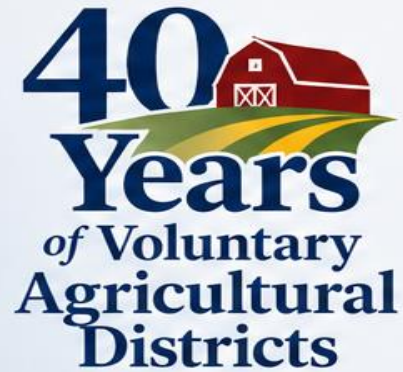




★  
*North Carolina Department of  
Agriculture and Consumer Services*

# Program Best Practices

- **April Hoyt, Conservationist/Education Coordinator, Henderson SWCD**
- **Angela Price, Farmland Preservation Coordinator, Henderson SWCD**
- **Jonathan Wallin, District Director/Conservationist Henderson SWCD**
- **Andrew Waters, Farmland Preservation Coordinator, Chatham SWCD**

**N★C  
FOREVER  
FARMS**





# Henderson VAD and Farmland Preservation



HENDERSON  
FARMLAND  
PRESERVATION



# Henderson Farmland

|           | Henderson <sup>1</sup> (ac) | North Carolina <sup>2</sup> (ac) |
|-----------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2002-2007 | 10,672                      | 604,330                          |
| 2007-2012 | 2,195                       | 59,915                           |
| 2012-2017 | Increased*                  | Increased*                       |
| 2017-2022 | 8,356                       | 302,386                          |

\*number of farms decreased, average size of farm increased slightly

| Henderson Co.   | 2017 <sup>1</sup> | 2022 <sup>2</sup> |
|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Number of Farms | 455               | 520               |
| Farms (ac)      | 41,099            | 32,743            |
| Cropland (ac)   | 25,029            | 19,572            |
| Orchards (ac)   | 4,439             | 5,471             |



