NORTH CAROLINA SENTINEL LANDSCAPE COMMITTEE



2019 ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE REPORT

August 30, 2019

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
Assistant Secretary of Military and Veterans Affairs – Ariel Aponte
Dean of the College of Natural Resources at NC State University – Dr. Mary Watzin
Representative of the North Carolina Sentinel Landscape Partnership – Chester Lowder

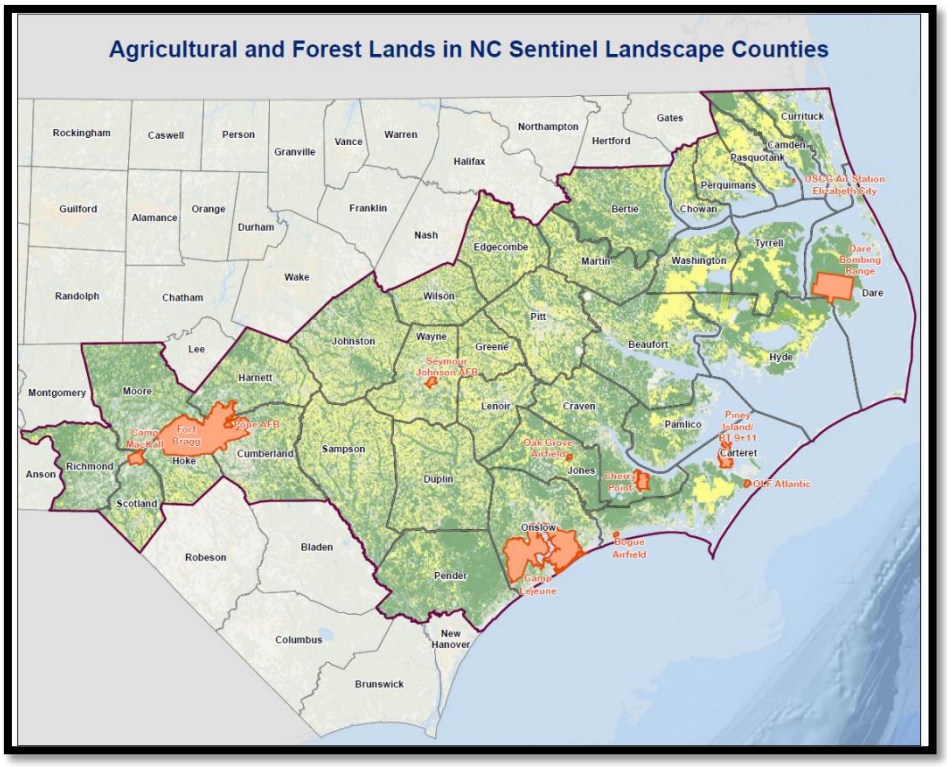
Pursuant to Section 3.19.(f) of Senate Bill 131 / S.L. 2017-10 … The Committee shall report on its activities conducted to implement this section, including any findings, recommendations, and legislative proposals, to the North Carolina Military Affairs Commission and the Agriculture and Forestry Awareness 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 seven 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
Ariel Aponte	Assistant 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 Committee 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

N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Report

N.C. Military Affairs Commission Memorandum of Understanding

In a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the N.C. Military Affairs Commission, the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services is contracted to use a portion of the funds and will subcontract the remainder to the College of Natural Resources at NC State University and the North Carolina Foundation for Soil and Water Conservation to support activities in the Eastern North Carolina Sentinel Landscape (ENCSL).

Below is a description of the proposed activities and funding amounts:

Purpose	Amount
Three positions within the NCDA&CS dedicated to outreach, technical assistance, legal services, and administrative support for Sentinel Landscape programs.	$75,000
NCSU will expand coordination and improve shared communication to sustain linking military readiness, inclusion of working lands, and conservation through publications and landowner outreach.	$40,000
North Carolina Foundation for Soil and Water Conservation will expand outreach efforts at the community level in the 33-county area of ENCSL. The Foundation, in partnership with local conservation districts and the NC Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (Association), will facilitate five landowner outreach meetings and five community meetings.	$35,000
Total	**$150,000**

Priority Parcels in the ENCSL

The Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation (ADFP) Trust Fund has been working extensively to engage willing landowners to place farms and forests under option for conservation easements and move priority parcels under contract. The ADFP Trust Fund is currently working with landowners to conserve and preserve **40,137.47 acres** in the ENCSL

The ADFP Trust Fund has contracted **11,440.39 acres** of privately-owned farms and forests determined by military partners to be in areas vital to the training mission of the armed services. The total project value for these conservation easement contracts total $20.7 million. The ADFP Trust Fund leveraged $12 million in federal funds for these projects.

Through the work of ADFP Trust Fund field staff, the N.C. Foundation for Soil and Water Conservation, and other partners, there are **28,697.08 acres** of privately-owned farms and forests under option for conservation easements in the ENCSL.

2016 Southern Sentinel Landscapes Conservation Project

The state was awarded $1.2 million through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). These conservation easement projects total **2,037 acres** and are funded through the ADFP Trust Fund, Seymour Johnson Air Force Base (SJAFB), and USDA.

Once recorded, these will be the first conservation easements in the nation that combine military, USDA, and state funds. These projects are anticipated to be closed in September 2019.

