

State Technical Advisory Urban Subcommittee Agenda

July 12, 2023

9:30 am – 10:30 am

Jeb Minarik -Moderator

Welcoming comments were given to everyone in attendance of the meeting. Jeb will be discussing some highlights and successes that NRCS has had over the past couple of years and then focus to next year and future fiscal years on efforts that NRCS wants to continue working on.



NC Urban Initiative Background (refer to slide below)

USDA-wide

- New advisory committee which will identify barriers and advise USDA on urban agriculture policies and outreach practices.
- Grants that target areas of food access, ed., business and start-up costs for new farmers....and other urban production needs
- Cooperative agreements...municipal compost plans and food waste reduction
- **Technical/Financial Assistance**
- FSA urban/suburban county committees

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- Serve people in urban and suburban areas.
- NRCS needs to focus the effort on the Urban and Suburban areas in the communities.
- NRCS is known for providing technical assistance (TA) and financial assistance (FA). FA being the most popular assistance.
- While Farm Service Agency (FSA) has County Committees there are 17 urban specific committees formed across the country. This looking at the national view.

North Carolina



- Created State Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) Urban Subcommittee.
- Partnership meetings to help with outreach
- Joint FSA/NRCS coordination meetings
- Urban Initiative announcement

Natural
Resources
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- NC in 2021 formed an urban subcommittee which is fairly new.
- NC has reached out to partners and stakeholders over the years.
- Also, we have an agreement letter between FSA and NRCS acknowledging the partnership to work with all producers.
- It is an informal commitment that NRCS and FSA will work with Urban growers and Urban producers.
- Beginning in NC of 2022 there was an Urban Initiative under the EQIP program.
- Last year was the first year that NC specifically targeted Urban and Suburban producers.

Landuses

- CART Guidance:
 - Applicable Landuses
 - Crop
 - Farmstead
 - Modifier
 - Urban

• If neither of the applicable land uses with the Urban modifier are attributed, the Assessment – Ranking Pool match will not occur.



- Start off with Crop and Farmstead which would be the lands NC NRCS would choose to work with.
- This would be from a program planning side and then having an urban modifier.

Resource Concerns (refer to slide below)

Resource Concerns



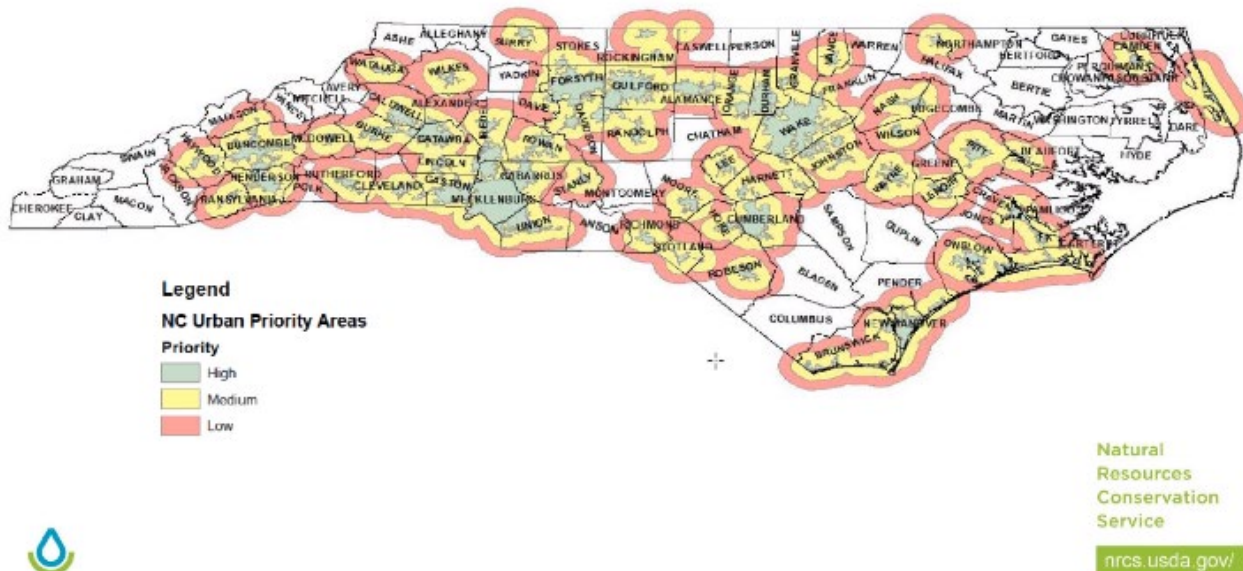
- CART Guidance continued:
 - Target Resource Concern Categories (RCCs)
 - Degraded Plant Condition
 - Soil Quality Limitations
 - Storage & Handling of Pollutants
 - Terrestrial Habitat
 - Wind & Water Erosion

