

**North Carolina Agriculture Cost Share Program Review Summary
(November, 2013)**

County Bladen Date of Previous Review/Report October 17 & 18, 2000

District Staff Name(s) Dean Morris, Karen Davis Date November 5th, 2013

NRCS Staff Name(s) NA

Division Representative(s) Kelly Ibrahim, Kristina Fischer

Additional Participants NA

Questions	Division Findings				Division Comments	District Plan of Action Required		SWCD Plan of Action	Proposed Timeline for Implementation	Division Response to Plan of Action (date)
	Commendation	Recommendation	Corrective Action	No Concerns/ Not Applicable		Yes	No			
Section 1: Application Procedures and Tracking Progress (BMP Implementation and Payments)										
Questions in this section focus on how the district advertises the program, how applications are developed, how contracts are developed, how funds are tracked and how the board approves each.										
When do you schedule your board meetings?				X	The meetings are regularly scheduled on the 2 nd Tuesday of each month unless it is unnecessary to meet, or the date needs to be changed.		X			
How do you notify the public of the board meeting schedule and does it adhere to the Open Meetings Law?				X	Meeting notices are posted on the Bulletin Boards at the District office common area and the Courthouse, and are published in the local print and		X			

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					online news sources. It adheres to the Open Meetings Law.					

Division Comments

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<i>When do you develop a conservation plan for a potential applicant?</i>				X	Conservation plans begin when the applicant signs the NCACSP application. Information is gathered with enough basic information to rank the application to be presented to the District Board. After approval from the District Board, the contract is completed to meet standards and specifications.		X			
<i>How do you assess the resource concerns on the farm to determine if a BMP is needed and feasible?</i>				X	A site visit is required to verify there is a need or problem that needs to be addressed. All options are discussed with the I/o to determine the best solution to the problem. Information is then gathered to determine if the potential applicant is eligible. He/she may sign an application at this time.		X			
<i>Are applications reviewed and approved by the Board as a separate action item?</i>		X			The district reports yes, Usually at the same meeting. The application is voted on, and then the contract, but this needs to continue to be reflected in the minutes as separate action items. The most recent minutes do reflect this. Please continue to ensure the applications are all listed separately and the vote recorded.	X				
<i>Are application decisions/motions recorded in the board minutes?</i>				X	Yes, The name of the supervisor that makes the motion is named in the minutes followed by names of the other supervisors' votes.		X			

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Because applicants are limited when applying for incentive BMPs, how does your district track the applications for incentive BMPs? Is your district using the self-certification form provided by the division to track incentive BMPs.				X	Office records and individuals' files will reflect the history of an applicant. The district reporting data sheet is also a tracking method. Yes, we use the self-certification form.		X			
Please describe how the district tracks applicants who are applying for multiple incentive BMPs or consecutive incentive BMPs.				X	Office records and files are reviewed to show the history of an applicant. Also if the individual farms or is a landowner in another county, that county is contacted to check the history of the applicant in that county.		X			
If multiple partners farm together, how does the district track individual applicants as one operation?				X	Crop reports are available at FSA that will show participants in a farming operation. Animal operation participants may be provided by applicant, information in District files, or accessed by DWQ permit forms.		X			
Once applications are approved, how do you develop a contract?				X	Farm is visited to collect necessary information such as soils, cultural resources, field slopes, and any other necessary information. RUSLE, NCNAT, Environmental evaluation, waste management plans, surveys, are also performed.		X			
Describe how the district reviews the contract with the applicant. Do you explain that work cannot begin until the contract is approved by the division?				X	The applicant is advised that all work is to be done according to NRCS standards. Contract with information job sheets are hand delivered to the applicant and expectations of the contract are discussed. This is		X			

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					recorded in the note section of the applicants file .I t is explained to the applicant not to begin work until the contract is approved by the Division with the exception of vegetated practice.					
What procedures do you follow for notifying the applicant that work can begin?				X	The contract and design information is hand delivered to the applicant. At that point in time the applicant is advised he/she may begin work. This date is recorded in the file notes.		X			
What information do you provide the applicant?				X	Complete contract packet along with the design, BMP information sheets, notification E-mail from Division that contract is approved.		X			
<i>Are contracts reviewed and approved by the Board as a separate action item?</i>		X			The district reports yes, Usually at the same meeting. The application is voted on, and then the contract, but this needs to continue to be reflected in the minutes as separate action items. The most recent minutes do reflect this. Please continue to ensure the contracts are all listed separately and the vote recorded.	X				
<i>Are contract decisions/motions recorded in the board minutes?</i>				X	Yes, Supervisor making motion and supervisors voting are recorded in official meeting minutes.		X			
Describe the district/board's procedure for approving supervisor contracts.				X	If a district supervisor application is to be voted on, that supervisor is not allowed to vote. This is noted in the		X			

