NORTH CAROLINA SENTINEL LANDSCAPE COMMITTEE



2018 ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE REPORT

August 31, 2018

Agriculture Commissioner – Steve Troxler – Chair
Executive Director of the Wildlife Resources Commission – Gordon Myers – Vice Chair
Chief Deputy Secretary of Natural and Cultural Resources – D. Reid Wilson – Secretary
Secretary of Military and Veterans Affairs – Larry Hall
Dean of the College of Natural Resources at N.C. State University – Dr. Mary Watzin
Representative of the North Carolina Sentinel Landscape Partnership – Chester Lowder

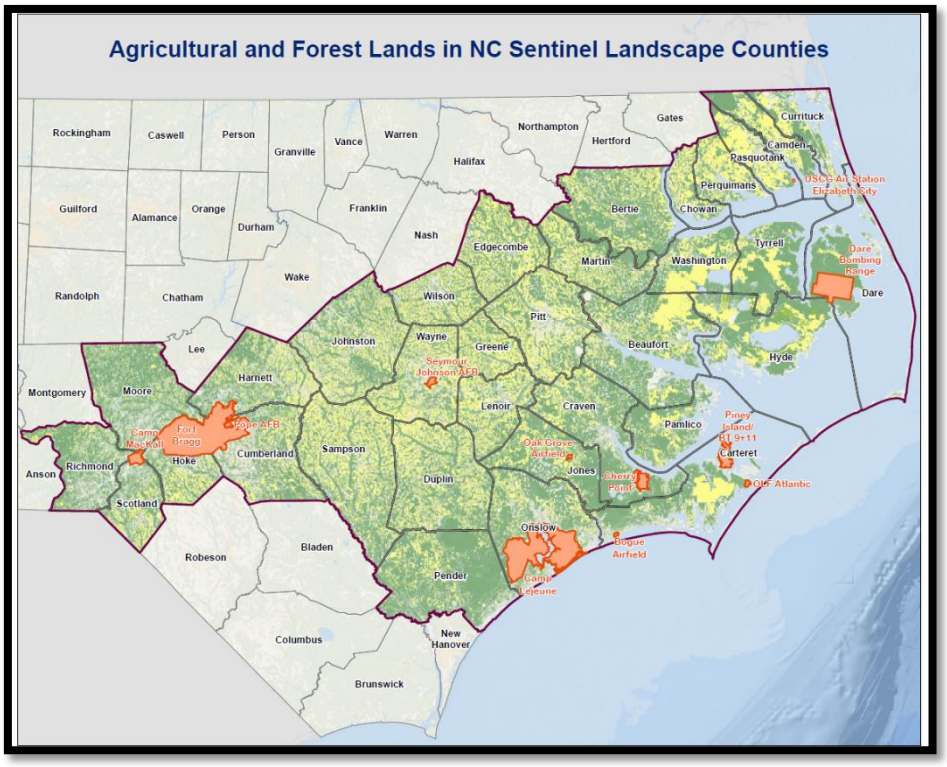
Pursuant to Section 3.19.(f) of Senate Bill 131 / S.L. 2017-10 … The Committee shall report on its activities conducted to implement this section, including any findings, recommendations, and legislative proposals, to the North Carolina Military Affairs Commission and the Agriculture and Forestry Awareness 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 North Carolina 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 Sentinel 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 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 North Carolina Sentinel Landscape leverages partnerships between military installations, federal departments, state agencies, local governments and non-profit partners that support North Carolina's top two economic sectors.

Purpose of the North Carolina Sentinel Landscape Committee



- Pursuant to state law, the North Carolina 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

North Carolina Sentinel Landscape Committee	
Chair – Steve Troxler	Commissioner of Agriculture
Vice Chair – Gordon Myers	Executive Director of the Wildlife Resources Commission
Secretary – Reid Wilson	Chief Deputy Secretary of Natural and Cultural Resources
Larry Hall	Secretary of the Department of Military and Veteran Affairs
Chester Lowder	Representative of the North Carolina Sentinel Landscape Partnership
Dr. Mary Watzin	Dean of the College of Natural Resources at N.C. State University