If neither of the applicable RCCs are selected, the Assessment – Ranking Pool match will not occur.

Project Area



FY2023 North Carolina Urban Initiative Priority Map



- Use of the map was by using the US Census urban and suburban clusters layer.
- The green shade would be the high priority, then went out incrementally 5 miles of buffers.

- Outside the green high priority is the 5-mile buffer of the medium zone (yellow shade) and outside of the 5-mile buffer outside of the medium would be the low priority (red shade).
- NC NRCS has 3 areas and Area 1 is in the Western part of the state, Area 2 is in the middle of the state and Area 3 is in the Eastern part of the state.
- NC NRCS has had these RCCs targeted for the past 2 years.
- NC gets a number of FA and goes according to Ranking Pools
- 31M for NC
- 10% must go to Underserved Farmers
- As long as there is funding NC NRCS will be giving support to Suburban and Urban communities.

Practices



- Contracts developed will be focused to the following practices.

Practice Code	Practice Name
317	Composting Facility*
325	High Tunnel System*
327	Conservation Cover*
328	Conservation Crop Rotation*
342	Critical Area Planting*
420	Wildlife Habitat Planting*
430	Irrigation Pipeline*
436	Irrigation Reservoir*
441	Irrigation System, Micro-irrigation*
449	Irrigation Water Management*
558	Roof Runoff Structure*
561	Heavy Use Area Protection
570	Stormwater Runoff*
587	Structure for Water Control
590	Nutrient Management*
595	Pest Management Conservation System*

Only the above listed conservation practices will be available in the Urban Ranking Pool.

Natural
Resources

- NC NRCS focuses on these practices and the ones highlighted in yellow are the ones added this past year. They were not offered in FY22.

Urban Initiative FY23 Summary (refer to slide below)

FY23 Successes



- 42 Contracts (funded all eligible everyone)
 - 2 Veterans
 - 2 Limited Resource Farmers
 - 5 Socially Disadvantaged
 - 30 Beginning Farmers
 - Approximately \$500,000 contracted
-
- It was close to ½ million dollars out of the 42 contracts.
 - Last year NC NRCS had about the same number of applicants, and everyone was funded and less than ½ million dollars.
 - The most popular practice for last year was hoop house or seasonal high tunnel.
 - This FY we have seen more practices other than seasonal high tunnel, including irrigation practices, cover crops, and composting facility just to name a few.

Urban Initiative for FY24



Comments/Questions:

Chris Drepps, WLT (Urban Area) – Looking at your list, we buy land, conserve land, and sell the land. Does NRCS fund or help fund these kinds of projects also, if the farmer already owns the land and needs technical assistance?

Response: Jeb Minarik – The Environmental Quality Incentives Program falls under this kind of assistance and other programs for financial assistance. There are also easements and NRCS holds a subcommittee meeting for these kinds of assistance. Jeb suggests that Mr. Drepps should sit-in the Easement Subcommittee meeting this afternoon at 1:30 p.m. that he would be more interested in attending. Jeb will send him the information so he can attend.

Tom Hill, DSWC – Announcement: He coordinates the Community Conservation Assistance Program which is a non-agricultural or storm retrofit program and wanted to let everyone know that if there is anyone interested with this program and application period it will start July 20, 2023, and close October 6, 2023. Does this agency do any Outreach with specific groups/communities. He remembers that NRCS had the Conservation Stewardship Program (CStP) and was involved with churches. He would like to know if NRCS still works in that capacity.

