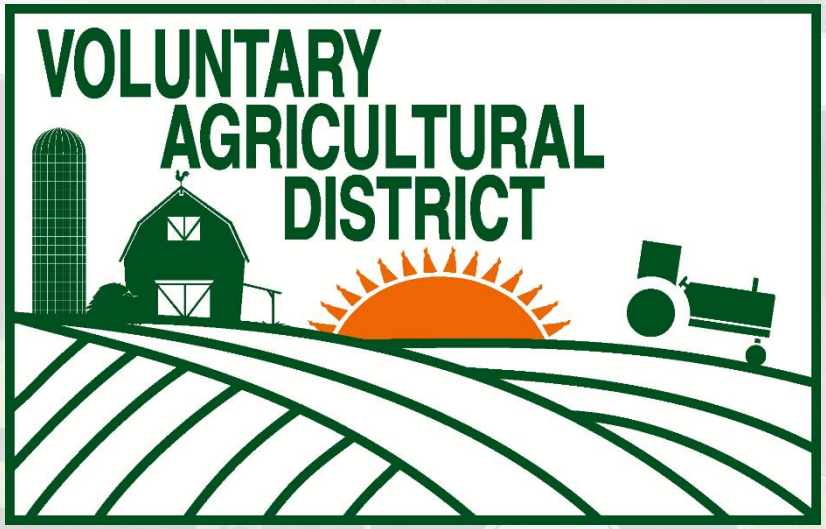
Voluntary Agricultural Districts



2018 Regional Preservation Workshops

May 2018

Agenda

2018 Regional Preservation Workshops Agenda	
Time	Session
9:30 AM	Welcome
9:40 AM	VAD Program Overview
10:00 AM	How to Find and Sustain Local Leadership
10:45 AM	Break – Refreshments brought to you by Farm Bureau
11:00 AM	Legal and Technical Issues
12:00 PM	Lunch - Brought to you by the North Carolina Farm Credit Network and the NC State Grange
1:00 PM	The Importance of Local Data and GIS
1:45 PM	How VAD Fits in the City/County Planning Process for NCDOT
2:45 PM	Other Conservation Programs for Landowners
3:15 PM	Question and Answer Session
3:30 PM	Adjourn

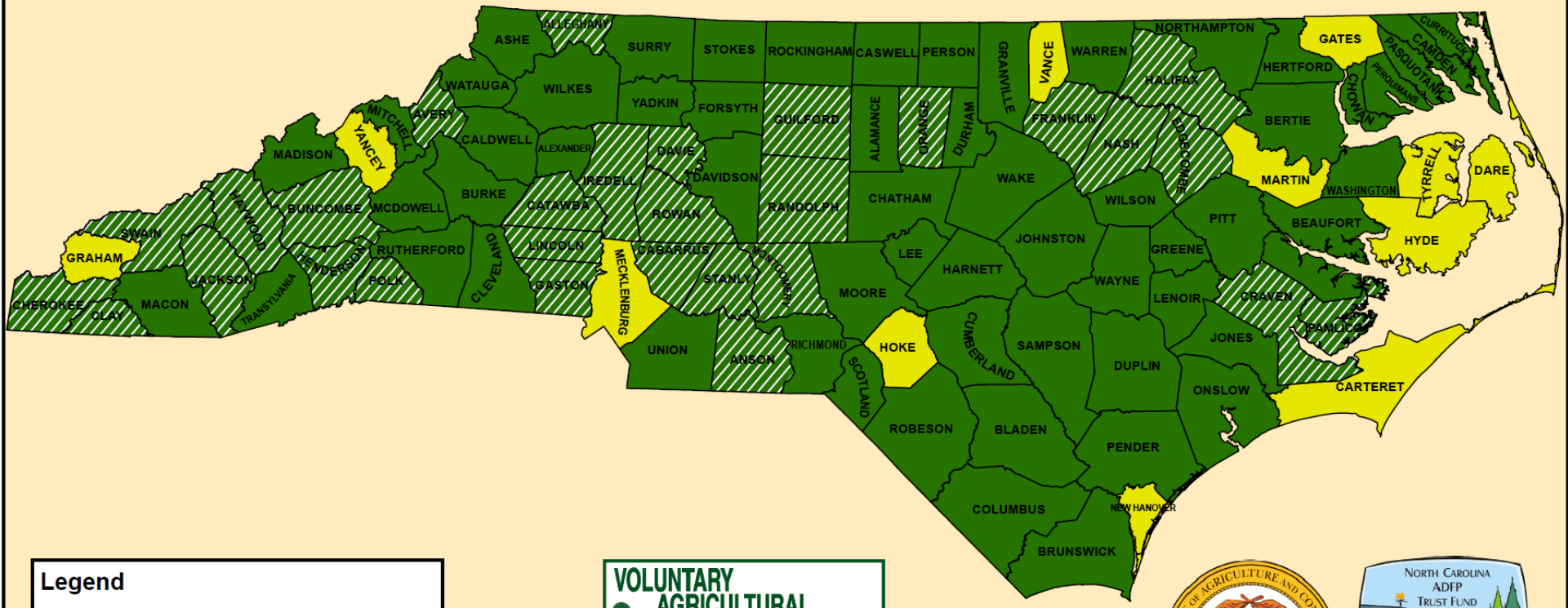
Voluntary Agricultural Districts Overview

- N.C. General Statutes Chapter 106, Article 61: The Farmland Preservation Enabling Act allows counties to adopt ordinances which provide for voluntary ag districts.

- § 106-738(b): The purpose of such agricultural districts shall be to increase identity and pride in the agricultural community and its way of life and to increase protection from nuisance suits and other negative impacts on properly managed farms.

- The VAD program is a county-level ordinance that establishes an Agricultural Advisory Board that provides a voice for farm, forestry and horticultural interests in local government.

VOLUNTARY AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS



VAD Statewide Statistics

Farms Enrolled in the VAD Program Statewide	9,529
Acres of Farmland Enrolled in the VAD Program Statewide	782,423
Farms Enrolled in the Enhanced VAD Program Statewide	654
Acres of Farmland Enrolled in the Enhanced VAD Program Statewide	50,931
Total Farms Enrolled in the VAD and EVAD Program Statewide	10,183
Total Acres of Farmland Enrolled in the VAD and EVAD Program Statewide	833,354

VAD Benefits

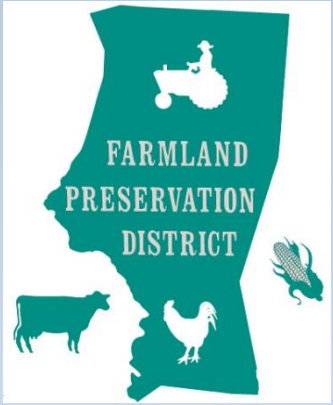
- § 106-739. Agricultural advisory board
  - Must be formed to comply with statute
  - Review and make recommendations concerning the establishment and modification of agricultural districts, and any ordinance or amendment adopted or proposed for adoption
  - Advises Board of Commissioners on agricultural issues
  - Runs VAD program (assistance from administrative entity like Soil and Water)
  - Holds public hearings on public projects affecting agriculture, especially condemnation of farmland
  - Each district must be represented on Board
  - Majority of the Board should be actively engaged in farming

VAD Benefits

- § 106-740. Public hearings on condemnation of farmland
  - "…may provide that no State or local public agency or governmental unit may formally initiate any action to condemn any interest in qualifying farmland within a voluntary agricultural district under this Part or an enhanced voluntary agricultural district under Part 3 of this Article until such agency has requested the local agricultural advisory board established under G.S. 106-739 to hold a public hearing on the proposed condemnation."
  - The Ag Advisory Board submits written findings and a recommendation to the decision-making body of the agency proposing acquisition.
  - Have 30 days after receiving a request to hold the public hearing and submit its findings and recommendations to the agency.
  - The agency may not formally initiate a condemnation action while the proposed condemnation is properly before the advisory board within these time limitations.

VAD Benefits

- § 106-741. Record notice of proximity to farmlands
  - County Geographic Information System (GIS) to notify the public of tracts or parcels "**within one-half mile of a voluntary agricultural district.**"
  - Deed notation
  - Mapping
  - Signage



VAD Benefits

- § 106-742. Waiver of water and sewer assessments
  - "A county or a city that has adopted an ordinance under this Part may provide by ordinance that its water and sewer assessments be held in abeyance, with or without interest, for farms, whether inside or outside of a voluntary agricultural district, until improvements on such property are connected to the water or sewer system for which the assessment was made."
  - The ordinance may provide that, when the period of abeyance ends, the assessment is payable in accordance with the terms set out in the assessment resolution.
  - Statutes of limitations are suspended during the time that any assessment is held in abeyance without interest.
  - Nothing in this section is intended to diminish the authority of counties or cities to hold assessments in abeyance

Qualifying Farmland

- To qualify for inclusion in an Ag District, farmland must:
  - Meet definition of “Agriculture” from N.C.G.S. 106-581.1
    - Crops, horticulture, forestry
    - Livestock and dairy (includes poultry, horses, and bees)
    - Aquaculture
    - Agritourism and value-added operations for items produced on the farm
    - Public or private grain warehouse or warehouse operation
    - General farm operations
  - Managed on accordance with NRCS practices for highly erodible land
  - Subject to a 10-year Conservation Agreement

Qualifying Farmland - Minimum Acreage Requirement

- County Commissioners set minimum required acreage.
- May require one or more farms

Conservation Agreement

- Landowner agrees to use land only for farm purposes for next ten years
- Allows creation of up to three residential lots
- Freely revocable by landowner upon written notice to the County
- May be recorded

Enhanced Voluntary Ag District Programs

- Requires a 10 year irrevocable Conservation Agreement
- Must be recorded
- Automatically renews for 3 years after the initial period unless notice is given by the landowner
- § 106-743.5. Waiver of utility assessments
  - All assessments for utilities provided by that county or city are held in abeyance, with or without interest, for EVAD farms
  - Similar provisions as for VADs and the waiver of water and sewer assessments
- Offers additional benefits to the landowner:
  - May sell nonfarm products without losing zoning exemption.
  - 90% cost share
  - EVAD may receive priority consideration for grants.

