management	Small Scale Urban Basic Nutrient Management	kSqFT



For information only (draft map) above.

- Areas that are in yellow-manilla color are the areas that are considered as urban. Information was obtained by the 2017 Census which provides urban and urban clusters.
- Areas that are outside the yellow-manilla color but within the red borders is a 10-mile buffer around the yellow area that will be offered assistance to those urban producers.
- This will help in utilizing as much of the funds.
- NC has set aside \$500,000 for the Urban Initiative.

Q/A:

(Who asked these questions)

Will there be an opportunity to suggest the practices for this initiative?

Response: Julius George – Any practices that are offered to the participant will be available.

Can Riparian practices be included in this initiative?

Response: Julius George - If there is a need to apply the Riparian Buffer than it will be provided to the participant.

Michael Jones

Would the 10-mile buffer be used when cities in surrounding states are on or near the with NC?

Response: Julius George – NC cannot go outside of the state. But if that particular city was within the radius, then it would be eligible to apply for the initiative. If they are not within the yellow areas than it would be considered a medium priority. Anything that is in the white areas is considered a low priority.

John Isenhour

Will there be a higher priority placed closer to the urban clusters? Will application within the 5-miles of the urban center receive more points?

Response: Julius George – Higher priority that are closer to the urban clusters has not been taken into consideration, but it can be initiated as part of the ranking. Once the templates are received from NHQ that is something that can be considered. NC is looking forward to having the rankings established and for planning purposes.

Katherine Diersen

Comment: I think that this is such a great initiative and very excited to see how it goes.

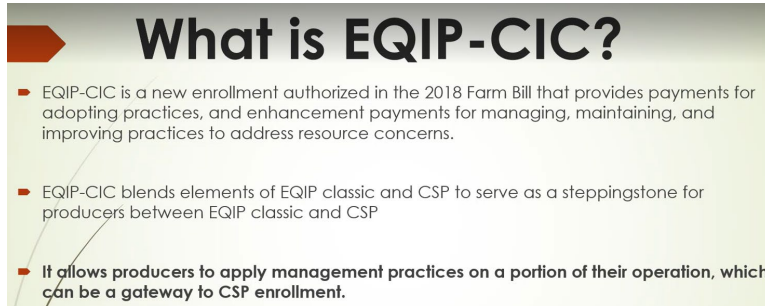
Response: Julius George – committee is happy to hear that we have support because we need everyone assistance to reach out to landowners that qualify in those urban cluster areas.

David Williams

Tim, will the reduction in CTA funding be partially offset by greater TA associated with EQIP/CTA?

Response: Tim Beard – The TA should increase because of the 9-step multiple done under CTA. Going into contracting program funding for TA kick-in. This is right now a waiting game of when we receive the funding. There are various formulas that are used to figure out the funding for the CTA under the programs.

Conservation Incentive Contracts



What is EQIP-CIC?

- EQIP-CIC is a new enrollment authorized in the 2018 Farm Bill that provides payments for adopting practices, and enhancement payments for managing, maintaining, and improving practices to address resource concerns.
- EQIP-CIC blends elements of EQIP classic and CSP to serve as a steppingstone for producers between EQIP classic and CSP
- It allows producers to apply management practices on a portion of their operation, which can be a gateway to CSP enrollment.

- Designed to help landowners to roll into CSP to continue the management of their current operations.
- Enrollment opportunity in management practices of NC and is available for croplands and producers that have cropland to implement the management practices to improve the management on their farm(s).
- It offers a 5-year contract what allows participants to schedule the managing practices multiple times within the contract.

Joint Chief's Landscape Restoration Partnership – Uwharrie Restoration Initiative, Lee Holcomb, NRCS



Joint Chief's Landscape Restoration Partnership (Uwharrie National Forest)

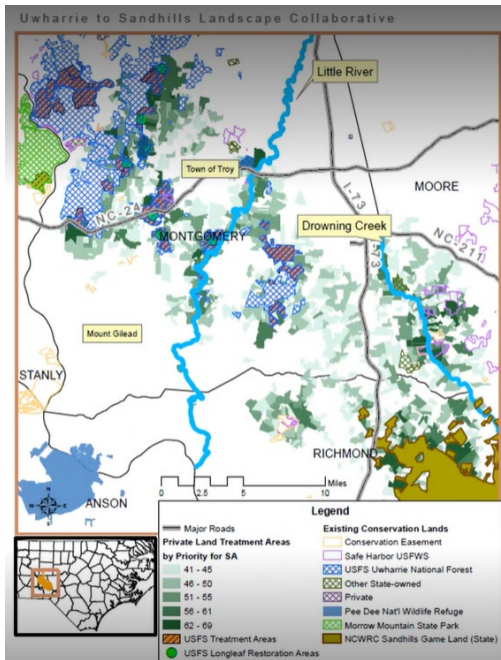
- The Uwharries are located within the NC Sandhills Longleaf Local Implementation Team boundary of the America's Longleaf Restoration Initiative. The Uwharries to Sandhills Landscape Collaborative (USLC) will improve forest health by restoring privately and publicly owned pine forests to an open-canopy condition (Habitat) in and around Uwharrie National Forest (UNF), and in a habitat corridor (the Corridor) between the Uwharries and the NC Sandhills ecoregion. To sustain project outcomes private landowners will be trained and mentored to conduct prescribed burning on their land by the Sandhills Prescribed Burn Association (PBA), and project partners.

Landscape-Scale Priorities and Objectives

Check one or more JCLRP objectives this proposal plans to address:

1. ☒ Reduce and mitigate wildfire threats to communities and landowners
2. ☒ Protect water quality and supply for communities and industry
3. ☒ Improve habitat conditions for at-risk species

- This initiative is a three-year funded project through NHQ.
- This encompasses many of NRCS Area 2 counties.
 - Randolph
 - Davidson
 - Rowan
 - Stanly
 - Richmond
 - Western part of Moore
 - Montgomery
- The focus is on the above-mentioned items on the slide under Landscape-Scale Priorities and Objectives.
- Individuals involved in NC with this initiative are:
 - Lee Holcomb
 - Ruben Torres
 - Julius George
 - Jeb Minarik



- Focused on private land buffers and watersheds.
- The stakeholders are wanting to show where their main focus is prioritized.

Joint Chief Initiative Resource Concerns and Practices

Resource Concerns

wildlife habitat improvement	wildlife habitat connectivity	at-risk species resiliency
ecosystem restoration	forestland conversion to pine plantations or non-forest development	wildfire hazard reduction
soil erosion	water supply loss	non-native plant infestations
illegal ORV use water quality damage	aquatic species health	restoration of extirpated species

Practice

420 - Wildlife Habitat Planting
314/315 - Brush Management / Herbaceous Weed Management (mechanical and chemical)
342 - Critical Area Planting (moderate grading)
338 - Prescribed Burning (understory)
394 - Firebreak (dozer plow)
490 - Tree/Shrub Site Preparation (mow and spray)
612 - Tree/Shrub Establishment (plug conifers)
655 - Forest Trails and Landings (grading and shaping with vegetative establishment)
666 - Forest Stand Improvement (competition control)

- Need to work on ranking pools for initiative.
- Setting up points and priority.
- Focus more on management vs. establishment.
- Some of the following practices will be included into the ranking.

Funding Availability

- NRCS Wildlife practices will be funded through the requested NRCS funds. NC NRCS will establish a dedicated Joint Chiefs Initiative funding pool that will focus NC NRCS practices on the proposed project area (See map). EQIP funding is being requested annually for three years as part of this Joint Chiefs proposal; Year 1 - \$118,405, Year 2 - \$215,507, and Year 3 - \$265,461.
- Only applications that qualify for the joint chief initiative will be evaluated in the established fund pool.

- Funding that has been given by NHQ which is FA monies of \$118,405 and already have \$177,300 monies of applications and pool for FY22. This is within the 10-mile buffer within the Uwharrie National Forest.
- The pool has already been setup in the system in order to get started for FY22.

- There is a lot of forestry workload in Montgomery, Richmond, Stanly, and Moore counties.
- In year w and year 3 more there will be more focus to the northwest of NC where there is not as much request for forestry, such as Davidson, Davie, and Randolph counties.

High Priority Practice Update for FY2023

FY2022 High Priority Practices

Any recommended changes to the high priority practices for FY2023?

- Conservation Crop Rotation - 328
- Residue and Tillage Management - No-Till- 329
- Nutrient Management- 590
- Pest Management Conservation System- 595
- Cover Crop- 340
- Prescribed Grazing- 528
- Conservation Cover- 327
- Fence- 382
- Animal Mortality Facility- 316
- Forest Stand Improvement- 666

- Group to provide any additional High Priority Practices to be identified as high priority vs. the one for FY2022. The listing can be adjusted annually.
- Send any additional practices to consider for FY23 and email to Julius and everyone will have approximately 2-weeks to discuss and then respond to Julius.
- These practices can be considered as team practices and high priority.
- Any of the practices selected there will be a 90% cost share to any contract. There will be a higher payment rate for a particular practice chosen.
- Julius George will check on the Waste Facility

10:00 to 10:15 Easement Updates (ACEP-ALE and WRP) – Easement Staff, Brian Loadholt, NRCS
- WRP/WRE Meeting – March 30, 2022, from 10:30am –

11:30am

- Received over 29 ALE applications with over \$13M.
- Out of 4 RCPP program easements there are 21 applications included.
- Reviewing applications.
- Building parcel contracts.
- Visiting sites for eligibility.
- There are 29 active easement parcel contracts, some are closed, and others close to being closed. Although, it does take up to 2 years to close these easements.
- NC also has 18 WRE parcels and have to be reviewed for eligibility.
- Discussion of WRE ranking for an additional subcommittee meeting for updating the ranking document. A meeting with the national program manager of WRE is schedule for the week of March 28, 2022. This meeting is to further identify WRE and further impacts.
- A meeting for ranking concerns is still in the works.
- Regarding the ALE it was decided to remove the LESA question from the ranking document. Also, working on replacement question to replace the LESA question.
- Discussion of GARC which is at 90% and will be maintaining this percentage.