County	Grant Recipient	Acres	SJAFB Funds	ADFPTF Funds	USDA Funds	Total Project Value
Hyde	Working Lands Trust (WLT)	409.57	$621,326.16	$392,726.16	$245,700.00	$1,259,752.32
Tyrrell	WLT	290.52	$540,977.97	$342,265.17	$174,312.00	$1,057,555.14
Tyrrell	WLT	61.60	$35,445.80	$26,661.80	$36,960.00	$99,067.60
Tyrrell	WLT	120.86	$231,822.24	$149,151.84	$72,516.00	$453,490.08
Tyrrell	WLT	298.01	$384,120.36	$244,623.96	$178,806.00	$807,550.31
Tyrrell	WLT	201.25	$378,190.85	$240,580.85	$120,750.00	$739,521.71
Tyrrell	WLT	655.34	$1,103,993.33	$693,793.01	$333,526.00	$2,131,312.34
Totals		**2,037.15**	**$3,295,876.70**	**$2,089,802.78**	**$1,162,570.00**	**$6,548,249.49**

North Carolina Sentinel Landscapes High Priority Protect Program (NCSLHPPP) for 2018

The state was awarded $5.6 million through the USDA NRCS RCPP. In the first round of projects, these conservation easement projects total **2,458 acres** and are funded through the ADFP Trust Fund, SJAFB, Marine Corps Installations East (MCIEAST), and USDA.

SJAFB Priority Area

County	Grant Recipient	Acres	SJAFB Funds	ADFPTF Funds	USDA Funds	Total Project Value
Tyrrell	WLT	395.05	$333,364.20	$333,364.20	$605,977.50	$1,272,705.90
Tyrrell	WLT	694.50	$232,853.12	$232,853.12	$416,700.00	$882,406.24
Tyrrell	WLT	505.10	$172,507.44	$172,507.44	$303,060.00	$648,074.87
Tyrrell	WLT	637.70	$214,755.79	$214,755.79	$382,620.00	$812,131.57
Totals		**2,232.35**	**$953,480.54**	**$953,480.54**	**$1,708,357.50**	**$3,615,318.58**

MCIEAST Priority Area

County	Grant Recipient	Acres	MCIEAST Funds	ADFPTF Funds	USDA Funds	Total Project Value
Jones	WLT	162.78	$78,957.54	$78,957.54	$126,891.46	$284,806.54
Jones	WLT	63.10	$31,679.61	$31,679.61	$37,860.00	$101,219.21
Totals		**225.88**	**$110,637.15**	**$110,637.15**	**$164,751.46**	**$386,025.75**

Military Partnership Contracts

The following contracts are funded through the military services and the ADFP Trust Fund. These conservation easement projects total **6,945 acres**.

SJAFB Priority Area

County	Grant Recipient	Acres	SJAFB Funds	ADFPTF Funds	Landowner Donation	Total Project Value
Tyrrell	WLT	2,530.43	$2,371,475.82	$2,371,475.82	-	$4,742,951.65
Bertie	WLT	110.00	$133,472.91	$133,472.91	-	$266,945.82
Hyde	WLT	291.60	$191,963.13	$191,963.13	-	$383,926.27
Washington	WLT	408.00	$418,573.42	$418,573.42	-	$837,146.84
Washington	WLT	405.00	$383,814.15	$383,814.15	-	$767,628.29
Tyrrell	WLT	1,865.00	$1,165,291.98	$46,291.98	$1,119,000.00	$2,330,583.95
Totals		**5,610.03**	**$4,664,591.41**	**$3,545,591.41**	**$1,119,000.00**	**$9,329,182.82**

MCIEAST Priority Area

County	Grant Recipient	Acres	MCIEAST Funds	ADFPTF Funds	Landowner Donation	Total Project Value
Pamlico	WLT	110.50	$28,664.24	$28,664.24	-	$57,328.48
Pamlico	WLT	1,030.50	$649,348.37	$649,348.37	-	$1,298,696.75
Jones	WLT	54.98	$84,903.56	$84,903.56	-	$169,807.12
Jones	WLT	139.00	$97,562.49	$97,562.49	-	$195,124.97
Totals		**1,334.98**	**$860,478.66**	**$860,478.66**	**-**	**$1,720,957.32**

N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission Report

Recovery and Sustainment Program (RASP)

The Red-Cockaded Woodpecker (RCW) Recovery and Sustainment Program (RASP) partnership has continued, promoting multi-agency collaboration. Along with the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, which leads the management effort, the partnership includes the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Marine Corps Installations East at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, the U.S. Department of the Navy and the Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Mid-Atlantic.

The Marine Corps and the Office of the Secretary of Defense funded a perpetual endowment fund, which is managed by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, to cover the costs of RCW management on the game lands. The Wildlife Commission is conducting short and long-term management activities to establish and conserve longleaf pine forest habitat essential for RCW recovery. Commission biologists are managing the properties to RCW habitat standards in order to establish 60 active RCW clusters off base. The Marine Corps will continue its RCW conservation and recovery efforts on base as well. The RASP program is well underway, with several notable accomplishments between September 2018 and August 2019:

- 1,000 acres of restoration timber harvests completed and/or in progress
- 90 acres of longleaf and native grass restoration
- 1,400 acres of prescribed fire conducted
- 9 miles of road upgrades to facilitate future timber restoration projects
- Archeological studies completed at both Bear Garden and Stones Creek

Land Acquisition Planning/Partnership Engagement

The WRC's Salter's Creek Acquisition project closed in June 2019. This 5,182-acre project includes multiple funding sources (Clean Water, Navy, WRC Agency Funds, NAWCA, private donations with the NC Coastal Land Trust) and buffers key airspace for the Marine Corps' Piney Island Bombing Range.