# County Timeline

**Chapter 45 Preservation Update:** September 16, 2024 (BOC)

**Farmland Preservation Taskforce created:** April 1, 2024 (BOC)

**Grant application submitted:** January 14, 2025 (FPT)

**Ag Advisory Board transition:** February 26, 2025 (Ch. 45 ordinance)

**Coordinator hired/started:** Nov 17, 2025 (SWCD)

**Grant match approved:** March 2, 2026 (BOC)

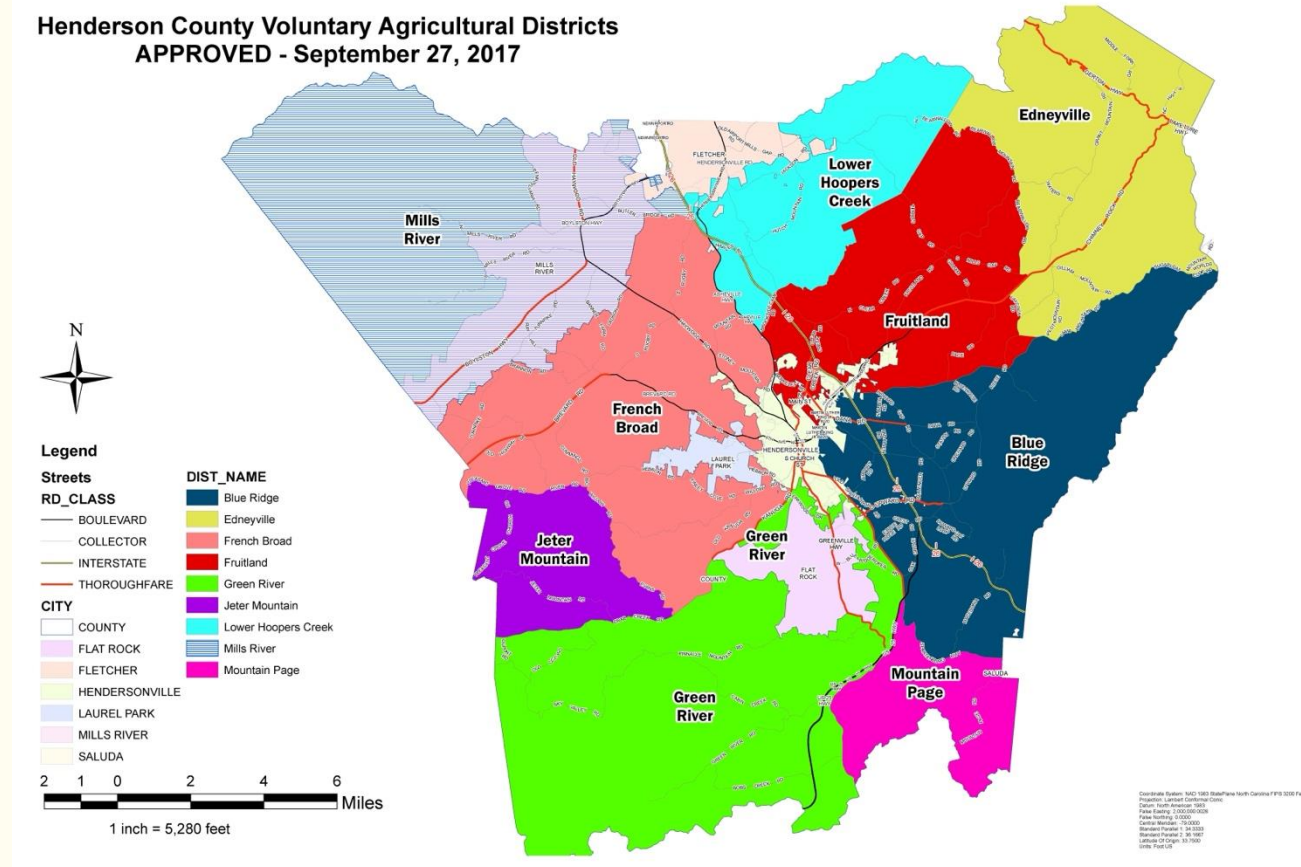
**EVAD/Easement Applications approved:** April 22, 2026 (AAB)





# Voluntary Agricultural Districts

- Protection from nuisance suits
- Right to a public hearing before any state or local agency, or governmental unit, may initiate any condemnation **and** rezoning proceedings\*
- Opens door for future preservation options