Q/A:

Dewitt Hardee

Can you update on status of new conservation application?

Response: Brian Loadholt – NRCS is out in the field at present for eligibility purposes, since

there are 29 it will take a little while to complete. There has been about 2 to 3 weeks spent in field visits reviewing the applications packages that have been submitted.

How is funding in caparison to applications?

Response: Brian Loadholt – Additional funding has been requested for the current applications. There is a new item that NC NRCS is looking into for Underserved applications. But the next level of funding is not expected until sometime in April 2022.

A new scenario is being looked at through the NHQ but not sure how it will look until sometime in April.

10:15 to 10:30

Soil Health and Soils in Urban Area, Michael Jones, NRCS

Soil Health and Soils has been edited about 3 months ago.

Goal 1 – Provide Soil Health Leadership

- Soil health teams will be designated. There will be team leads and POCs.
- SRC will coordinate the soil teams and meet twice a year.
- Teams will consist of resource soil scientist, area resource conservationist, soil conservationist, soil conservation technician, and district technician. There may not be all consist of all these individuals.
- To promote soil health and education staff members.
- Training for field office groups.
- Training for use of equipment, i.e., soil health buckets.
- Promote adhoc groups.
- Promote cross training.
- Soil health tunnel – a display that can be moved throughout the state for several events/activities.
- Identify gaps.
- Promote soil health event yearly.
- Present soil health event yearly.
- Use outreach to community soil health.
- Soil health management and strategy.

Goal 2 – More Conservation on the Ground Resulting in Improved Soil Health

- Facilitate regular soil health tech exchange.
- Identify gaps in soil health knowledge.
- Review practice standards as needed to incorporate soil health concerns.
- Promote soil health events and attend at least one per year.
- Restart the soil health subcommittee with reports to the group. Anyone interested in joining this committee, send your names and information to Mike Jones or Ryan

Goal 3 – develop strong partnerships with the NCACD, SWCD and other NC conservation partners.

- Enlists national soil health division specialist for support.
- Soil health technician/specialist leads will use outreach and awareness efforts to identify barriers.

II. → Explore opportunities to leverage existing and develop new partnerships to facilitate training and adoption of SHMS through agreements and MOUs.¶
a. → Include partner staff in agency training opportunities to further their knowledge of soil health. ¶
b. → Explore opportunities for outreach and awareness efforts in coordination with external affairs, partners, and the media, leveraging ability to co-brand products and outreach campaigns. ¶
c. → Continue and enhance better engagement and communication with University, Cooperative Extension, and NC Dept of Agriculture and Consumer Service partners to facilitate more common ground messaging in joint promotion of soil health objectives and the management systems necessary to achieve them in NC climate, soils, crop systems, and economic realities. ¶
d. → Continue to work with NCDA Soil Testing laboratory partners to encourage inclusion of soil organic matter percentage in 'classic' type soil testing. ¶

Urban Soil Survey Update

Urban Soil Survey Updates¶

The Soil Plant Science Division (SPSD) is working with NC NRCS on a plan to update the urban areas along the I-40 US Rt 1 Greater Raleigh-Durham, I-85-I-40 Greater Charlotte, I-26-I-40 Greater Asheville areas in NC. This is in support of the Urban initiative that Julius was talking about earlier. Timelines have only been roughed out and with minimal staffing from the SPSP, are likely to change.¶

¶

The main reason for needing this update is that many map units have little or no data associated with them. Making interpretations, at best, difficult but more likely impossible.¶

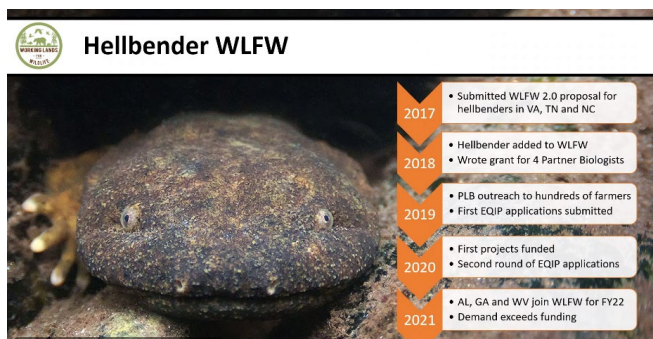
- The soil plant science division (SPSD) is working with the NC NRCS on a plan to update the urban areas

10:30 to 10:55

Break

10:55 to 11:10


Eastern Hellbender WLFW Update – Katherine Diersen



- WLFW 2.0 is led by the state, and they have more discretion on how to implement the program.
- It does have any federal funding.
- 2018 allowed WLFW to hire four private land biologists.
- Lots of outreach was completed the in the early years, including lots of one-on-one outreach with farmers.
- Lots of EQIP applications were done in 2019 and were defunded in 2020.
- 2nd batch of applications was submitted in 2020 and in the process of being funded in FY2022.
- Also, AL, GA and WV have decided to join the WLFW for 2022.



- FY2020 WLFW submitted 15 projects for \$977,258.99
- 11 projects were funded and 4 were cancelled by the producer.

FY 2020 – NC	
Projects Submitted vs. Funded (EQIP)	
Submitted	Obligated
15 applications - \$977,258.99	11 contracts - \$731,452.58; 4 applications and \$245,806.41 cancelled by producer before obligation
	Obligated Pools
	Hellbender Pool 5 contracts - \$166,016.58
	Mills River RCPP 1 contract - \$70,400.00
	WNC SWQI RCPP 1 contract - \$450,000.00
	Local Pasture 1 contract - \$25,500.00
	Local Crop 3 contracts - \$9,286.00
Completed Practices	
\$122,183.68	
387 ft exclusion fence (+ water), 120.4 ac. cover crop, 1 ac. riparian buffer, 2.3 ac. stream habitat imp & mgmt.	


Please refer to the slide above for projects submitted obligated vs. unobligated.

FY 2020 – NC	
Projects Submitted vs. Funded (EQIP)	
Remaining \$159,268.90 (excluding \$450,000 RCPP project)	
Streambank and Shoreline Protection*	5 contracts – 1,723 ft
Channel Bed Stabilization*	5 contracts - 880 ft
Stream Habitat Improvement and Management*	5 contracts – 1.1 ac. (720 ft)
Riparian Buffers (391 and 612)*	5 contracts – 2.6 ac.
Exclusion Fencing*	2 contracts – 2,819 ft.
Grassed Waterway	1 contract – 0.6 ac.
*These remaining practices are pending completed designs from NRCS ENG staff	
riparian buffer, 2.3 ac. stream habitat imp & mgmt.	

- This table is showing the remaining stream restoration projects.
- These restorations are still pending because WLFW is still waiting on the NRCS engineer design.

FY 2020 – NC	
Projects Submitted vs. Funded (EQIP)	
Submitted	Obligated
Remaining \$450,000 WNC-SWQI RCPP Contract	
Streambank and Shoreline Protection	3,515 ft
Channel Bed Stabilization	3,650 ft
Stream Habitat Improvement and Management	4.0 ac. (3,515 ft)
Riparian Buffers (391 and 612)	1.5 ac.
These remaining practices are pending additional funding from NCDWR	
\$122,183.68	
387 ft exclusion fence (+ water), 120.4 ac. cover crop, 1 ac. riparian buffer, 2.3 ac. stream habitat imp & mgmt.	


- This remaining WNC-SWQI is still awaiting additional funds from DWR.

FY 2021 – NC	
Projects Submitted vs. Funded (EQIP)	
Submitted	Obligated
14 applications - \$717,028.93	8 contracts - \$318,802.88; 1 only partially funded (\$4,556.00 of \$63,958.85), 4 applications at \$265,164.29 cancelled by producer before obligation, 1 at \$69,398.35 not funded
	Obligated Pools
	Hellbender Pool 4 contracts - \$301,451.60
	Local Pasture 1 partial contract - \$4,556.00
	Local Crop 4 contracts - \$15,376.08

- There were 14 applications for approximately \$700,000.
- 8 of the applications were obligated.
- 1 was partially funded, the pasture, forestry, water system and fencing but the stream restoration portion was not funded.
- 4 applications that were cancelled.
- 1 did not receive funding.
- FY2021 did not have 2 RCPP pools due to lack of funding.
- Local pasture and Local Crop did get funded.
- 4.8 acres of riparian buffer, 1 improved stream crossing, 320 ft. streambank and shoreline protection.