Advantages of Ag District Program

- It’s completely voluntary
- It’s flexible - counties may add other programs to be run by Ag Advisory Board for the Ag Districts

Limitations of Ag District Program

- Protection against nuisance suits is not absolute
- It’s not uniform statewide

Adopting a VAD Ordinance

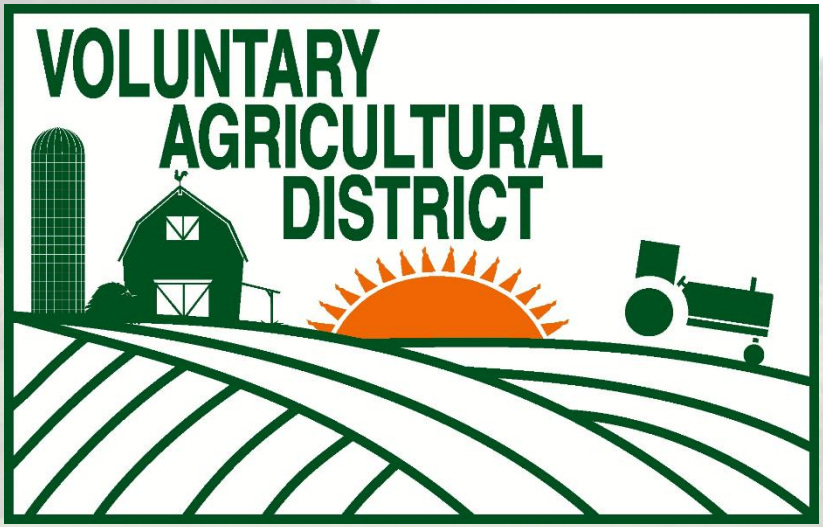
- Stakeholder meetings
- Support from county leadership, county agencies, private and nonprofit partners, and farmers and landowners
- Development of VAD ordinance
  - Models ordinances are available
- Approval from County Manager and County Attorney
- Passage by County Board of Commissioners

FAQs

- How are municipalities affected by the VAD ordinance?
- Is there assistance available to develop an ordinance?
  - ADFP Trust Fund grants are available to fund the development of the VAD ordinance. Grant Cycle XII opens October 15, 2018
- What resources are available to counties?
  - State VAD Workgroup
  - Coming soon: www.NCVAD.org
  - Documents, links, and contact information available through www.NCADFP.org

Questions?

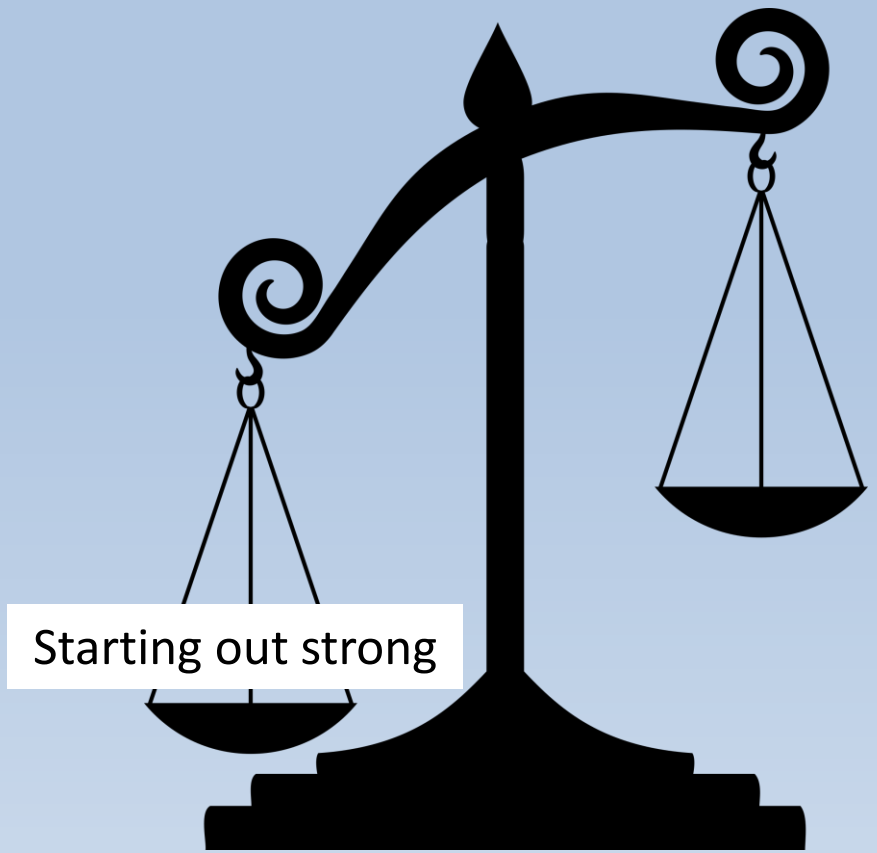
How To Find and Sustain Local Leadership for your VAD



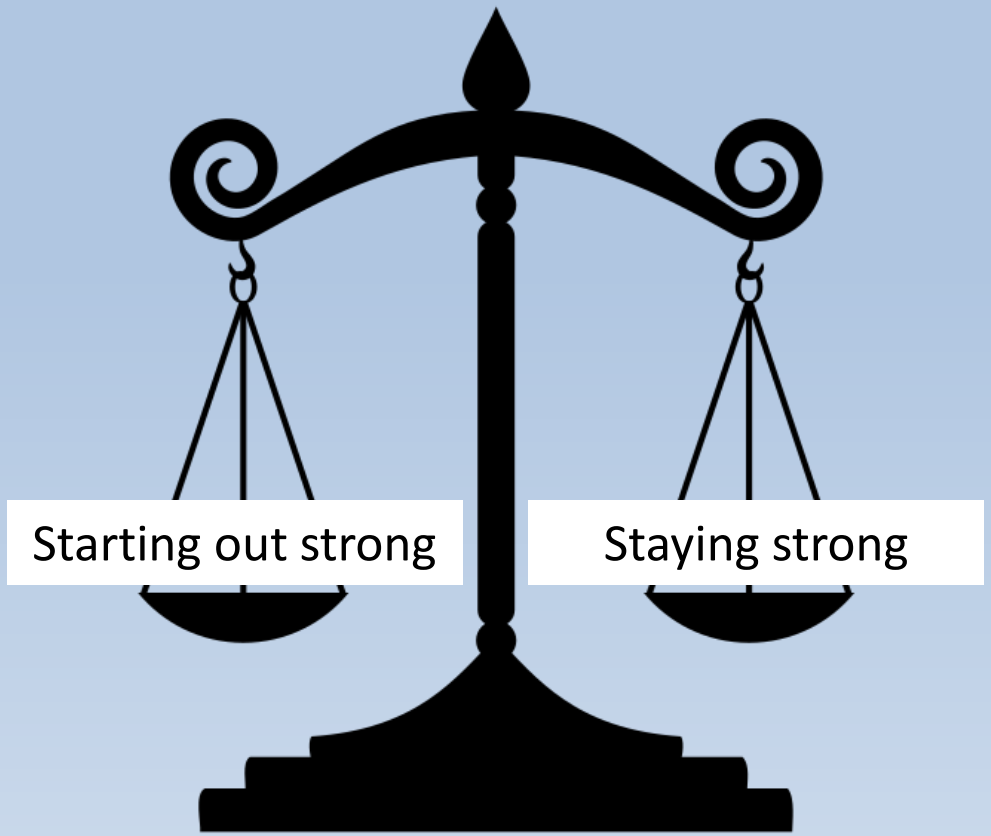
Cast Your Vote

- On a scale of 1 to 3, with 1 being the strongest, 2 is medium, and 3 is needs improvement:
  - How do you rate the leadership and activeness of the Agricultural Advisory Board (VAD Board)?
  - How well known is the VAD program in your county?
  - How do you rate your program overall?

There is almost always interest in starting a VAD and strong leadership is present. The key is maintaining it.



- Motivated administrators
- Community leaders
- New active members



Do you know how your VAD started?

- How did the initial conversation about a VAD program begin? With farmers and landowners? County staff? Elected officials?

- Who were the major stakeholders involved in the planning, development, and passage of the VAD ordinance?

- What were the hurdles? Where did you find support?

What makes a strong VAD program?

- Staff that takes a leading role with program administration
- Adding landowners and acreage every year
- Keeping the program current by reviewing the VAD files annually
- Keeping board members enthusiastic and challenged

How many of these questions can you answer?

- 1. What is the purpose of your VAD?
- 2. What is the vision of your VAD?
- 3. What are the goals of your VAD?
- 4. What is being done to accomplish those goals?
- 5. What *should* your board members be doing, what are they *willing* to do, and what *are* they doing?
- 6. What has your VAD accomplished both long term and during the past year?

How many of these questions can you answer?

- 7. Have you asked your board members to compile a list of future women and men to serve on your AAB?
- 8. How are you publicizing or communicating the accomplishments of your VAD?
- 9. What is being done each year to recruit landowners to sign-up for your VAD?
- 10. Are meetings of your AAB orderly and with an agenda?
- 11. What is the condition of the economy, farms and forestry in your county?
- 12. Is there anything that farms and forestry operations in your county need that the VAD can address?

County Spotlight

- What are things your VAD program does well?
- In what areas can your program improve?
- What are your AAB meetings like?
- What is application process?
- How do you communicate news and updates to members and the general public?
- What would you change about the VAD program?

Best Practices

- Update VAD statistics regularly, including yearly report to NCDA&CS
- Have a GIS layer and update it regularly
- Communicate successes and spotlight members to county leadership and the public
- Hold regular AAB meetings
- Recruitment for program and board
- Thank your farmers and landowners

Break

FARM BUREAU
NORTH CAROLINA

Review of State Law Requirements and Local Government Discretion

LEGAL ISSUES IN VAD AND EVAD

MINIMUM ACREAGE

Counties have differing goals

-Some want to protect urban farms

- Some more focused on larger ag areas

Counties and municipalities have discretion to set their own minimum acreage. No longer tied to Present Use-Value

RECORD NOTICE

- Could be stand-alone ordinance
- Property within 600 feet of any ag operation
- Property within ½ mile of :
  - Poultry or swine operation
  - Ag District

Where may county exercise discretion?