\*new state law update as of October 2025

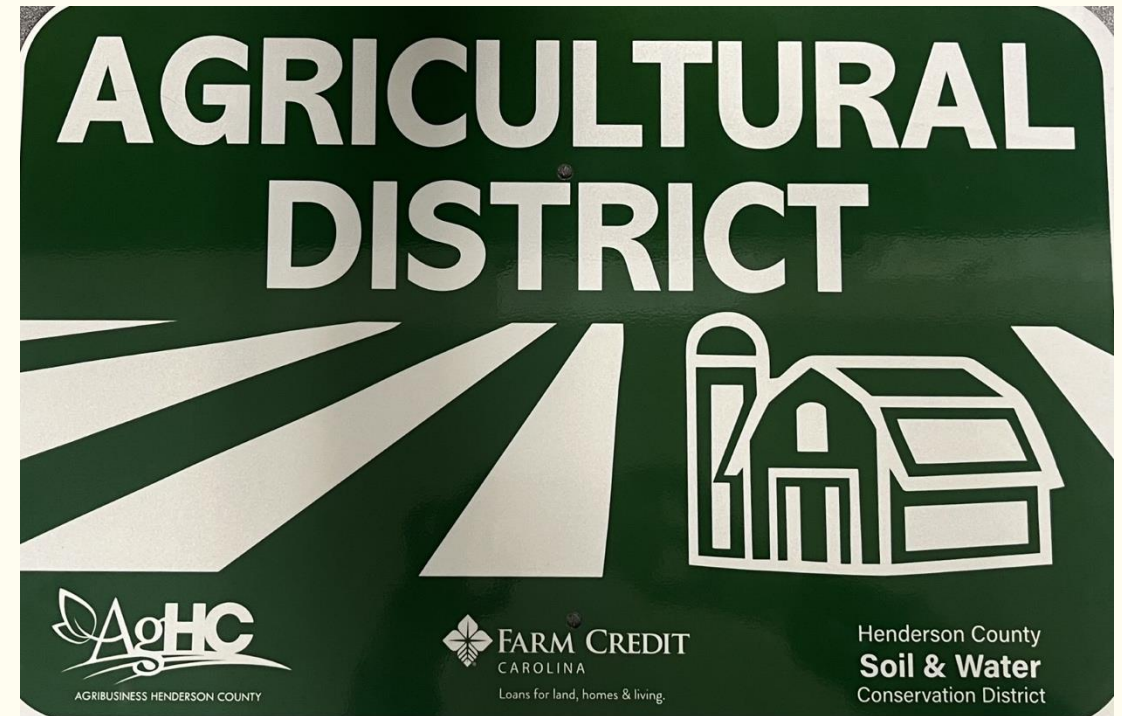


HENDERSON  
FARMLAND  
PRESERVATION



# Enhanced VAD

- Included in Chapter 45 of Henderson County Code, Farmland Preservation
- First enrollment in May 2026
- Requires a 10-year irrevocable Conservation Agreement included in a deed amendment
- Potential financial benefits through enrollment
- Transitional period for easement application *or* less permanent option