FY 2021 – NC	
Projects Submitted vs. Funded (EQIP)	
Remaining Active Contracts \$281,516.19	
Streambank and Shoreline Protection*	3 contracts – 1,683 ft
Channel Bed Stabilization*	3 contracts - 935 ft
Stream Habitat Improvement and Management*	3 contracts – 2.1 ac. (1,580 ft)
Riparian Buffers (391 and 612)*	3 contracts – 2.8 ac.
Exclusion Fencing	1 contract – 529 ft.
Grassed Waterway	1 contract – 0.7 ac.
*These remaining practices are pending additional funding from NCDWR	

- Stream restoration are about the same as FY2020 and managed by Resource Institute.
- Awaiting additional funding from the Division of Water Resources to complete these projects.

FY 2022 – NC	
Projects Submitted vs. Funded (EQIP)	
Submitted	Obligated
10 projects - \$1,380,932.37	PENDING Preapprovals on April 20
	

This picture is showing the stream habitat improvement structural enhancement for eastern hellbenders that is a guideline that was put together for NRCS and the three rocks closest to

the lower part of the picture were bought in and installed cover rocks for eastern hellbenders. A few of these rocks were installed on this producer's property and installed a Riparian Buffer. Once hellbender has been found since the installment and it was colonized since then. These sites will be monitored to look for outcomes and success stories.

- 10 projects were submitted for FY2022 with a submission of \$1.3M.
- All submissions are pending approval.
- By April 20, 2022, this when finding out how many will be approved.



What's Next



- We committed to the core belief that WLFW provides a "win-win" for farmers and hellbenders and have shown that it does!
- Proposed adding new watershed/s to the program for next funding cycle and welcome feedback
- Demand strongly exceeds funding within the hellbender pool; how should this be balanced with other priorities?

- WLFW has decided to add an additional priority watershed for next year's funding.
- WLFW in working with the wildlife pool.
- It is also time to expand in this function with the farmers.

11:10 to 11:25

Swine and Dairy Assistance Program, David Williams

General assembly has approved for funds from the American Pandemic Recovery Act. Federal funding was sent to NC to help recovery from the impact of the pandemic.

Submit applications June 23, 2023.

Awaiting on release of funds presently.

History of Program & Intent

- ▶ Early 2021 - Discussion of Effects of COVID-19 to Swine & Dairy Industry Resiliency
- ▶ Legislation generated and proposed
 - ▶ \$30M for financial and infrastructure assistance
- ▶ November 2021 - Budget Passed - S.L. 2021-180
- ▶ December, 2021 - Phase 1 Applications Opened, Application Deadline is June 30, 2023
- ▶ February, 2022 - Phase 2 Applications Opened



Funding of Program

- ▶ American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)
 - ▶ Federal Funding - State Appropriation for the use of resiliency relative to COVID-19
 - ▶ Federal funding rules - overseen by NC Pandemic Response Office (NCPRO)

Phases of Program

- ▶ Phase I - Economic Resilience Support
- ▶ Phase II - Infrastructure Resilience Support
 - ▶ 90% Cost Share
 - ▶ Renovations - Up to \$10/pig space
 - ▶ Rebuild - Up to \$20/pig space
 - ▶ Waste Structure Closure - Up to \$100K

Everyone who falls under Phase 1 will receive \$31,500.

Phase II

Waste structure closure is for those who are not able to or chose not to seek a new contract and will be going out of business.

These operations will have waste structure closure included whether they are dairies or swine.

There is 90% cost share not to exceed \$100,000 for each operation that will be closing.

Application Process - Infrastructure

- ▶ Submit Dairy & Swine COVID Infrastructure Program Application
 - ▶ Phase I applicants only need to provide Phase I Reference Number
 - ▶ Others must submit eligibility documentation
 - ▶ Applications reviewed - Follow up from staff as needed
 - ▶ Phase II - Allows for transfer of benefit to a purchaser

Assistance Available

90% cost share (up to \$100,000 per applicant) for closing lagoon(s)

Additional 90% cost share (up to \$30,000 per applicant) to convert lagoon(s) to water supply ponds for ag water needs

USDA EQIP and/or NC Ag Cost Share Funds may be used to supplement for closure projects exceeding caps (subject to available funds and application ranking)

Application Process - Lagoon Closure

- ▶ Submit Dairy & Swine COVID Waste Structure Closure Program Application
 - ▶ Phase I applicants only need to provide Phase I Reference Number
 - ▶ Others must submit eligibility documentation
- ▶ Eligible applications will be forwarded to the relevant local Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD)
- ▶ SWCD will assist to develop Cost Share application and contract

Lagoon Closure Plan

- ▶ District Staff will assist the applicant to develop a lagoon closure plan (waste utilization plan) that complies with NRCS Standard, Commission guidelines, and DWR permit requirements
- ▶ Identify nearby fields and crops
- ▶ Soil and waste samples
- ▶ Determine application rates based upon crop nutrient needs and
 - ▶ Plant Available Nitrogen
 - ▶ Phosphorus application rate may be limited depending on soil test results (Phosphorus Loss Assessment Tool)
 - ▶ Copper and Zinc may also limit application rates

Lagoon Closure

- ▶ Applicant solicits quotes from established contractors based on lagoon closure plan
- ▶ Select lowest bid that is technically feasible
- ▶ District staff must review application records to confirm application rates not exceeded
- ▶ Waste must be removed from the lagoon to the maximum extent practicable

Optional Conversion to Water Supply Pond

- ▶ Applicants with a documented ag water supply need may choose to convert the lagoon to a pond.
- ▶ Pond design and installation must meet NRCS 378 standard and be sealed by Professional Engineer
- ▶ Install properly engineered principle and auxiliary (where applicable) spillway

Phase II applications to date

- ▶ Lagoon Closure (37): Duplin, Sampson, Wayne, Greene, Northampton, Onslow, Chatham, Davidson, Davie, Johnston, Jones, Pender, Randolph
- ▶ Facility Infrastructure Improvement (65): Wayne, Lenoir, Greene, Duplin, Sampson, Pitt, Randolph, Johnston, Jones, Wilson

In Phase 1

There are 369 applicants for swine and 13 for dairy that have applied for Phase 1. They have been asked what their status is, and it was indicated and all the dairies except for 2 will close their storage farms.

In Phase II

Receipt of 37 application for closure. (Refer to the above slide for counties included in this count) 13 applications for dairy and almost all the dairies will be closing. Two will remain in business.

Q/A

Timothy Beard: Are we allowed up to 10 of the high priority practices?

Response: Julius George - Yes, 10 practices are allowed, and some can be removed. The list would be reviewed and compared to what would be the best practice and exchange with the recommended practice. Julius would submit an email to the committee for their recommendation and set a date for concurrence. Once the date has passed, he will then compile a final list and send to all the members. Once he receives their response then it can be moved forward. The FY2023 payment schedule will be developed within the next month. Those 10 priority practices have to be entered then. NRCS will be presenting this to NHQ to find out if NC can obtain additional funding.

Is there an opportunity for RCPP within this same scenario?

Response: Julius George – There is an opportunity for RCPP but there is a lot of information that must be submitted and find partners to agree and signoff on the proposal. This has already been submitted for FY2022 and this would be an item that can be completed for FY2023.


David Williams comments: RCPP cannot be submitted because they must be submitted by June 30, 2022, for the FY2023. The contracts have to be in place for the state.

Dewitt Hardee


Do RCPP conservation easements with parcels on the closing lagoon provide target area resource needs RCPP extended span time of 5 years?

Response: Brian Loadholt – It would be addressed in conjunction with EQIP and RCPP.

11:25 to 11:50 Open Discussions and Comments

 No questions or remarks were asked.

11:50 to 12:00 Closing Comments, Timothy Beard, NRCS

 Appreciation to everyone for attending the meeting. All discussion is greatly important from everyone.

 All presenters have done an excellent job in their most informative slides.

Meeting adjourned at 11:48 a.m.

Attendees:

Julius George, Brian Loadholt, Bill Edwards, Ryan McCloud, Rob Lipford, Matt Kinane, Ruben Torres, Timothy Beard, Josh Hammond, Kristin May, Morgan Harris, Rafael Vega, Jeb Minarik, Don Barker, Yamika Bennett, Evelena Best, Jacob Comer, Desirae Kissell, Vivian Doyle, Michael Jones, Josh Spencer, Mark Ferguson, Kathryn Fidler, Pete Benjamin, Veronica Fasselt, James Davis, Jim Kjølgaard, Terry Foreman, Brian Short, Jeremy Roston, Eric Galamb, Lisa Furlow, Dewitt Hardee, Trish D'Arconte, Kara Cassels, Bree Charron, John E Beck, Clinton Barden, Sharon Anderson, John Ann Shear, Michael Knoerr

Minutes

North Carolina State Technical Advisory Committee Teleconference 9:00am to 12:00pm – August 10, 2022 Moderator, Julius George