Ongoing Technical Guidance and Support

WRC staff continue to provide ongoing technical support across the ENC Sentinel Landscape for private landowners and entities including local governments. Through tools such as the Green Growth Toolbox, WRC staff are bringing smart growth opportunities to communities across the Sentinel Landscape that help ensure conservation, local development, and military priorities are accomplished. WRC staff are also providing private landowners with guidance on how to

manage lands for conservation priorities that help secure compatible land use throughout the landscape for our military partners.

Southeast Regional Partnership for Planning and Sustainability (SERPPAS) "Good Map"

Working through the SERPPAS partnership and with the support of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services Science Applications unit, the "Good Map" project had 3 major accomplishments this year:

1) Developed an improved GIS layer of the military mission footprint,
2) Received >$1 million to create an improved fire tracking and reporting system, and
3) Added regionally important data layers showing conservation and military interests to the REPI interactive map: https://serppas.org/maps/

N.C. Department of Natural and Cultural Resources Report

The Division of Land and Water Stewardship is part of the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. The Division includes two programs focused on preserving North Carolina's unique environment – the Land and Water Fund (also known as the Clean Water Management Trust Fund) and the Natural Heritage Program. Both programs have contributed significantly to the Sentinel Landscape effort.

Clean Water Management Trust Fund Sentinel Landscape Report September 2018-August 2019

North Carolina's Clean Water Management Trust Fund (CWMTF) was established by the General Assembly in 1996 as a non-regulatory organization with a focus on protecting and restoring the State's land and water resources. CWMTF awards grants to non-profit and governmental organizations to protect land for natural, historical and cultural benefit, limit encroachment on military installations and provide match for federal funds that buffer military installation, restore degraded streams, and develop and improve stormwater treatment technology.

At its funding meeting in November 2018, Clean Water Management Trust Fund awarded $3,714,191 to purchase fee simple or conservation easements on over 7,100 acres in the ENCSL that limit encroachment to training routes or directly buffer military installations. Project details are below.

County	Installation	Grant Recipient	Acres	CWMTF Funds	REPI Funds
Washington	SJAFB Dare County Bombing Range	The Nature Conservancy	1,246	$375,056	$530,270
Carteret	MCAS Cherry Point's Piney Island Bombing Range	NC Coastal Land Trust	5,494	$1,200,000	$1,920,000
Granville	NC Army National Guard Camp Butner	Tar River Land Conservancy	65	$137,908	$137,900
Hoke	Fort Bragg, Camp Mackall	The Nature Conservancy	249	$413,367	$629,186
Onslow	USMC Camp Lejeune	The Nature Conservancy	50	$387,860	$395,000
Carteret	USMC Auxiliary Land Field Bogue	NC Coastal Federation	40	$1,200,000	$2,015,000

Natural Heritage Program Sentinel Landscape Report September 2018-August 2019

North Carolina's Natural Heritage Program (NCNHP) conducts biological surveys of natural lands and maintains an inventory of rare species and high-quality examples of natural communities. Many of these inventories are conducted in cooperation with partners who are interested in setting aside land for conservation, a land use compatible with maintaining the military mission footprint in North Carolina. The table below shows natural heritage surveys conducted by NCNHP assisting with land conservation activities in the Eastern North Carolina Sentinel Landscape during September 2018-August 2019**.** Natural areas or species of interest are listed in alphabetical order by county. Permission to visit the sites was received from landowners and land managers.

County	Natural Area	Partner Agency
Beaufort	Voice of America Site A	NC Wildlife Resources Commission
Bertie	Salmon Creek	NC Coastal Land Trust, NC Division of Parks and Recreation
Brunswick	Columbus County Game Land proposed acquisition	NC Wildlife Resources Commission
Camden	Great Dismal Swamp, North River	The Nature Conservancy
Carteret	Boathouse Creek	Town of Cedar Point
Columbus	Waccamaw River proposed acquisition	NC Wildlife Resources Commission, The Nature Conservancy
Craven	Island Creek Natural Area	Croatan National Forest
Craven	Neuse River Game Land addition	NC Wildlife Resources Commission
Cumberland	Boonie Doone Natural Area	Fayetteville Public Works
Cumberland	Clark Park Sandhills	City of Fayetteville
Dare	Buckridge Coastal Reserve	NC Division of Coastal Management
Dare	Kitty Hawk Woods Meter Point Tract	NC Division of Coastal Management

