North Carolina Sentinel Landscapes Committee Minutes
September 16, 1:30 PM – 3:36 PM
Conference Call Number: 984-204-1487
Conference ID: 271 445 287#

Attendees:
Committee members present:

- David Smith, Deputy Commissioner of Agriculture
- Rick Long, NC Department of Military and Veterans Affairs
- Jeff Michael, Deputy Secretary, NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources
- Brian McRae, sitting in for Executive Director Kyle Briggs, NC Wildlife Resources Commission
- Dr. Bob Bardon, sitting in for Dean Myron F. Floyd, College of Natural Resources
- Chester Lowder, Sentinel Landscape Partnership Liaison
- Jeremy Goodwin, State Roadside Environmental Engineer, NC Department of Transportation

Other Attendees: In-person – Corey Hoilman, Chris Baillie, Neil Oakley, Jon Lanier, Cameron Dawson, Joe Austin, Veronica Jamison, Anita Kennedy, Reva Orr, Sabrina Shaffer, Ryan Manning, Will Summer, Bill Edwards, Dewitt Hardee, Steve Woodson, Tristan Reynolds, Christian Vose, Addie L. Thornton, Ashton Bachman, and Will Robinson;

Online – Carmen Lombardo, Jacob Boyd, Denise Evans, Jaime Simon, Gwen Abernathy, Kevin Johnson, Brian McRae, Lisa Shealy

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 from the June 9, 2025, meeting were presented for approval. Chris Baillie said he offered a correction to remove the line about Avon Park from his report. Jeff Michael made the motion to approve with Baillie's edits, and Rick Long seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Evan Davis reported on military partnerships with USAF-SJAFB and MCIEAST-MCB Camp Lejeune. There are two open military partnership conservation easement contracts, one with each installation. Boyd Farm is still in development with the Air Force, and Futral Farm with MCIEAST is nearing completion and will hopefully close by the end of the year. The two projects combine for 1,629.21 acres. Davis reviewed a summary of the completed agricultural

conservation easements since 2016, which have combined to preserve nearly 15,000 acres, with 27 easements recorded in six North Carolina counties.

Davis also provided the summary of funding for completed military partnership agricultural conservation easements. NCDA&CS has spent $11 million to date, REPI has contributed $13.7 million, and USDA has committed just over $5 million. These partner funds, plus the value of landowner donations, put the total easement purchase value at nearly $32.8 million. He also reviewed the MOU with NCMAC and the balance of that award through August 2025.

Rick Long with the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs reported on the progress of the MOU, a Department of Defense project in partnership between the University of Georgia and Seymour Johnson Air Force Base. Also, he noted that it was the Air Force's 78th birthday.

Jeff Michael spoke briefly for the NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources before turning it over to Will Summer. He said the NC Land and Water Fund has received $120 million in requests and receives $36 million from the license plate fund to add to their budget. He said that at the next meeting, he will be able to give a better rundown of requests and funding.

Brian McRae was sitting in for Kyle Briggs to present the NC Wildlife Resources Commission report. He reported on conservation activities from June and July 2025. He reported that the Recovery and Sustainment Partnership (RASP) had completed 816 acres of prescribed burning, 197 acres of mechanical and timber treatment, 211 acres of clear-cutting, and 45 acres of thinning at Holly Shelter Game Land. He also reported on the progress of the Wildlife Conservation Lands Program (WCLP), noting that eight site visits had been conducted across five counties, totaling 891 acres. He also reported on recent activities, if any, for Fieldwork for Species of Greatest Conservation Need, the Green Growth Toolbox (GGT) and Partners for Green Growth (PGG), and the NC Wildlife Action Plan.

Dr. Bob Barden was sitting in for Dr. Myron F. Floyd to present for the College of Natural Resources. He reported on recent personnel moves at NC State, including the selection of Kevin Howell as the new chancellor.

Chester Lowder presented for the Sentinel Landscape Partnership. He said that he had been working hard with Chris Baillie on the quarterly meeting and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) decision memo for Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) and Wetlands Reserve Easement (WRE) funding. He also reported on the 2025 Southeast Regional Partnership for Planning and Sustainability (SERPPAS) Principals meeting.

Chris Baillie gave more updates on the Eastern NC Sentinel Landscape Partnership Report. He reported on new proposals under the REPI Challenge, Conventional REPI, and the Forest Legacy program. He also provided Regional Impacts Briefs, information about the Camp Lejeune and MCAS New River Military Installation Readiness Review Project (MIRR), and the upcoming annual report.

Jeremy Goodwin presented for the NC Department of Transportation. He spoke about the mountain-based project on the monarch butterfly and mentioned practices involving roadside wildflowers and milkweed plots.

Addie Thornton with the Texas A&M Natural Resources Institute reported on the 2025 SERPPAS Principals Meeting. She reported that this meeting brings together representatives from North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, and Mississippi. She said the Department of Defense wants to foster strong relationships with Southeastern U.S. installations. She also highlighted the value of the mission, noting that these agencies aligned their missions. Thornton passed along a save-the-date for the meeting, November 17-19, at the Carolina Hotel, Cardinal Ballroom in Southern Pines, and broke down the meeting schedule for each day.

In other business, Chris Baillie brought forward a request for approval of the ENCSL Partnership Strategic Plan and to add two statutorily required ex officio members to the North Carolina Sentinel Landscape Committee. Those members are the ENCSL Partnership Coordinator and a representative from the United States Department of Defense Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration Program. Additional ex officio members, optional under the state law, would be considered for approval at a later meeting.

David Smith asked for a motion to approve. Rick Long made the motion, and Chester Lowder seconded. The motion was approved.

The next meeting was set for December 9. Will Summer made the motion to adjourn, seconded by Rick Long.