North Carolina Sentinel Landscapes Committee Minutes
September 10, 2024, 1:30 PM – 2:18 PM
Conference Number: 984-204-1487
Conference ID: 650264404

Attendees:
Committee members present:

- Steve Troxler, Commissioner, NC Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services
- David Smith, Deputy Commissioner of Agriculture
- Rick Long, NC Department of Military and Veterans Affairs
- Will Summer, Deputy Secretary, NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources
- Chester Lowder, Sentinel Landscape Partnership Liaison
- David Harris, State Roadside Environmental Engineer, NCDOT

Other Attendees: Doug Taggart, Joe Austin, Corey Hoilman, Janine McLawhorn, Dewitt Hardee, Evan Davis, Allison Rodriguez, Mark Pfanstiehl, Steve Woodson, Scott Shoulars, Alisa Davis, Chris Baillie, Mitch Peele, Ryan Manning, Anita Kennedy, Nancy Richardson, Mikey Fulk, Richard Reich, Kelsey Pearce, Cameron Dawson, Bill Edwards, Bill Ross, Tom Potter, Jimmy Johnson, Weston McCorkle, Kevin Johnson, Christian Vose, Edward Oliver, Edward Davis, Neil Oakley, Denise Evans, Will Robinson, and Veronica Jamison.

Reading of 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.

The minutes for the June 11 meeting were presented for approval. Rick Long made the motion, and Will Summer seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Evan Davis presented for the NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. He said that the six current open military contracts with Working Lands Trust total nearly 3,000 acres, five of which are MCIEAST projects, and the other project is an Air Force-partnered easement. He provided the statistics behind the 23 military partnership agricultural conservation easements recorded since July 2016. Twenty Air Force easements and three MCIEAST easements have been recorded in six ENCSL counties, preserving over 13,000 acres. Davis reviewed the easement purchase funding summary for completed military partnership agricultural conservation easements. The total to date of state, REPI and USDA funds plus the amount of landowner donation toward easement purchase value is $28,309,105.57. He reviewed the pre-proposal submitted on April 4 to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's America the Beautiful Challenge 2024 that requesting $2 million in grant funding, and the pending Johnston County submission to the Natural Resource Conservation Service for an Air Force-focused RCPP proposal that will ask for $12 million.

Rick Long presented for the NC Department of Military Affairs. He spoke on the military defense memorandum of understanding for veterans in the state to help with veterans' services. He mentioned that Doug Taggart with the department is working heavily with state agencies on the defense of Seymour Johnson Air Force Base operations, and Dr. Bailey is working through the MAC. He also spoke on a petroleum leak the EPA is working to control at Buxton Naval Facility. He spoke on the upcoming

defense program with no applications in at this time. He spoke on upcoming events including the Saving the Bases event on October 14, the military flight training conference in San Antonio, Texas from October 28 – 30, and Operation Green Light that shows support for service members in the week preceding the Veterans Day holiday on November 11.

Will Summer presented for the NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. He spoke on the North Carolina Land and Water Fund awards that will provide $45 million to protect natural areas, waterways, historic sites and military buffers. He said they are to meet October 1 and 2 to review the funds that are to protect over 13,750 acres for public and recreational uses. He reported on the North Carolina Land and Water Fund grants, which will provide buffers for military installations and training areas, awarding $7.4 million and protecting over 1,350 acres near MCAS Cherry Point, Fort Liberty and Camp Lejeune.

Lisa Davis gave the report for the NC Wildlife Resources Commission. She spoke the Long Leaf Bear Garden, affecting 56 landowners and 481 acres. She mentioned the Green Growth Habitat in Pender County, the French Broad River Partnership, and the ongoing project with Pocosin Lakes Refuge Hydrology Restoration.

Chester Lowder briefly reported out on behalf of the Sentinel Landscape Partnership by mentioning projects he had been working on before turning it over to Chris Baillie to let him speak further on the Partnership's recent efforts that he said have been working well.

Chris Baillie, interim partnership coordinator, delivered the ENCSL Partnership updates. He presented ENCSL partner accomplishments to date going back to FY2015. Funding committed by all partners totaled $263.7 million, protecting 213,246 acres and enrolling over 1,518,995 acres in cost share. He spoke about a pilot program and the possibility of Sentinel Landscape Committee representatives meeting as a small group prior to the regular quarterly meeting. He presented the program review priority areas – the governance structure, strategic planning, and coordination capacity and resourcing. For the review of the ENCSL Local Coordinating Committee, he discussed the plan review process and timeline, ENCSL LCC meeting coordination, the possibility of additional membership, and the establishment of a workgroup.

David Harris presented for the NC Department of Transportation. He said he had nothing really to report at this time that would affect anyone in the group.

Cameron Dawson presented the legislative update. He reported on the Farm Act passed on June 27, spoke on House Bill 10, and said the legislature will be back in session on October 9. The law was updated to include NC Department of Transportation and NC Sentinel Landscapes Partnership as voting members of the NCSLC, the ENCSL Coordinator and a representative from the Department of Defense REPI were added as non-voting ex-officio members, made the Commissioner of Agriculture as chair of the committee, provided the ability to add voting or non-voting members, and gave the committee the ability to add federal agencies or military installations as voting or non-voting members.

David Smith asked if there was any further Sentinel Landscape Committee business items or public comments. Bill Ross said he wanted to say well done to all involved.

Rick Long made the motion to adjourn, and Chester Lowder seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 2:18 pm.