9:00 to 9:05 Call to Order - Julius George, NRCS

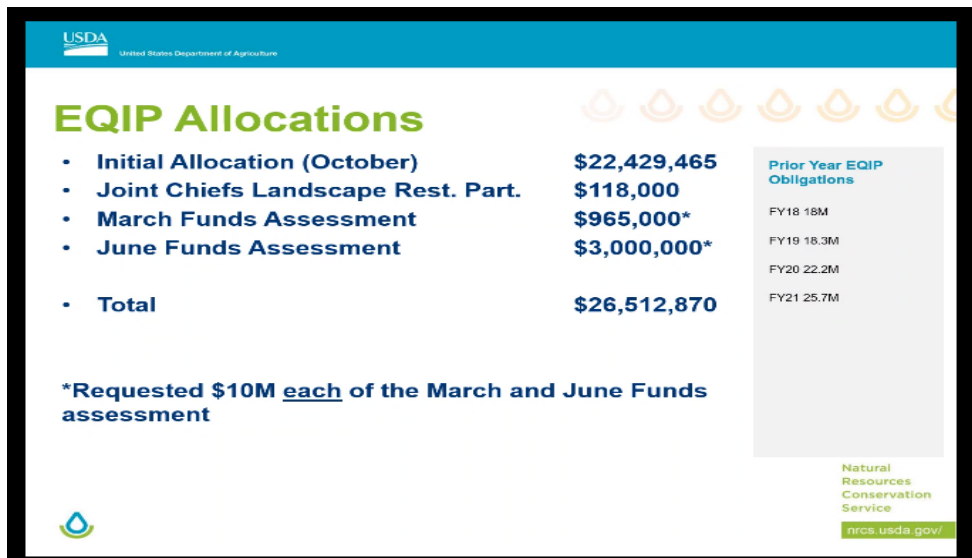
Request is made for everyone to join in the meeting if there are any questions or concerns as the meeting progresses through each topic on the agenda. Discuss any upcoming changes and updates in programs depending on what the agency has been able to accomplish in FY2022. Julius notified everyone that the meeting is being recorded for minute purposes. Anyone who wishes to ask a question please use the raise hand icon or place your question on the chat box which Jeb will be monitoring.

9:05 to 9:10 Welcome from State Conservationist - Mr. Timothy Beard, STC, NRCS
Welcomes everyone to the meeting and explains that due to COVID the meeting cannot be held face to face. This meeting helps to know what to discuss the demands of NRCS. He explains that it has been a difficult time this FY with the agency's various programs due to funding and unfortunately NC NRCS does not have enough funding to fund all the request. NC NRCS has requested from NHQ for additional funding but at the time the agency has not received the funding. Although, with the State Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) input the agency is looking forward to getting some input from everyone in the meeting about operational standpoint and best management practices on servicing our customers. Anything that may not have been covered or any additional items that you feel did not get covered contact Julius George or me. (julius.george@usda.gov or timothy.beard@usda.gov)

9:10 to 9:20 Summary from State Technical Advisory Sub-Committee for Forestry and Wildlife
Don Barker, NRCS

- Update state proposal National Headquarters (NHQ) requested from Farm Service Agency (FSA) that it needed to be resubmitted in a certain format and it has already been submitted.
- The state proposal was returned from NHQ because there was a practice that was not authorized for cost share and there are practices that take care of management activities and deleted the unauthorized practice out of the proposal.
- Lisa Furlow mentions that the proposal was written up as required and the FSA SO is waiting on a response on the state proposal. She announced that it may be coming within the next two weeks.
- Joint Chief Forestry agreement looks like there will be about \$230,000 for FY2023 and applications will be taken in November of FY23. The proposal is focused on management deliverables funds, and not much on tree planting and site preparations.
- Oyster pilot program is moving forward and there is one application and receiving funding. There is good news because we have more interests from individuals requesting information. Any discussion regarding funding should be addressed to Julius George and the programs staff.
- NC Wildlife announcement of new position in the Southern Piedmont (District 6) Mr. Greg Queen, Conservation Biologist.
- Joint Chiefs program outreach regional event will be coming up in Montgomery County on September 13, 2022, at Montgomery Community College.
- Dewitt Hardee wants to know what kind of practices in the Oyster project. More participation hopefully to be in 2023.

EQIP Allocations for FY2022



The infographic is titled "EQIP Allocations" and features the USDA logo at the top left. It lists four allocation items with their respective amounts: Initial Allocation (October) at \$22,429,465, Joint Chiefs Landscape Rest. Part. at \$118,000, March Funds Assessment at \$965,000*, and June Funds Assessment at \$3,000,000*. A total of \$26,512,870 is shown. A note states: "*Requested \$10M each of the March and June Funds assessment". To the right, a box titled "Prior Year EQIP Obligations" lists: FY18 18M, FY19 18.3M, FY20 22.2M, and FY21 25.7M. The bottom right corner includes the text "Natural Resources Conservation Service" and the website "nrcs.usda.gov".

Allocation Item	Amount
Initial Allocation (October)	\$22,429,465
Joint Chiefs Landscape Rest. Part.	\$118,000
March Funds Assessment	\$965,000*
June Funds Assessment	\$3,000,000*
Total	\$26,512,870

*Requested \$10M each of the March and June Funds assessment

Prior Year EQIP Obligations

Fiscal Year	Obligation
FY18	18M
FY19	18.3M
FY20	22.2M
FY21	25.7M

Natural Resources Conservation Service
nrcs.usda.gov

- Within the \$22M the agency divides the allocation towards:
 - Three fourths going to GWW.
 - \$8,000 was for special Water Quality projects.
- Joint Chiefs project funds will be increasing as the fiscal year moves on.
- Additional funds have been requested of \$10M from the 1st request and only received less than \$1M and on the 2nd request the agency asked for \$10M again and only received \$3M.
- NRCS has 3 targets; livestock about 1/2 of the amount; wildlife spending 10% of the funds; and
- Historically undeserved targets.

Q/A:

Is there a way to share which additional funding are moved forward? Response: Julius – In respect to the additional funds that are received it accounts for the overall allocations and must also account for the mandated requirements. We try to address all the applications towards those mandates. The majority of the funding went out to the animal operations which accounts for 50% of the total funds allocate. We also allocate funds toward our forestry and wildlife.



The infographic features a photo of a brown cow on the left. On the right, a table displays livestock statistics: Contracts (165), Obligations (\$13,285,693.07), Payments (\$1,306,245.83), and Contract Acres (6,214.4). Below the table, a dark box contains the text "FY2022 EQIP Livestock".

Category	Value
Contracts:	165
Obligations:	\$13,285,693.07
Payments:	\$1,306,245.83
Contract Acres:	6,214.4

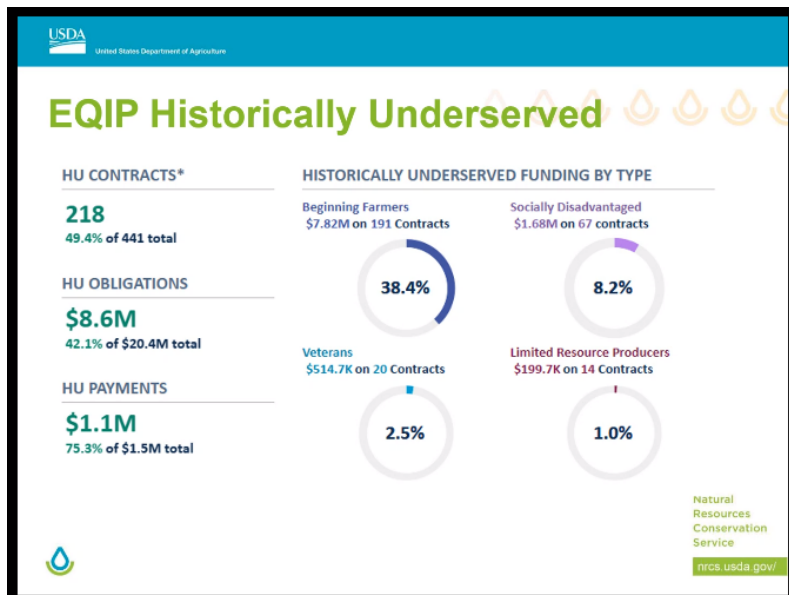
**FY2022
EQIP Livestock**

- NC is about 80% obligated.
- NC has obligated \$13.2M in livestock for FY2023.

FY2022 EQIP Forestry & Wildlife

Fund Pool	Applications	Estimates	Contracts	Obligated
GWW	12	\$ 394,468	12	\$ 364,545
Hellbender	9	\$ 1,173,325	0**	\$ -
LLPI Est.	51	\$ 1,001,028	18	\$ 580,384
LLPI Mgt.	45	\$ 920,521	31	\$ 708,180
WLFW Northern Bobwhite Quail Pine Savanna	0	\$ -	0	\$ -
Wildlife - Aquatic	3	\$ 153,204	3	\$ 160,578
Wildlife - Early Successional & Pollinator H	9	\$ 48,230	9	\$ 46,062
Wildlife - Forest	5	\$ 62,892.00	5	\$ 65,473
All other (includes a 'wildlife**' practice)			53	\$ 3,042,873
Total	134	\$ 3,753,668	131	\$ 4,968,095
*327, 390, 391, 395, 396, 420, 422, 472, 580, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 649, 657, 658, and 659 (blue denotes practices NC contracted)				
** Four of these projects were funded in other pools for \$216,631.				
Fund Pool	Applications	Estimates	Contracts	Obligated
Forestry (Combined)	122	\$ 3,278,306	19	\$ 754,153

- These are the traditional wildlife pools.
- Hellbender reads at zero but ended up funding 4 applicants and were funded.
- The following practice codes are what to be expected to be used by NHQ.
- Each state is expected to use no less than 10% of their allocation for wildlife-related practices.
- The agency only gets general forestry which is noted in the screen below.
- 10% is shared in the LLP not general forestry.