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

Meeting Summaries

- December 12, 2017 meeting – The North Carolina Sentinel Landscape Committee met in the Hall of Fame Room at the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. Committee members in attendance included Steve Troxler, Commissioner of the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Dr. Mary Watzin, Dean of the N.C. State University College of Natural Resources, Gordon Myers, Executive Director of the N.C. Wildlife Resource Commission, Jeremy Collins, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, and Reid Wilson, Chief Deputy Secretary of the N.C. Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. Others in attendance included David Smith, NCDA&CS Chief Deputy Commissioner, Dewitt Hardee, NCDA&CS Farmland Preservation Program Manager, Robert Hosford, NCDA&CS Military Affairs Liaison, Tina Hlabse, NCDA&CS General Counsel, Jonathan Lanier, NCDA&CS Assistant General Counsel, Janine McLawhorn, NCDA&CS Paralegal, Evan Davis, NCDA&CS Farmland Preservation Document Specialist, Veronica Jamison, NCDA&CS Farmland Preservation Office Manager, Bob Bardon, N.C. State University College of Natural Resources, Mary Lou Addor, N.C. State University College of Natural Resources, Mitch Peele, N.C. Farm Bureau Federation, Chester Lowder, N.C. Farm Bureau Federation, and Margo Minkler, N.C. Wildlife Resource Commission.

Dewitt Hardee reported that North Carolina was awarded a $7 million grant for the North Carolina Sentinel Landscapes High Priority Protect Program (NCSLHPPP) through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). Additional recognition was given to partners participating in the proposal including the U.S. Army, U.S. Air Force, U.S. Marine Corps, and many others that assisted with the proposal's development and submission. The NCSLHPP for 2018 focuses on approximately 8,000 acres of must-protect land parcels in the Eastern North Carolina Sentinel Landscape area. Dewitt Hardee also provided an update on the $13 million request for 2018 state funding to NCDA&CS in support of the NCSLHPP for 2018 military conservation easements and other statewide conservation easement projects requiring match for federal funding.

Jeremy Collins did not provide a direct report pertaining the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs activities but moved for the following in a request for the Committee members to meet in private to discuss.
Motion:

1. Ask the Partnership to put on its February agenda a vote that it be an advisor to the Committee
2. Ask the Partnership to vote on a proposed member to the Committee from the Partnership to submit to the Chair to the Committee.
3. Ask the Partnership if a member(s) of the Committee can attend and speak at the Partnership meeting in February regarding common priorities, i.e. outreach to landowners, and the need for more structure for organization.

The motion was seconded by Dr. Mary Watzin. The motion passed.

Commissioner Troxler announced a recess for the public attendees and for the Committee members to follow him to his office for the private meeting.

The Committee members returned to the room and Commissioner Troxler called the public meeting back to order. Jeremy Collins reported out that the Committee had approved the request.

Reid Wilson provided a report on the activities of the Clean Water Management Trust Fund activities noting the award of several projects with military-related importance.

Dr. Mary Watzin recognized Mary Lou Addor for the report. Addor reported on several activities associated with the North Carolina Sentinel Landscape Partnership's ongoing activities. The report included information on the North Carolina Sentinel Landscape Partnership fall quarterly meeting.

Gordon Myers provided a handout, Conservation with Conflict, for information and consideration as the Committee moves forward with future tasks. He focused his comments on the following statement: "Conservation without Conflict is a necessary approach through which we can learn collaborative conservation is working well and we can work with those that help make collaborative conservation the way the government, landowners, and society develop and work toward common goals."

Commissioner Troxler asked the Committee to continue its outreach efforts and the need to develop an "Outreach Strategy" for the Eastern North Carolina Sentinel Landscape area. He noted that this effort must incorporate the many protentional Eastern North Carolina Partners.

- February 13, 2018 meeting - The North Carolina Sentinel Landscape Committee met in the Hall of Fame Room at the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. Committee members in attendance included Steve Troxler, Commissioner of the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Dr. Mary Watzin, Dean of the N.C. State University College of Natural Resources, Gordon Myers, Executive Director of the N.C. Wildlife Resource Commission, Jeremy Collins, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, Reid Wilson, Chief Deputy Secretary of the N.C. Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, and Chester Lowder, North Carolina Sentinel Landscape Partnership Representative. Others in attendance included David Smith, NCDA&CS Chief Deputy Commissioner, Dewitt Hardee, NCDA&CS Farmland Preservation Program Manager, Robert Hosford, NCDA&CS Military Affairs Liaison, Tina Hlabse, NCDA&CS General Counsel, Jonathan Lanier, NCDA&CS Assistant General Counsel, Evan Davis, NCDA&CS Farmland Preservation Assistant Director, Veronica Jamison, NCDA&CS Farmland Preservation Office Manager, Joe Hudyncia, NCDA&CS Environmental Specialist, Anna Hayworth, NCDA&CS Legal Affairs, Bob Bardon, N.C. State University College of Natural Resources, Michelle Lovejoy, N.C. Foundation for Soil and Water Conservation, Bill Edwards, USDA-NRCS, John Nicholson, N.C. Department of Environmental Quality Chief Deputy Secretary, Will Best, N.C. Department of Commerce, Joy Gillian, Alex Zachman, and Jim West.

