North Carolina Soil and Water Conservation Commission

2015
International
Year of Soils

DIVISION REPORT

MARCH 18, 2015

NC ETHICS RULES

- Commission is subject to NC Ethics Rules
- Statements of Economic Interest are due April 15th (online; 2 options – long form & no change form)
- Ethics education and lobbying presentation within 6 months of appointment; refresher every 2 years thereafter (online option)
- http://www.ethicscommission.nc.gov/sei/

Emergency Action Plans

- The Coal Ash Bill requires all intermediate and high hazard dams to develop an Emergency Action Plan by March 1, 2015.
- Concern about the short time allowed
- Expectation that a Professional Engineer must seal the inundation map
- Proposed Senate Bill 14 extends the deadline for EAPs to December 31 for ponds other than coal ash ponds and to clarify that developing an inundation map and Emergency Action Plan does not require a PE.

Guidance on Public Records Requests

- The Division is working with the School of Government and NCDA to develop guidance on responding to public records
- Also developing a model records retention schedule for districts

Update on Conditional Supervisor Appointments

- 4 reappointments conditioned upon supervisor attending the School of Government Training in February (all attended)
  - Chad Decker, Cherokee
  - Ted Wortman, Cleveland
  - John Walters, New River
  - Clay Parker, Orange
- 3 reappointments conditioned on supervisor attending 2/3 of board meetings between December 2014 and November 2015
  - Edward McLaurin, Chatham
  - John Lovin, Graham
  - Wilton Lee Short, Vance

Personnel Update

- Western Soil Scientist
  - Dalton Buchanan will start April 1, 2015
- CREP Manager
  - Division has completed interviews & recommended a candidate
  - Awaiting approval from HR to make the offer
- CREP Program Specialist
  - Reclassifying position to Environmental Specialist
  - Relocate from Whiteville to Mocksville
  - Advertise in Spring

- Pollination is crucial to the success of NC's $78 billion agricultural industry
- Up to 1/3 of the food we eat can be directly attributed to the work of pollinators
  - Cucumbers, berries, melons, squash, apples, other produce
  - Some row crops, such as cotton, soybeans, and peanuts also benefit from pollinators
- Important pollinators include: bees, butterflies, moths, beetles, birds, and other animals

3 Steps to Pollinator Success

- Recognize native pollinators and pollinator habitats already on the farm
- Adapt existing farm and land management practices to avoid causing undue harm to pollinators
- Provide habitat for native pollinators on and around the farm
  - Increase available foraging habitat to include a range of plants blooming at different times to provide nectar and pollen throughout the seasons
  - Create nesting sites by providing suitable ground conditions or tunnel-filled lumber and appropriate nesting materials
  - Reduce the risk to bees from use of insecticides and herbicides

Cost Share/CREP/EQIP

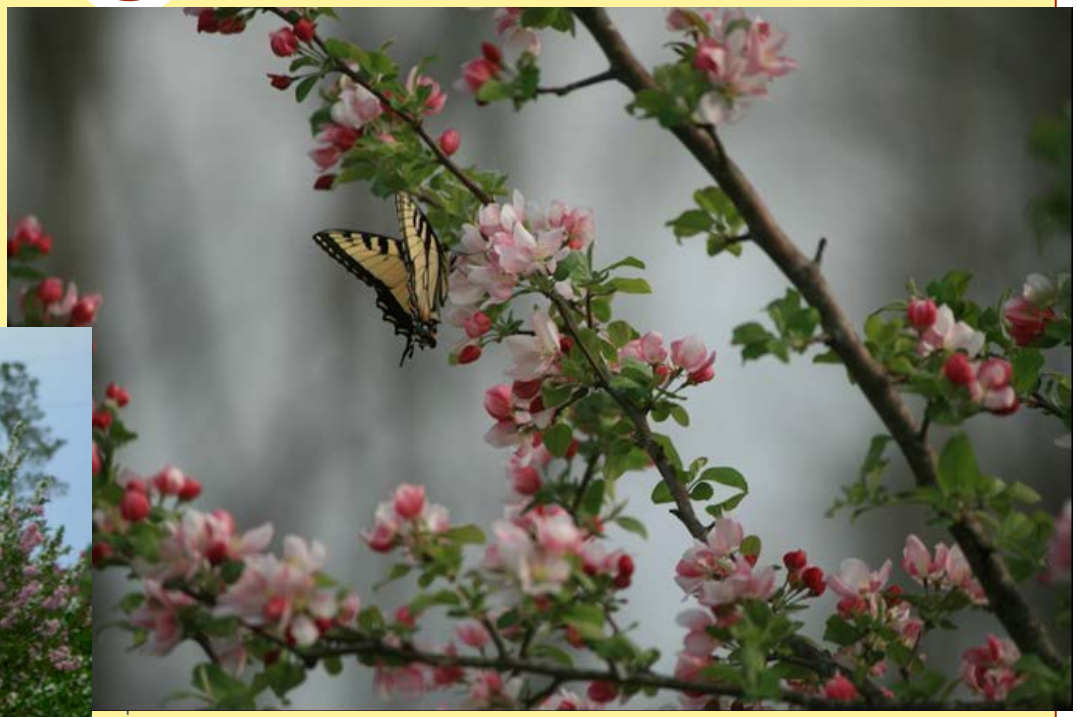
- Encourage landowners to incorporate pollinator attracting species into conservation plantings:
  - Field Borders
  - Filter strips
  - Cropland Conversion
  - Cover crops
  - Critical Area Planting
  - Riparian Buffers
  - Pasture Renovation
  - Prescribed Grazing
  - Streambank Stabilization
- Encourage reduced tillage to protect ground nesting sites

Community Conservation

- Incorporate pollinator nesting/foraging areas into conservation planting
  - Rain gardens
  - Bioretention areas
  - Critical Area Planting
  - Impervious Surface Conversion
  - Riparian Buffer
  - Stormwater Wetland
  - Stream Restoration
- Include signage in public areas encouraging pollinator habitat

CREP

- Developed a flyer to describe opportunities to promote pollinators.



AgWRAP Technology Grants

- Grants funded from AgWRAP Technical Assistance
- Grants capped at $7,500 and require 25% match
- Received 12 applications from 11 districts ($56,031)
- Division has awarded funding to 10 districts totaling $50,590

Technology Grant Awards

District	Equipment to be Acquired	Award Amount	Total Cost
Beaufort	Total Station	$4,872	$6,495
Burke	Handheld GPS	$2,337	$3,122
Cleveland	Handheld GPS & software	$5,474	$7,298
Gaston	Total Station & Data Collector	$7,328	$9,770
Haywood	Handheld GPS & software	$7,500	$11,300
Henderson	Total Station & Data Collector	$7,500	$29,166
Hertford	Handheld GPS & software	$5,525	$7,366
Onslow	Handheld GPS	$258	$395
Pitt	Upgrade Existing Radio System & Battery Pack	$4,678	$6,237
Randolph	AutoCAD Civil 3D Software	$5,118	$6,825

Grant Program Timeline

Target Date	Grant Activity
November 19, 2014	Information and Guidance Document, & application packets available
February 20, 2014	Applications due by 5:00 PM EST, applications post marked on or before the February 20th deadline and received after 5:00 PM on the 20th will not be reviewed.
March 18, 2015	Grant announcements to be made
March-April, 2015	Initiate Amendments to Master Agreement with Districts
May 1, 2015 - June 30, 2016	Purchases must be completed between these dates
	Reimbursement Invoice must be submitted 60 days after purchase but no later than August 1, 2016

* Requests from Districts to offer another round next fiscal year.