

**North Carolina Agriculture Cost Share Program Review Summary
(January, 2014)**

County	<u>Columbus</u>	Date of Previous Review/Report	<u>2003</u>
District Staff Name(s)	<u>Edward Davis, Greg Davis, Sara Hammonds</u>	Date	<u>01/23/2014</u>
NRCS Staff Name(s)	<u>Donna Register</u>		
Division Representative(s)	<u>Ken Parks, Kristina Fischer, Sam Edwards</u>		
Additional Participants	<u>Lloyd Ransom, Board Supervisor</u>		

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	Board meetings are held on the 1 st Thursday of each month. If meetings are rescheduled they are posted on the meeting room door and bulletin board outside of office. The county clerk has a copy of the regular schedule. It is also posted in the		X			

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					community calendar that is in the local paper.					
How do you notify the public of the board meeting schedule and does it adhere to the Open Meetings Law?	X				Yes. The do have special called meetings and are done sometime by teleconference and posted well in advance.		X			
<i>When do you develop a conservation plan for a potential applicant?</i>	X				When the applicant requests assistance they put together the information of resource concerns and talk about the conservation plan.		X			
<i>How do you assess the resource concerns on the farm to determine if a BMP is needed and feasible?</i>	X				The district technician uses the NRCS 52, Rusle II and C-Graze, etc.		x			
<i>Are applications reviewed and approved by the Board as a separate action item?</i>				X	Applications are reviewed and approved		X			
<i>Are application decisions/motions recorded in the board minutes?</i>				X	Yes.		X			
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	The applicants are tracked on an Excel spreadsheet and the technician talk with the neighboring district and the technician knows the farmers.		X			

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Please describe how the district tracks applicants who are applying for multiple incentive BMPs or consecutive incentive BMPs.	X				The technician uses several spreadsheets to track applicants that cancel contracts, etc. He also uses a spreadsheet for each cost share program.		X			
If multiple partners farm together, how does the district track individual applicants as one operation?	X				They are tracked with the same spreadsheets		X			
Once applications are approved, how do you develop a contract?				X	Applications are ranked based on the water benefits of the ranking sheet. Applications ranked the highest are funded first. Any contract ranked above 50 is funded. If it is 30 – 49 they are put in a batching period. Below 30 the application are not funded unless there is funding available. All BMPs are capped at \$15,000. If there is a tie they use the date for the tiebreaker.		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 technician explains the application and contract process and explains that work cannot begin until final approval from the division. Then after approval they technician give the cooperators a copy of the contract.		X			

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What procedures do you follow for notifying the applicant that work can begin?		X			The contract, once approved, is delivered and the cooperator is called or asks them to come to the office to explain the requirements or meet them on the farm. Recommend to send a letter of approval to the cooperator.	X		The District will begin using to inform applicants that their contracts have been approved and that they can begin work on them. (Please see attached form letter.)	Immediately	Sent a copy of an example approval letter. Plan of action accepted.
What information do you provide the applicant?				X	A copy of the contract and conservation plan.		X			
<i>Are contracts reviewed and approved by the Board as a separate action item?</i>				X	They are reviewed and approved as separate action items.		X			
<i>Are contract decisions/motions recorded in the board minutes?</i>				X	Yes.		X			
Describe the district/board's procedure for approving supervisor contracts.				X	The supervisor is notified of their contract and explains they have to abstain from voting.		X			
<i>Is it documented in the Board minutes that the supervisor abstained from discussing his/her own contract and from voting?</i>				X	Yes.		X			
What technical assistance do you provide during the BMP installation process to ensure the BMP is installed by the contract deadline?				X	The technician goes on-site with the contractors for structural practices and make sure the BMP is being installed okay. If it is a vegetative type practice the technician asks the cooperator to		X			

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					call him when it is done.					
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 contract approval date is tracked on the technician's spreadsheet and as the 1/3 rd date gets closer he lets the cooperator know.		X			
Is the district recording 6-month extensions in the board minutes?				X	The extension request is on the meeting breakout sheet. Check previous board minutes for documentation.		X			
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 installed date is written on the NC-ACSP-11 form and initialed who checked it out. It is also recorded in the 6 notes.		X			
Are BMPs measured then certified before the request for payment is approved? How is this documented?		X			Yes. It is documented on the NC-ACSP-11 forms. The documentation is also recorded in the field books and includes engineering letters. Recommend to include the NRCS BMP check form.	X		The District will begin using the NRCS BMP job sheets that have the check-out areas on them for each BMP that are found on the EFOTG site. The District will provide a copy to the landowner.	Immediately	Directed the District where to find the NRCS check-out sheet. Plan of action accepted.
Are receipts received and reviewed for CSP BMPs that are based on actual cost?				X	Receipts are received and are attached to the request for payments.		X			

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Are request for payments reviewed and approved by the board as a separate action item?				X	RFPs are reviewed and approved as separate action items. The RFPs are listed on the breakout sheet and are handled separately and brought to the board before any applications and contracts.		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	The district has not had one recently, but knows the procedure. The technician is aware that after a year or year and a half the cooperators may not finish the contract.		X			
Are payment decisions/motions recorded in the board minutes?				X	Yes.		X			
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.										
Who participates in annual spot checks? When are they conducted?				X	All supervisors are invited and they have at least 2 supervisors and other additional staff. They are usually done in May.		X			
How does the district select which contracts to spot check?				X	Someone draws a number from the total of the active contracts and pull nth of that number. They start from the oldest to the newest.		X			

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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 DWR.				X	Yes.					
How does the district review five percent of all waste utilization plans?				X	The district does not review waste utilization plans when the farms are over the DWR threshold.		X			
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	When NRCS does the annual spotchecks the technician notifies the district conservationist with any of these.		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	The district sends a certified letter and gives a phone call to repair or re-implement the BMP.		X			
How are supervisors notified of BMPs that are found to be destroyed or mismanaged at any time throughout the year?				X	They are notified at a 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	When a BMP is found out of compliance the notification is done right away.		X			
If the BMP was not repaired or re-implemented, was repayment requested? Please provide documentation.				X	Yes, See contract 24-03-27-08.		X			
<i>Is the district notifying the division of non-compliance and resolutions?</i>				X	Check contract file.		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.										