Commissioner Troxler welcomed Chester Lowder to the committee as the representative for the North Carolina Sentinel Landscape Partnership.

Lowder thanked the Partnership and stated that he is very happy to work with the North Carolina Sentinel Landscape Committee to protect the lands around military installations and to help promote its importance to the economy of North Carolina.

Dewitt Hardee reported there were two conservation easement recordings on December 15, 2017. The farms were R&M Properties of Hyde County, LLC (388.27 acres) and the John McAden and Ingrid P. McAden Farm (459.5 acres). These farms are in Hyde County and are of military importance due to their location in the high priority military airspace training routes leading to the Dare County Range. There are other ongoing opportunities for farmland preservation in areas of military importance. Through the 2016 USDA-NRCS RCPP, there is $2,698,176 being contracted for 2,037 acres of conservation easements that will have military, USDA, and NCDA&CS funding. Additionally, the development of the 2018 USDA-NRCS RCPP has begun. NCDA&CS has scheduled Voluntary Agricultural District "Train the Trainer" workshops in May 2018. Two of those workshops are in the ENCSL: May 8 at the East Carolina Agriculture & Education Center in Rocky Mount, and May 23 at the Johnston County Ag Center in Smithfield.

Jeremy Collins reported that the NCDMVA is conducting outreach through local VFW chapters in the ENCSL and will be meeting with N.C. Military Affairs Council (MAC) next week. David Smith, NCDA&CS Chief Deputy Commissioner, discussed the two percent limit for budget requests from the Office of State Budget and Management. Collins stated that NCDMVA is supporting the conservation efforts in the ENSCL by supporting the $13 million budget request for the N.C. Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation (ADFP) Trust Fund and would like to schedule a meeting to discuss with Smith about making this priority known for the Governor's proposed budget.

Reid Wilson reported that the Clean Water Trust Fund had over 120 applications with over $56 million in requests. There were nine applications that were military-related projects in the ENCSL.

Dean Mary Watzin stated that Bob Bardon would give the NCSU report in the absence of Mary Lou Addor. Bardon stated they have a lot of activities going on right now. They are working on public recognition activities through the Appalachian Society of American Foresters, the N.C. State Southeast Regional Cooperative Ecosystem Study Units (CESU) Rally in March, and the development of a Sentinel Landscapes film by Grizzly Creeks & FCC. There are N.C. Sentinel Landscape landowner recognition activities ongoing, including the Southeast Regional Partnership for Planning and Sustainability (SERPPAS) landowner survey discussion and the development of a N.C. Sentinel Landscape Toolbox that builds incentive programs and coordination among partners.

Gordon Myers reported on behalf of the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission that they are analyzing all of their private landowner initiatives to incorporate sentinel landscape priorities. In updating the Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Challenge grant, he

hopes to have personnel in place to work on the Holly Shelter Game Land. There may be opportunities for additional federal funding for the conservation of wildlife habitats and he will keep the Committee informed of any Congressional updates on the matter.

Chester Lowder reported that the Sentinel Landscapes Partnership would continue working with its partners and identifying new programs to further support sentinel landscapes.

Commissioner Troxler asked the Committee for Priority Sentinel Landscape Committee Initiatives for 2018. He stated that he was reaching out to Congress and USDA officials about grassland and wildlife habitat management practices that are required with USDA-NRCS Agriculture Land Easements (ALE). This "one size fits all" approach does not work because these practices are designed for Midwest and Western states, rather than Eastern states such as North Carolina. Additionally, as previously discussed, one of the initiatives for 2018 will be to get the $13 million-dollar funding match from the Legislature. Another initiative will be outreach to landowners.

Commissioner Troxler next sought any public comments.

Bill Edwards, biologist for USDA-NRCS, said the North Carolina USDA office had funding for programs this year, but was unsure about next fiscal year. Programs like Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) were among those that were fully funded and contracted. The North Carolina USDA office was in the middle of a two-year hiring freeze and down 14 employees, with only four positions on the programs staff.

Zane Hedgecock, NCDA&CS Chief of Staff, stated that Chrissy Waggett with NCDA&CS was the Federal liaison for NCDA&CS and can help with federal and congressional updates.

Robert Hosford, military affairs liaison for NCDA&CS, spoke about the potential for Camp Butner, a North Carolina Army National Guard training facility, to be included in the North Carolina Sentinel Landscape program. Will Best, Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) project manager for the N.C. Department of Commerce, stated that a JLUS for Camp Butner was completed approximately 5 years ago and Fort Bragg would be completing a JLUS soon. The JLUS provides guidance on potential funding recommendations.