Get all information from all other subcommittee meeting minutes to make appropriate decision in funding and participants.

The 2018 Farm Bill requires a portion of EQIP funds to be designated to assist BFR and SDFR (at least five percent for each category).

Beginning Farmer or Rancher – The term “Beginning Farmer or Rancher” means a participant who:

- Has not operated a farm or ranch, or who has operated a farm or ranch for not more than 10 consecutive years. This requirement applies to all members of a legal entity, and
- Who will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm or ranch?

Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher – The term “Socially Disadvantaged” means an individual or entity who is a member of a socially disadvantaged group. For an entity, at least 50 percent ownership in the farm business must be held by socially disadvantaged individuals. A socially disadvantaged group is a group whose members have been subject to racial or ethnic prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities.

These groups consist of the following:

- American Indians or Alaskan Natives.
- Asians.
- Blacks or African Americans.
- Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders.
- Hispanics.

Note: Gender alone is not a covered group for the purposes of NRCS conservation programs. The term entities reflect a broad interpretation to include partnerships, couples, legal entities, etc.

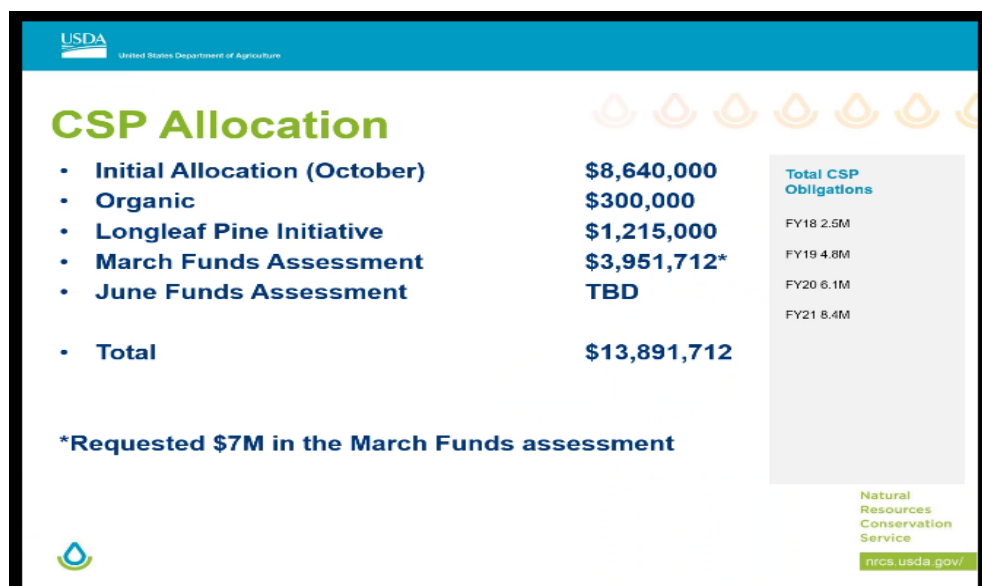
Limited Resource Farmer or Rancher means a participant:

- With direct or indirect gross farm sales not more than the current indexed value in each of the previous two years, and
- Who has a total household income at or below the national poverty level for a family of four, or less than 50 percent of county median household income in each of the previous two years?

Veteran Farmer or Rancher – The term "Veteran Farmer or Rancher" means a producer who served in the United States Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, or Coast Guard, including the reserve component thereof; was released from service under conditions other than dishonorable; and:

- Has not operated a farm or ranch, or has operated a farm or ranch for not more than 10 years; or
- Who first obtained status as a veteran during the most recent 10-year period?

CSP Allocations Funds for FY2022



- \$7M additional funds were requested; out of that money only received \$4M.
- TBD is listed because NC may receive additional funds.

FY2022 NIPF

NIPF	# Apps	\$ Requested	#Apps Intended	\$ Intended
Total	208	\$23,464,210.26	73	\$7,927,032.00
NIPF BF	# Apps	\$ Requested	#Apps Intended	\$ Intended
Total	51	\$5,041,752.39	24	\$2,457,600.00
NIPF SD	# Apps	\$ Requested	#Apps Intended	\$ Intended
Total	10	\$510,200.00	10	\$662,723.00

- Non-Industrial Private Forestland
- NIPF Beginning Farmer
- NIPF Socially Disadvantage

FY2022 AgLand

Agland	# Apps	\$ Requested	#Apps Intended	\$ Intended
Total	25	\$2,059,648.00	12	\$927,919.00
Agland BF	# Apps	\$ Requested	#Apps Intended	\$ Intended
Total	7	\$194,720.73	7	\$188,999.73
Agland SD	# Apps	\$ Requested	#Apps Intended	\$ Intended
Total	2	\$17,275.00	2	\$17,274.00

- Includes Agland and Pastureland.
- Approximately three quarters were for forestry items.

FY2022 LLPI

	# Apps	\$ Requested	#Apps Intended	\$ Intended
LLPI	27	\$2,983,687.00	7	\$595,150.00
	# Apps	\$ Requested	#Apps Intended	\$ Intended
LLPI BF	11	\$1,397,150.00	5	\$616,899.00
	# Apps	\$ Requested	#Apps Intended	\$ Intended
LLP SD	3	\$296,000.00	3	\$288,000.00
LLPI Total	40	\$4,560,837.00	15	\$1,500,049.00

- \$1.2M to be used in Longleaf Pine (LLP)
- Some of the general funds were added to the LLP.
- \$1.5M is intended to be funded.

Q/A and Comments:

Julius notes that CSP and EQIP funding has increased from FY2018 to present and encourages everyone to continue to give their comments and suggestion NRCS is listening. He reflects that for NC NRCS has been able to increase funding in CSP from \$8,640,000 to \$12,891,712 to FY2022 and in EQIP from \$22,429,465 to FY2022 26,512,870.

Timothy Beard mentions that the conservations with NHQ the fund would be an additional \$3M, these funds must be obligated before FY2022 is over.

Timothy Beard - If we get the additional \$3M from the June fund assessment where does NC NRCS plan to obligate the funds and which one of the categories in the ones that Jeb Minirik just described. Has this been figured out yet? **Response:** Julius George – The majority will be going to applications already in the forestry fund pools. Also, in the additional applications in AgLand fund pool and Historically Undeserved fund pool.

David Williams – Can you provide a breakdown of FY2022 application and obligations by County and by Teams. **Response:** Julius George – We can supply a number for FY2022 but still in the process of obligating and cannot give a good number for CSP although we can for EQIP.

Alton Perry - Is inquiring about the CSP application deadline. **Response:** Julius George – CSP deadline is March 11, 2022.

John Isenhour - Could we get a breakdown that shows not only how obligations have increased since FY18 but request on participants for each fiscal year? **Response:** Julius George – Our analyst, Steven Kroger who puts spreadsheets together put the information together and share the information with everyone.

Danny Edwards – Can you provide how much money has been obligated by EQIP and CSP in a source work area? Any idea why there was no interest in application with Bob White Pine Design Pond. **Response:** Julius George – at this point we cannot say why there was not any particular interest. If a fund pool is not being considered due to interest than it must be considered where the pool is relevant to keep maintained. The applicants can still apply but there are other fund pools that they can apply for financial assistance.

Dewitt Hardee – When all allocations have been received, can you breakdown the percentage of requests per practice field request versus amount provided? **Response:** Julius George – We will get together with our analyst to get that information and send it out.

Timothy Beard comment – To complete more Outreach and encourage the participants to re-apply even if they have applied more than two or three times. He encourages everyone to let participants and the public know to be patient and spread the word about NRCS programs, why their participation is important, and that hopefully soon NRCS can get to their applications.

David Williams – Can you give us more specifics about what the concerns are because it has been known that the funds come in pre-sliced. How would that affect the Local Workgroups if national priorities are dictating than the Local Work Groups need to take a stand and do better. Can there be an explanation regarding this item? **Response:** Timothy Beard – We must address animal agriculture, wildlife, and SDA and when you are only given a certain amount of money you are to use it in those particular areas. Although, not all those areas are also not getting funding and there are only limited funds once the areas have been addressed. We requested funding and still did not receive what was requested. It is understood that NRCS also has to meet the responsibilities of the Local Workgroup priorities the agency has to associate the priorities at a point to rise to the top. (All of the LWG priorities may not be meant.)