Response: Jeb Minarik – Jeb will have to research this question and speak with some other colleagues to answer Mr. Hill's question. He will reach out to Diana Irizarry about the Outreach in the Programs Section so she can follow up with Mr. Hill and churches and organizations. Jeb will follow up with Mr. Hill on this later.

Josh Hammond, Public Affairs Specialist (NRCS) – NRCS is seeking nominations for 4 positions in Urban Agriculture and Innovation Production. The nomination window will be closing July 15, 2023. I have 12-member committee which convened in March. It is the agency's average to increase support for urban agriculture and innovation. The information is on the NRCS website and encourage anyone to look into and give their input.

Debbie Maner, NC Rural Water Association – How you get information out to individuals about NRCS FA and submitting applications. Do you have a listserv? Do people just go to the NRCS website and know about these programs?

Response: Jeb Minarik – NRCS has areas and in the areas NRCS has field offices that reach out to people and do outreach and co-located with SWCD that also do outreach. Josh Hammond is also an individual who works with social media and also works on Outreach. Also, the Programs staff has an Outreach Coordinator, Diana Irizarry and she travels throughout the state going to various groups. Go to NRCS website NRCS ([usda.gov](https://www.nrcs.usda.gov)) NRCS gets funding through the FB and the agency receives a certain amount. The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) got a lot of funding out to the states. This funding will be geared toward climate change, carbon sequestration, and greenhouse gas reduction.

Linda Geron – Outreach Coordinator and ask to reach out to GovDelivery if you want Outreach events the efforts with NRCS and FSA will be available to help in any events to spread the word for Outreach.

Remarks: Jeb Minarik – Jeb reminded everyone to reach out to him for any information or comments. jeb.minarik@usda.gov.

Partner Updates

- No updates were given.

Adjourn:

Meeting adjourned at 10:12 a.m.

Attendees:

Joshua Hammond, Evalena Best, Jeb Minarik, Barbara Bleiweis, Chris Drepps, Debbie Maner, Thomas A Hill, Maria Pittsinger, Jim Kjelgaard, Danny K Edwards, Mark Ferguson, Sharon Anderson, Linda Gerron, James Davis, Trish D'Arconte

Notetaker: Maggie Whitaker

**State Technical Advisory Committee Meeting Sub
Committee Meetings Minutes
Forestry Wildlife Subcommittee
July 12, 2023
11:00 am to 12:00 pm**

Moderator: Jeb Minarik

Everyone was welcomed to the meeting and announced that the meeting was being recorded. This meeting is an informal biannual meeting to updates of where everyone is at in the current Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23). Anyone who is new to this meeting NRCS has been focusing on Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) which is one of the Financial Assistance (FA) programs. The FA for Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) will not be covered but possible by the summer State Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) meeting or spring of FY2024. The information for this meeting is of July 11, 2023.

FY2023 10% Wildlife Accomplishments – **Jeb Minarik, NRCS**

[Forestry Practices as of 7-12-2023.xlsx](#)

Fund Pool	Applications	Estimates	Contracts	Obligated	Comments
GWW	9	\$ 385,300	9	\$ 283,362	
Hellbender	5	\$ 525,377	2	\$ 273,314	will fund 3
LLPI Est.	22	\$ 585,368	16	\$ 461,945	will fund all
LLPI Est. (IRA)	22	\$ 287,612	18	\$ 225,948	Will fund all
LLPI Mgt.	31	\$ 664,525	25	\$ 536,595	Will fund all
LLPI Mgt. (IRA)	3	\$ 29,400	3	\$ 29,003	Will fund all
WLFW Northern Bobwhite Quail Pine Savanna	4	\$ 38,625	3	\$ 32,296	will fund all
Wildlife - Aquatic	0		0	\$ -	
Wildlife - Early Successional & Pollinator H	6	\$ 37,175	5	\$ 34,352	will fund all
Wildlife - Early Successional & Pollinator H (IRA)	4	\$ 31,601	3	\$ 26,889	Will fund all
Wildlife - Forest	4	\$ 140,643.00	2	\$ 56,005	will fund all
Wildlife - Forest (IRA)	2	\$ 9,506.00	1	\$ 5,791	Will fund all
All other (includes a 'wildlife' practice)	32	1672417	32	\$ 1,672,417	
Total	144	\$ 4,407,549	119	\$ 3,637,917	
*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 - High Priority)	89	\$ 2,399,188	24	\$ 857,806	

