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Commissioner

North Carolina Department of Agriculture  
and Consumer Services  
*Division of Soil and Water Conservation*

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Director

**THE NORTH CAROLINA AGRICULTURAL WATER RESOURCES ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**  
**AgWRAP Review Committee**  
Monday, December 17, 2012: 9:00am-12:00pm  
**DRAFT Meeting Minutes**

Attendees: Daphne Cartner, Julie Henshaw, Natalie Woolard, Greg Hughes, Ed Emory, Kelly Ibrahim, Dewitt Hardee, Tom Ellis, Tom Hill, Pat Harris, Cindy Safrit, Kelly Whitaker

- I. Welcome and introductions - Attendees introduced themselves.
- II. Minutes from November 30, 2012 meeting - approved by consensus
- III. PY2013 State Pond Application Cycle: \$450,000
  - \$425,000 from PY2013 appropriation + \$25,000 from unencumbered PY2012 pond contracts
  - The application period for new pond applications closed on November 16, 2012. 28 applications from 15 districts were received:
    - 11 from the Coastal Plain
    - 4 from the Mountains
    - And 13 from the Piedmont
  - These applications represent the following agricultural sectors
    - 10 from field crops operations
    - 10 from fruit and vegetable producers
    - 1-2 from green industry operations
    - And 6 from livestock and poultry (including forages and drinking water)
- IV. Review pond rankings

**Additional information requested by committee members:**

Run an analysis on water conservation BMP use and whether or not the operation is new.\  
Add for the sources for those purchasing water  
Contact Dr. Grabow about the best way to evaluate parameter 1

**Suggestions for next application cycle:**

- a. Define soil amendments or mulch to add organic matter for next cycle. Research the definition of amendment – better explain animal waste and whether it would or would not fall under this parameter. To count, it may require the applicant to provide information from regional agronomists and/or CES agents that animal waste is necessary and will improve the soils of the operation.

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- b. Follows a pre-existing written irrigation management plan – for next year consider requiring an outside review.
  - i. Who is authorized to write and sign off on that type of plan? As a starting point, can rely on the following certifications: use NRCS JAA for certified irrigation specialist in the state of NC or licensed by the national association with that designation. This is a high threshold for plans.
  - ii. Is there a template available for operations to use? For example, CES nutrient management plan created a simple, fill-in-the-blank, automated template for farmers to use. Could this be adopted and made for irrigation plans? Developing these types of tools would be helpful during the reduced resources available.
    - 1. Check to see if Farm-A-Syst has something that could be adapted for this purpose.
    - 2. Also, check with other states to see what could already exist.
- c. Rephrase: Reduce flushing of ponds between harvesting fish and receiving new fish (**aquaculture operations only**)

**Potential Water Balance Tool upgrades for future versions:** Note - this is not a design tool, a planning tool

- Add output under required storage outputs for livestock only operations
- For coastal plain add subsurface recharge
- Adding more crops: blueberries, blackberries, sage; guidance on how to handle nurseries (especially if water is being taken back into the greenhouse)
- Water needs for establishment of vineyards, orchards and specialty crops that will be higher than the annual water needs after establishment
- Add the operation identification information to the printouts

**Training needs:**

- Training and/or refresher for the Water Balance Tool before next fiscal year (spring).

**Engineering update: additional engineer staff on board**

- Sam Bingham, PE working as a temporary (retired NRCS) employee to design ponds in the western part of the state.
- Sam Warren working in the southeastern part (retired NRCS) of the state providing preliminary design work and construction oversight for pond construction.
- Surveying needs are being met timely – survey staff in two places in the state.

V. Rulemaking

Asked the commission for feedback on how they would like us to proceed with rulemaking for AgWRAP funds given that they are currently non-recurring. The commission is to provide recommendations at their January or March meeting.