ENFORCEMENT OF CONSERVATION AGREEMENT

- VAD – What is there to enforce?
- EVAD – Irrevocable for 10 years
  - Who monitors and enforces?
  - Where does the money for enforcement come from?
  - Injunction, Penalty, Recoupment of Benefits
  - What specific enforcement rights do counties have?

AG ADVISORY BOARD

- State Law Requirements
  - VAD statute
  - Other state requirements

REPRESENTATION ON AG ADVISORY BOARD

- State law requires “that each (such) district have a representative on the agricultural advisory board.”
- How many counties know which district their board members represent?

HEARINGS ON CONDEMNATION

- Not Applicable to Private Condemnors
- 30-Day Timeframe
- Notice
- Open Meetings Law
- Specific Issues to be Discussed

REMOVING LAND FROM VAD

- Voluntarily
  - Removing part of a farm
- Involuntarily
  - Appeal Rights

Removal of notations in Register of Deeds/Tax Office

What is a bona fide farm?

And why does it matter?

Bona fide farm purposes (from § 153A-340)

- production and activities relating or incidental to the production of:
  - Crops
  - Grains
  - Fruits
  - Vegetables
  - Ornamental and flowering plants
  - Dairy, livestock, poultry
  - and all other forms of agriculture, as defined in **G.S. 106-581.1**

§ 106-581.1. Agriculture defined.

- "agriculture", "agricultural", and "farming" refer to all of the following:
  - (1) The cultivation of soil for production and harvesting of crops, including but not limited to fruits, vegetables, sod, flowers and ornamental plants.
  - (2) The planting and production of trees and timber.
  - (3) Dairying and the raising, management, care, and training of livestock, including horses, bees, poultry, and other animals for individual and public use, consumption, and marketing.
  - (4) Aquaculture as defined in G.S. 106-758.

§ 106-581.1., continued…

- (5) The operation, management, conservation, improvement, and maintenance of a farm and the structures and buildings on the farm, including building and structure repair, replacement, expansion, and construction incident to the farming operation.
- (6) **When performed on the farm**, "agriculture", "agricultural", and "farming" also include the marketing and selling of agricultural products, **agritourism**, the storage and use of materials for agricultural purposes, packing, treating, processing, sorting, storage, and other activities performed to add value to crops, livestock, and agricultural items produced on a farm, and similar activities incident to the operation of a farm.
- (7) A public or private grain warehouse or warehouse operation where grain is held 10 days or longer and includes, but is not limited to, all buildings, elevators, equipment, and warehouses consisting of one or more warehouse sections and considered a single delivery point with the capability to receive, load out, weigh, dry, and store grain.

§ 153A-340 continued…

- **"when performed on the farm"** in G.S. 106-581.1(6) shall include the farm within the jurisdiction of the county and any other farm owned or leased to or from others by the bona fide farm operator, no matter where located.
- the production of a **nonfarm product** that:
  - the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services recognizes as a "Goodness Grows in North Carolina" product
  - is produced on a farm subject to a conservation agreement under G.S. 106-743.2 is a bona fide farm purpose.
  - Examples:

§ 153A-340 continued…

Sufficient evidence

- sufficient evidence that the property is being used for bona fide farm purposes:
  - a. A farm sales tax exemption certificate issued by the Department of Revenue.
  - b. A copy of the property tax listing showing that the property is eligible for participation in the present use value program pursuant to G.S. 105-277.3.
  - c. A copy of the farm owner's or operator's Schedule F from the owner's or operator's most recent federal income tax return.
  - d. A forest management plan.

§ 153A-340 continued…

What about an agritourism building?

- Yes, if it is on a property owned by a person who:
  - holds a qualifying farmer sales tax exemption certificate from the Department of Revenue **or**
  - is enrolled in the present-use value program

§ 153A-340 continued…

What is an agritourism building?

- used for public or private events, including, but not limited to:
  - Weddings
  - Receptions
  - Meetings
  - Demonstrations of farm activities
  - Meals
  - Other events that are taking place on the farm **because of its farm or rural setting.**

§ 153A-340 continued…

What is agritourism?

- "agritourism" means:
  - any activity carried out on a farm or ranch that:
    - allows members of the general public, for recreational, entertainment, or educational purposes, to view or enjoy rural activities, including:
    - farming, ranching, historic, cultural, harvest-your-own activities, or natural activities and attractions.

Why is bona fide farm use important?
County Zoning…

- County Zoning regulations do not affect property used for bona fide farm purposes (§ 153A-340)
- However, the use of farm property for nonfarm purposes is still subject to zoning (§ 153A-340)

Why is bona fide farm use important?
City/Town Zoning…

- Property that is located in the geographic area of a municipality's extraterritorial jurisdiction and that is used for bona fide farm purposes is exempt from exercise of the municipality's extraterritorial jurisdiction §160A-360(k)
- Property that is being used for bona fide farm purposes on the date of the resolution of intent to consider annexation may not be annexed without the written consent of the owner or owners of the property. §160A-58.54(c)

Why is bona fide farm use important?
The Building Code…

- Certain farm buildings are exempt from the Building Code.
- North Carolina State Building Code: a "farm building" means any nonresidential building or structure that is used for a bona fide farm purpose as provided in G.S. 153A-340.

Why is bona fide farm use important?
Ag Cost Share…

- Must be a bona fide farm under G.S. 153A-340(b)(2) to be eligible for Agricultural Cost Share Program under G.S. 106-850(b)(10).

Why is bona fide farm use important?
VAD and EVAD…

- Although being "bona fide" is not required for VAD and EVAD, bona fide farms certainly qualify, and so receive the following benefits:
  - Public hearings on condemnation of farmland
  - Record notice of proximity to farmland
  - Waiver of water and sewer assessments.
  - If in an EVAD conservation agreement, may receive up to twenty-five percent (25%) of gross sales from the sale of nonfarm products and still qualify as a bona fide farm that is exempt from zoning regulations (EVAD only).
  - If in an EVAD conservation agreement, eligible under G.S. 106-850(b) to receive the higher percentage (90%) of cost-share funds for the benefit of that farmland under the Agriculture Cost Share Program (EVAD only).

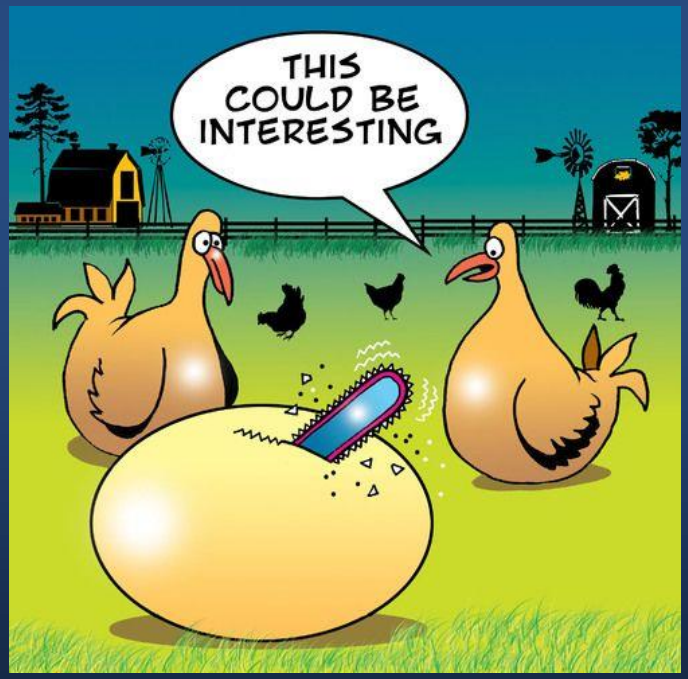
Lunch

NC GRANGE
ESTABLISHED 1929

FARM CREDIT
AGCAROLINA | CAPE FEAR | CAROLINA

The North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

Utilization of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to Map Voluntary Agriculture Districts

