NORTH CAROLINA SENTINEL LANDSCAPE COMMITTEE



2017 ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE REPORT

September 1, 2017

Agriculture Commissioner – Steve Troxler – Chair
Executive Director of the Wildlife Resources Commission – Gordon Myers – Vice Chair
Secretary of Natural and Cultural Resources – Susi Hamilton – Secretary
NC Department of Military and Veterans Affairs – Jeremy Collins
Dean of the College of Natural Resources at NC State University – Dr. Mary Watzin

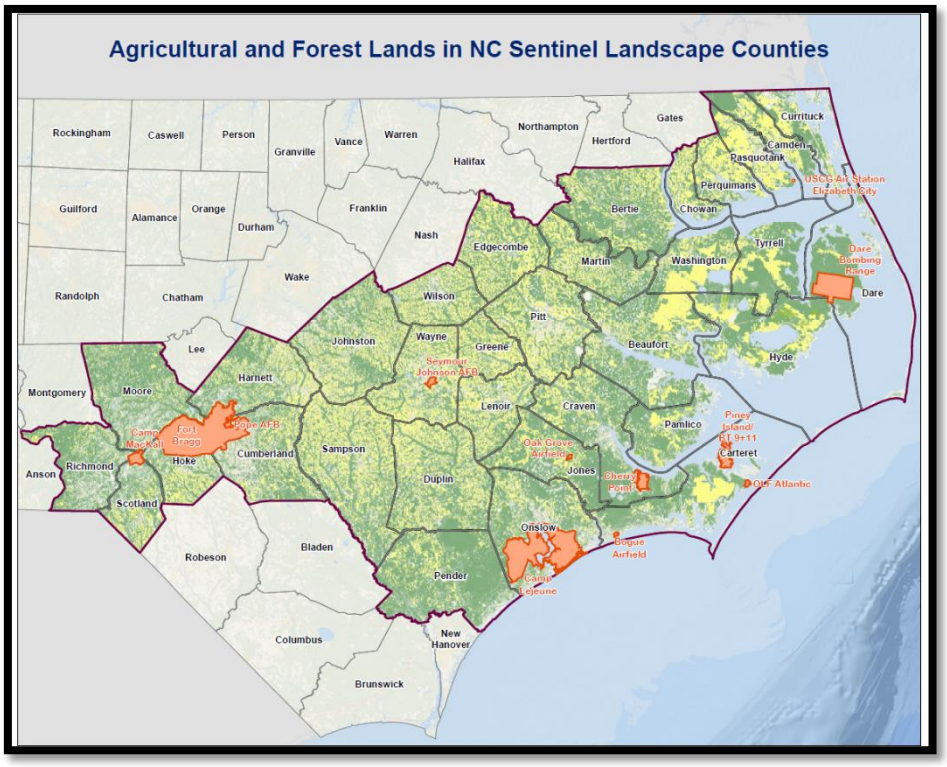
Pursuit to Section 3.19.(f) of Senate Bill 131 / S.L. 2017-10 … The Committee shall report on its activities conducted to implement this section, including any findings, recommendations, and legislative proposals, to the North Carolina Military Affairs Commission and the Agriculture and Forestry Awareness Study Commission beginning September 1, 2017, and annually thereafter, until such time as the Committee completes its work.

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What are Sentinel Landscapes?

The Eastern NC Sentinel Landscape benefits agriculture, forestry, wildlife, and the military



- In 2016, the federal government designated 33 North Carolina counties as a Sentinel Landscape. The Eastern North Carolina Sentinel Landscape is one of six landscapes designated by the U.S. Departments of Agriculture, Defense, and the Interior.

- The partnership aims to strengthen farms, ranches and forests while conserving habitat and natural resources and protecting vital training grounds for military installations.

- North Carolina is the only state to have multiple military branches, military installations and counties named as part of the designation.

- Regions with increasing commercial and residential development affect agriculture, forestry, wildlife and the military in similar ways, as incompatible development limits training abilities for the military and reduces viable farmland, forests, and natural areas.

- Agriculture and the military are the top two economic sectors in North Carolina. The Eastern NC Sentinel Landscape leverages partnerships between military installations, federal departments, state agencies, local governments and non-profit partners that support North Carolina's top two industry sectors.