County	Natural Area	Partner Agency
Granville	Grace Ministries Tract proposed conservation	Tar River Land Conservancy, Camp Butner
Martin	Lower Roanoke River Game Land	NC Wildlife Resources Commission
Moore	Eastwood Plant Conservation Preserve proposed addition	Sandhills Area Land Trust, NC Plant Conservation Program
Moore	Jackson Creek proposed acquisition	Three Rivers Land Trust
Moore	Mill Creek proposed acquisition	Moore County Wildlife Club, Three Rivers Land Trust
Moore	Nature Preserve land donation	Longleaf Alliance
Moore	Voncanon Longleaf	Private Nonprofit
New Hanover, Pender	Sidbury Road natural area	NC Botanical Garden
Onslow	Kings Creek proposed acquisition	NC Wildlife Resources Commission
Pender	421 Sand Ridge Corbett Tract	The Nature Conservancy
Pender	Black River	The Nature Conservancy
Pender	Lea Island	Audubon NC, NC Division of Parks and Recreation
Pender	Merrick Creek	The Nature Conservancy
Pender	Shaken Creek Savanna	The Nature Conservancy
Robeson	Warwick Mill Bay	NC Division for Parks and Recreation
Scotland	McIntosh Bay	NC Plant Conservation Program
Tyrrell	Alligator River proposed acquisition	NC Division of Coastal Management
Washington	Roanoke River	The Nature Conservancy

N.C. Department of Military and Veteran Affairs Report

N.C. Military Affairs Commission Memorandum of Understanding

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the N.C. Military Affairs Commission (NCMAC) and the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services was executed. This $150,000 MOU is to support the North Carolina Sentinel Landscape Committee and ongoing activities within the Eastern North Carolina Sentinel Landscape (ENCSL).

NCMAC is the primary State agency to enhance the State's current military-friendly environment and foster and promote business, technology, economic development, and other efforts in support of the transformation of the United States government military and national defense activities located in the State as well as promote the industrial and economic development of localities included in or adjacent to United States government military and national defense activities and those of the State.

The funding breakdown for the MOU is as follows:

Entity	Amount
North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services	$75,000
College of Natural Resources at NC State University	$40,000
North Carolina Foundation for Soil and Water Conservation	$35,000
Total	**$150,000**

NCMAC wishes to engage the coordination of North Carolina Sentinel Landscape Committee in support of the Sentinel Landscape Partnership using funds from the Military Presence Stabilization Fund to preserve the working and rural character of key landscapes.

College of Natural Resources at N.C. State University Report

Sentinel Landscapes Resource Programming in Support of Military Readiness for Marine Corps Installations East (MCIEAST)

1) Provide administrative and facilitation support to project titled: Sentinel Landscapes Resource Programming in Support of Military Readiness for Marine Corps Installations East (MCIEAST)
   a) provide project administration.
   b) provide facilitation consultation to NC Foundation for Soil and Water Conservation County Leadership Roundtables.
   c) provide consultation to project focused on building working relationships between local governance and the NC Sentinel Landscape.

Facilitation and Coordination of the Sentinel Landscape Partnership

1) With funding support from the NC Department of Military and Veteran Affairs
   a) provide facilitation and coordination support to the Coordinating Committee of the Sentinel Landscape Partnership.
   b) produce working lands publications for access by working professionals and/or landowners, or as curriculum or supplemental information for training and workshops.
   c) provide facilitation and coordination support of the REPI Challenge grant between interested parties.

2) With funding support from the US Endowment for Forest and Communities
   a) coordinate monthly with the Federal Coordinating Committee and other Sentinel Landscape Coordinators about national and state level goals, and innovative strategies that link military readiness with working lands of farms and forests, and conservation.
   b) attended the national workshop for sentinel landscapes coordinators. The workshop served as an orientation for Sentinel Landscapes Coordinators to aid their success and connection to the Sentinel Landscapes Federal Coordinating Committee (Departments of Defense, Interior, and Agricultural). Introduced a process to develop objectives and key results for the Sentinel Landscapes Partnership – at the national-, landscape-, and individual-level.

Coordinate and facilitate the project known as Spaces Between the Bases: The North Carolina Strategic Plan for Sustaining Military Readiness through Conservation Partnerships

1) Project designed to integrates common goals and objectives from various organizations that will result in a Conservation Blueprint for North Carolina. Project is a partnership between US Fish & Wildlife Service, NC State University, the NC Sentinel Landscape Partnership, and other interested parties.

Southeast Regional Partnership for Planning and Sustainability (SERPPAS)

1) SERPPAS Principals and Steering Committee Meetings
   a) contributed to the implementation of the 2018- 2020 SERPPAS Strategic Plan through prioritized work group actions and further development of the SERPPAS Good Map actions. The SERPPAS Good Map is a regional approach to identify critical areas (threat and opportunities) for immediate and long-term strategic approaches and in order to make smart decisions of mutual and multiple benefit for all partners.
   b) Sentinel Landscape Working Group: Mary Lou Addor coordinates the NC Sentinel Landscape Partnership and along with other Sentinel Landscape Coordinators, contributes to the SERPPAS Sentinel Landscape Working Group and coordination of action items for implementation.
   c) Prescribe Fire Working Group: Jen Fawcett coordinates the SERPPAS Prescribed Fire Working Group, and Laurel Kays helps with that regional effort. This team coordinates actions items for implementation to meet the goals of the SERPPAS Prescribed Fire Strategy and supports Learn & Burn field days for landowners through an online video course for prescribed burn training.

