



**NORTH CAROLINA
SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION COMMISSION
BUSINESS SESSION MEETING MINUTES
April 26, 2022**

Department of Agriculture
Division of Soil & Water Conservation
Johnston County Agricultural Center
2736 NC Highway 210
Conference Room 313
Smithfield, NC 27577

Commission Members	Guests via Teams	Guests via Teams
John Langdon	Alexandra Dinwiddie	Celeste Maus
Chris Hughes – online	Paula Day	Maria Polizzi
Blount Knowles - online	Kristina Fischer	Joshua Vetter
James Lamb - online	Gary Higgins	Jessica Perrin
Derek Potter - online	Cole Smith	Eric Hamilton
Mike Willis - online	Cayle Aldridge	Michael Shepherd
George Teague	Sarah Clancy	Annette Adams
Commission Counsel	Eric Pare	Michelle Lovejoy
Phillip Reynolds - online	Kayla McCoy	Edward Long
Guests	Rob Baldwin	Jane Humphrey
Vernon Cox	Graham Fox	Maegan Trimnal
David Williams	Adam Hilton	Kristy Dail
Bryan Evans	Angie Quinn	Charles Bass III
Ralston James	Amanda Sand	Jason Turner
Helen Wiklund	Jennifer Harrison	Daniel McClellan
Tom Hill	Matthew Swinarski	Jacob Peele
Julie Henshaw	Kenny Ray	Lynn Lambert
Guests via Teams	Heather Reichert	Andy Miller
Scott Melvin	Nicole Warren	James Massey
Sydney Mucha	John Beck	PJ Andrews
Rick McSwain	Kaitlyn Johnson	Jason Walker
Anne Coan	Frankie Singleton	Kyle Gentry
Henry Faison	Joshua Thomas	

Chairman Langdon called the meeting to order at 8:07 a.m. Chairman Langdon inquired whether any Commission members need to declare any conflict of interest, or appearance of conflict of interest, that

may exist for agenda items under consideration, as mandated by the State Ethics Act. Chairman Langdon stated the meeting guidelines.

1. **Approval of Agenda:** Chairman Langdon asked for approval of the agenda. Commissioner Teague moved to approve the agenda and Commissioner Knowles seconded. Motion carried.

2. **Proposed Draft of Streamflow Rehabilitation Assistance Program Allocation:** Chairman Langdon recognized Deputy Director David Williams to present. A copy of the report is included as an official part of the minutes. Mr. Williams stated there is \$38M being considered for allocation for the Streamflow Rehabilitation Assistance Program. Mr. Williams reviewed the program’s purpose, which is to protect and restore the integrity of the drainage infrastructure through routine maintenance to existing streams and drainage ways by removing blockages caused by accumulated sediment. Also, the improvement of small watershed structural projects. The eligible costs through the program include project engineering, permitting, and administrative costs. The funds can also be used to provide non-federal match for related disaster recovery activities funded by the Federal government. The list of eligible applicants was highlighted. There were 125 eligible applications received, with 67 applications directly from soil and water conservation districts. There were 27 applications from cities and towns and 15 applications from counties, with 11 of those 15 that came from districts applying through the county. The top category for applications received is for vegetative debris removal with \$160,860,941.00 requested. The previous reserve of \$1.4M for matching federal EWP funds is being reallocated with half of the money being shifted into stream debris removal and the other half of the money into small watershed rehabilitation projects.

The proposed funding buckets are below:

Program Purpose	Recommended Initial Funding Pool - March	Recommended Initial Funding Pool - April
Stream Debris Removal	\$28,700,000	\$29,400,000
Reserve for Matching Federal Funds	\$1,400,000	\$0 (Replace with Matthew/Florence Funds)*
Small Watershed Project Rehab	\$6,000,000	\$6,700,000
Administration	\$1,900,000	\$1,900,000
TOTAL	\$38,000,000	\$38,000,000

The Commission is also being asked to approve the reallocation of a total of \$4.25M from appropriations for Hurricane Matthew (\$1M) and Hurricane Florence (\$3.25) for Tropical Storm Eta and Tropical Storm Fred disaster recovery. The Commission is also being asked to approve another change of \$567,604 to correct an error in coding for Hurricane Matthew appropriations.

Chairman Langdon asked for a motion. Commissioner Hughes moved to approve the recommendation to allocate the re-apportionment of 2016 Matthew funds to cover a payment error and re-apportion 2017 Hurricane Matthew and 2018 Hurricane Florence funds to cover match needs for EWP (Tropical Storm Eta and Tropical Storm Fred) and Commissioner Lamb seconded. Motion carried.