Purpose of the North Carolina Sentinel Landscape Committee



- Pursuant to state law, the NC Sentinel Landscape Committee will:

- Coordinate the overlapping priority areas in the vicinity of and where testing and training occur near or adjacent to major military installations, as that term is defined in G.S. 143-215.115, or other areas of strategic benefit to national defense.

- Assist landowners in improving their land to benefit their operations and enhance wildlife habitats while furthering the State's vested economic interest in preserving, maintaining, and sustaining land uses that are compatible with military activities at major military installations and National Guard facilities.

- Develop and implement programs and strategies that:
    - Protect working lands in the vicinity of and where testing and training occur near or adjacent to major military installations or other areas of strategic benefit to national defense,
    - Address restrictions that inhibit military testing and training, and
    - Forestall incompatible development in the vicinity of and where testing and training occur near or adjacent to military installations or other areas of strategic benefit to national defense.

Committee Members

NC Sentinel Landscape Committee	
Chair – Steve Troxler	Commissioner of Agriculture
Vice Chair – Gordon Myers	Executive Director of the Wildlife Resources Committee
Secretary – Susi Hamilton	Secretary of Natural and Cultural Resources
Jeremy Collins	Department of Military and Veteran Affairs
Dr. Mary Watzin	Dean of the College of Natural Resources at NC State University

NC Sentinel Landscape Support Staff from NCDA&CS	
David Smith	Chief Deputy Commissioner
Evan Davis	Farmland Preservation Document Specialist
Dewitt Hardee	Farmland Preservation Program Director
Tina Hlabse	General Counsel
Robert Hosford	Military Liaison
Veronica Jamison	Farmland Preservation Office Manager
Jonathan Lanier	Assistant General Counsel
Janine Owens	Paralegal

Meeting Summaries, Reports, and Action Items

- May 25, 2017 meeting - The North Carolina Sentinel Landscape Committee held its inaugural meeting in the Hall of Fame Room at the North Carolina Department of Agricultural & Consumers Services. Commissioner Steve Troxler called to meeting to order with the primary objective of the meeting to be startup and organization of the Committee. Attendees at the meeting included Commissioner Steve Troxler, NC Department of Agriculture, Dr. Mary Watzin, NCSU Dean College of Natural Resources, Gordon Myers, Executive Director, NC Wildlife Resource Commission, Jeremy Collins, Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, Dewitt Hardee, ADFP Trust Fund Program Manager, Robert Hosford, NCDA&CS Military Affairs Liaison, David Smith, NCDA&CS Chief Deputy Commissioner, Zane Hedgecock, NCDA&CS Chief of Staff, Jonathan Lanier, NCDA&CS Assistant General Counsel, Tina Hlabse, NCDA&CS General Counsel, Veronica Jamison, NCDA&CS ADFP Trust Fund Office Manager.

NCDA&CS staff provided information on the legislative intent and purpose in the creation of the North Carolina Sentinel Landscape Committee. A report was provided by NCDA&CS legal staff on the Ethics Act and potential compliance was being reviewed by the Ethics Committee. Additional reports on military related action items were being conducted by the five state agencies of the committee. Report items included the 2017 REPI Challenge Award of $9.2 million, the need for additional training between NCDA&CS State Forestry and the NC Wildlife Resource Commission, and the NCSU College of Natural Resources 50-year timber deed on Hoffmann Forest that will continue timber production near to the U.S. Marine training area.

Additional discussion focused on current budgeted resources in North Carolina agencies for the Eastern North Carolina Sentinel Landscape and how to proceed organizationally.

- July 25, 2017 meeting - The North Carolina Sentinel Landscape Committee was held in the Hall of Fame Room at the North Carolina Department of Agricultural & Consumers Services. Commissioner Steve Troxler called to meeting to order with the objective of the meeting to continue the organizational process of the Committee. Attendees at the meeting included: Commissioner Steve Troxler, NC Department of Agriculture, Dr. Mary Watzin, NCSU Dean College of Natural Resources, Gordon Myers, Executive Director, NC Wildlife Resources Commission, Jeremy Collins, NC Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, Larry Hall, NC Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, Dewitt Hardee, ADFP Trust Fund Manager, Robert Hosford, NCDA&CS Military Affairs Liaison, David Smith, NCDA&CS Chief Deputy Commissioner, Zane Hedgecock, NCDA&CS Chief of Staff, Tina Hlabse, NCDA&CS General Counsel, Veronica Jamison, NCDA&CS ADFP Trust Fund Office Manager, Evan Davis, NCDA&CS ADFP Trust Fund, Michelle Lovejoy, North Carolina Foundation for Soil & Water Conservation, John Nicholson, North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality, Laurie Barnhart, North Carolina State Grange, Ethan Holland, NCDA&CS, Will Peete, Working Lands Trust, Paul Friday, Marine Corps Installations East, William Meier, Marine Corps Installations