# Agricultural Districts

**VAD**

**July 2026**

394 parcels

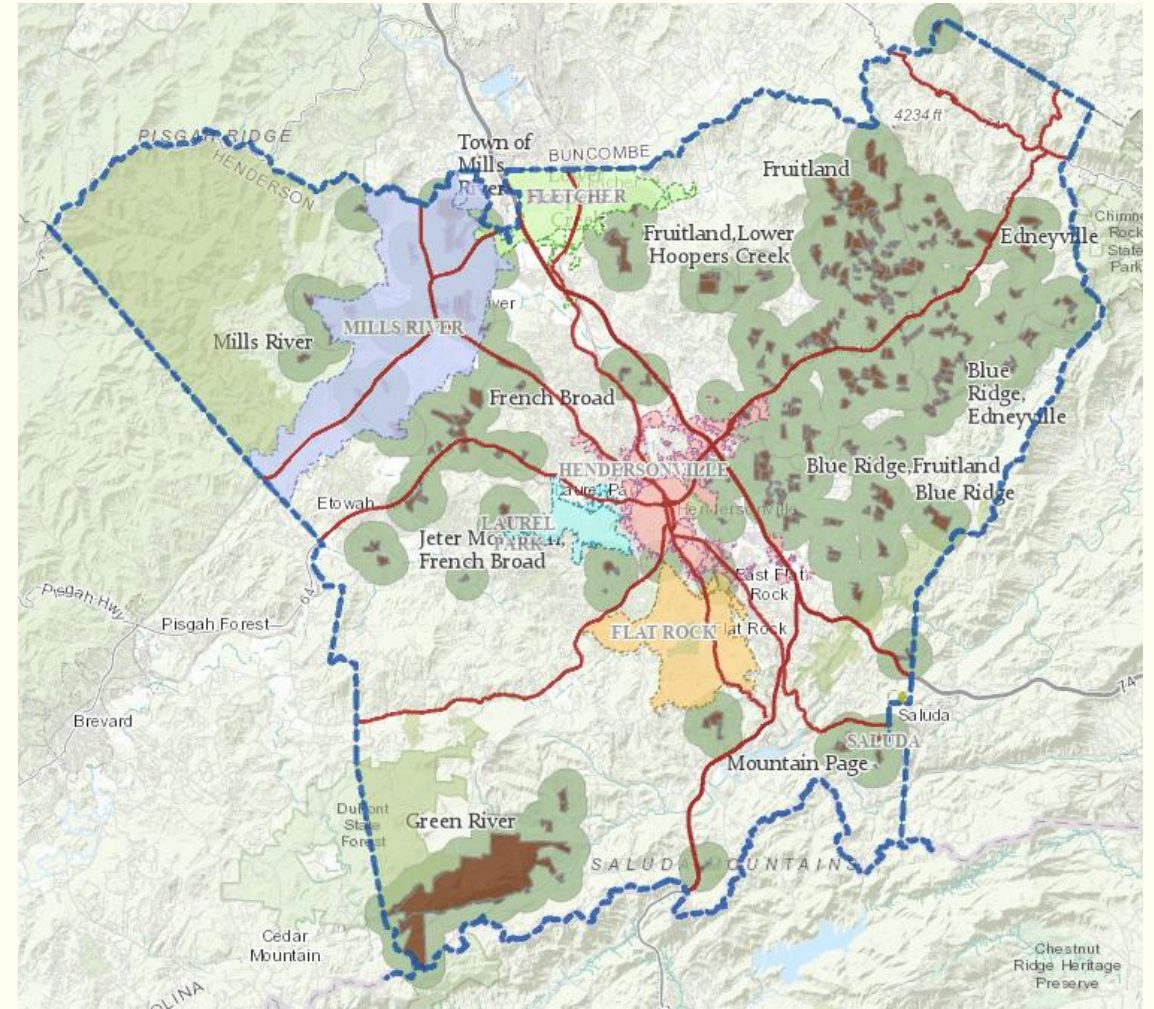
11,380.68 acres

**EVAD**

**July 2026**

8 parcels

120.12 acres



**HENDERSON  
FARMLAND  
PRESERVATION**



# Outreach and Participation

## Outreach

- Landowner info packet
- Social Media/Quarterly update flyer
- Tax flyer
- Apple school
- Farm City Day
- Mills River Day
- Earthfest

## Participation

- Beginning of 2026:
  - VAD enrollment
    - + 293 ac
  - EVAD
    - + 120.12 ac
  - Easement applications
    - + 132.7 ac





# Funding

- AGZ Grant
  - “The purpose of the Local Agricultural Growth Zones program is to allow counties and conservation nonprofit organizations to enhance local investments in the acquisition of agricultural conservation easements by applying for matching funds from the state”
  - Total: \$821,545
- Exploring future avenues
  - PUV rollback
  - New state budget line item
  - USDA ALE grant
  - ADFP Trust Fund





**HENDERSON  
FARMLAND  
PRESERVATION**

**Contact:**

Angela Price  
Henderson Soil and Water  
828-697-4949



**HENDERSON  
FARMLAND  
PRESERVATION**



# Chatham Farmland Preservation Program

Andrew Waters

Farmland Preservation Coordinator



# Chatham Agricultural Preservation & Development Trust Fund

---

- The CAPD Trust Fund was unanimously approved by the Chatham County Board of Commissioners on October 17, 2022, to support agricultural preservation and development within Chatham County.
- Funding for the CAPD Trust Fund was designated in the Article 46 (0.25%) tax referendum that was approved by Chatham County voters in the March 2020 voter referendum.
- Current Annual Allocation is \$325,000.
- Started receiving PUV Rollback Revenues in FY 26
- FY 26 allocation was approximately \$650,400.





# Chatham Agricultural Preservation & Development Trust Fund

---

- Will pay up to 50% of CE value; up to \$50,000 in transaction costs.
- Applications evaluated on scoring criteria.
- Applications are competitive; Application period coincides with ADFP.
- Organizational Support Grant: \$75,000.
- Total Commitments so far:
  - 6 Farms; 591 Acres
  - \$1.3 million