- Farm Bill (FB) mandates that the agency spend a certain percentage of the funds that is grouped for Wildlife.
- Made up of certain ranking pools, such as Golden Wing Warbler (NC has received 9 applications which became contracts, and amount is located in the estimates column). The 9 contracts were all funded. The obligated amount was less about \$100,000 less than the estimate.
- These fund codes are primarily targeted for 10% of funds.
- North Carolina (NC) had initially received \$30M with a request and received an additional \$9M. At his point NC has \$40M.
- 10% of that amount (\$4M) is what NC needs to reach for the Wildlife efforts in EQIP.
- NC is still obligating applications to turn into contracts. Please review the Comments column for how many contracts will be funded. (i.e., Hellbender has 2 applications but there will be 3 contracts funded.

Other columns read that all contracts will be funded.


- Presently NC has about \$3.6M funded. The total at the bottom of the table is not exact but it is an approximate amount intended for the wildlife subaccounts.
- NC has 32 additional contracts that can be funded within the 10% target that are other specific fund pools. These are included in the table above.
- The FB for this year received additional funding for the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) required this funding go to the IRA efforts (i.e., greenhouse gas reduction and carbon sequestration).
- In order to use these funds NC has created a subset of the base sub fund pool in certain projects and practices. This helps to fund more applications. There was not a lot of additional funding. But there is a certain amount that is projected to be received within the next 3 years. NC received over \$3M for IRA-EQIP. As for IRA-CSP NC received over \$5M. (i.e., subaccounts of IRA-LLP management and subaccount, IRA-specific Wildlife Early Success subaccount).
- The last line below on the table are applications and contracts that NC received that is referred to as the General Funding. There are 24 contracts out of 89 applications in the general forestry.
- Looking at the IRA funds NC has been able to obligate more applications and reach out to more participants.

Comments/Questions:

Jessica Schmelz – There is a total of 16 contracts for a rough total amount of \$554,622 that would be roughly closer to \$1.4M. Also, in RCPP there was one large Hellbender project funded and all the 3 applications were funded. Although, there were 2 remaining that were not funded because they were deemed not possible to be implemented at this time.

Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) – **Jeb Minarik stand in for Julius S George, NRCS**

Climate Smart Agriculture Forestry (CSAF) – Documentation



Climate Change Mitigation Practice Categories	Code	Conservation Practice Standard Name ⁽¹⁾ (units)	CSP Enhancement Code	Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) Bundle and Enhancement Activity
			B0005FF1	Buffer Bundle#1*
			B000CPL24	Cropland soil health management system*
			B000CPL25	Climate smart advanced soil health*
	327	Conservation Cover (acres)	E327A	Conservation cover for pollinators and beneficial insects
			E327B	Establish Monarch butterfly habitat
			E328A	Resource conserving crop rotation
			E328B	Improved resource conserving crop rotation
			E328E	Soil health crop rotation
	328	Conservation Crop Rotation (acres)	E328F	Modifications to improve soil health and increase soil organic matter
			E328G	Crop rotation on recently converted CRP grass/legume cover for soil organic matter improvement
			E328N	Intercropping to improve soil health
			E328O	Perennial grain crop conservation rotation
			E329A	No till to reduce soil erosion
	329	Residue and Tillage Management, No Till (acres)	E329B	No till to reduce tillage induced particulate matter
			E329C	No till to increase plant-available moisture
			E329D	No till system to increase soil health and soil organic matter content
			E329E	No till to reduce energy
	332	Contour Buffer Strips (acres)		None Available
			E340A	Cover crop to reduce soil erosion
			E340B	Intensive cover cropping to increase soil health and soil organic matter content

- CSAF Activity List is a compilation of conservation practices, on left-hand side and the basis for the accompanying enhancements and right-hand side of pages are primary enhancements that are typically used in CSP.
- These practices are the main focus that NHQ has reinforced and will have a direct impact towards

USDA's efforts of greenhouse gas reduction and carbon sequestration.