Evan Davis, Farmland Preservation Division assistant director, spoke about the military training routes in Western North Carolina, and that a future consideration of the committee may be to explore funding for easements under military training airspace through the mountains, foothills, and piedmont.

- **May 15, 2018 meeting** - The North Carolina Sentinel Landscape Committee met in the Hall of Fame Room at the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. Committee members in attendance included Steve Troxler, Commissioner of the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Dr. Mary Watzin, Dean of the N.C. State University College of Natural Resources, Gordon Myers, Executive Director of the N.C. Wildlife Resource Commission, Larry Hall, Secretary of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, Reid Wilson, Chief Deputy

Secretary of the N.C. Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, and Chester Lowder, North Carolina Sentinel Landscape Partnership Representative. Others in attendance included Zane Hedgecock, NCDA&CS Chief of Staff , David Smith, NCDA&CS Chief Deputy Commissioner, Dewitt Hardee, NCDA&CS Farmland Preservation Program Manager, Robert Hosford, NCDA&CS Military Affairs Liaison, Tina Hlabse, NCDA&CS General Counsel, Jonathan Lanier, NCDA&CS Assistant General Counsel, Janine McLawhorn, NCDA&CS Paralegal, Evan Davis, NCDA&CS Farmland Preservation Assistant Director, Veronica Jamison, NCDA&CS Farmland Preservation Office Manager, Laura Brookshire, NCDA&CS Farmland Preservation Document Specialist, Chrissy Waggett, NCDA&CS Federal Liaison, Bob Bardon, N.C. State University College of Natural Resources, Mary Lou Addor, N.C. State University College of Natural Resources, Mitch Peele, N.C. Farm Bureau Federation, Bill Meier, Marine Corps Installations East, and Erin Adams, Marine Corps Installations East.

Dewitt Hardee gave the NCDA&CS report. The Farmland Preservation Division was in the process of developing 2016 United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) contracts. These contracts will be with the Working Lands Trust and will use NCDA&CS, USDA, and military funds for agricultural conservation easements in areas of importance to the military. A map of the priority area for the Dare County Range was shared, along with overview maps of the Eastern North Carolina Sentinel Landscape (ENCSL). Hardee explained how the funds to be used for agricultural conservation easements that includes match with the U.S. Air Force, U.S. Marine Corps, and U.S. Army. He also introduced Laura Brookshire to the group as the newest member of the NCDA&CS Farmland Preservation team.

Secretary Hall reported that the NCDMVA was supportive of the request of $13 million budget request for the Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation (ADFP) Trust Fund for federal match for various projects. Commissioner Troxler thanked Secretary Hall and was very appreciative of him and those that are supporting their efforts to bring additional funds to these important projects.

Reid Wilson reported that the NCDNCR was requesting an additional $6.5 million for the Clean Water Management Trust Fund (CWMTF) and $6.5 million for Parks and Recreation Trust Fund. Wilson reported that he has the CWMTF received over 120 project applications, many of which are in the ENCSL. He will report at the next meeting about how the new budget will affect their projects and how they can support projects in the ENCSL.

Gordon Myers reported that the NCWRC will be hiring two full-time foresters to work in the ENCSL. He spoke about on-going efforts with the Southeast Regional Partnership for Planning and Sustainability (SERPPAS) to create footprint maps that will be beneficial in identifying lands that will support wildlife, conservation, and military compatibility.

Dr. Watzin reported they are supportive of the efforts of SERPPAS mapping and how it would be very beneficial. Her staff will be attending a meeting at Texas A&M University on August 13-16 on military land sustainability. Watzin spoke about the importance of forestry to the economy of the region and that recent reports showed an uptick in the economic impact of the industry.

Chester Lowder reported that the North Carolina Sentinel Landscape Partnership will hold a meeting on May 30 at the N.C. Farm Bureau Federation office. He also reported on a Military Ready Conference that will be held in Nashville, Tennessee next month. Lowder announced the N.C. Forever Program. It is a pilot program to help reach out to landowners in the ENCSL and Michelle Lovejoy, Executive Director of the N.C. Foundation for Soil and Water Conservation, will be lead that project.

Commissioner Troxler spoke about how the Memorandum of Understanding between the NCDMVA and the North Carolina Sentinel Landscape Committee will help move landowner outreach and conservation efforts forward. Secretary Hall said that the MOU will be placed in front of the N.C. Military Affairs Commission for consideration and that it is expected to be passed in the coming months.