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How does the district track BMP funds?				X	The district technician uses several Excel spreadsheets.		X			
How does the district use the division on-line (website) reports?				X	The technician uses the online reports to check balances and dates.		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	The BMP funds are audited by the technician and the form was completed and notarized. The last one was dated on May28, 2013.		X			
How are technical assistance funds tracked? Are they audited? What is the date of the last audit? Who performed the audit?				X	TA funds are tracked on spreadsheets and are audited by the county finance dept. The date of the last audit was July 2013 and was performed by the CPA firm of Thompson, Price, Scott, Adams & Co.		X			
Who in the office is funded by Cost Share Technical Assistance (TA) from the State?				X	Edward Davis		X			
How are operating funds tracked? Are they audited? What is the date of the last audit? Who performed the audit?				X	TA funds are tracked on spreadsheets and are audited by the county finance dept. The date of the last audit was July 2013 and was performed by the CPA firm of Thompson, Price, Scott, Adams & Co.		X			

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How are matching funds tracked? Are they audited? What is the date of the last audit? Who performed the audit?				X	TA funds are tracked on spreadsheets and are audited by the county finance dept. The date of the last audit was July 2013 and was performed by the CPA firm of 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	Edward Davis spends about 60% of his time on just cost share programs. It is tracked on the technician's calendar and record on the timesheet.		X			
Is proper job approval authority (JAA) documented for each technical and cost share position?				X	Yes.		X			
Do district supervisors complete supervisor forms when they have a financial interest in an entity requesting a cost share contract?				X	Yes.		X			

Office review comments: The Columbus District staff is doing a good job implementing the ACSP and the Division gives 5 commendations on several items the staff is doing really well. The Division gives 2 recommendations for improvement for the District. There were no corrective actions on the office review.

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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.

<p>Contract Number: 24-07-020, 24-12-011 Applicant Name: Robert Ezzell BMP: Outlet Pipes, Cropland Conversion to Grass</p> 				X	<p>The BMPs were functioning and looked good.</p> <p>There were no job sheets and benchmark measures in the file.</p> <p>There was no written conservation plan in the file.</p>		X			
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Contract Number: 24-05-005 Applicant Name: David Coleman BMP: Cropland Conversion to Trees 				X	The BMP was functioning and looked good. The contract file looked good.		X			

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<p>Contract Number: 24-09-007 Applicant Name: Terry Rabon BMP: Ag. Irrigation Pond</p> 		X			<p>The BMP was functioning, but recommend doing some reseeding along the banks based on the technician's specifications.</p> <p>The contract file looked good.</p>	X		<p>Seeding specifications were faxed to Mr. Rabon on March 27, 2014. Mr. Rabon called the office on April 9th and said that he has been sick. He said that he plans to replant the permanent vegetation in a week or so.</p>	<p>Replant Spring 2014.</p>	<p>Plan of action accepted.</p> <p>Will check with the District for a follow-up on this BMP.</p>

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<p>Contract Number: 24-06-002 Applicant Name: Buddy McPherson BMP: Cropland Conversion to Grass</p> 				X	<p>The BMP was functioning and looked good.</p> <p>The contract file looked good.</p>		X			

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Contract Number: 24-04-031 Applicant Name: Bobby Stanley (supervisor) BMP: Watering Tanks 				X	The BMP was functioning and looked good. There were no benchmark measures. There was no written conservation plan.		X			

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<p>Contract Number: 24-10-021 Applicant Name: Timothy McColskey BMP: Long Term No-Till</p> 			X		<p>The BMP was functioning on part of the fields, but it appeared that some of the other fields did not have enough residue to meet the 80% residue requirement. (approx. 18.7 acres).</p> <p>There is a corrective action for this contract.</p> <p>The contract file looked good.</p>	X		<p>The applicant has practiced good faith efforts to maintain residue on these fields. Due to dry weather & sandy fields, the residue amount on some fields is low. We are sending a certified letter to the applicant with recommendations on re-establishment of the required residue by planting a cover crop.</p>	<p>Plant a cover crop as soon as possible. Seeding dates are May 5th through July 5th.</p>	<p>Plan of action accepted. Will check with the District for a follow-up on this BMP.</p>

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<p>Contract Number: 24-09-048 Applicant Name: Craig Fisher BMP: Mortality Incinerator</p> 				X	<p>The BMP was functioning and looked good.</p> <p>The contract file looked good.</p>		X			

Field site and contract file comments: There was one BMP site with a corrective action and one BMP site with a recommendation. The division recommends providing any culture resources review forms as needed per BMP, any job sheets/technical forms, conservation plans and also the benchmark measures calculations* in the future contract files. * Please note that as of program year 2012 benchmark measures calculations are required by commission policy in the contract files. All the ACSP files are kept in a lockable room for security purposes.