The allocation criteria for vegetative debris removal related to stream treatments shows \$160M in requests with only \$29.4M available for category B1. It is recommended that all 107 applicants receive a base allocation of either \$250,000 or the full amount of their B1 request whichever is less and an additional allocation of 5.06705% of the total of their B1 request over \$250,000, with a maximum allocation of \$700,000. Applicants under categories B2-B5 will not receive assistance. The prioritizations that were approved on January 9, 2022, for P.L. 566 Small Watershed Project Rehabilitation Allocation Criteria is below:

- Minimum base C1 allocation: \$500,000, unless applicants requested less than \$500,000 (7 applicants)
- Add 50% of total C1 request over \$500,000 if applicants also requesting USDA Watershed Rehab (13% if not requesting match funds)
- C2 allocate requested amount up to \$135,000 (3 applicants)
- C3 allocate requested amount up to \$95,000 (4 applicants)
- Maximum allocation: \$2M

The summary of the recommended allocation is below:

- 110 of 125 eligible applicants will receive funding (\$38.9M)
- 107 applicants funded for vegetative debris removal (\$29.4M)
- 11 applicants funded for P.L. 566 – related projects (\$6.7M)
- 110 applicants from 78 counties receive an allocation
- 63 SWCDS, 15 Counties, 19 Municipalities, 6 Drainage Districts, 4 NGOs, 1 RC&D, 1 Water/Sewer Authority, 1 Watershed Commission would receive an allocation (9 SWCDS applied through the county)
- 15 applicants from 11 counties will not receive an allocation, due to not applying for high-priority activities

Commissioner Willis stated that district supervisors must be held accountable. Commissioner Willis suggested the recording secretary should send out a letter to all district chairs who did not apply for funds, asking for an explanation of their decision not to request StRAP funding.

Chairman Langdon stated the Division needs to gather more information for the May meeting. Commissioner Willis asked the Division to present an allocation using the following parameters for consideration at the May Commission meeting.

- Cap vegetative allocation at \$500K

- Reduce vegetative allocation by 50% of balance of non-Eta debris removal funds currently unexpended by the local sponsor
- Cap total allocation at \$2M, excluding EWP match

3. Briefing on Climate Smart Commodities Proposal: Chairman Langdon recognized Ms. Julie Henshaw to present. A copy of the report is included as an official part of the minutes. Ms. Henshaw stated the partners for this proposal include NCDA&CS, NC Farm Bureau, NC State University, NC A&T State University, the Foundation for Soil and Water Conservation and various commodity groups. There is \$1B available through this request. Applicants can apply for up to \$100M per project. The Division's proposed grant funding request will work as follows:

- Goal is to bring additional funding for climate smart conservation practices and implement them through our existing Agriculture Cost Share Program (ACSP)
- Districts provided estimates of Best Management Practices (BMP) units and acres to be funded for applicable practices available in ACSP
- Funds will be administered through CS2
- New practice cost will be used so that costs will be comparable with federal cost share rates

The Climate Smart Agricultural Practices include cover crops, low-till or no-till, nutrient management, manure management, buffers, wetland and grassland management, tree planting, and prescribed grazing. The 19 eligible BMPs for Climate Smart Practices were highlighted.

The amount of funding being requested through the ACSP is as follows:

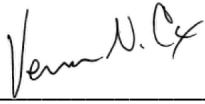
- BMPs requests include \$3M per year for 5 years; \$15M total for BMPS
- Technical Assistance; ~\$2.2M
 - Based on district feedback, a combination of technical assistance options is proposed

The Grant submittal date is May 6, 2022, with awards anticipated this summer, and updates will be provided as announcements are made.

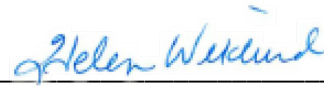
IV. Public Comments: Chairman Langdon stated the Commission and Division have a lot of responsibilities. The district supervisors and people that he has met have a wealth of character and commends them for their service and to continue to make your district a flagship of your area. Chairman Langdon thanked Mr. Evans for continuing to make the Association great and thanked Commissioner Hughes for his tremendous work with the Association.

Chairman Langdon stated the Commission will meet in three weeks in Sampson County. He challenges Commissioner Potter and the other commissioners to think about possible meeting places and tours for the remainder of the year.

V. Adjournment: Chairman Langdon asked for a motion to adjourn at 10:02 a.m. Commissioner Teague moved to adjourn the meeting and Commissioner Potter seconded. Motion carried.



Vernon N. Cox, Director
Division of Soil & Water Conservation, Raleigh, N.C.



Helen Wiklund, Recording Secretary

These minutes were approved by the North Carolina Soil & Water Conservation Commission on May 18, 2022.