Alton Perry - Conservation Cap on funding of practices in CSP. NRCS cannot address this option because it is

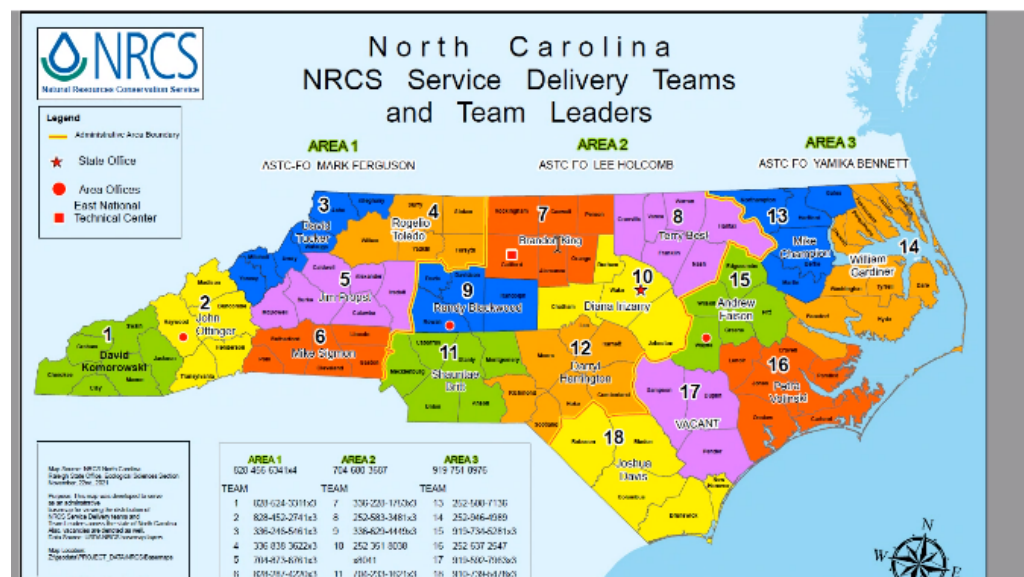
not available in CSP. One would have to go through a FSA program through a Micro Loan that can be used for implementation of practices which are other alternatives for CSP.

Alton Perry – spoke with FSA about Micro Loans and they do not fund forestry projects.

9:45 to 10:00 Update of NC NRCS Applications and Practices - Julius George, NRCS

Workload per Team (both slides go together with bullets)

Count of (EQIP) Contract Numbers							Count of EQIP Applications						
Team	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	Grand Total	Team	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	Grand Total
1	42	29	23	38	33	165	1	70	86	108	86	112	462
2	18	33	53	40	22	166	2	48	91	141	81	95	456
3	26	13	20	22	17	98	3	51	37	74	59	75	296
4	52	47	20	39	19	177	4	204	178	174	138	216	910
5	21	29	18	13	14	95	5	77	69	55	31	34	266
6	27	15	16	14	15	87	6	53	37	35	23	44	192
7	20	26	19	12	16	93	7	66	78	61	51	110	366
8	32	18	30	27	13	120	8	142	62	78	106	109	497
9	20	41	32	32	26	151	9	45	75	113	71	83	387
10	18	20	10	16	12	76	10	59	54	49	67	104	333
11	30	39	31	34	17	151	11	105	127	146	115	201	694
12	108	115	67	58	77	425	12	236	177	323	254	454	1444
13	43	31	31	36	11	152	13	105	105	136	100	163	609
14	25	17	12	16	12	82	14	54	49	77	57	72	309
15	36	30	17	23	11	117	15	124	89	129	105	96	543
16	35	39	24	18	13	129	16	189	138	110	104	91	632
17	77	57	35	45	52	266	17	199	210	305	210	368	1292
18	62	55	38	36	17	208	18	131	111	216	118	154	730
Grand Total	692	654	496	519	397	2758	Grand Total	1958	1773	2330	1776	2581	10418



- What the workload is per NRCS Teams from an application standpoint as well as contracts and popular practices.
- On the top screen with all the numbers is the collaborative data that has been put together from FY18 through FY22. Right column isle are the applications for EQIP and their Teams.
- There are some Teams that received more applications than others which were Team 4 (Pasture and Confined Animal), Team 12 (Forestry and Confined Animal) and Team 17 (Confined Animal).
- The map is of the NRCS Teams what they consist of and where they are located, and we have a total of 1 to 18 teams.
- Look at screen shot one table that FY20 and FY21 these were COVID years you will notice a decline in some areas and increase in others.
- Look at the number of applications that were received and the number of contracts that were obligated due to the number of applications.
- The number applications and contracts that is a reflection to the amount of funding NRCS is receiving in the state.

- Most popular practices contracted

- NC is mostly a Combined Animal type practices.
- NC spent over \$22M in Animal Mortality practices.
- The bottom slide shows the whole table for you to see from an Area to Teams perspective.
- Amount of funds obligated toward practices.

Soft Teams-video (14)

- FY2021 CSP acres, practice, and funding

CSP-2014 and CSP-2018; FY21		Count of CSP 2014+2018 Contract Numbers; FY 21		
Code-Practice	Sum of Obligation_2	Sum of Contract Acres	Team	FY21
E612B-Planting for high carbon sequestration rate	\$3,460,432	14,881	1	7
E300EAP2-Existing Activity Payment-Resource Concern	\$1,002,110	204,132	2	2
E300EAP1-Existing Activity Payment-Land Use	\$759,550	238,179	3	5
E338C-Sequential patch burning	\$500,374	24,493	4	4
E612C-Establishing tree/shrub species to restore native plant communities	\$454,051	3,251	5	2
E338B-Short-interval burns to promote a healthy herbaceous plant community	\$242,017	7,853	6	6
E328A-Resource conserving crop rotation	\$236,171	11,914	7	13
E590A-Improving nutrient uptake efficiency and reducing risk of nutrient losses	\$219,101	19,762	8	1
E666D-Forest management to enhance understory vegetation	\$202,293	4,390	9	2
E612G-Tree/shrub planting for wildlife food	\$148,548	6,411	10	
E340C-Use of multi-species cover crops to improve soil health and increase soil organic matter	\$122,368	10,868	11	12
E329D-No till system to increase soil health and soil organic matter content	\$103,379	26,672	12	21
612-Tree/Shrub Establishment	\$89,635	24,450	13	6
340-Cover Crop	\$83,076	26,091	14	4
329-Residue and Tillage Management, No Till	\$60,232	26,672	15	3
E328L-Leaving tall crop residue for wildlife	\$57,466	5,931	16	3
E666O-Snags, den trees, and coarse woody debris for wildlife habitat	\$47,091	8,444	17	14
E328F-Modifications to improve soil health and increase soil organic matter	\$45,844	4,765	18	16
MINPAY-Minimum Payment Adjustment	\$41,543	11,275	Grand Total	
338-Prescribed Burning	\$36,065	32,369		
666-Forest Stand Improvement	\$34,872	12,565		
E328E-Soil health crop rotation	\$30,756	6,103		
328-Conservation Crop Rotation	\$28,275	24,217		

- Shows most popular practices.
- Where the funds are being spent.
- The number of Teams and contracts that the practice is supported.
- CSP is not only about enhancement but also funding practices.

Q/A and Comments: N/A

10:00 to 10:30 FY2023 Roll Out Information - Julius George, NRCS

Julius recounts on the Programs Strategic meeting for FY2022.

- How can we be improving and be more efficient in a program respective?
- How to stretch out funding further.
 - Establishing practice payment caps.
- What kind of problems that may be coming up at the field staff level that we can resolve and simplify things to make items easier for administering all the programs?

FY2023 Practice Payment Caps	
▶ Animal Mortality Facility (316)	\$150,000 per site/per operation (reduced from \$200k)
▶ Cover Crop (340)	\$50,000 per operation (Reduced from \$90k)
▶ Seasonal High Tunnel (325)	\$9,500 (maximum payment)
▶ Pumping Plant (533)	\$200,000 per operation
▶ Roofs and Covers (367)	\$90,000 per operation
▶ Waste Storage Facility (313)	\$60,000 per operation
▶ Irrigation System (Center Pivots)	\$20,000 per operation (added for FY2023)

The screen above shows the adjustments and changes for FY2023 Practice Payment Caps.

- i.e., animal mortality Team 17 had over 96 HP applications that totaled over \$30M+ for animal mortality waste storage facility roofs and cover.
- Animal mortality was at \$200,000 and will be reducing that amount by \$50,00 to \$150,000 that would free up \$50,000 for maintaining and additional applications.
- Cover crop changes change from \$90,000 and reduce to \$50,000 that would allow in getting more cover crop on the ground and assistance with agricultural land.

Q/A and Comments:

Keith Larick – What is the average cost of the Animal Mortality practice. (Concern: If the CAP is too low and the producer portion is too high as a result than individuals will not do it.) **Response:** Julius George – The actual cost is depending on the amount the landowner has requested, and payment limitations will be made in order to support the landowner. In looking at these costs they involve assistance without including the full cost. Depending on the practice the amount would encompass all costs that the landowner would need. (i.e., Waste Storage Facility does not encompass roof and cover and you would have to have two separate practices to help cover the costs.)

Timothy A. Beard - Discusses that there is no reducing any amounts and maintain all funding. Any amounts that are increased/decreased will be on the various practices and which one will be used. Mr. Beard emphasizes that NRCS has meetings with the field to ensure that their input is discussed so that everyone is aware of the need of the landowners because the field are the individuals who works closely with the landowners. There will be some shuffling with the practices depending on the need and make sure that we do not have to hit anyone with overpayment.

David Williams – Comments on the \$200,000 Pumping Plant Cap and he seems that a lower Cap could apply. This practice is to support those produces on the Eastern part of the state for water control obstruction so they can pump the water off the land so they can continue to farm. NRCS does not have many practices support this item so that is why we keep this particular one.

