North Carolina Sentinel Landscapes Committee Minutes
March 6, 2019
2:00 pm – 3:30 p.m.
Hall of Fame Room, NCDA&CS, Raleigh, NC
Conference Call 712-775-7031 Access Code 597842

Attendees:
Committee members present:

- Steve Troxler, Commissioner of Agriculture
- Dr. Bob Bardon, Designee for Dr. Mary Watzin, Dean of NC State University College of Natural Resources
- Jessie Birkhead, Designee of NC Wildlife Resources Commission
- Reid Wilson, Chief Deputy Secretary of NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (NCDCNR)
- Ariel Aponte, Designee of NC Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (NCDMV)
- Chester Lowder, NC Sentinel Landscapes Partnership Representative

Other Attendees:

Mary Lou Addor, Tina Hlabse, Jonathan Lanier, David Smith, Janine McLawhorn, Dewitt Hardee, Evan Davis, Laura Brookshire, Will Best, John Nicholson.

Laura Brookshire called the Roll of Members and announced a quorum was present.

Commissioner Troxler 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.

Commissioner Troxler requested a motion of approval for the minutes as presented to the members. Dr. Bob Bardon moved for approval of the minutes for December 12, 2018, Mr. Chester Lowder seconded the motion. The minutes were approved as presented.

Dewitt Hardee, Director of the Farmland Preservation Division, reported on 2016 Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) contracted projects. The Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation (ADFP) Trust Fund is currently working with Working Land Trust to close these contracts by the end of June, which is ahead of schedule. Currently waiting on 2018 Farm Bill guidance documents and applications for United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Land Easements (ALE) to be submitted by 3/15/2019. United States Air

Force (USAF) and Navy/Marine Corps Installations East (MCIEAST) parcels have been selected.

2018 RCPP: ALE-USAF Parcels include 4,763 acres estimated $12,038,861 conservation easement expenditures:

- USAF $3,324,956;
- ADFPTF $3,324,956;
- USDA NRCS ALE $5,388,948

2018 RCPP ALE-Navy/MCIEAST Parcels 336 Acres

- Navy/MCIEAST $157,419
- ADFPTF $157,419
- USDA NRCS ALE $231,051

The Sheppard Farm contract is completed and moving forward to closing once a template is approved.

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. Jonathan Lanier confirmed that NRCS attorney is reviewing the template and once it is approved it can be forwarded to the Navy. He confirmed the Air Force attorney did not see issues with the language and that it is now up to USDA for approval. The one question with the easement template is which federal entity has the primary authority for enforcing the easement if an easement holding entity folds.

All easement templates are available for download at www.ncadfp.org/downloads .

Ariel Aponte, NCMVA Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, 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. Commission Troxler reminded everyone that this was being constructed on land that was swapped between State entities to get this accomplished.

Reid Wilson, NCDCNR Chief Deputy Secretary, 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. They have site visits scheduled and the board will meet in September to vote on which grants will be funded. The Governor has proposed $20 million for this project, $5 million coming from recurring funds and $5 million from license plate revenue.

Jessie Birkhead, designee of NC Wildlife Resources Commission, informed the Committee they were in the process of doing a land acquisition of 17,000 acres, 5,000 acres of which are in the

Eastern North Carolina Sentinel Landscape (ENCSL). These are scheduled to close in June. They are continuing to work on habitat restoration in several counties.

Bob Bardon, designee for the Dean of NC State University College of Natural Resources, reported that the contract with the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (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. The following reports are available for review:

- Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) https://www.repi.mil/Portals/44/2019 REPI Report to Congress Final.pdf?ver=2019-02-21-121034-590
- Network of Landscape Conservation (NLC) http://landscapeconservation.org/catalyst-fund
- Report on Effects of a Changing Climate to the Department of Defense https://media.defense.gov/2019/Jan/29/2002084200/-1/-1/1/CLIMATE-CHANGE-REPORT-2019.pdf
- Interactive Map: The Vulnerability of America's Military Bases to Climate Change https://www.americansecurityproject.org/interactive-map-the-vulnerability-of-americas-military-bases-to-climate-change
- South Atlantic Coastal Study (SACS): Vision Meeting 1 (held Feb 27) https://gulfofmexicoalliance.org/2019/02/us-army-corps-of-engineers-south-atlantic-coastal-study-begins-february-27th

Chester Lowder, NC Sentinel Landscapes Partnership Representative added the following update:

> NC Sentinel Landscape Partnership focused on Conservation as a tool to protect the accessibility, availability, and a capacity for military preparedness on U.S. military installations, by sustaining natural habitats, open space, working lands, cultural resources, and communities, and placing limitations on development around installations. Conservation is a critical aspect of military installations. Conservation approaches include:
>
> - NC Woods for Wildlife Conservation: initiative strives to engage more woodland owners in forest management and certification, enhance habitat for species of conservation concern, and promote the conservation of imperiled habitats, including longleaf and bottomland hardwood forests. Southern Initiative partnership offered by the American Forest Foundation (AF), USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service & Funding sources via the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.
> - Green Growth Toolbox: non-regulatory guide for technical assistance program for integrating priority wildlife habitat conservation (and low-density development) into local government land use & transportation planning.
> - Foundation for Soil & Water Conservation Landowner Outreach: connecting Sentinel Landscapes to on the ground conservation. Conservation practices can require a farmer to change their management systems and bring growing pains. When

conservation practices enhance profitability, however, increases in management costs are more than offset.

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. Representatives from Virginia are coming next week to meet regarding North Carolina's sentinel program. The Camp Butner expansion has been delayed due to federal government shutdown. The partnership is looking at proposed criteria for sentinel landscape projects and what will be the qualifying factors to bring each project to committee.

Will Best, NC Department of Commerce, presented a map that is now available with the military mission footprint and depicted how the ENCSL plays into the Department of Justice and vertical construction map. It is in high use with training, including the Department of Homeland Security. The map has a disclaimer for individuals entering the site. 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.

Web address is as follows:
https://nccommerce.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=485276d94d154c47ba7e536465dee195

John Nicholson, Department of Environmental Quality Deputy Secretary, said permits for wind turbines onshore is increasing but it has been held up due to the size of the turbine. The department should have answer late spring or early summer and will take 7-9 months to get permit. 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, North Carolina Forest Service, 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. Mr. Wallace is going to provide the original to Commissioner Troxler's office and he will send it out for electronic signature by all members.

The letters will be sent out to the list of landowners. This is currently between 2,000 to 3,000 landowners who they want to reach under current grant. They will need funding for the ongoing project. The second phase of the project includes full recognition of landowners and would need funding in order to proceed.

David Smith provided a hurricane relief update. The initial relief was for 35 counties. This has increased to 72 counties with a potential of additional counties to be added. Currently, $90 million has been disbursed with checks being cut on Monday, Wednesday and Friday each week. The department received 7,055 applications and 91 percent have been processed and are ready for a second payment. There have been some big payments and some small payments. It is

important to note that 10 percent of our farmers bring in 90 percent of the industry income for the state.

With no further questions and discussion, Commissioner Troxler entertained a motion for adjournment. Mr. Wilson moved to adjourn with Mr. Lowder seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Adjourn 3:10 pm