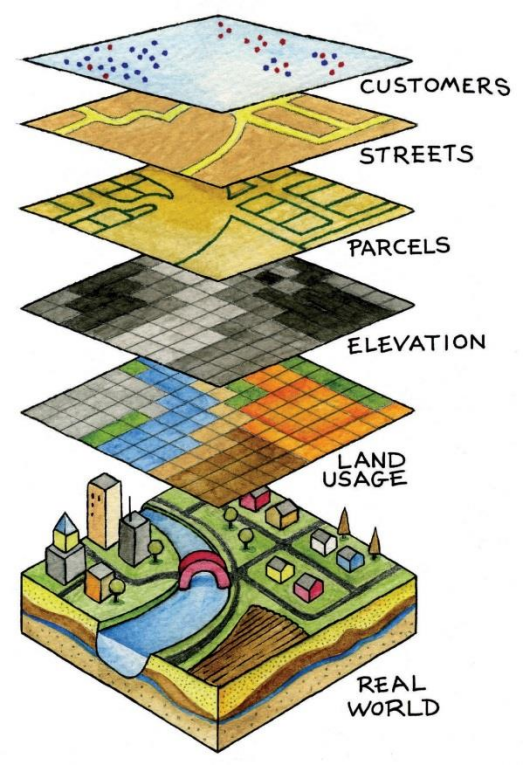


Daniel Madding
GIS Manager

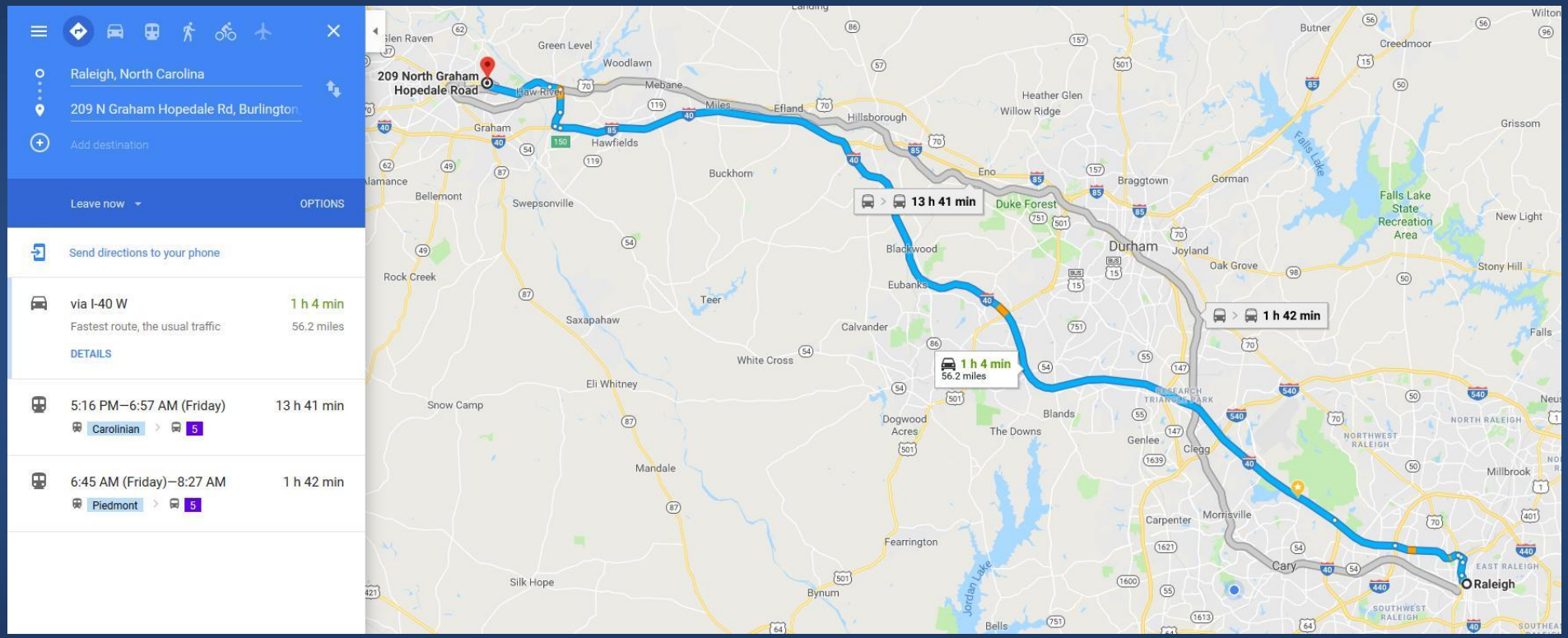
What is GIS

Geographic Information Systems (**GIS**)

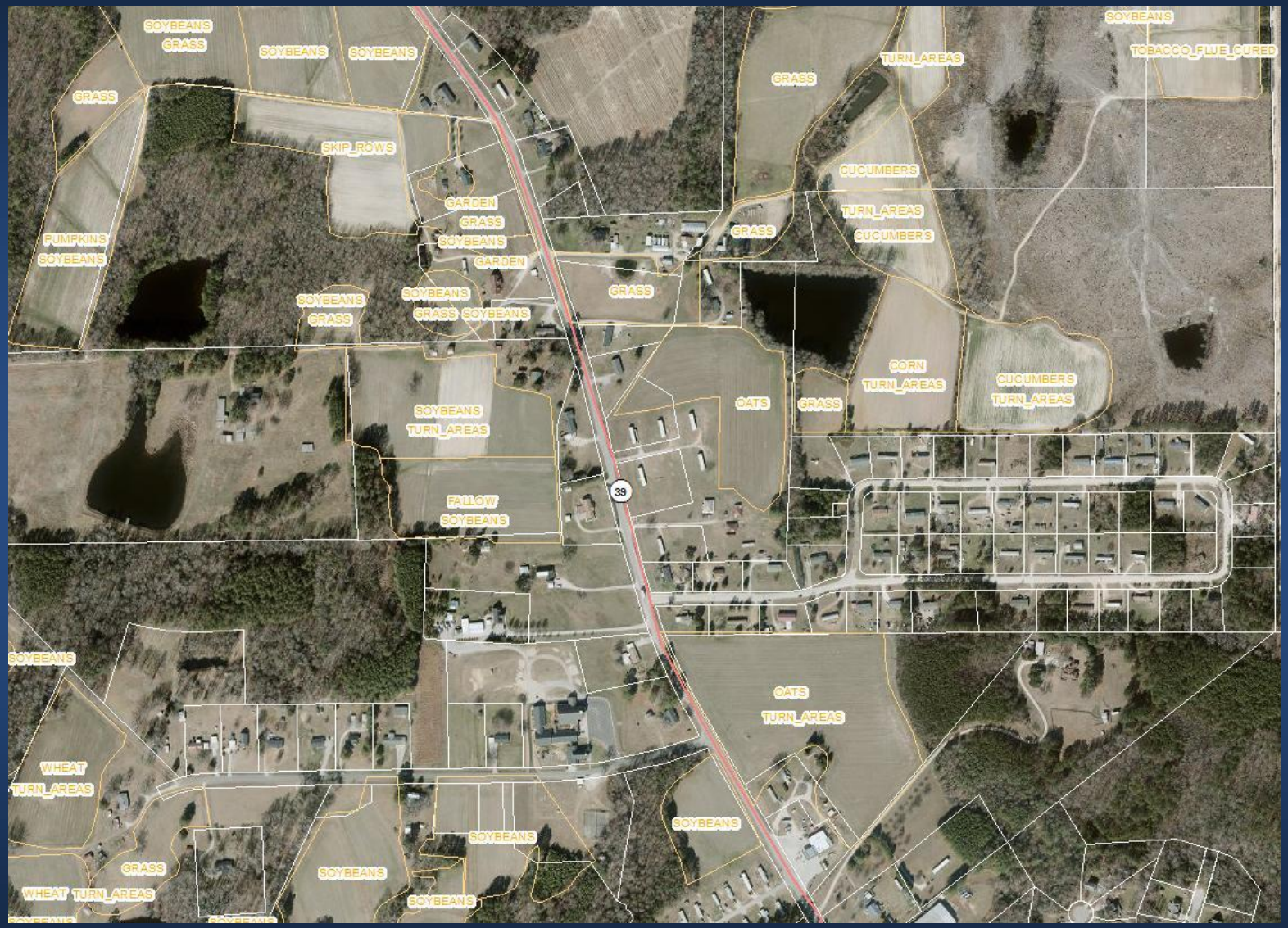
- Is computer software that enable users to capture, store, analyze and manage data spatially.



Google Maps is GIS

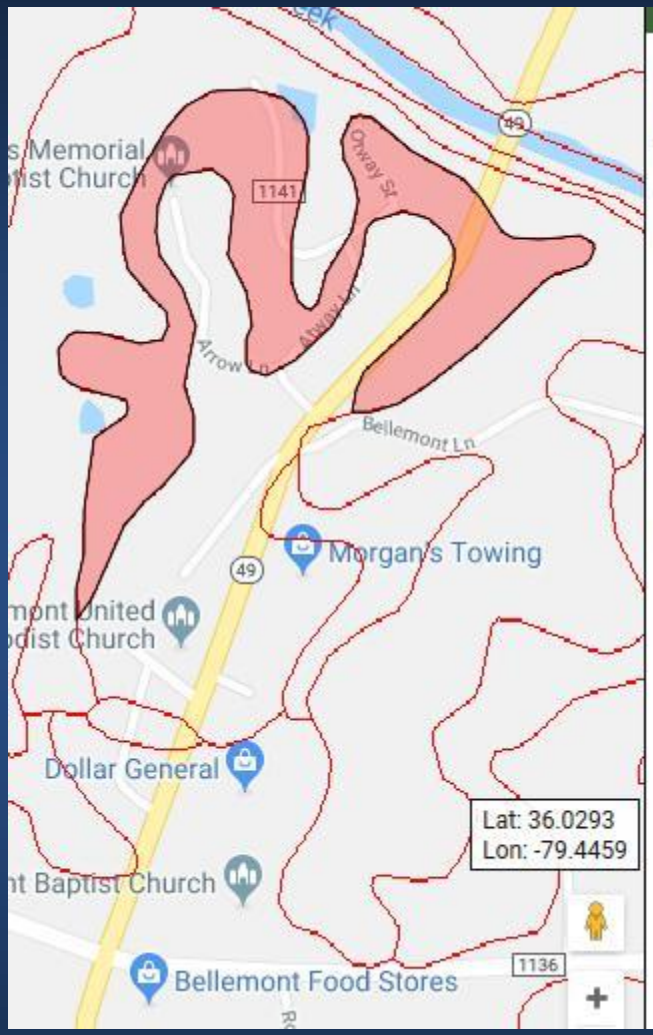


Using GIS we can..



In under a minute, tell who owns any parcel of land in NC. FSA

Realist Yields Expectation – GIS Example



RYE SoilWeb Help

Realistic Yields for EeC2: *Enon loam, 6 to 10 percent eroded (Wynott)* in Al County

Crop	Yield	Nitrogen Factor	Re Ni (lb
Barley (Grain)	56 Bushels	1.49	
Corn (Grain)	105 Bushels	0.92	
Corn (Silage)	11 Tons	10.9	
Cotton	460 Pounds	0.081	
Sorghum (Silage)	9.4 Tons	7.6	
Oats (Grain)	70 Bushels	1.13	

Crop	Yield	Nitrogen Factor	Realistic Nitrogen Rate (lbs/acre)
Bahiagrass (Hay)	3	43	129
Barley (Grain)	65	1.47	95
Caucasion/Old World Bluestem (Hay)	3.2	43	138
Common Bermudagrass (Hay)	3	43	129
Corn (Grain)	120	0.9	108
Corn (Silage)	18.4	10.7	197
Cotton	560	0.073	41
Dallisgrass (Hay)	3	43	129
Fescue (Hay)	4	43	172
Hybrid Bermudagrass (Hay)	4	43	172
Hybrid Bermudagrass overseeded with	0	43	0