East, Tom Ellis, NC Grange, Greg Walker, USDA-NRCS, Herb Vanderberry, NC Farm Bureau Federation, and Mary Lou Addor, NCSU.

NCDA&CS General Counsel Tina Hlabse updated the Committee on the Ethics ruling pertaining to the committee and outlined legislated guidance for the Committee pertaining to organizational structure and activities anticipated. The Commissioner of Agriculture was noted to be the Chairman for the first two years and thereafter it shall be one of the five listed Committee members.

The Committee nominated and accepted Gordon Meyers (NC Wildlife Resources Commission) as Vice-Chairman and Susi Hamilton (NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources) as Secretary.

Reports from the state agencies included an update of NCDA&CS on partnership funds for protection of military training areas in the Eastern North Carolina Sentinel Landscapes, a delegation report from the North Carolina attendees at the National Sentinel Landscape Meeting in New Orleans (June 14-16, 2017) and an update on the Stone Creek and Bear Garden projects by NC Wildlife Resources Commission.

- August 30, 2017 - The North Carolina Sentinel Landscape Committee was held in the Hall of Fame Room at the North Carolina Department of Agricultural & Consumers Services. - August 30, 2017 - The North Carolina Sentinel Landscape Committee was held in the Hall of Fame Room at the North Carolina Department of Agricultural & Consumers Services. Attendance: Dr. Mary Watzin, NCSU Dean College of Natural Resources, Mary Lou Addor, NCSU, Tina Hlabse, NCDA&CS General Counsel, Jonathan Lanier, NCDA&CS Assistant General Counsel, Bob Bardon, NCSU, Gordon Myers, Executive Director, NC Wildlife Resources Commission, Margo Minkler, NC Wildlife Resources Commission, Jeremy Collins, NC Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, Reid Wilson, NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (for Secretary Susi Hamilton), David Smith, NCDA&CS (for Chairman, Commissioner Steve Troxler), Janine McLawhorn, NCDA&CS Paralegal, Mitch Peele, NC Farm Bureau, Dewitt Hardee, NCDA&CS Farmland Preservation Director, Robert Hosford, NCDA&CS Military Affairs Liaison, Evan Davis, NCDA&CS ADFP Trust Fund, Chandra Pitts, One Village Alliance, and Will Peete, Working Lands Trust (via Telephone).

Gordon Myers welcomed everyone and suggested that discussions regarding the North Carolina Sentinel Landscape Committee and its relationship with the North Carolina Sentinel Landscape Partnership be deferred until all committee members are present.

The Committee reviewed and approved the initial 2017 Annual Report to the North Carolina General Assembly. Members discussed various ways to outreach to private landowners to encourage the preservation and compatible use of lands vital to military training including requesting funding from the North Carolina General Assembly to assist with the efforts. Because the Sentinel Landscapes Committee was established only recently, specific findings and recommendations to the NC General Assembly are not yet prepared but will be provided as soon as they are ready.

Additional information pertaining to the 2018 USDA NRCS RCPP application - North Carolina Sentinel Landscape High Priority Protect Program (NCSLHPPP) for $10 million was presented to the Committee. The NCSLHPPP will conserve vital privately owned land parcels identified by the US Air Force, US Marine Corps, and US Army with agriculture, forestry wildlife, and natural resources importance within their respective training areas. Agricultural conservation easements would be used to protect the property from development and compatible use for military training. The Committee endorsed moving forward with the application and encouraged all Committee members and others associated with the Eastern North Carolina Sentinel Landscape efforts to be partners and support the proposal. The NCDA&CS will submit the proposal on behalf of the Sentinel Landscape Partners by 9/7/17.

Future meeting dates were discussed but no decision was made. Potential dates will be circulated to the Committee members for acceptance.



This report was prepared by the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services on behalf of the North Carolina Sentinel Landscapes Committee.