Dewitt Hardee– Comments on the data breakdown by Julius, can the summary by the SWCD be provided to allow the local SWCD match up using local needs that may not be covered? (i.e., Funding for Waste Storage Closure not being funding by the federal maybe the state funding or other local resources can be redirected or considered similar feedback can also be directed back to NRCS.) Comment/suggestion about communication breaking down this information by district. **Julius comments** - NHQ has developed a new tool that encompasses our SWCD as far as being able to give us support NRCS can give the new tool that is called **TABLEAU** and NRCS can pull this information for SWCD it can provide the amount of funding for within the SWCD but not knowing what funding they have available or what they can contribute toward it would be difficult for NRCS but the agency can at least provide the information that SWCD has only if it allows. Otherwise, we can break it down by county and utilize to determine which district falls.

FY2023 EQIP Timeline

▶ Application Cutoff	October 14, 2022
▶ Program Eligibility Letter/Application Checklist Mailed	October 21, 2022
▶ Eligibility Determination	November 18, 2022
▶ Screening/Priority	December 9, 2022
▶ Assessment/Ranking	February 24, 2023
▶ Pre-Approvals (National, State, and Area Pools)	March 3, 2023
▶ Obligation (\$150k contracts, state, national, and area fund pools)	April 7, 2023
▶ Obligation (Local Fund Pools)	May 5, 2023

- Application sign-up period with a cutoff for EQIP and CSP of October 14, 2022.
- Obligated the funding by April 7, 2023, for state and national area fund pools as well as the \$150,000 or greater applications. These funds pools should be obligated first which allows NRCS to be able to obligate additional applications in other funds pools. It also helps NRCS show the obligated large amount of money initially and capture applications that may be in multiple pools in area, state, and national pools that that may also be in local pools.
- Obligate local fund pools by May 5, 2023.
- Encourage any of the participants to submit their applications at any time before October 14. They do not have to wait until the October 14th date.
- This applies to all the subcategories under EQIP. (Conservation Incentives contract, Urban Initiative, Climate Smart Initiative and Joint Chiefs)

FY2023 CSP Timeline

▶ Application Cutoff	October 14, 2022
▶ Program Eligibility Letter/Application Checklist Mailed	October 21, 2022
▶ Eligibility Determination	November 18, 2022
▶ Assessment/Ranking	June 30, 2023
▶ Pre-Approvals	July 7, 2023
▶ Obligation	August 18, 2023

- CSP will be processed and obligated immediately right after EQIP obligations.
- CSP will have the same timeframe for applications and eligibility. This will allow NRCS one sign-up period for both EQIP and CSP which would make it a smoother process.
- Although, due to the Tool Conservation Desktop establishment and obligations for CSP will be different from EQIP. (It is difficult and problematic for NRCS to obligate two separate programs at the same time.
- Obligations for CSP will be by August 18, 2023.
- Due to applications taking time to process, Programs will explain the idea and assist in process of obligation.
- Payment schedule is being released in September. Ranking information to be released prior to the eligibility deadline.

FY2023 CSP Adjustments E612B

CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY

E612B

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Planting for high carbon sequestration rate

Conservation Practice 612: TREE/SHRUB ESTABLISHMENT

APPLICABLE LAND USE: Crop (Annual & Mixed); Crop (Perennial), Pasture, Range, Forest, Associated Ag Land, Farmstead

RESOURCE CONCERN: Air

ENHANCEMENT LIFE SPAN: 15 years

Enhancement Description

Plant tree species and use stocking levels for higher growth to increase the rate of carbon sequestration (capture). Use species with a longer life span as well as relatively fast growth, and species suitable for durable manufactured products. Increase stocking levels in forests that are not fully stocked. Implement afforestation on appropriate open lands.

Criteria

- States will apply general criteria from the NRCS National Conservation Practice Standard Tree/Shrub Establishment (Code 612) as listed below, and additional criteria as required by the NRCS State Office.
- Trees and shrubs will be selected for their rate of growth and suitability for use in durable manufactured products as well as their adaptability to site conditions. Refer to state lists.
- Trees and shrubs will be planted on selected areas within any land use.
- Trees and shrubs will be planted in areas with adequate sunlight. If plantings are used to supplement stocking within existing forested acreages, plant trees where light conditions are suitable. Planting rates will follow State NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Tree/Shrub Establishment (Code 612).

FY2023 CSP Adjustments E612B

- ▶ The enhancement is designed to be installed on land without trees and to increase stocking rates on existing stands.
- ▶ Afforestation, Replanting Cutover, and Increase Stocking applications will be a high priority
- ▶ Existing stands not harvested by the eligibility deadline will not be eligible for this enhancement

- Any questions that are needed to be answered, please do not hesitate to contact Julius George by email at Julius.george@usda.gov.

Q/A and comments:

Rob Lipford – Is the payment rate going to be the same? **Response:** Julius George – The payment rate will be \$1,602.

John Isenhour – What scenario was envisioned to justify that kind of payment? **Response:** Julius George – I need to get back to the actual detail scenario to identify the payment and what he can explain is that site preparation is included in the payment therefore 490 cannot be paid with this standard. Also, we take in consideration the materials for practice for installation as well. We are working with the ECS staff who are currently reaching out to our Tech Center for discussion on this enhancement and others to get further details. Also, as this practice and others are discussed we will pass along the information discussed to everyone. This can also be an item to have a deeper discussion in the next Forestry and Wildlife Subcommittee meeting.

Alton Perry – What is the stocking rate of E612B? **Response:** Julius George – NRCS is asking for the plant emergency at 450 trees per acre after 3 years. What would be the fencing rate? **Response:** Don Barker – this all depends on the need of each participant whether they need 450 or 700 trees after 3 years.

Alton Perry - Is there any restrictions on Timber Harvest for that practice or Carbon Sequestration once the trees reach maturity? Is there any kind of protection place on that timber stand? NRCS only has authority while it is active but once it expires, we have no authority to enforce anything. Although, we have the capability of administering the facility life span of that practice and address it with the landowner if they apply for application.

10:40 to 10:55 Break

10:55 to 11:15 Easement Updates (ACEP-ALE and WRP) – Easement Team

- ALE FY2023 Sign Up and Ranking Update - Brian Loadholt, NRCS
 - Applications received in FY22 are 41 ALE applications.
 - Received 3 RCPP-ALE parcel agreements.
 - Pursuing 20 parcels that we are looking into applications and 8 of those would be under RCPP. (Every time one is closed it because the responsibility of stewardship)
 - Closed 10 Easements and in hopes of closing 3 more by October 1, 2022.
- Planning for FY2023
 - Updating website.
 - Making adjustments to ranking.
 - Making adjustments to application request package request list.
 - Looking to November 4, 2022, as the batching period.

- Looking to ask for additional dollars for the state program. Obligated some easements and will be asking for more funding for applications that have been already received.
- ALE-Removal of questions on form and adding Water Quality questions 303D Streams and NWQI on our Water Quality Initiative Watersheds. (Include: Indian Creek, Watauga Basin and the Eastern and Middletown of the Warm Water.
- Increasing the number of points provided for the Historical Undeserved.

Dewitt Hardee – Are entities that go in to apply for ALE the period ends November 4, 2022. Response: Brian Loadholt did re-emphasize that the entities do have for the applications that they have currently.

WRP/WRE Update and Ranking Adjustment - Bill Edwards, NRCS

U.S Department of Agriculture – Natural Resources Conservation Service

[Clear form](#) [Email](#) [Print Form](#)

For NRCS use only: **Easement No.** **Parcel No.**

Landowner Name:

Farm Name (if applicable):

NRCS WRE Ranking Form

Part 1. Resource Ranking Factors (Maximum points = 200)	Score (Make Selection)
1. Hydrogeomorphic Class: (Maximum points = 25) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>25 points</u> if 75% of the acres are estuarine, riverine or Carolina Bay, Mountain Bog or • <u>15 points</u> if 75% of the acres can be described as depressions and slopes or • <u>10 points</u> if 75% of the acres can be described as Flats 	<input type="text"/>
2. Hydrologic Restoration: ACEP-WRE Policy requires restoration of wetland hydrology to pre-manipulations conditions. Based on the county's soil survey reports "Water Features". Depth to water table value, obtained from web soil survey: (Maximum points = 100) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>100 points</u> if at least 75% of area with a depth to water table of 0 – 30.5 cm 	<input type="text"/>

- Moved forward with 2 applications and will move for funding next year.
- 8 active restoration construction projects this summer.
- 125,000 easements over 50,000 acres
- Question 1 addition of Mountain Bogs to receive priority points.
- Question 3 changed some wording to make it easier.
- The screen above (ranking sheet) has not been finalized yet.
- Julius comments that speaking with NHQ that NC is at the top 5 if not the 3 in the Eastern U.S. with the highest number of applications and easements in ALE/WRP.