Commissioner Troxler spoke about adding Camp Butner to the list of military installations recognized by the state committee. This is due to its role as an active training facility for the North Carolina Army National Guard and supplemental training area for US Army units stationed at Fort Bragg. Since the ENCSL is a federal designation, Commissioner Troxler asked Jonathan Lanier to review the authority of the committee to add state-designated areas. Lanier said there was language in the statute to justify this, as it would not affect the federal designation of the ENCSL since the state law specifically addresses National Guard facilities and other areas of strategic benefit.

Myers moved to add Camp Butner as a priority area for the North Carolina Sentinel Landscape Committee, Wilson seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Chrissy Waggett presented a federal update to the committee. She provided some insight on potential changes with the upcoming federal farm bill and expectations for funding for USDA-NRCS conservation programs, along with changes and restructuring with the school nutrition program.

2017-18 Highlights and Milestones

Compiled by the Eastern North Carolina Sentinel Landscape Partnership and N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

- The Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation (ADFP) Trust Fund recorded the first two agriculture conservation easements using military and state funds on December 15, 2017. The farms were R&M Properties of Hyde County, LLC (388.27 acres) and the John and Ingrid McAden Farm (459.5 acres). These farms are in Hyde County and are of importance to the US Air Force due to their location in the high priority military airspace training routes leading to the Dare County Range.

- The Partnership proposed the addition of Chester Lowder as a new voting member to serve on the North Carolina Sentinel Landscape Committee in the role of liaison/representative of the North Carolina Sentinel Landscape Partnership. This proposal was accepted by the North Carolina Sentinel Landscape Committee during the February 13, 2018 meeting.

- The Partnership proposed the addition of Camp Butner as a new military partner to the Eastern North Carolina Sentinel Landscape, particularly for their effort in addressing water quality and quantity. This proposal was accepted by the North Carolina Sentinel Landscape Committee during the May 15, 2018 meeting.

- North Carolina was awarded a $7 million grant for the North Carolina Sentinel Landscapes High Priority Protect Program (NCSLHPPP) through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). The NCSLHPP for 2018 focuses on approximately 8,000 acres of must-protect land parcels in the ENCSL.

- The ADFP Trust Fund has more than 30,000 acres of private working lands with signed options for conservation easements in the ENCSL. These private farms and forests are in areas of military importance to the Air Force and Marine Corps.

- The use of Southeast Conservation Adaptation Strategy (SECAS) visual model will aid to identify compatible resource prioritization and future gaps of respective interests starting at a regional level and then at a Sentinel Landscapes level.

- The red cockaded woodpecker (RCW) Recovery and Sustainment Program (RASP), another signature program, provides habitat to the RCW in a partnership with the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Marine Corps.

- The ADFP Trust Fund is coordinating the NCSLHPPP in responding directly to military readiness and has collaborated to develop a single easement template designed to be utilized by multiple funders and the Air Force, Army, and Marine Corps.

- The Working Lands Outreach Program is piloted in five counties near Marine Corps Installations East (MCIEAST) and coordinated by N.C. Foundation for Soil & Water Conservation and the Marine Corps. The purpose of the pilot program is to determine landowner eligibility in conservation programs and promote the use of long term protection tools in MCIEAST priority areas.

- The N.C. Military Affairs Commission has provided funding of $75,000 to NCDA&CS for coordination of its NCSLHPPP and the North Carolina Sentinel Landscape Committee; $35,000 to Foundation for Soil and Water Conservation for Working Lands outreach in all 33 counties of the ENCSL; and $40,000 to N.C. State University for management of the North Carolina Sentinel Landscape Partnership.

- The Sentinel Landscape Coordinator and the Committee Representative to the Partnership serve on the SERPPAS Sentinel Landscape Working Group, and the Coordinator serves on the SERPPAS Coastal Resiliency Working Group and the SECAS Technical Group. A contingent of the Eastern North Carolina Sentinel Landscape Partnership attended the 2018 Sustaining Military Readiness Conference in August 2018, and the Sentinel Landscape Coordinator attended an all-day Sentinel Landscape Sustaining workshop which introduced:
    - 2018 Strategic Action Plan of the Federal Coordinating Committee (DoD, DOI, and USDA),
    - Sentinel Landscape Federal Coordinating Committee MOU (in revisions),
    - Onboarding of the 7 Sentinel Landscape Coordinators,
    - Exploration and introduction of tools to aid the 7 Sentinel Landscape Coordinators, and
    - 8 Elements defined for ultimate success of a Sentinel Landscape

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