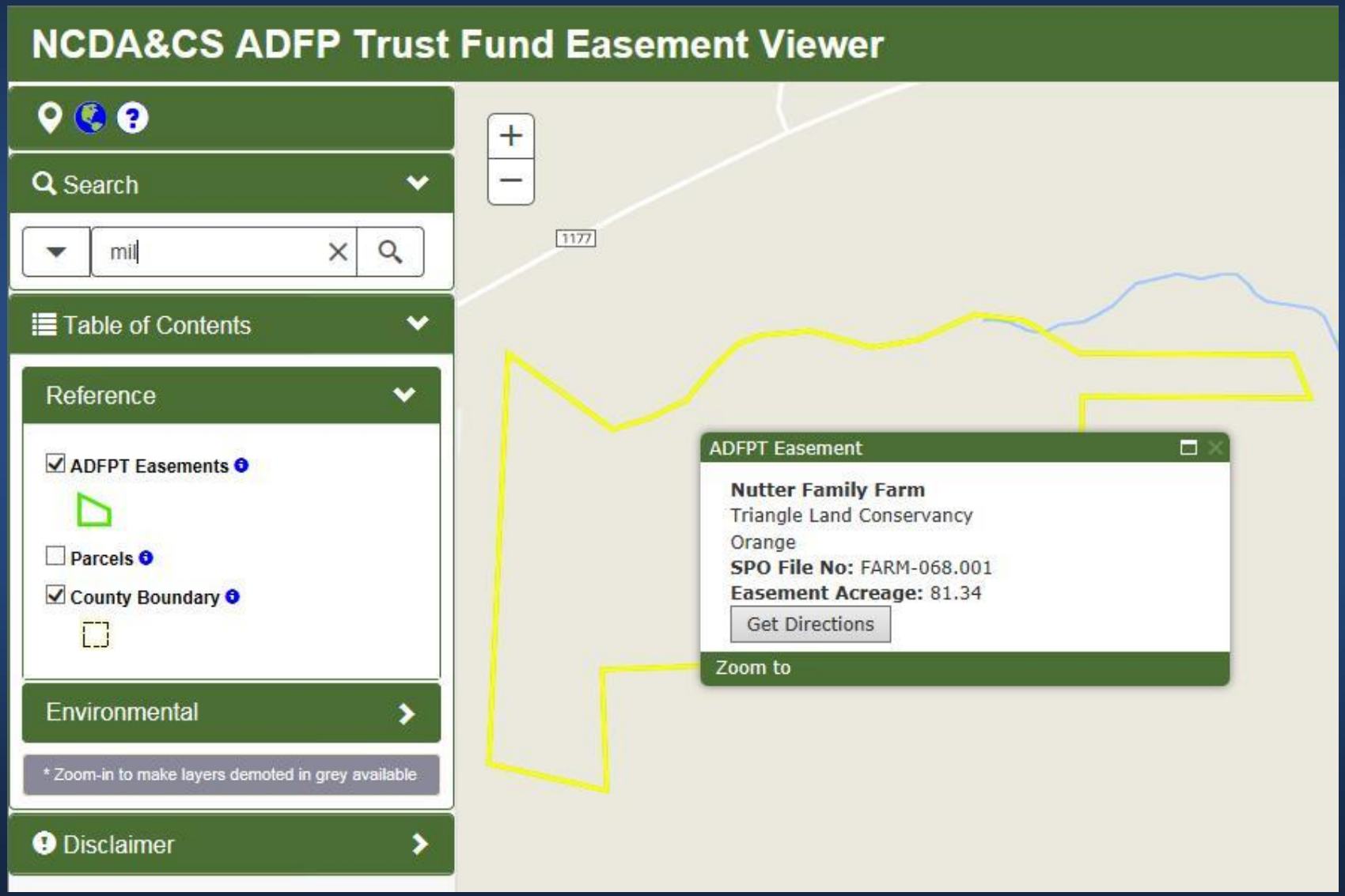
http://www.ncmhtd.com/rye/

TEAM GIS Example

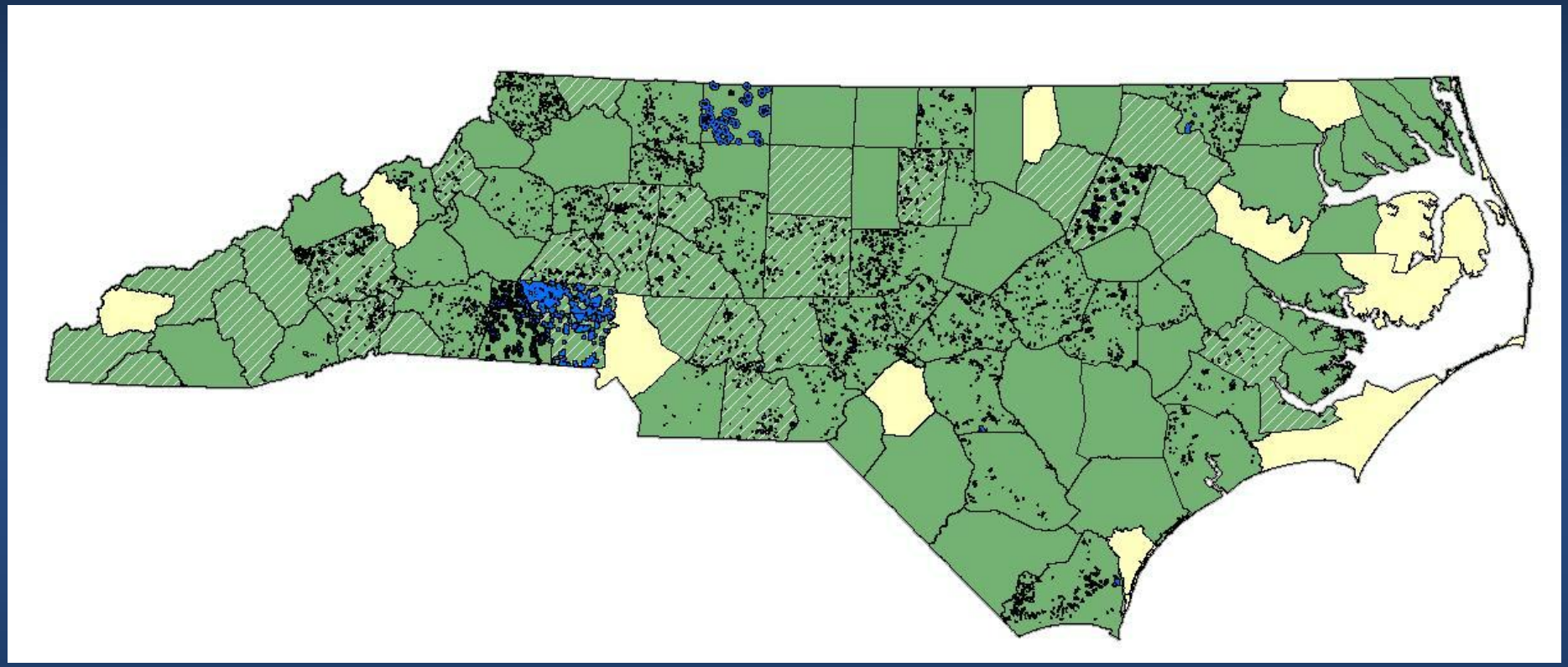
Designed to help land owners find potential conservation funding sources.