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					minutes. Contract is sent to Commission for approval. This is noted in the December 13, 2005 minutes where Russell Patterson abstained from voting and discussion on his contract.					
<i>Is it documented in the Board minutes that the supervisor abstained from discussing his/her own contract and from voting?</i>				X	Yes, see above.		X			
What technical assistance do you provide during the BMP installation process to ensure the BMP is installed by the contract deadline?				X	The applicant is provided any technical assistance needed to properly install a practice. This may require survey assistance or resource advice such as seeding types, rates, depth, material specifications. Depending on the BMP, district staff may be on site during installation.		X			
How do you track the Commission's interim performance milestone? One-third of the work must be completed within 12 months of division approval.				X	The District tracking data sheet is a quick reference that will show the date the contract was approved by the District Board and the Division. The applicants file will show when the contract was delivered to the applicant.		X			
Is the district recording 6-month extensions in the board minutes?				X	Yes, If extensions are required.		X			

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What documentation do you include in the contract file that certifies that the BMP was inspected and is installed to the standards and specifications?				X	The construction check is either recorded in the field book or noted in the district file notes that the practice has been completed and meets standards or NRCS and the NCACSP. The request for payment is kept in the District file folder with the job approval signature. For projects requiring Engineering Job Approval a letter accompanies the RFP.		X			
Are BMPs measured then certified before the request for payment is approved? How is this documented?				X	Construction check sheets, or construction check notes, or construction checks in field book.		X			
Are receipts received and reviewed for CSP BMPs that are based on actual cost?				X	Yes, The receipts are available in the District File.		X			
Are request for payments reviewed and approved by the board as a separate action item?				X	Completed projects are reviewed with the Board, the final cost is stated. The Board then votes to approve the RFP.		X			
If the BMPs are not installed by the end of the third program year per Commission policy, how does the district request a one-year extension?				X	If this should occur, the District would request an extension of the contract by letter or personal appearance at the commission meeting. This has not been an issue.		X			
Are payment decisions/motions recorded in the board minutes?	X				Yes, The division recommends the district put contract numbers along with the name in the minutes to denote RPFs.	X				

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Section 2: Spot Checks and Compliance Issues										
Questions in this section focus on how the district reviews BMPs for compliance and how maintenance and/or non-compliance issues are addressed.										
<i>Who participates in annual spot checks? When are they conducted?</i>		X			District staff, available District Supervisors usually attend. At least one supervisor attends; typically two and they are usually conducted in May or June. The division recommends the district begin spot checks earlier and make additional steps to plan around bio-security issues.	X				
How does the district select which contracts to spot check?				X	This has varied thru the years. Numbers (1-25) are in a folder. A number is drawn randomly for each year that will select the contract to be spot checked. Another method used is to select a (#) and that (#) for each year will be checked.		X			
<i>Are all BMPs under the waste management category spot checked for the first five years after installation? This applies to all farms that fall under the thresholds that are regulated by DWQ.</i>		X			Yes, all animal waste farms with cost share assistance are spot checked for 5 consecutive years. The division recommends the district look into any bio-security issues/directives that may be in place and plan spot checks accordingly.	X				
How does the district review five percent of all waste utilization plans?				X	Farms with Waste management plans that have received cost share assistance are reviewed for 5 years when the farm is inspected.		X			

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How does the district notify the NRCS area office (for ACSP contracts) or division (for CCAP contracts) to conduct spot checks on lands owned or operated by a district, county, division or NRCS employee or district supervisor? This includes CPOs, revisions, supplements or repairs.				X	A District supervisor contract is inspected on the annual spot check. Area Office is informed of any active employee or supervisor contract so they may include in the NRCS inspection. The district informs the DC who informs the NRCS Area Office for the spot check need.		X			

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The North Carolina Statute 02 NCAC 59D.0107(f) states "If the technical representative of the district determines that a BMP for which program funds were received has been destroyed or has not been properly maintained, the applicant will be notified that the BMP must be repaired or re-implemented within 30 working days. For vegetative practices, applicants are given one calendar year to re-establish the vegetation" How does your district notify individuals that have destroyed or mismanaged a BMP?		X			If an applicant is found non-compliant, he/she will be notified by letter. The maintenance needed will be recorded in the note section of the file. District staff will arrange a visit with the applicant to remedy the situation. This may require repair, replacement, or repayment. The District Board will be notified and decide what course of action will be best for all parties. The division recommends the district review the draft compliance policy available here: http://www.ncagr.gov/SWC/commission/cost_share_committee.html . This policy should be effective in the first half of 2014.	X				
How are supervisors notified of BMPs that are found to be destroyed or mismanaged at any time throughout the year?				X	Destroyed practices are discussed in an official Board meeting.		X			
When does the district provide a written notice that the BMP must be repaired or re-implemented within 30 working days? (Vegetative practices have to be reestablished within one calendar year.) Is a copy of the notification kept with the CPO?				X	If an applicant is found to be out of compliance, a letter will be sent from the District Office stating the decision of the Board and program requirements. This will be done after consultation of the Board. The district should copy their cost share specialist on all non-compliance letters to producers.		X			