- Funding that was received fall under the IRA. NRCS did have the opportunity to submit enhancement and practices that could have a direct positive impact on the IRA.
- NC has submitted some enhancements and practices for review so we can have a more extensive list. The more practices the more types of projects that be used in additional funding.
- There are various categories that these activities fall under, such as, Soil Health, Agroforestry/Forestry/Upland Wildlife Habitat, and with using the IRA, one of these core practices or core enhancements must be contracted. Any practice that is needed to support a practice must be with a Core Practice.

Comments/Questions

Clinton Barden – Can you cover what the difference between the blue and the black and the yellow highlighted practices?

Response: Jeb Minarik – left hand side are Practices and Enhancements start with an “E” and the ones highlighted in yellow were added from FY22. Forest Stand Improvement (Code 666) was added from the initial year. As for the “blue” it was the headings for the various columns. The ones that are in the “black” column, such as, (Code 327) these enhancements have the base of practice of conservation cover. It is a specific enhancement for CSP that directly covers pollinator and beneficial insects. This specific enhancement has a specific benefit to greenhouse gas reduction and carbon sequestration.

John Ann Shearer - When will you find out about the ones that were submitted for NC will be accepted?

Response: Jeb Minarik – Not sure when the timeline is for acceptance. He will respond to this question when he gets an answer to this question.

Gavin Thompson – I do not see the difference between using (Code 338) for LLP vs. any other tree species that we are trying to establish. Many of our plans have site-prep burns as a requirement. It was not understood why it is only used for LLP. It should not be allowed as a supporting practice for (Code 612) Tree Establishment.

Response: Jeb Minarik – this is something that we work with ECS, and this is something that we have to go back and discuss with them.

Clinton Barber – The Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Procedure (WHEP) could use some changes. Due to how one person interprets how it reads some people are getting funded and others are not. I believe that it should be trees per acre range so it would make it even for everyone.

Response: Jeb Minarik- He has communicated this with the ECS staff, and it will be taken a look at it. NC certainly wants everyone to use it correctly, so training is provided. NC can also update, change or whatever they need to do.

Response: Ruben Torres – The only reason NC allows on LLP is because that is the only option that NHQ gives us. The only flexibility NC has right now is Establishment. A list of practices was submitted for FY24 in order to get more primary practices into the IRA. This would include Prescribe Burning to be opened for every species. Ruben does not know when these practices will be accepted. Although, all the practices are in for review.

Don Barker – He has received the comments for the WHEP. He has pulled several states to get an idea of what NC can do to make it consistent for our planners. Also, do some more training so the field can look at the WHEP tool and understand what is required of field employees.

John Isenhour - Which is the Wildlife practice code, and it is (420) and NC practices have a payment rate and get paid per foot, per acre, or per unit. He said that his concern is where land is taken out of production there could be foregone income and foregone income can be included in the building of a practice payment rate. Should the foregone income be for 5 years that the land is taken out of a production?

Response: Jeb Minarik - It is part of the payment rate at that one given time it does take into consideration the lifespan of that particular practice.

Increase Applications in NWQI and GWW Pools – NRCS

- Funding that we receive for the National Water Quality Incentive (NWQI) and GWW must be used for only these projects. This year we had to send back some of the funding to NHQ. NRCS is needing help from the partners in order to help use these funds, so NC does not have to send any money back to National Headquarters (NHQ).
- NC is looking to get more applicants and help them with their projects.
- This is just an opportunity to spreading the news of these opportunities.
- The NWQI in NC has the opportunity for additional projects. Some are in the Western part of the state. Those 2 projects that are in the west will be closing. Also, two others in west of Charlotte, in the Lincoln area and another in the Eastern part Coharrie Creek did come online this year. States are allowed to have at least 3 NWQI projects. This would be good for the watershed(s)/water quality (WQ) projects to address WQ related issues. This can be anywhere in the state.
- The GWW is focused on high elevation forested areas. Only one the Western part of the state.

Comments/Questions

Bree Charron – What kind of funding level is NWQI program? How much funding can you request?