David Williams – (refer to slides below)

Funding of Program

- ▶ American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)
 - ▶ Federal Funding - State Appropriation for the use of resiliency relative to COVID-19
 - ▶ Federal funding rules - overseen by NC Pandemic Response Office (NCPRO)
- ▶ S.L. 2021-180 (2021-22 State Budget) budgeted \$30M for financial and infrastructure assistance

Phases of Program

- ▶ Phase I - Economic Resilience Support - \$31,500 per eligible applicant/operation - Initial check mail out on May 6.
- ▶ Phase II - Infrastructure Resilience Support
 - ▶ 90% Cost Share
 - ▶ Renovations - Up to \$10/pig space
 - ▶ Rebuild - Up to \$20/pig space
 - ▶ Waste Structure Closure - Up to \$100K, plus \$30K if want to convert to pond

Application Process - Lagoon Closure

- ▶ Submit Dairy & Swine COVID Waste Structure Closure Program Application - Deadline June 30, 2023
 - ▶ Phase I applicants only need to provide Phase I Reference Number
 - ▶ Others must submit eligibility documentation
- ▶ Eligible applications will be forwarded to the relevant local Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) - (78 referred so far, more to come)
- ▶ SWCD will assist to develop Cost Share application and contract - Contracts must be in place by 12/31/24, funds spent by 12/31/26.
- ▶ Hope to refer lagoon closures estimated to require > \$100K to EQIP for supplemental cost share (subject to available \$).

Optional Conversion to Water Supply Pond

- ▶ Applicants with a documented ag water supply need may choose to convert the lagoon to a pond.
- ▶ Pond design and installation must meet NRCS 378 standard and be sealed by Professional Engineer
- ▶ Install properly engineered principle and auxiliary (where applicable) spillway

Contacts:

- ▶ <https://www.ncagr.gov/CovidSwineandDairyAssistance.htm>
- ▶ NCDA&CS COVID Assistance helpline: 866-747-9823

dwilliams@ncagr.gov

Q/A and Comments

Dewitt Hardee – What is the eligibility requirement to be consider for Lagoon Closure? **Response:**
David Williams – To be eligible they are to have a termination letter for their integrator for their sign-up operation, dairy production they must have a letter that their operation has suspended or has stopped sometime between March 1, 2020, and June 30, 2022. In the letter it must explain the cancellation or terminating the contract or lost dairy production during that time. Should have to have had permitted with State requirements. Evidence of their certificate of coverage by state permit and this would be the same for the dairy operations unless they were redeemed permit operations and that would be other documentations.

Jim Kjelgaard- Converting it to an Aquaculture Facility would be considered an Ag purpose.

Response: David responds yes it would be considered as true. But that question really has not been discussed.

11:15 to 11:30 Soils update - Michael Jones, NRCS



Our Mission: Healthy, Functioning Soil as the Foundation for all Working Lands In North Carolina

Background- NRCS, formerly known as the Soil Erosion Service, was founded to protect the Soil. Being the most vital and basic of all resources that drive farm production and risk, developing and protecting soil health needs to be of the highest priority for the agency. Increasing soil health by applying conservation practices that promote increasing biological activity and organic matter incorporation will go a long way in making soils of NC healthy.

North Carolina has one of the most diverse agriculture industries in the United States in terms of commodities. Its diverse row crop production includes corn, wheat, soybeans, tobacco, cotton, sweet potatoes, peanuts, sorghum, cucumbers, blueberries, and emerging crops like hemp and rapeseed among others. Many of our most prominent economically and culturally important cropping systems routinely utilize planting practices for crops that are considered low residue systems. Cropping systems and rotations are in many cases, driven by market trends and projected commodity prices, making routine cover crop use very challenging in terms of producer decision-making. Although North Carolina faces different challenges due to the wide range of diversity, topography, climate, soil, and farming systems, optimally functioning healthy soils are important to both state and national food production and may help mitigate the level to which natural disasters and weather extremes impact agriculture and our society's well-being.

Crops like tobacco, sweet potatoes, and peanuts are typically grown in a way in which very little residue is produced and what was there is destroyed in the field preparation to plant these crops. Other crops that are prominent and routinely no-tilled like cotton and soybeans – are low residue crops that are often repeated year after year due to markets. When these crops are used in the rotation, optimum cover crop planting windows can be missed. Routine cover crop use in the types of continuous no till systems that produce optimum outcomes for building the soil organic matter (SOM) component are therefore challenging.

Soil organic matter is the foundation and primary catalyst for positive impacts to soil properties under the overall umbrella of soil health. A producer's decision is challenged economically and operationally in how to maximize create and benefit from high biomass levels that help generate the SOM that result in improved soil health.

Continued state leadership on soil health in coordination with the Soil Health Division will focus on priority actions and leverage local, state, and regional partnerships to implement the best, most efficient, and effective investments of taxpayer dollars to create long-term and broad scale soil health change on the landscape. Positive soil health changes can maximize opportunities for both conservation and production as they produce the following goals through improved soil function:

- Improved aggregate stability,

- Ruben Torres and Mike Jones have been working with the individuals in Greensboro for a strategy in NC to develop a Soil Health Plan in NC.
- The NC Soils staff to participate in training to the individual offices and the Greensboro employees will be helping in a statewide training. One by each Area. Hoping to have one in the East would be in November, Piedmont in April early May, and the Mountains would be early to midsummer. This would be in hopes to having it finalized by late December.
- Soil subcommittee back together and anyone interested in becoming a member email mike.jones3@usda.gov or ruben.torres@usda.gov or send to Julius George and he can forward on to Mike Jones or Ruben Torres. This would help further guide the strategy in NC.
- State Offsite Method for Wetland Determination and Mike reached out to NHQ and the replied that the final draft to be released within a month.

Ann Coan – What is the status of the NC Onsite Methods document comments is NHQ working on the NC version or are they working on a national version? **Response:** Mike Jones - NHQ will be coming out with a national policy guidance document for offsite determination.

Ann Coan – Is this going to be published in the federal record for comments? **Response:** Mike Jones- this was discussed but he does not know to what extent it was discussed. Also, that it will be released within a month Mike does not believe it would be in the register because that required 30 to 60 days of public comments. Ann Coan has provided several comments and wanted to know if they had been addressed. She would like to set-up a time to speak with Mike Jones and discuss further. Mike will reach out to NHQ again to find out more information.

11:30 to 11:45 Partner Comments and Updates – STAC Partners

Q/A or Comments: N/A

11:45 to 12:00 Open Discussions and Comments

David Williams: revitalize the Local Workgroup level and he would like the meeting back with everyone in the local level and get stronger with all partners. This would be discussion for all programs for everyone. These meetings will be in early Spring.

Timothy A Beard: Agrees that this should be a local group level and making then apart of this conversation. The local group level would be able to discuss to the STAC meetings.

Julius George: the agency is trying to establish with the Local Work Group. The agency is wanting to work with the LWG is agreeable that it is very critical.

Morgan Harris: Is the New Farm Bill is the FY2023 being governed by FB2018, and we will not move to another one until it gets approved. **Julius George**: It will be governed by FB2018.

John Isenhour: Wildlife Cons Programs and interested are more interested in Wildlife management forward them to District Biologist.

Rob Lipford: The NCFS has \$2M to \$2.5 M a year in the Forest Development Program. The last few years we have been bolstered it in the Forest Reforestation Fund (FRF) spending \$5m to \$6M a year in FDP+FRF and now FRF is sunsetting and now we will be back down to limited funds because of too many applications. Which means applicants will be looking for reforestation money somewhere else. Still working with Southern Pine Beetle doing pre-commercial thinning. Also doing Understory Herbicide Treatments and Prescribed Burning. We also have a Prescribed Burn Program that is separate from Southern Pine Beetle, and it has about \$1M annual for the next couple of years. We are going to be stretching to find enough landowners to spend that money. Other programs such as, Foresters for Healthy Waters (which focuses on projects up in the Granville, Halifax, and Edgcombe areas) Agricultural Disaster Recovery Program (It has \$2.5M for comprehensive plan preparation). The plan will be paid for if written by the NCFS or a consulting forester. Question by Julius – Did your rates stay the same or did they go up in reference to the cost writing a forest management plan for a landowner? **Response**: Rob Lipford – The Forest Service does not get paid any more but the rates for consulting foresters are higher.

John Ann Shearer: Do you know when RCPP will be approved? The agency will be notified by August 15, 2022.

12:00 to 12:10 Closing Comments – Mr. Timothy Beard, STC, NRCS

Thank you for all your comments and questions and suggestions. Reach out to NRCS if there are any questions.

Meeting adjourned: 12:20 p.m.

Attendees: Julius George, Timothy A. Beard, Rob Lipford, Steven Kroeger, Brian Loadholt, Bill Edwards, Clinton Barden, Matt Kinane, Michael Jones, Leslie McCormick, Dewitt Hardee, Aaron Shwartz, Sabrina Shaffer, Eric Galamb, John Ann Shearer, Danny K Edwards, Desirae Kissell, Yamika Bennett, Jeb Minirik, Alton Perry, Don Barker, Charron Bree, Charles Faires, Trish D'Arconte, Danny K Edwards, Lisa Furlow, Morgan Harris, Jessica Schmelz, Josh Spencer, Terry Foreman, Joshua Hammond, Jacob Comer, James Davis, Luke E Lolies, Pete Benjamin, Veronica Fasselt, Vivian, Doyle, Mark Ferguson, David Williams, Keith Larick, Ann Coan, Shannon Deaton, Vivian Doyle, Ebonie Alexander, Odessa Armstrong, Tim Gestwicki, Ned Jones, Liz Rutledge, Jim Kjelgaard, Ruben Torres, Lee Holcomb, Robert Satterfield, John Isenhour, Bree Charron, Mark Dempsey, Karen McSwain, Maggie Whitaker