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If the BMP was not repaired or re-implemented, was repayment requested? Please provide documentation.				X	Yes, A Five year No-till practice was found to be out of compliance of a District Supervisor. We were able to change to a three year conservation tillage with peanuts, restart his time period with no funds having to be repayed.		X			
<i>Is the district notifying the division of non-compliance and resolutions?</i>				X	Yes, If the situation occurs. The situation we had in the past required consultation and advise from the division. The district is required to notify the division of all non-compliance so the division can tract the status. Please ensure the division is notified.		X			
Section 3: Record Keeping										
Questions in this section focus on how funds are managed and accounted for, maintaining proper design and job approval authority, as well as disclosure forms.										
How does the district track BMP funds?				X	The District data tracking sheet, Division website summary reports, IBEAM.		X			
How does the district use the division on-line (website) reports?				X	The Division web site data is used to compare to District Data to ensure everything is correct.		X			
How are your BMP funds audited? What is the date of the last audit? Who performed the audit? Was the BMP audit form completed and notarized?				X	District data tracking sheets, division summary reports are used to complete audits. District Staff performs the audit. Yes, audit form completed and notarized.		X			

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How are technical assistance funds tracked? Are they audited? What is the date of the last audit? Who performed the audit?				X	An Excel spreadsheet is used to track funds, and is reconciled with the County's General Ledger monthly. Yes, they are audited. The last audit was presented at the County Commissioners' meeting on 12/17/12. The audit was performed by Thompson, Price, Scott, Adams & Co.		X			
Who in the office is funded by Cost Share Technical Assistance (TA) from the State?				X	Robert Dean Morris		X			
How are operating funds tracked? Are they audited? What is the date of the last audit? Who performed the audit?				X	Bladen county tracks and audits operating funds, Karen Davis does the reimbursements and submits them to the division.		X			
How are matching funds tracked? Are they audited? What is the date of the last audit? Who performed the audit?				X	An Excel spreadsheet is used to track funds, and is reconciled with the County's General Ledger monthly. Yes, they are audited. The last audit was presented at the County Commissioners' meeting on 12/17/12. The audit was performed by Thompson, Price, Scott, Adams & Co.		X			
How much time is spent on cost share program (ACSP, CCAP, AgWRAP) contracts and BMP implementation? How is that tracked?				X	A minimum of 50% of the cost share (TA) funded is used in Division programs such as NCACSP, AgWRAP, and BMP implementation. The Division Tracking system is now used to record time for each program activity.		X			

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Is proper job approval authority (JAA) documented for each technical and cost share position?				X	Yes, copies of Dean Morris' JAA was provided.		X			
Do district supervisors complete supervisor forms when they have a financial interest in an entity requesting a cost share contract?				X	Yes, they are turned into the division each year.		X			
Section 4: Contract Reviews and Site Visits Below is a list of the contracts the division reviewed. Spot checks were also conducted. Notes include recommendations and/or corrective action for contract files as well as the BMP. Contracts/BMPs are listed by contract number.										
Contract Number:09-2004-007 Applicant Name: Kevin Kinlaw BMP: Field Border				X	Field border is narrow in some places but looks good overall. No work needed.		X			

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Contract Number:09-2006-012 Applicant Name: Rusty Patterson BMP: Cropland Conversion-Grass				X	Grass well established.		X			

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Contract Number: 09-2007-011 Applicant Name: Rufus Garner BMP: Cropland Conversion-Grass				X	Grass well established.		X			

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<p>Contract Number: 09-2008-012 Applicant Name: Hugh Clark BMP: Cropland Conversion-Grass</p> 				X	Grass was well established. No concerns.		X			
<p>Contract Number: 09-09-2011 Applicant Name: Susie Wilkes BMP: Cropland Conversion -Grass</p>				X	Grass established, there was a small area where there is obvious heavy use and grass is not able to remain established but there were not any		X			

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					direct water quality issues with this area. They could utilize a heavy use area if the producer wanted to apply for funds for this purpose.					

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Contract Number: 09-2012-007 Applicant Name: Hugh Clark BMP: Cropland Conversion-Grass 				X	Grass well established.		X			
General Contract Comments:				X	Over all the contracts were in great shape. They could all use more field notes and documentation.		X			