Response: Jessica Schmelz – it works in a way where the partner decides what they want to focus on and what direction they want to go. (i.e., the one in the West were streambank stabilization type projects. While the one in the East was more focused on the Water Quality of surrounding CAFO operations. It is based on how many applications and practices you want funded each year. (i.e., in the West they were approximately about \$500,000 per year for each. On the other hand, the one in the East was about \$1.2M a year. NWQI is for 5 years. When you get ready to ask you need all your information such as practices that individuals will be requesting, we then multiply that by NC's funding is for each one or the payment list. So, it is based on the applicants you think will be coming in and the resource concerns your addressing. Contact Jessica Schmelz if any help is needed at jessica.schmelz@usda.gov.

Other items – **Committee Members**

- No comments

Partner Updates – **Subcommittee Members**

Starla Harwood - Starla and John Isenhour have been working on updating the State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) Factsheet, the NC Early Succession Bird Habitat waiting on NHQ and once it gets back it will be located on the website.

Alton Perry – Has there been any processes for Advance Payments or partial payments like in EQIP for other Programs because that is not the case for CSP? It seems that in CSP the practice has to be done before the first payment can be received in October. That puts a landowner to come up with the funding to complete the practice and this happened in early FY20 or late FY22. Has there been any more discussion of helping landowners with payment upfront? He just wanted everyone to understand that if there is no funding for the landowner to have to start his/her practice than it would be difficult for that landowner to understand the reasoning of not receiving the payment in CSP.

Response: Jeb Minarik – These payments are in EQIP for the Historically Underserved participants. Although, he does believe that there are eligible loans for participants through Farm Service Agency (FSA).

Response: Jeb Minarik – there are programs in FSA and also a program that is EQIP-CIC and the participant can apply for FA. He will share for discussion.

Don Barker – If participants are being told that they cannot participate in any of the NRCS funding because the agency should not be telling any landowners they cannot participate in the programs.

Alton Perry – He did not mean that NRCS has told anyone in NRCS has told a landowner that they cannot be funded.

Julius George – This has been a huge discussion with the under secretary and other leadership at the national level and individuals at the policy branch. They are considering this change in the new Farm Bill (FB) that funding will be available in various programs specifically CSP. Also, can provide FA funding.

Jeb Minarik- last call for remarks/comments and he announced that the next meeting will be August 9, 2023. He will let everyone know if the meeting will be an in-person meeting or virtual meeting.

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 12:02 p.m.

Attendees: Jeb Minarik, Alton Perry, Clinton Barden, Don Barker, Evalena Best, Charron Bree, Debbie Maner, Danny K Edwards, Bob Etheridge, Laura Fogo, Patricia Gabriel, John Ann Shearer, Linda Gerron, Starla Harwood, Julie Henshaw, Michael Knoerr, Liz Rutledge, Luke E Loiles, Jessica Schmelz, Sabrina Shaffer, Julius George.

Notetaker: Maggie Whitaker

State Technical Advisory Easement Subcommittee Minutes

July 12, 2023

1:30 pm – 3:00 pm

Geographic Area Rate Cap (GARC) FY24

No change

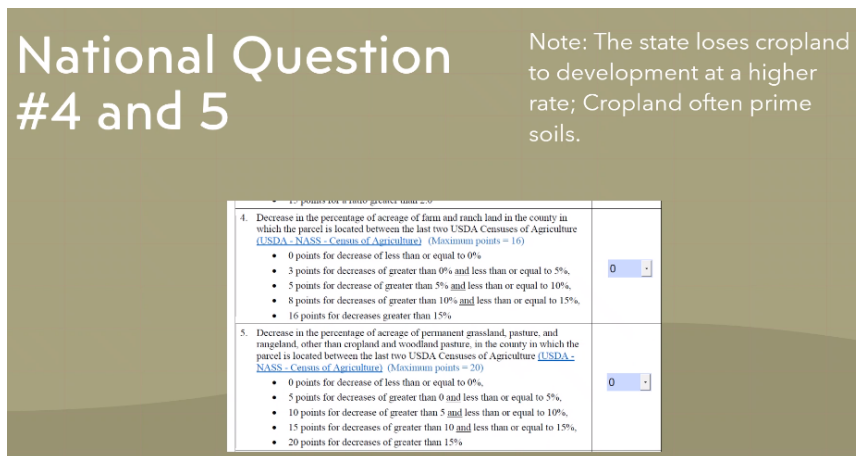


**North Carolina
GARC**

- NC NRCS sets a Geographic Area Rate Cap as a ratio of the FMV appraisal with a not-to-exceed (NTE) Cost per acre for WRE.
- The current NC GARC ratio is set at 90% FMV.
- The current NTE cap is set at \$5,000.