Conservation Easements – GIS Example

https://www.ncmhtd.com/environmentalprograms/adfpt/



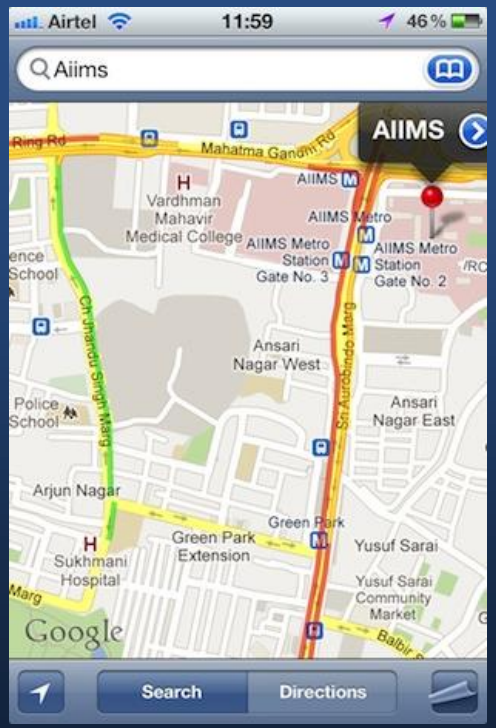
Map of VAD data in a GIS format



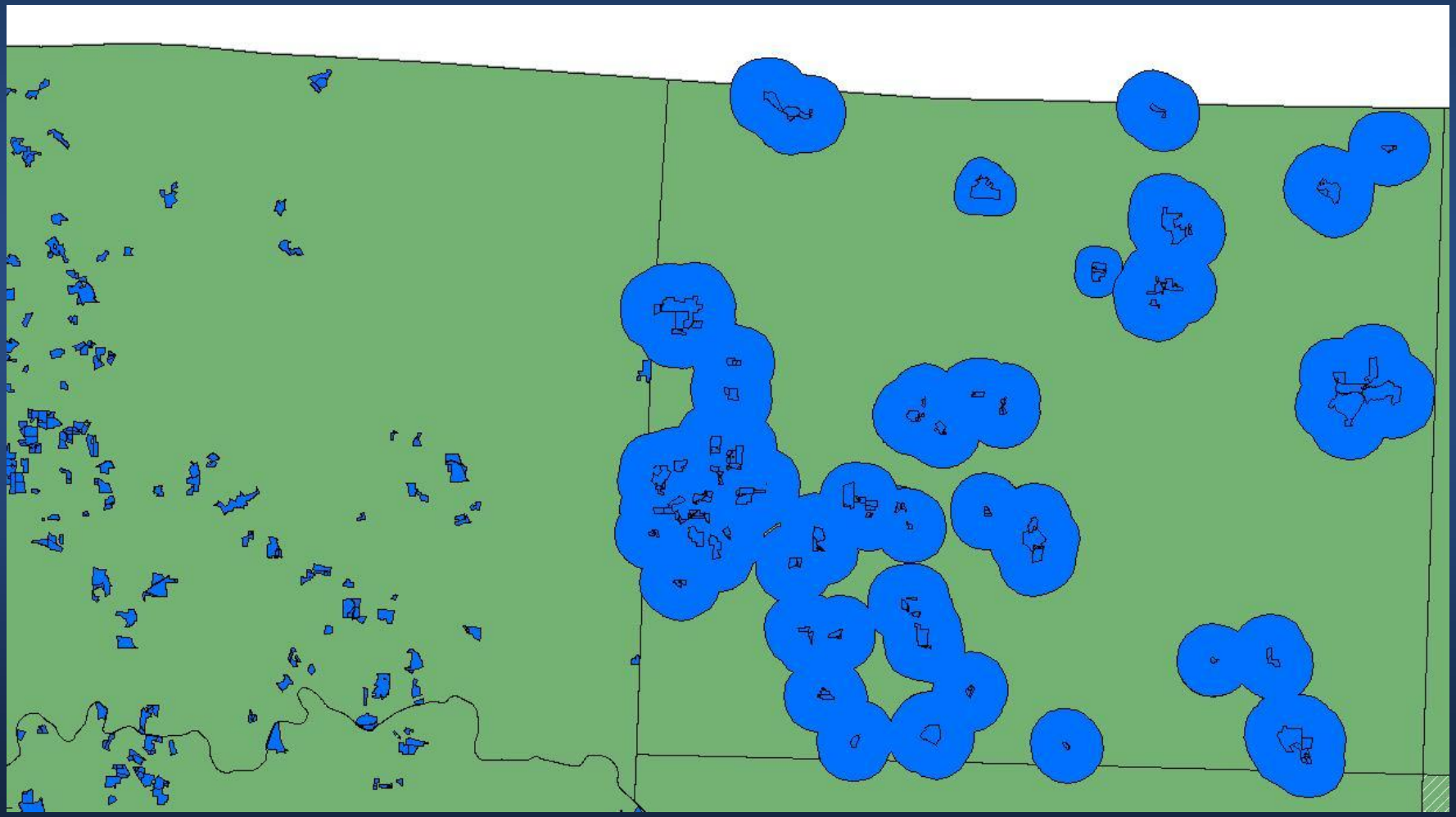
We have VAD data, in a GIS format, for over 50 counties

Where are you with mapping your VAD

- 1980s?
- 1990s?
- 2000s
- Modern?



Parcels in VAD programs
vs.
Districts



Minimum Information to store in your VAD dataset

- ☑ PIN
- ☑ PARCEL_ID_
- ☑ NAME_
- ☑ ADDR_
- ☑ CITY_
- ☑ ZIPCD_
- ☑ COUNTY_
- ☑ ACRES_
- ☑ DATE_ENROL
- ☑ DATE_RENEW
- ☑ DATA_DATE

Owner names
Mailing Address (Street, City, St, Zip)
County – GIS can add
Acres – GIS can only add GIS Acres
Date Enrolled
Date Renewed – If applicable

Statewide_VAD_2015

PIN	PARCEL_ID_	NAME_	ADDR_	CITY_	ZIPCD_	COUNTY_	ACRES_	DATE_ENROL	DATE_RENEW	DATA_DATE
591900954702		JOHNSON FAMILY FARM LLC	LOUISE AV			Surry	0	<Null>	<Null>	2014
409002958921		JOHNSON FAMILY FARM LLC	OLD LOWGAP S RD			Surry	0	<Null>	<Null>	2014

0 (0 out of 12560 Selected)

Attributes (data) for the overachievers

- Applicant
- Determinant (Approved)
- Agreement ID (to tie back to other data)
- Application Data
- Historically Enrolled (Do you want in-actives)
- EVAD – (Yes No)

PINS vs. Tax IDs

Parcel Indentation Numbers or “PIN”

Do NOT have letters. Normally 10-16 numbers.

Full PINs are unique statewide

- 00-4410-10-8811-55 – True format, not common
- 4410-10-8811– more common
- 4410.10-8811

Tax ID are from a tax system and can have letters.

- T012-12_A99
- 0123456

What we can do to help

More than happy to help you make GIS data for your VAD parcels.

Your County GIS staff or Land Records staff is also a good resource
– Just ask, but don't ask them to go thorough a file cabinet

If you have an <u>accurate, electronic</u> list of PINs for your VAD parcels,
-- Making a GIS layer is around 15 minutes of work

Questions?

Warning,
If there are no questions,
I ask questions

Daniel.Madding@ncagr.gov

How do Voluntary Agricultural Districts Fit in With Land Use and Transportation Planning Processes

Diane Wilson
NCDOT – Environmental Analysis Unit

Land Use and Transportation Plans

25 year planning horizons

Three Questions:

Land use: what/where/when

Transportation: what/where/when

Three Simple Questions…..