N.C. Sentinel Landscape Partnership Report

The Eastern North Carolina Sentinel Landscape is home to five key military installations and ranges: Fort Bragg, Dare County Bombing Range, Marine Corps Base (MCB) Camp Lejeune, Marine Corps Air Stations (MCAS) Cherry Point New River, and Seymour Johnson Air Force Base (AFB). Behind agriculture, military-related activity is the second largest economic driver in the state. For years, North Carolinians from defense, agricultural, and conservation communities have carried out collaborative, locally grounded projects that promote sustainable land management. The 2016 Eastern North Carolina Sentinel Landscape designation, which encompasses nearly 11 million acres across a 33-county region, was a natural progression in what has been a fruitful and positive history of cooperation.

The Eastern North Carolina Sentinel Landscape partners to address priority concerns identified by the military, including restrictions related to species conservation. In 2015, the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps partnered with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), and the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission to establish the Red-Cockaded Woodpecker (RCW) Recovery and Sustainment Program Partnership (RASP). RASP seeks to enhance training flexibility at Camp Lejeune by conserving RCW habitats in the coastal region of North Carolina.

The objective of the partnership is to help Camp Lejeune reach and maintain its recovery goal of 173 RCW clusters, as mandated by the ESA. In 2011, Camp Lejeune supported 100 RCW clusters on base; today, over 130 RCW clusters thrive because of partnership efforts. Moving forward, RASP will target its resources towards preserving 60 RCW clusters across two protected properties that lie adjacent to the installation, the 13,000-acre Bear Garden tract and the 3,000-acre Stones Creek game land. The 60 clusters will count towards Camp Lejeune's ESA requirement, thereby alleviating training restrictions that Marine Corps Installations East currently shoulders. RASP is emblematic of the Sentinel Landscapes Partnership's mission as it expands the landscape that is devoted to endangered species recovery while simultaneously strengthening the military's mission.

Protecting working lands that support agriculture and agribusiness is also a top priority for the Eastern North Carolina Sentinel Landscape partners, as these industries contribute approximately $87 billion annually to the state's economy. In 2018, NRCS's Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) awarded $7 million in federal Agricultural Conservation Easement funding to help stand up the North Carolina Sentinel Landscapes High Priority Protect Program, a partnership between the Army, Air Force, Marine Corps, and the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, and other sentinel landscape partners. Through this program, agricultural, conservation, and defense stakeholders work with willing landowners to place easements on properties that defense communities have identified as high priority for protection.

In addition to protecting land through conservation easements, Eastern North Carolina Sentinel Landscape partners are pursuing opportunities to acknowledge private landowners for their stewardship practices. In 2018, the North Carolina Forest Service collaborated with several

Other sentinel landscape partners to develop a landowner recognition and appreciation letter that will be distributed to individuals who have demonstrated a commitment to sustainably managing their working lands. By voluntarily implementing practices related to prescribed fire, wildlife restoration, and recreational management, these landowners have directly contributed to the Sentinel Landscapes Partnership's mission.

In order to streamline the process to acquire a conservation easement, the Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Program Trust Fund collaborated with defense partners to develop a single easement template for the Eastern North Carolina Sentinel Landscape that can streamline resources from multiple sentinel landscape partners. The partners designed the template to reduce the anticipated easement acquisition timeline from 3-4 years to 1-2 years by having legal and logistical negotiations pre-approved by all potential funding resources.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service has administered conservation measures over 178,000 acres of working lands throughout the Sentinel Landscape. The College of Natural Resources at N.C. State University collaborated with sentinel landscape partners to produce and disseminate two publications that demonstrate the value of landscape-scale conservation. The publications are: The Landowner Guide for Working Lands Conservation and Establishing a Partnership for Sentinel Landscapes: The North Carolina Experience.

Sentinel Landscape partners conducted educational workshops about working land conservation with private landowners and piloted a Working Lands Outreach Program in five counties near MCIEAST.

A conservation footprint in North Carolina will help identify lands that support wildlife, conservation, and military compatibility in the sentinel landscape Sentinel landscape partners are working with the Southeast Regional Partnership for Planning and Sustainability and partners from North Carolina to develop a geospatial map that identifies overlapping interests between the military, conservation, and working lands in the Southeast region. The map will provide a visual model that enables the sentinel landscape partners to prioritize resources in the region.

Meeting Summaries

- September 26, 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, Dr. Doug Meckes, NCDA&CS State Veterinarian, Joe Reardon, NCDA&CS Assistant Commissioner of Consumer Protection, 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, Bob Bardon, N.C. State University College of Natural Resources, Mary Lou Addor, N.C. State University College of Natural Resources, Martin Falls, Assistant Secretary of Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, and Ariel Aponte, Intergovernmental Director of Department of Military and Veterans Affairs.

Commissioner Troxler briefly spoke about the devastation on farmland and livestock in the hard-hit areas from Hurricane Florence.

Dewitt Hardee reported on the North Carolina Sentinel Landscapes High Priority Protection Program (NCSLHPPP). The NCSLHPP for 2018 focuses on approximately 8,000 acres of must-protect land parcels for the Eastern North Carolina Sentinel Landscape (ENCSL) Area. There are 18,498 acres under conservation easement -statewide, with 7,063 acres under contract for conservation easements. There are 31,932 acres of farms and forests that are under option for a conservation easement inside the ENCSL. This includes 21,220 acres in the US Air Force region and 10,712 acres in the US Marine Corps region.