ALE Ranking Tool (Changes expected FY24)

Continuing to work on potential adjustments



**National Question
#4 and 5**

Note: The state loses cropland to development at a higher rate; Cropland often prime soils.

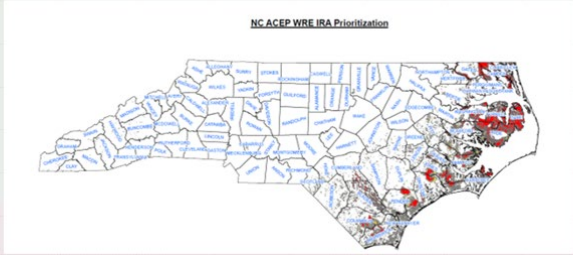
4. Decrease in the percentage of acreage of farm and ranch land in the county in which the parcel is located between the last two USDA Censuses of Agriculture (USDA - NASS - Census of Agriculture) (Maximum points = 16) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 0 points for decrease of less than or equal to 0%• 3 points for decreases of greater than 0% and less than or equal to 5%• 5 points for decrease of greater than 5% and less than or equal to 10%• 8 points for decreases of greater than 10% and less than or equal to 15%• 16 points for decreases greater than 15%	<input type="text" value="0"/>
5. Decrease in the percentage of acreage of permanent grassland, pasture, and rangeland, other than cropland and woodland pasture, in the county in which the parcel is located between the last two USDA Censuses of Agriculture (USDA - NASS - Census of Agriculture) (Maximum points = 20) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 0 points for decrease of less than or equal to 0%• 5 points for decreases of greater than 0 and less than or equal to 5%• 10 points for decrease of greater than 5 and less than or equal to 10%• 15 points for decreases of greater than 10 and less than or equal to 15%• 20 points for decreases of greater than 15%	<input type="text" value="0"/>

RCPP Agreement Coming on Board

IRA-WRE Update

IRA ACEP-WRE

- Wetland Reserve Easements (ACEP-WRE) applications for the current IRA funding cycle resulted in 3 WRE IRA parcel applications moving towards pending offers.



NC ACEP WRE IRA Prioritization

- 3 parcels for FY23.
- FY24 there is not an announced priority area at this time.
- We do have applications in hand that fall within the high priority areas as currently identified.

ACEP-ALE- IRA Idea Solicitation.

- NRCS request scientific input to support ACEP ALE through IRA that identifies high priority opportunities for easement acquisition that offer maximum reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emission and carbon sequestration, as well as significant risk of land use conversion that, if avoided would minimize GHG emissions
- Seeking scientific input supported by peer-reviewed scientific literature
- Maps of proposed area.
- July 26 submission to brian.Loadholt@usda.gov and Julius.George@usda.gov

- National office has asked states how we might want to utilize IRA funding.
- Everyone has until July 26 from each member for ideas and send to Brian Loadholt per email at brian.loadholt@usda.gov and Julius George
- Funding could be possible for landowners by 50% from the federal government and 50% by the landowners. Unless there is the possibility for other partners to invest in projects.
- Greenhouse emissions – seek someone with scientific data. (Check with NCSU)/need of any supporting documentation is needed.
- Dewitt Hardee comments that the cropland can be very expensive to keep up.
- Additional funds for NC would be very helpful.

Future Opportunities through WRE

Future opportunities with WRE

- Past conversation involving WRE for the purpose of protecting, developing or enhancing Bog Turtle Habitat
- Research for potential pool development (site reviews, discussion with neighboring states, etc)
- Tools needed
- Partners
- Timeline considerations

- Most of the funds in the recent past have been placed in eastern NC
- NRCS is looking at having an additional pool for Bog Turtle pool or Wildlife pool.
- Type of ranking look at, tools that are needed within funding.

Comments:

John Ann Shearer – F&WS is looking forward in being part of this effort.

Mike Knoerr – rates (to determine the potential of lands, rates for the practices that NRCS has at the moment/It really depends on the geography, place)

Brian Loadholt – looking into timeline and looking into some sites. What sites have been restored and sites that might need restoration.