Land use: what/where/when

What do we want

Where do we want it

When can we expect it

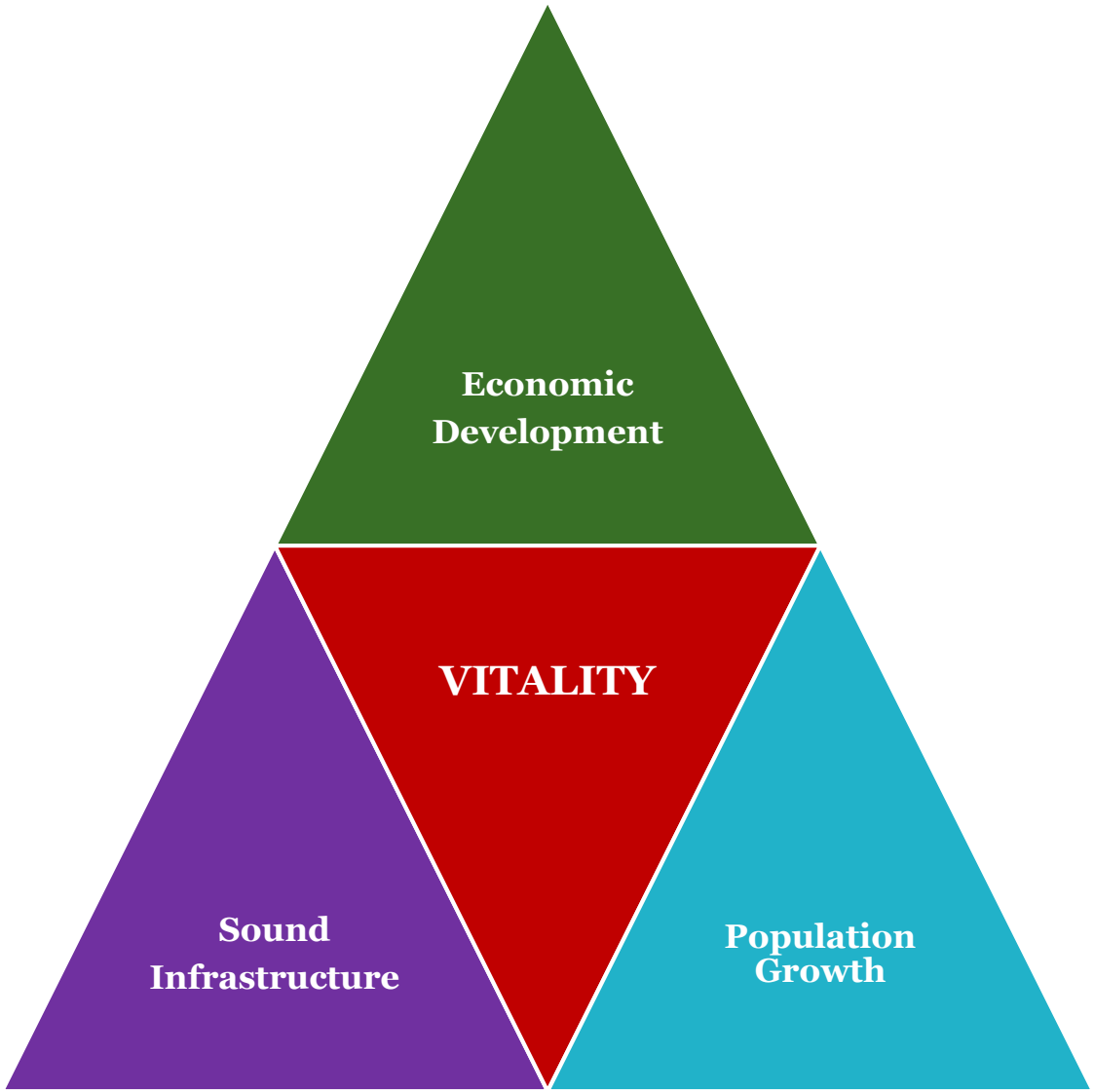
Transportation: what/where/when

What do we think they need

Where is the best location for it

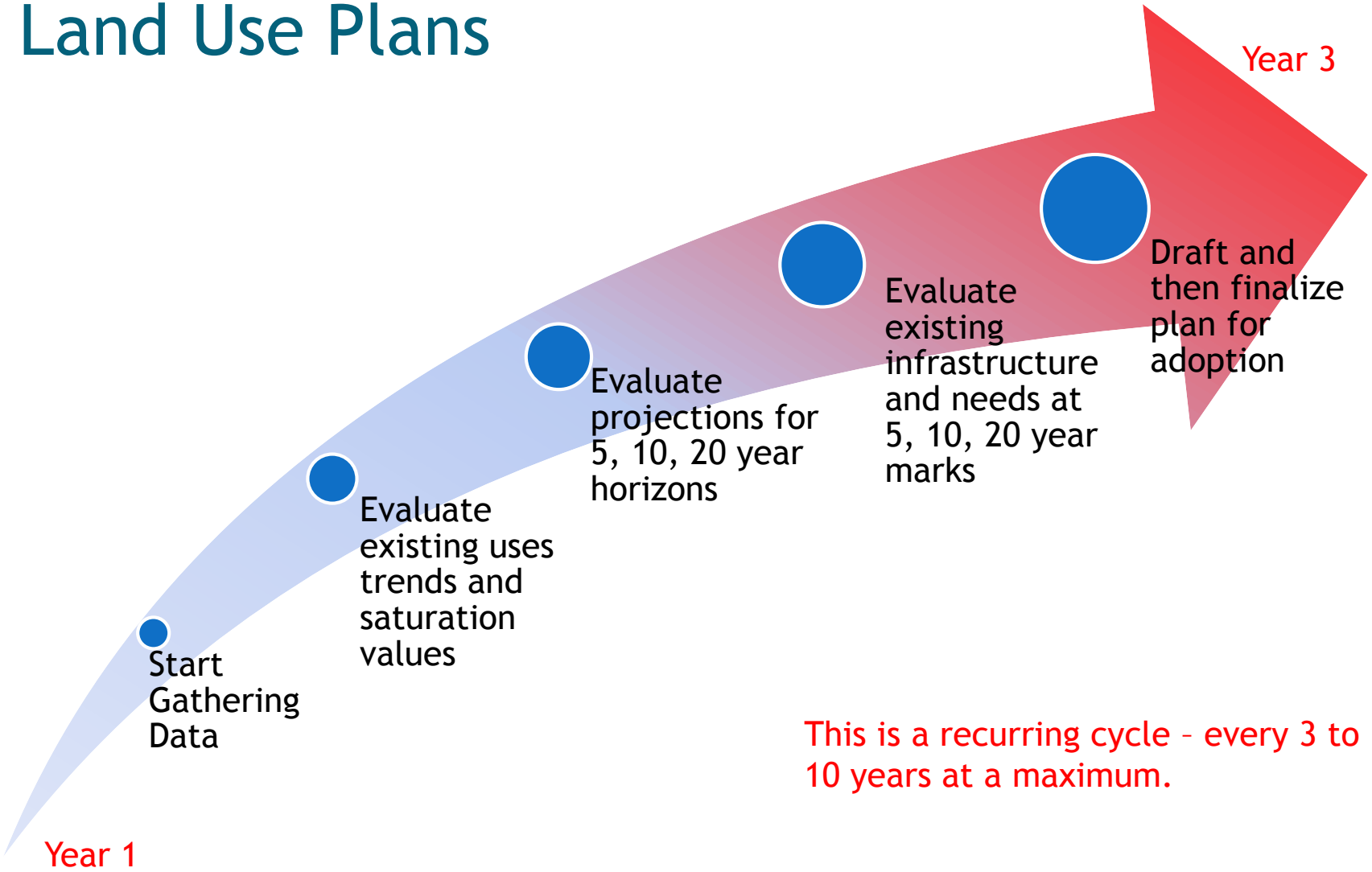
When do we need to complete it

Land Use


Economic Development
VITALITY
Sound Infrastructure
Population Growth

Transportation

Land Use Plans



This is a recurring cycle – every 3 to 10 years at a maximum.

Who Develops Land Use Plans?

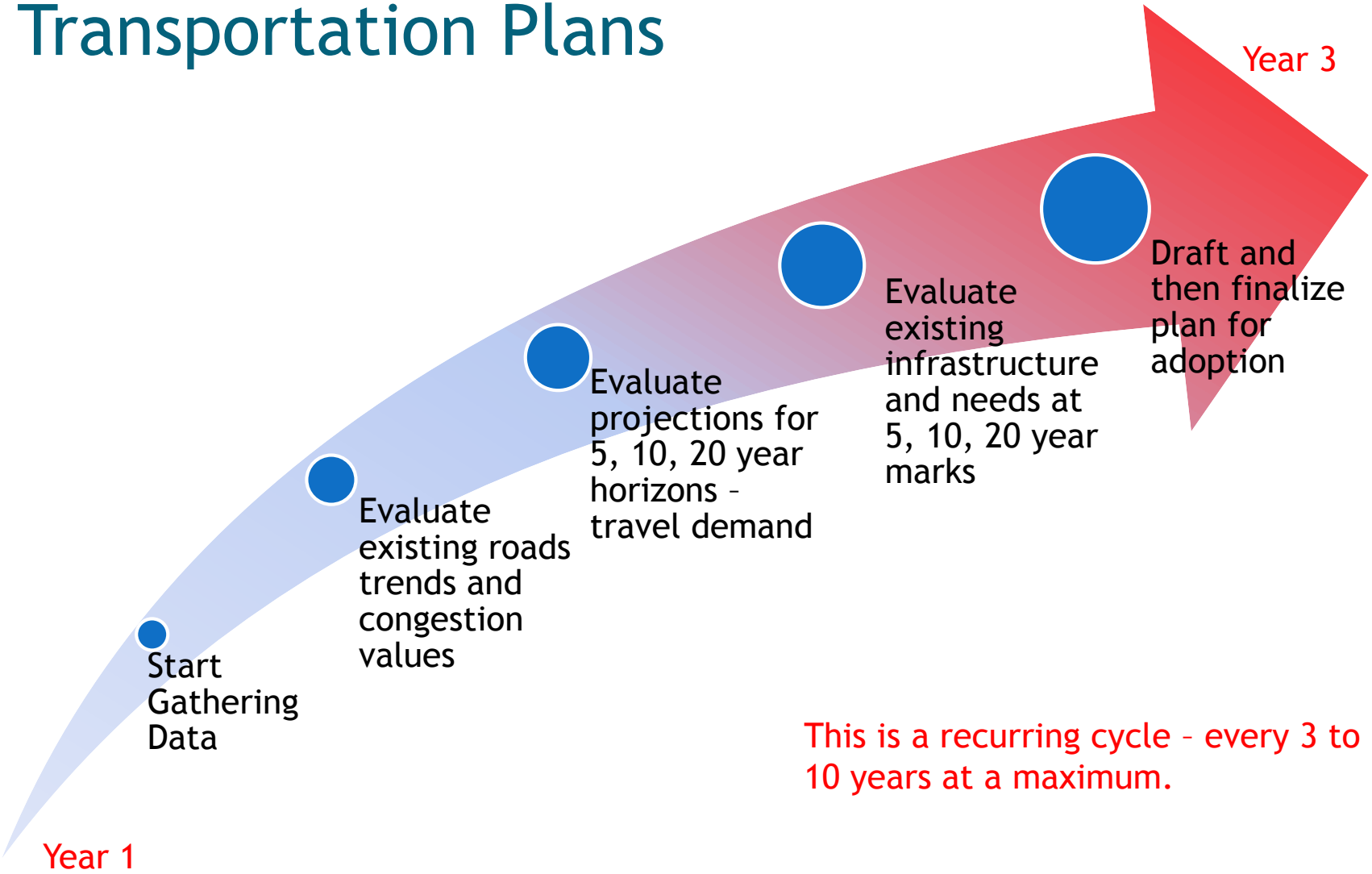
Cities and Counties

County plans – VADs and EVADs

Know their website and know their numbers

AS SOON AS VAD/EVAD PAPERWORK FILED CONTACT COUNTY PLANNING AND SUBMIT COPY INCLUDING PARCEL MAP

Transportation Plans



This is a recurring cycle – every 3 to 10 years at a maximum.

Who Develops Transportation Plans?

Cities and Counties
(3-10 year plans)

Metropolitan Planning Organizations
Rural Planning Organizations
(10-50 year plans)

NCDOT
(10 year plan)

Know their website post their schedule
and attend long range planning meetings in your area

Do I need to attend every meeting?

NO

You do need to attend or *at least participate*

MPO/RPO Comprehensive Transportation Plan

→ Plans for future transportation needs based on the <u>best available information</u> (50 year / 25 year / 10 year)

→ Every 4 years with updates in between

At the CTP meetings, lines are "placed on the map" not based on $ but based on information provided by City/County planners and future land development and traffic projections

Second Chance

→ Long-Range Transportation Plan (25 year)

(also called Metropolitan Transportation Plan)

→ Plans for future transportation **needs**

→ based on the <u>best available information</u> including, but not limited to, population, economic conditions, traffic trends and patterns of land development in the county.

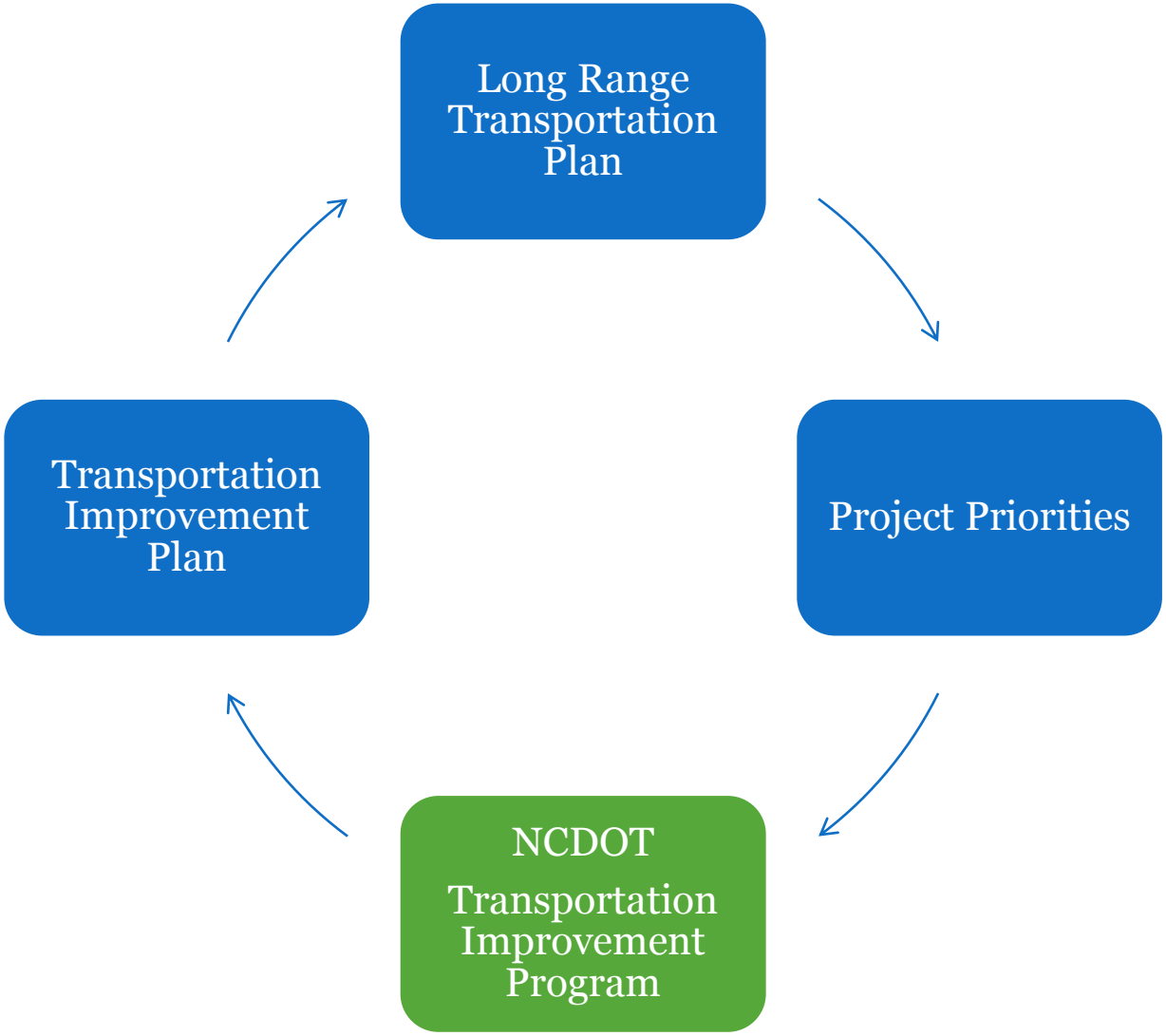
→ Fiscally constrained – what can we pay for in the next 25 years