Secretary Hall provided the report from the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. He spoke about the rainfall data from agencies and how bases and personnel were able to move out during the storm.

Martin Falls updated on Hurricane Florence aftermath. Two military cemeteries were affected in Jacksonville and Spring Lake and the cemeteries in Goldsboro and Black Mountain seemed to be fine. There was a veterans nursing home in Fayetteville they were watching and were prepared to evacuate if they needed to due to the proximity of the river.

Mr. Wilson provided an update on the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR). There are currently four state parks that remained closed due to flooding and damage. Jordan

Lake remained flooded because no water can be let out of the dam. The water on the banks are high enough to reach the bottom of the volleyball nets.

Dr. Watzin provided the report for NC State College of Natural Resources. She stated the Hofmann Forest received 29 inches of rain from the hurricane. In Durham County, the G. W. Hill Demonstration Forest seems to be fine. She yielded to Mary Lou Addor for the rest of the report. Dr. Addor stated she had the pleasure to attend the national Sentinel Landscape conference in St. Louis, Missouri in August 2018. She said there was a strong showing from North Carolina. They reviewed how to work with landowners, working with contracts, and reviewing easements. She has been working with Marylou Martin on the Southeast Regional Partnership for Planning and Sustainability (SERPPAS) mapping process and how it will benefit the Sentinel Landscapes effort in North Carolina.

Mr. Myers provided a report for the Wildlife Resources Commission (WRC). He reported that the Hurricane Florence response is focused on the 44 dams across the state and they are ready for response with boats and other heavy equipment. More than 570 acres are currently under contract on lands slated for longleaf ecosystem restoration to establish red cockaded woodpecker habitat. A little over 80 acres of longleaf pine and native plantings are scheduled for the fall of 2018 within Recovery and Sustainment Program (RASP) area. Mr. Myers stated over 570 acres of prescribed burning was conducted this year in the RASP area with over 5,000 acres planned in 2019.

Chester Lowder provided the report for the NC Sentinel Landscapes Partnership. He stated the Camp Butner addition to the Sentinel Landscape was still under review. Dr. Addor stated they should know about Camp Butner in December.

Commissioner Troxler spoke about the Memorandum of Understanding with the NC Military Affairs Commission and NCDA&CS. The department will contract with NC State University and the NC Foundation for Soil and Water Conservation for a portion of the MOU.

Dr. Douglas Meckes, DVM State Veterinarian, and Joe Reardon, Assistant Commissioner for Consumer Protection, gave a presentation of Hurricane Florence and an overview of the NCDA&CS efforts towards cleanup and assistance. This included the statistics on agricultural production for the state and the economic value of loss. They also provided a PowerPoint presentation of the damage and various efforts to assist the farm community which included special assistance efforts in the handling of poultry mortality.

Commissioner Troxler showed pictures of the Hurricane Florence damage helicopter tour of September 18, 2018. The tour participants included Commissioner Steve Troxler, DEQ Secretary Michael Regan, Speaker of the House Tim Moore, Senator Brent Jackson, Representative Jimmy Dixon and NCDA&CS Chief of Staff Zane Hedgecock. Commissioner Troxler emphasized that the swine lagoon damage was not as bad as it could have been. He noted that less than 20 out of more than 3,300 lagoons appeared to have had issues. Commissioner Troxler also reported on the 2,300 hogs that had broken out of their holding pens near the Trent River and a majority were captured safely by the NCDA&CS staff. Mr. Smith recognized the North Carolina Department of Transportation for helping with the roads to help the department with Hurricane Florence

damage areas. Bob Bardon asked what the latest press release was on the latest numbers on the total dollar amount lost. Dr. Bardon said the estimated forestry losses were at $33 million. Commissioner Troxler stated the total agriculture losses were over $1.1 billon.

- **December 12, 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, Jessie Birckhead, Designee of the N.C. Wildlife Resource Commission, Ariel Apone, Designee 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, Bob Bardon, N.C. State University College of Natural Resources, Mary Lou Addor, N.C. State University College of Natural Resources, Will Best, N.C. Department of Commerce, Bill Meyer, Marine Corps Installations East, and Paul Friday, Marine Corps Installations East.

Commissioner Troxler recognized both Bill Meyer and Paul Friday with the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Ambassador of Agriculture Award. He thanked them both for their partnership with the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (NCDA&CS) and for their efforts with the United States Marine Corps (USMC) in advancing the conservation of working lands in the Eastern North Carolina Sentinel Landscape (ENCSL). Mr. Meyer and Mr. Friday both thanked Commissioner Troxler and others who they have worked with over the years for the award.

Dewitt Hardee reported on the conservation easement template status. The United States Air Force (USAF)- United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Land Easement (ALE)- Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund (ADFPTF) conservation easement template is currently under review with the USAF legal staff. The United States Navy (USN)-ADFPTF conservation easement template is complete and ready for use. The next step will be to complete a USN-USDA ALE-ADFPTF conservation easement template. Mr. Hardee reviewed the priority Marine Corps Installations East (MCIEAST) and USAF conservation easement projects with a breakdown of the deeded acres, owners, county, and the estimated project values.

Mr. Aponte reviewed the damage to military and veteran facilities, including cemeteries, from Hurricane Florence and Tropical Storm Michael.