David Williams – How prevalent the Bog Turtle Habitat? John Ann Shearer believes that it is narrow, but Mike Knoerr would know more. There is a lot of interest with landowners.

Morgan Harris – it used to be narrow, but it was at a larger amount in the past.

RCPP consideration for Easements

Agricultural Lands Easements Through RCPP

- Forever Farms I and II
- Upper Cape Fear
- Upper Neuse
- North Carolina Sentinel Landscape High Priority Program

- At the moment we have 4 projects, but others should come later.

RCPP Proposals for Easements for Future Partners

RCPP Entity-held Easement Land Eligibility

Land may be eligible for enrollment if it is-

- 440 CPM 531.22(B)(1) Private or Tribal agricultural land, nonindustrial private forest land, or associated land on which an eligible activity would help achieve the conservation benefits defined for an approved project
- Capable of supporting the identified conservation values and the planned future condition of the proposed easement area subject to the terms of the RCPP conservation easement deed

List continues next slide

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- RCPP does not have the land use as there was in the past.
- Some of the constraints that were in the past RCPP no longer exist presently.

RCPP Proposals for Easements for Future Partners

RCPP Entity-held Easements Minimum Deed Terms (MDTs)

3 sets of MDTs each with a version with or without a US Right of Enforcement

Select most appropriate to achieve project purposes

1. Minimum Deed Terms for Agricultural Use (*Minimally Restrictive*)
2. Minimum Deed Terms for Conservation Use with Compatible Agricultural Use (*Moderately Restrictive*)
3. Minimum Deed Terms for Uses Limited for Protection of Conservation Values (*Highly Restrictive*)



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- Most of the project fall under this item.

RCPP Proposals for Easements for Future Partners

RCPP Entity-held Easement Minimum Deed Terms

RCPP Entity-Held Easement Type	Typical Technical Land Eligibility Categories and Criteria
Highly Restrictive: RCPP MINIMUM DEED TERMS FOR USES LIMITED FOR PROTECTION OF CONSERVATION VALUES	ACEP-WRE land eligibility (440 CPM 528, § 528.105) HFRP land eligibility (440 CPM 511, § 511.24(A))
Moderately Restrictive: RCPP MINIMUM DEED TERMS FOR CONSERVATION USE WITH COMPATIBLE AGRICULTURAL USES	ACEP-ALE grasslands of special environmental significance (440 CPM 528-528.33(B)(iii)) ACEP-WRE reservation of grazing rights as described in the States WRCG (440 CPM 528-528.131(B)(vi) and 528.162(A))
Minimally Restrictive: RCPP MINIMUM DEED TERMS FOR AGRICULTURAL USE	ACEP-ALE land eligibility (440 CPM 528-528.33(A)(3-6), (B), and (C))

Actively Active Easements

- 14 active ACEP ALE projects
- 4 active ACEP ALE applications in process
- 9 active RCPP-ALE projects
- 12 active RCPP-ALE applications
- 3 active WRE projects
- 1 active WRE application
- 3 active WRE-IRA applications
- Stewardship easements (collecting monitoring reports, responding to potential violations, amendments, etc)

- Most of these will be closing by the end of this fiscal year.
- 300 easements are presently closed.
- 2 certified applications to close easements.
- NRCS is looking into hiring more individuals in helping with Easements.

Partner Updates/Questions

- Dewitt – Where is NRCS with current applications.
- Brian Loadholt – announcements have not been made.

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 2:08 p.m.

Attendees: Brian Loadholt, Evalena Best, Don Barker, Gavin Thompson, Jessica Schmeltz, Debbie Maner, Dewitt Hardee, Bill Edwards, Danny K Edwards, Linda Gerron, Morgan Harris, Starla Harwood, Jess Laggis, Michael Knoerr, Luke E Lokies, Mary Lou Addor, Sabrina Shaffer, John Ann Shearer, Terry Foreman, Jason Firster, Christopher Childers, Patricia Gabriel, Jeb Minarik, James Davis, Bob Etheridge, Lisa Furlow, Desirae Kissell, Melissa Smith, Pete Benjamin, Veronica Fasselt, Vivian Doyle

Notetaker: Maggie Whitaker