North Carolina Sentinel Landscapes Committee Minutes
December 5, 2019
2:00 pm – 3:20 p.m.
Hall of Fame Room, NCDA&CS, Raleigh, NC
Conference Call 712-775-7031 Access Code 597842

Attendees:
Committee members present:

- David Smith, Chief Deputy Commissioner of Agriculture
- Myron Floyd, Dean of NC State University College of Natural Resources
- Gordon Myers, Executive Director of NC Wildlife Resources Commission
- Reid Wilson, Chief Deputy Commissioner of NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (NCDCNR)
- Ariel Aponte, Designee of NC Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (NCDMVA)
- Chester Lowder, NC Sentinel Landscapes Partnership Representative

Other Attendees: Zane Hedgecock, Bill Ross, Mary Lou Addor, Tina Hlabse, Will Best, Jonathan Lanier, Bob Bardon, David Smith, Laura Kilian, Janine McLawhorn, Dewitt Hardee, Evan Davis, Laura Brookshire, and Veronica Jamison.

David Smith, Deputy Commissioner of Agriculture called the meeting to order at 2:02pm. Mr. Smith thanked everyone for attending, especially before the Christmas and holiday season. Mr. Smith called on Veronica Jamison to conduct a roll call. A quorum was present.

Mr. Smith read the Ethics Reminder:
Under the State Government Ethics Act, the chairman is required to remind all members of their duty to avoid conflicts of interest or appearances of conflicts of interest. If you have any conflict or appearance of conflict of interest with respect to any item on the agenda, please state this for the record and refrain from inappropriate participation on that item.

Mr. Smith requested a motion to approve the minutes from the August 22, 2019 meeting. Dr. Mary Lou Addor had a correction to the minutes. The minutes were corrected. Mr. Gordon Myers moved to approve the minutes for August 22, 2019. Dr. Myron Floyd seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Mr. Smith called on Dewitt Hardee to report for the NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (NCDA&CS). The Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund (ADFPTF), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and United States Navy conservation easement template was sent to Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) on October 1, 2019. This template uses the existing ADFPTF-Navy conservation easement template and inserts USDA requirements and language.

Mr. Hardee discussed the North Carolina Military Affairs (NCMAC) Commission Memorandum of Understanding with NCDA&CS. The $150,000 MOU is split between $75,000 for ADFPTF staff activities within the Eastern North Carolina Sentinel Landscape (ENCSL), $40,000 for NC State University and the coordination of the North Carolina Sentinel Landscape Partnership, and $35,000 for the North Carolina Foundation for Soil and Water Conservation to conduct outreach meetings for landowners and conservation partners. The remaining balance of the MOU is $124,449.56.

Mr. Hardee spoke about the 2016 USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) grant. There are five easements totaling 2,037 acres that are scheduled to be recorded in December 2019. These conservation easements will be the first in the nation that are in a common easement between two federal agencies and a state government.

Mr. Hardee discussed on-going activities in the ENCSL. The ADFPTF are working on 49,512 acres of privately-owned farms and forests in the ENCSL. Of these, 11,440 acres of farms and forests are under contract for conservation easements. These were 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 $24,578,283. These contracts will leverage $15,624,077 in federal funds on these projects. There are 38,074.43 acres of privately-owned farms and forest under option for conservation easements.

Ariel Aponte provided the NC Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (NCDMVA) report. Mr. Aponte reported on the meeting he attended with Congressman David Price and members of the Council of State at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point. Mr. Aponte said that NCDMVA is developing a task force that will work with the NC Department of Transportation to support the infrastructure needs of these military installations.

Mr. Smith asked Mr. Aponte about the status of the veterans' retirement home. Mr. Aponte said they are working with the Department of Veterans Affairs for continued funding. Land preparation is complete and NCDMVA is working on construction of the home.

Reid Wilson provided the NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (NCDNCR) report. The Clean Water Management Trust Fund (CWMTF) board met on October 13, 2019. The CWMTF received 115 applications in February, totaling $65 million. Six of those are military-related projects, totaling 1,700 acres and $2.5 million in proposed funding. Mr. Hardee asked Mr. Wilson if the CWMTF will provide funding for the Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Challenge. Mr. Wilson said he will discuss with Mr. Hardee after the meeting.

Gordon Myers provided the NC Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) report. NCWRC is progressing with the Recovery and Sustainment Program (RASP) in which they are partnering with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, along with the United States Marines and United States Navy. NCWRC is responsible for conducting short- and long-term management activities to establish and conserve long leaf pine forest habitat for red

cockaded woodpecker recovery. NCWRC is looking to have a full-time employee the middle of next year for this project. NCWRC is still working on the logo for the landowner activities in the ENCSL. Mr. Myers announced that there will be a Project Healing Waters Veterans Fly Fishing event on December 16, 2019 from 9:00am until 1:00pm at the John E. Pechmann Fishing Education Center in Fayetteville.

Dr. Myron Floyd provided the NC State University College of Natural Resources report. Dr. Floyd thanked the committee for the funding from NCMAC to help with the facilitation and coordination of the NC Sentinel Landscapes Partnership. Dr. Mary Lou Addor is working to produce working lands publications for landowners and conservation partners. Additionally, there is the development of curriculum for training and workshops. With support from the US Endowment for Forest and Communities, NCSU will coordinate monthly with the Federal Coordinating Committee and other Sentinel Landscape Coordinators about national and state level goals and discuss innovative strategies that link military readiness with working lands and conservation.

Chester Lowder provided the NC Sentinel Landscape Partnership report. Mr. Lowder said they continue to be very active. The mission statement of the NC Sentinel Landscape Partnership: Sentinel Landscapes are landscape-scale areas; they are the working or natural lands that serve to protect and support the rural economy, the natural environment, outdoor recreation, and the national defense and training mission of the military.

Evan Davis provided an update on upcoming grant projects. The USDA NRCS RCPP proposal, Preserving Upriver Farms to Reduce Flooding in NC, was submitted on December 3, 2019. The 2020 REPI Challenge is under development. The pre-proposal is due January 24, 2020. All pre-proposal applicants will be notified regarding status of their proposal on February 21, 2020. If invited to submit a full proposal, it will be due April 24, 2020. Mr. Davis requested that involved entities provide letters of support for the REPI Challenge prior to the January 24, 2020 deadline.

Mr. Smith asked for additional comments and public comments. Mr. Smith entertained a motion of adjournment. Mr. Wilson moved to adjourn and was seconded by Mr. Lowder. The meeting was adjourned 3:10pm.