Mr. Wilson reported on the upcoming Clean Water Management Trust Fund (CWMTF) grants, including $2.5 million on five military projects. These include a project with the Tar River Land Conservancy in Granville County and a project with the Nature Conservancy in Hoke County.

Ms. Birckhead reported for Gordon Myers and stated that NCWRC was considering final approval to proceed with acquisition of the Salter's Creek Tract in Carteret County and the Duck Creek Wetland Tract in Craven County. These game lands are in military priority areas and should be contracted next year.

Dean Watzin reported on the MCIEAST Resource Programming Project. This includes NC Landowner Outreach Project in five pilot counties near MCIEAST, Southeast Regional Partnership for Planning and Sustainability (SERPPAS) Good Map Workshop, SERPPAS Sentinel Landscape Working Group, and SERPPAS Prescribed Fire Working Group.

Mr. Lowder on behalf of the NC Sentinel Landscape Partnership reported the NC Sentinel Landscape Partnership Memorandum of Understanding was renewed on November 29, 2018and sunsets on January 29, 2021, the 2019 NC Sentinel Landscape Partnership Scheduled Meetings are February 14, May 16, August 22, and November 7, Federal Coordinating Committee (FCC) of the Sentinel Landscape Partnership will be meeting cornering Camp Butner as part of the Eastern NC Sentinel Landscape, and program staff from Avon Park Sentinel Landscape attended the November 29, 2018 Sentinel Landscape Partnership quarterly meeting. Professionals from both Sentinel Landscapes groups spent time together brainstorming strategies and means to improve the coordination and outcomes of their respective Sentinel Landscapes.

Phil Wallace with the NC Forest Service stated he would like to come up with a letter to landowners that will broaden participation in the ENCSL and get more landowners engaged with the program. Mr. Wallace will have a letter to review at the next meeting. Mr. Lowder stated he would like to include a flyer to help with the outreach efforts. Commissioner Troxler encouraged the NC Farm Bureau Federation to be involved with the outreach efforts.

Commissioner Troxler gave a quick update on the Hurricane Relief Agriculture Disaster Program. NCDA&CS is currently taking relief applications from farmers and the deadline to apply is December 20, 2018. NCDA&CS staff will review the completed applications and anticipates the first checks being sent to farmers in January 2019.

- March 6, 2019 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. Bob Bardon, Designee of the Dean of the N.C. State University College of Natural Resources, Jessie Birckhead, Designee of the Executive Director of the N.C. Wildlife Resource Commission, Ariel Aponte, Designee of the 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 David Smith, NCDA&CS Chief Deputy Commissioner, Dewitt Hardee, NCDA&CS Farmland Preservation Program Manager, 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, Laura Brookshire, NCDA&CS Farmland Preservation Document Specialist, Mary Lou Addor, N.C. State University College of Natural Resources, John Nicholson, N.C. Department of Environmental Quality Chief Deputy Secretary, Phil Wallace, North Carolina Forest Service, and Will Best, N.C. Department of Commerce.

Dewitt Hardee reported on 2016 Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) contracted projects. United States Air Force (USAF) and Navy/Marine Corps Installations East (MCIEAST) parcels have been selected. The easement template is still under review by USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Air Force attorney has given their stamp of approval. Once NRCS has approved the template, this will move all 2016 RCPP files to closing and will send the template to the Navy for approval.

Ariel Aponte reported he visited Jones County, Hoke County and Scotland County to do further assessment of damage from the hurricane, including visits to Seymour Johnson Air Force Base and at Fort Bragg. The department hopes to offer further assistance to these areas due to hurricane damage. Mr. Aponte informed the Committee that the completion of the veteran nursing home in Raleigh is currently still on schedule

Reid Wilson reported they received 150 applications for Clean Water Management Trust Fund grants, with 75 percent for land acquisition. Six of these were identified as military-related and would use $2.2 million in funding.

Jessie Birckhead said the NCWRC were in the process of doing a land acquisition of 17,000 acres, of which 5,000 acres ENCSL. These are scheduled to close in June.

Bob Bardon reported that the contract with NCDA&CS was in place. The NC Landowner Outreach project is in five pilot counties near MCIEAST. This effort is being led by Foundation for Soil & Water Conservation and will be expanding in 2019.

Chester Lowder said the Partnership was using the following conservation approaches: NC Woods for Wildlife Conservation, Green Growth Toolbox, and the Foundation for Soil & Water Conservation Landowner Outreach. They are reaching out for new funding sources in the community and local government. They continue to work with Sentinel Landscape on African American land retention. The Camp Butner expansion has been delayed due to federal government shutdown.

Will Best presented a map with the military mission footprint It is in use with training, including the Department of Homeland Security. The map shows the vertical impact and is great for developers and the state in coordination of future development. The map is interactive and parcel data populates as you click on a parcel. Data is updated as each county enters the information.

John Nicholson said permits for wind turbines onshore is increasing but it has been held up due to the size of the turbine. They are looking at turbines offshore at Kitty Hawk, which have been signed off on possibly to be completed by 2023-2025. Wilmington permits have been placed on hold.

Phil Wallace presented two copies of a letter to send to sentinel landscape participants and requested approval from the Committee either signed by Commissioner Troxler and Vice Chair Myers or the entire Committee. It was discussed and decided that the entire Committee would sign the letter. The letters will be sent out to between 2,000 to 3,000 landowners who they want to reach under current grant.

