



Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) North Carolina - The Update

Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Program Updates

Obligations for FY 2026

EQUIP

\$43,931,000- Allocated

\$23,326,899.63 - Obligated

53%- Obligation rate (as of 7/27/2026)

*Obligated 35 contracts under RPP for \$9,182,057

CSP

\$23,739,000- Allocated

\$8,121,533 - Obligated

34%- Obligation Rate (as of 7/27/2026)

* Obligated 14 contracts funder RPP for \$1,218,733

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)-Agricultural Land Easements

USDA announced a 2nd sign-up for agricultural producers & landowners to apply for fiscal year 2026 assistance in ACEP through NRCS. N.C received 38 applications for an estimated total of \$28,334,482.00 in request. N.C was preselected to fund 16 applications for an estimated amount of \$16,258,042 through the second sign-up for ALE.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

NRCS is now accepting RCPP project proposals now through August 24, 2026, to help farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners boost their operations and conserve natural resources.

General Updates

Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWPP)

The official hurricane season is underway. It is a good time to remember that when a natural disaster occurs and there is a need to do field assessments, please work with your local NRCS office and go ahead and complete a Field Damage Report (FDR). Those are initial eligible/ineligible determinations.

General Updates Cont.

EWPP Cont.

On June 17, NRCS met with U.S Army Corps of Engineers (UACE) in Asheville to discuss EWPP process and permitting.

Damage Survey Report Updates (DSR)

TS Debby/TC 8

Robeson Round1

- 11 sites
- estimated \$29.6 million budget, \$22.9 NRCS support

4 County Coalition (NHQ Accepted & Funded)

- Robeson- \$15,334,572 total cost
- Robeson/Scotland-\$13,384,032 total cost
- Robeson/Hoke-\$16,824,566 total cost
- Robeson/Bladen-\$5,831,998 total cost

Cumberland Co.

- 8 sites
- estimated \$1.8mil total budget, \$1.4mil NRCS support

Hurricane Helene

35 DSRs accepted by NHQ

- 530 sites
- \$115,988,411.00 - accepted and allocated financial assistance

Needs NHQ Review

- 78 sites total
- \$10,240,256.00 total estimated financial assistance

TS Chantal

- 1 site
- \$127,612.50, this includes both financial and technical assistance

General Updates Cont.

New NRCS Chief and Priorities

The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced the appointment of Colton L. Buckley as Chief of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the nation's primary private lands conservation agency. Buckley, who currently serves as Associate Chief of NRCS, brings extensive leadership experience in conservation and agriculture policy to the role.

As Associate Chief, he has overseen the agency's financial and technical assistance programs, management and strategy, science and technology, soil science and resource assessment deputy areas, and partnerships division. Previously, he served as Chief of Staff for NRCS and as Chief Executive Officer of the National Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils.

Priorities:

- Preserve and protect agricultural land;
- Shift to outcome-based conservation and farmer empowerment;
- Re-center field engagement and strengthen technical expertise;
- Expand wildlife conservation and outdoor access;
- Strengthen partnerships by streamlining processes and accountability;
- Optimize mission delivery by strengthening workforce culture; and
- Modernize NRCS infrastructure and technology.



NRCS State Conservationist

Matt Walker will serve as the NRCS–North Carolina State Conservationist where he will lead statewide efforts in empowering the state's producers by delivering technical and financial assistance to address natural resource concerns and historic loss of farm land across the state.

Over nearly two decades with NRCS, Walker has taken on roles of increasing responsibility, including Acting District Conservationist, Area Biologist, State Biologist, Acting Area Conservationist, Acting Assistant Director of Technology, Acting State Conservationist, Acting Chief of Staff to the Associate Chief's Office, and Acting Associate Deputy Chief and Deputy Chief of Soil Science and Resource Assessment. These assignments have taken him to Kentucky, Montana, Hawaii, Tennessee, Maine, and NRCS National Headquarters. Before serving as the North Carolina State Conservationist, Walker served as the permanent Maine State Conservationist since 2020.



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