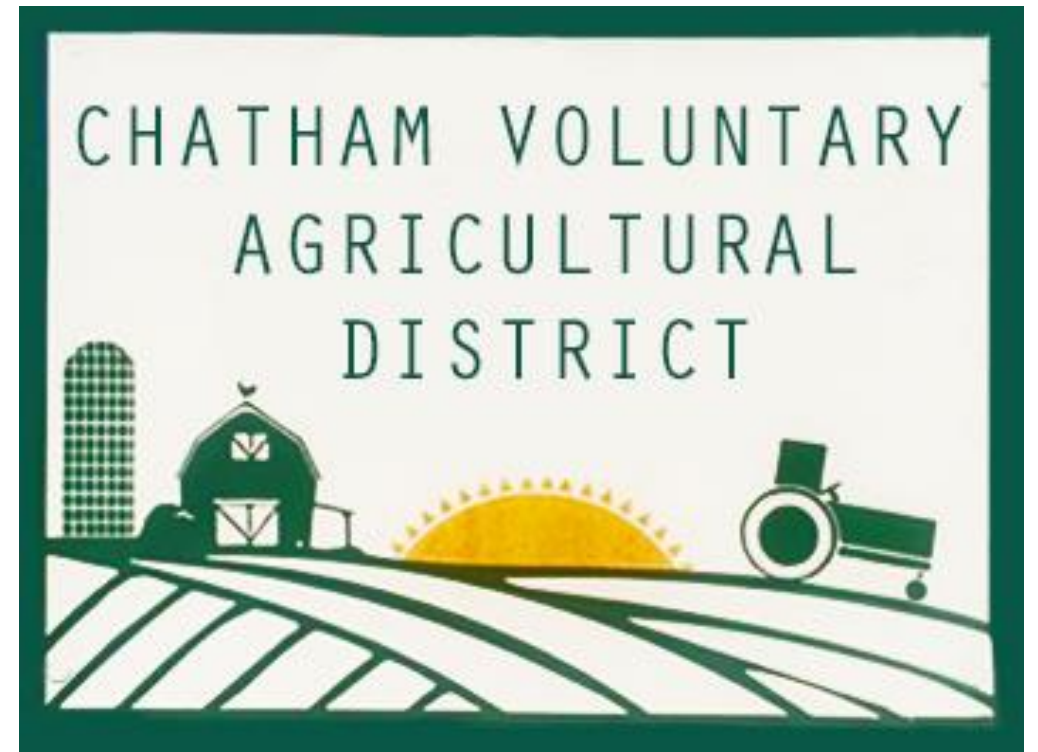
# Leveraging Matching Funds

- NC ADFP
- Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)—ACEP, RCCP
- Landowner in-kind donation of value
  - Many CE acquisition projects have some level of landowner “donation”



# 4 Components of Farmland Preservation Program

1. CAPD Trust Fund
2. Voluntary Agricultural District Program
3. Farmland Preservation Plan (Summer 2024)
4. Landowner Outreach & Education



# Programming and Outreach

---

- Farm Transition Workshop, Summer 2024 & 2025
- Chatham Farms Forever Day
- Chatham Agricultural Summit
- Ag-Fest



## Chatham County Farmland Preservation Program

### FARM TRANSITION WORKSHOP

Farmland transition and estate planning is the most important step you can take to preserve your farm for your heirs and future generations.

The Chatham County Farmland Preservation Program with Cedar Grove Law Firm is offering a free farmland transition and estate planning workshop on Thursday, June 20, from 9 to 11 a.m. at the Chatham County Agricultural and Conference Center, 1192 US Hwy 64 W Business, Pittsboro, NC, 27312. Registration Required.



Scan here to register or visit:  
<https://forms.office.com/r/5ZedreyZjv>.

Contact Andrew Waters, Farmland Preservation Coordinator, at [andrew.waters@chathamcountync.gov](mailto:andrew.waters@chathamcountync.gov) for more information.





# Observations

- Transaction fund has been a success.
- \$7,000 Development Grant from ADFP
- Allow funding for programming, etc.
- Be diligent and creative.
- Not holding easements for now.



# Questions ???

Andrew Waters, Farmland Preservation Coordinator

[andrew.waters@chathamcountync.gov](mailto:andrew.waters@chathamcountync.gov)

919-545-8447