David Smith provided a hurricane relief update. The initial relief was for 35 counties. This has increased to 72 counties with potential counties to be added. Currently $90 million has been disbursed. The department received 7,055 applications and 91 percent have been processed and are ready for a second payment.

- **May 30, 2019 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, Ariel Aponte, Designee of the Secretary of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, Walter Clark, Designee 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, Tina Hlabse, NCDA&CS General Counsel, Jonathan Lanier, NCDA&CS Assistant General Counsel, Robert Hosford, NCDA&CS Military Affairs Liaison, 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, Bob Bardon, N.C. State University College of Natural Resources, Mary Lou Addor, N.C. State University College of Natural Resources, Will Best, N.C. Department of Commerce, Michelle Lovejoy, Executive Director of the N.C. Foundation for Soil and Water Conservation, Michael Scalise, Marine Corps Installations East, Joe Ramirez, Marine Corps Installations East, Brian Joyner, Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, and Patrick Archibald.

Dewitt Hardee reported there is $2.3 million total funds available for ENCSL military/agriculture conservation easements. The ADFP Trust Fund is currently working with the Working Lands Trust to close the 2016 USDA NRCS ALE Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) contracted projects contracts by July or August. The 2018 USDA RCPP USAF parcels include 4,872.78 acres and 2018 USDA RCPP MCIEAST parcels include 336 acres. There are 14,724 acres under a conservation easement purchase option in the USAF priority area. There are 9,850 acres under a conservation easement purchase option in the MCIEAST priority area. There are more interested landowners in the priority areas. The easement template for USDA NRCS ALE/ADFP Trust Fund/USAF is complete.

Ariel Aponte reported that he has a new position as the Assistant Secretary focused on military affairs. In his new role, he will be traveling to assess North Carolina's aviation platforms and the Army's future in aviation, including drones and airlifts. Mr. Aponte explained the importance of

protecting land that accommodates multi-domain training (land, sea, and air) and is conducting an air evaluation to better understand who and what is in the sky. North Carolina is postured to be a model state in terms of aviation.

Walter Clark reported there are five projects, most coming from Land Trust partners, that are considered high priority for the military. The five projects have been vetted by the military. The Clean Water Management Trust Fund's board meets in September to decide which grants will be funded and Mr. Clark expects that the five military-related projects will all be funded. The total value of the five projects is $5.5 million.

Gordon Myers reported they are in a partnership with MCIEAST and the Army to conduct timber restoration on 775 acres, long leaf pine habitat and native grass restoration on 90 acres, and prescribed burns on 1,400 acres with an additional 386 acres due for prescribed burns this summer. There are 1,400 acres of timber sales planned for the Recovery and Sustainment Program (RASP). A land acquisition is under way or completed for Salters Creek Landing, 5,182 acres in Carteret County. This 5,182-acre project includes multiple funding sources (Clean Water Management Trust Fund, Navy, Wildlife Resources Commission Agency Funds, North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA), and private donations) and will help buffer key airspace for the Marine Corps' Piney Island Bombing Range. Additionally, archeological studies were completed at both Bear Garden and Stones Creek.

Dr. Mary Watzin reported that the NC Landowner Outreach Project is expanding to additional counties and military installations. Southeast Regional Partnership for Planning and Sustainability (SERPPAS) has reengaged around good mapping, which was its initial focus. Dr. Watzin is stepping down as Dean and the end of this summer, and in the fall, she will be in the Provost's office working to unite colleges around coastal resilience.

Chester Lowder, said he, Mary Lou Addor, and Michelle Lovejoy attended a sentinel landscapes orientation meeting last week. Key takeaways included that other states often comment that NC's sentinel landscape area is too large, but Mr. Lowder feels that they do not understand how many bases and supplemental training areas NC has, there is a Federal Coordinating Committee with representatives from Department of Defense, Department of Interior, and Department of Agriculture and there is a documentary about sentinel landscapes that brought up good questions without directly asking them and challenges viewers to learn more.

Mr. Hardee asked for the Partnership to define who can be considered a partner and to define terms for when the Partnership label can be used. Mr. Lowder said it is a partnership of the willing. Anyone who is willing to help and believes in the mission can be involved. Dr. Watzin added that the goal is to involve anyone that can advance the effort of the Partnership.

Mr. Smith gave an update on the Hurricane Florence Disaster Program of 2018. Over $170 million have been distributed to farmers. The end of the first phase is wrapping up now. Henderson County and other mountain counties might be added, pending legislation. Commissioner Troxler said it is important to note that 10 percent of farmers bring in 90 percent of the industry income for the state.

Mr. Hosford gave an update on NC military service base leadership and command. There have been several turnovers in leadership at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, MCIEAST, and Fort Bragg. Major General Alford is returning to Fort Bragg from Afghanistan in July. Colonel Curtis is coming to Cherry Point. Colonel Don Yates will be the Wing Commander at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base.

Mr. Aponte said on June 20, several entities are coming together at the NC National Guard Joint Force Headquarters to discuss what aircrafts are available to assist with upcoming/current hurricane season. He informed the Committee that the completion of the veteran nursing home in Raleigh is currently still on schedule.



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