At the CTP meetings, lines are "placed on the map" based on information provided by City/County planners and future land development and traffic projections

If they don't know you're there.....
..... they can't plan to miss you.....

Project Priorities

- Projects drawn from Long Range Transportation Plan
- Based on project selection criteria
- FDOT considers the priorities when developing the work program


Long Range Transportation Plan
Project Priorities
NCDOT Transportation Improvement Program
Transportation Improvement Plan

Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)

- Project Development and Environmental Analysis
- Design
- Right of Way / Land Acquisition
- Construction

State Transportation Improvement Program

- Staged, multi-year, intermodal program of prioritized transportation initiatives
  - Five-year program, updated annually
  - Reflects public and stakeholder involvement

- **If a project is not listed in the STIP, it cannot receive Federal funds**

Typical Progression of Project Phases

- Project Development and Environmental (PD&E)
  - Years 0-2
- Design
  - Years 2-4
- Right of Way / Land Acquisition
  - Years 4-6
- Construction
  - Years 6-8

THE Most Important Things

Know who does your local planning

- City
- County
- Planning Organization
- State

Know who to call

Watch for meetings in your area

Be Proactive!

LET THEM KNOW YOU ARE THERE…….

Other Conservation Programs for Landowners

NC Soil & Water Conservation Cost Share Programs

- Agriculture Cost Share Program (ACSP)
- Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)
- Community Conservation Assistance Program (CCAP)
- Agricultural Water Resources Assistance Program (AgWRAP)

Program Implementation
Locally Led Conservation

- Delivered through 96 local soil & water conservation districts (SWCDs)
- NC Soil & Water Conservation Commission
  - Sets statewide rules and policies
  - Allocates funds to local SWCDs
- Local districts
  - Set local funding priorities,
  - Receives and ranks applications,
  - Develop conservation plans and design practices
  - Oversee and certify implementation

How To Apply

Contact your local soil and water conservation district office!
www.ncagr.gov/SWC/findyourdistrict.html

- ACSP– Counties are allocated funding each year.
- CREP – Continuous signup
- AgWRAP – Funds are available in two ways
  - AgWRAP funding is allocated to counties
  - Competitive regional application process for selected BMPs
- CCAP – Competitive application process

NCDA&CS Division of Soil & Water Conservation
www.ncagr.gov/SWC
919-707-3770

North Carolina Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund

North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Farmland Preservation Division

Steve Troxler, Commissioner

ADFP Trust Fund Background and Mission

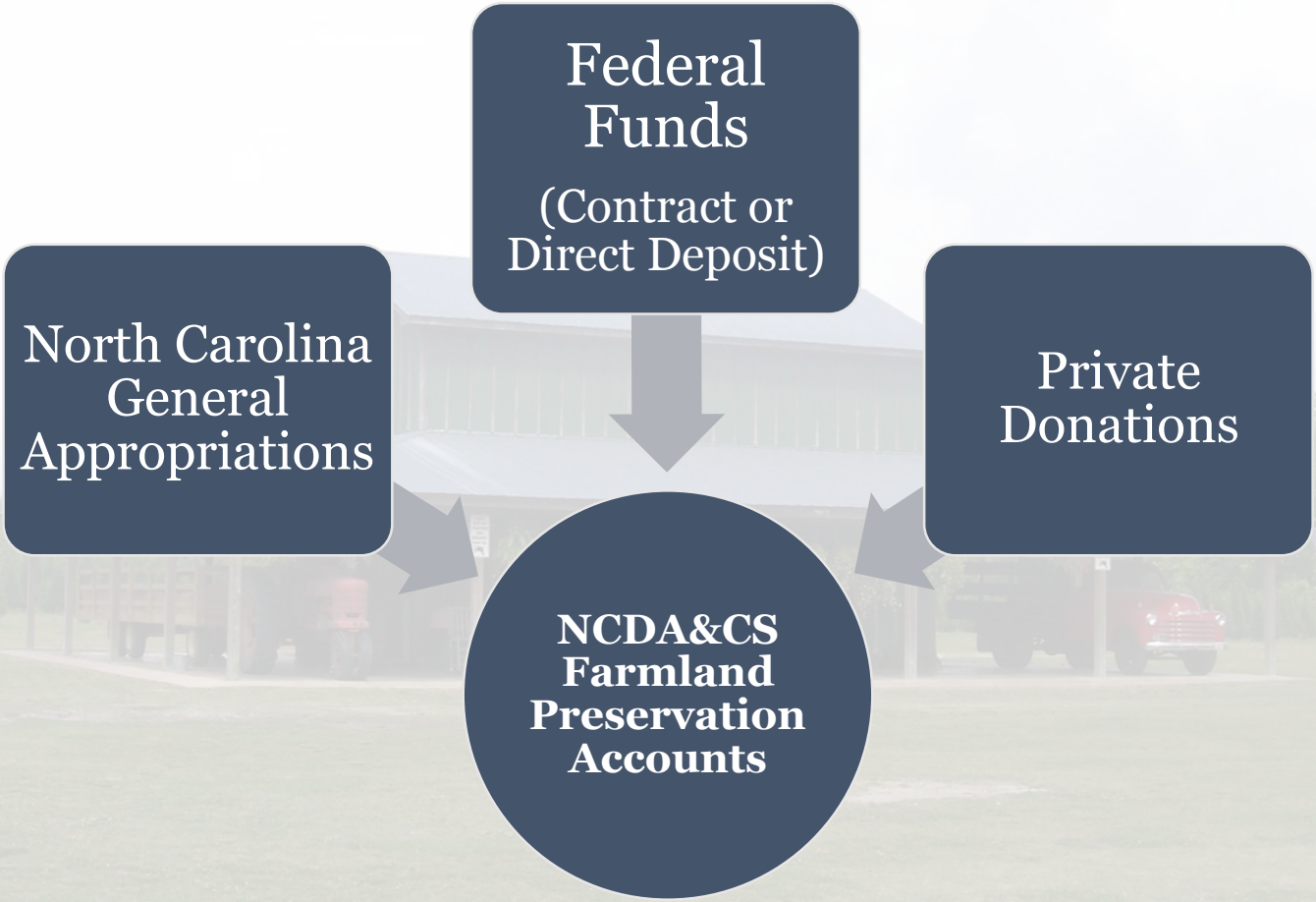
- In March 2005, Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler delivered his "Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Strategy" to the North Carolina General Assembly. During the 2005 legislative session, the General Assembly passed House Bill 607, and the Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund and was signed into law, N.C.G.S. 106-744.

- Assist in the preservation of N.C.'s agricultural economy by providing grants to county governments and non-profit organizations for conservation easements, agricultural agreements and programs.

- To encourage the preservation of qualifying agricultural, horticultural and forestlands to foster the growth, development and sustainability of family farms.

- Prioritize grant funding for maximum match resource utilization from private, local and federal constituent partners.

ADFP Trust Fund Funding



Who May Apply for ADFP Trust Fund Grants?

County Governments

Private Nonprofit Conservation Organizations

- Eligible entities may apply for conservation easements on behalf of private landowners. If awarded grant funds, the application entity will serve as the conservation easement holder.
- Open application period runs from mid-October to mid-December each year.
- Applications are filled out electronically at www.ncadfp.org

ADFP Trust Fund Grant Categories

Agricultural Development Projects

- According to N.C.G.S. 106-744, agricultural development projects are defined as "public and private enterprise programs that will promote profitable and sustainable family farms through assistance to farmers in developing and implementing plans for the production of food, fiber, and value-added products, agritourism activities, marketing and sales of agricultural products produced on the farm, and other agriculturally related business activities."

Agricultural Plans

- Voluntary Agricultural Districts
  - 88 counties have passed VAD ordinances

- Farmland Protection Plans
  - 55 counties have endorsed FPPs

ADFP Trust Fund Grant Categories

Conservation Easements

- According to N.C.G.S. 106-744, an "agricultural conservation easement" means a negative easement in gross restricting residential, commercial, and industrial development of land for the purpose of maintaining its agricultural production capability.

- The ADFP Trust Fund provides grants to remove the development rights off the property and for other costs associated with the recording of the conservation easement.

- The property remains in private ownership.

- The conservation easement is held by a third party. County governments and conservation nonprofits are eligible third parties.

- Monitoring of the conservation easement property is conducted by the easement holder and NCDA&CS for the length of the conservation easement.

- Agricultural conservation easements may be perpetual or term-limited in duration.

Question and Answer Session

Question and Answer Session

1. What is the process for someone wanting to sign up for Farmland Preservation? Can they sign up for 30 years, 15 years, and how are the funds calculated eg. payment per acre?

2. Looking to learn a basic understanding as well as implementing an enhanced VAD.

3. I've completed 2 applications. Struggled with the budget information - matching funds, etc. Would like more direction on that process.

Adjourn