AGRICULTURE COST SHARE PROGRAM

Technical Review Committee

August 26, 2026 – Meeting Minutes

Attendees

TRC Members: John Beck (Chair), Erin Rivers, Abubakarr Mansaray, Alex Jones, Dewitt Hardee, Rachel Smith, Anne Coan, Elliot Swain, Jamie Bridges, Elton Wilson, Starla Harwood, Pete Anderson, Rick McSwain, James Rodriguez (alternate for Brandon King)

Guests: Dalton Buchanan, Tim Baumgartner, Thomas Ducey, Joshua Padilla, Bill Yarborough, Michael Shepherd, Steven Ward, Lorien Deaton, Allie Dinwiddie, Darren Layton, Sam Allbee, Keith Larick, Jacob Peele, Bryan Evans, Roger Toledo, Dustin Brewer, Lisa Fine, Shelby Kaplan, Josh Vetter, Barbara Bleiweis, Julie Henshaw, Lindsay Edwards, Porche Spence, Matthew Berens, Sam Edwards, Kristina Fischer, Jane Humphrey, Nicole Warren, Angie Quinn

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Agenda Summary

- Welcome & Introductions
- Review & Approval of June Meeting Minutes (Action Item)
- ACSP Program Updates
- Biochar BMP Presentation (Action Item)
- Member Items & Closing Discussion

Meeting Overview

- **June Meeting Minutes Approved**
  Motion by Dewitt Hardee, seconded by Abubakarr Mansaray; unanimous approval.
- **ACSP Program Updates Received**
  No committee votes required; informational briefing only.
- **Biochar BMP Consideration Deferred**
  TRC determined additional revisions were required regarding nutrient management

plan thresholds, cost structure (volume-based instead of per-acre), and template updates.
An **interim meeting will be held in early September** to review modifications prior to final consideration.

Meeting Proceedings

1) Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 1:31 PM by Chair John Beck. He noted the large number of attendees, and facilitated full introductions for members, guests and presenters.

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2) Review and Approval of June Meeting Minutes

John Beck reviewed the June minutes; one correction had been made regarding a member's name.

- Motion to approve: Dewitt Hardee
- Second: Abubakarr Mansaray
- Vote: All TRC voting members indicated "Yay"; motion passed.

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3) ACSP Updates

John Beck summarized significant policy and funding updates from the latest Commission meeting.

Grass Waterway BMP

- Policy updates were approved to allow use of subsurface drains under specific conditions.
- Technical competency requirements are to be considered in September.

Program Cost List & Maintenance Period Adjustments

- Approved changes included tiered 5-year and 10-year options for:
    - Critical Area Planting, Cropland Conversion, Field Borders, Filter Strips

Funding Summary

- District requests: ~$19M total; ~$2.4M for impaired/impacted streams.

- Available funds: ~$7.4M including non-recurring appropriation and rollover funds.
- $300K deferred to September for possible Biochar Grant supplementation.
- $500K earmarked for impaired/impacted initiative.
- Upper French Broad livestock exclusion funds fully allocated (remaining $670,323).

Implementation Communications

- Funding allocations were released on August 3.
- Webinar was held on August 6 covering ACSP, AgWRAP, CCAP.

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4) Biochar BMP

Dalton Buchanan presented the proposed **Biochar Soil Carbon Amendment BMP**, explaining its water equality benefits and alignment with NRCS CPS 336.

Key Benefits

- Increased soil water availability (up to 45% in coarse soils)
- Reduced nutrient leaching
- Improved infiltration and aggregate stability
- Liming effect in acidic soils

Risks & Safeguards

- Over-liming, phosphorus/salt loading, contaminant concerns addressed via soil tests and material testing.
- Feedstocks such as treated wood and municipal biosolids are prohibited.

Policy Review – Josh Vetter

Reviewed draft BMP policy including:

- Required soil carbon amendment plan
- Biochar testing requirements
- Soil test requirements (pre & one-year post-application)

Discussion Points

Member requested revisions:

- Clarify CPS 590 requirement.
- Switch cost structure to cubic yard or tonnage basis.
- Modify NC-specific soil carbon amendment plan template.

- Clarify compatibility with existing nutrient management plans.

Outcome

TRC postponed formal action pending revisions.
An interim meeting will be held in early September to review updates.

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5) Member Items

No additional items were raised.

Meeting Adjourned

- The meeting concluded at 3:29 PM.