



AGRICULTURE COST SHARE PROGRAM

Technical Review Committee

February 18, 2026 – Meeting Minutes



TRC Members: John E. Beck, Rodney Wright, Pete Anderson, Benjy Strope, Anne Coan, Abubakarr Mansaray, Alex Jones, Erin Rivers, Rachel Smith, Rick McSwain, Jim Kjelgaard

Guests: Shelby Kaplan, Porche Spence, Chelsea Ricks, Steven Ward, Emily Bateman, Conor McKearney, Alexandra Dinwiddie, Bryan Evans, Samantha Allbee, Chris Love, Caleb Lippard, Michael Shepherd, Lorien Deaton, Julie Henshaw, Robert Moore, Joshua Vetter

Agenda Summary

- Welcome and Introductions
- Approval of December Meeting Minutes
- Fishing Creek District BMP Request – Portable Shade Structure
- Grassed Waterway Policy Update – Inclusion of Subsurface Drains
- Proposed FY2027 Meeting Schedule
- Member Items

Decisions

- Approved December 2025 meeting minutes (with corrections).
- Approved Portable Shade Structure BMP for Fishing Creek District.
- FY2027 meeting schedule accepted.

Meeting Proceedings:

1. **Welcome and Introductions**
 - Call to Order: Meeting was called to order at 1:31 PM. Recording initiated.
 - John Beck opened the meeting and introduced new TRC member Pete Anderson (Pamlico SWCD Supervisor).
 - Members introduced themselves briefly.
2. **Approval of December Meeting Minutes**
 - Minor grammatical corrections noted.

- Motion to approve with corrections by Rick McSwain, seconded by Benjy Strope.
- Voice vote: Approved unanimously.

3. Fishing Creek District BMP Request – Portable Shade Structure

- Presenter: Chelsea Ricks (Fishing Creek SWCD).
- Proposal for a portable shade structure to support rotational grazing and protect water quality.
- Discussion highlights:
 - Utilizing materials and guidance developed by Lincoln SWCD and approved by the TRC in 2024.
 - Purpose is to protect water quality and provide alternative shade locations for livestock, away from riparian buffers. Noted that stream exclusion systems in Halifax county have resulted in excluded shade for cattle, justifying the need for alternative shade.
 - Cost-share reimbursement recommended based on actual cost (including shipping).
 - Discussion on maintenance responsibility concerns over the 10-year period included management for severe weather and high winds and replacement of shade fabric as needed. The Operation & Maintenance agreement on this practice includes the cooperator's responsibilities. Additional notes based on manufacturer instruction should be detailed on the O&M. A repair contract would only be permitted if damage was at no fault of the cooperator and it is recommended the cooperator consider insurance options.
 - Nutrient management benefits due to the manure dispersal throughout the pasture were noted.
- Motion to approve by Anne Coan, seconded by Benjy Strope.
- Voice vote: Approved unanimously.

4. Grassed Waterway Policy Update – Inclusion of Subsurface Drains

- Continued discussion from previous meeting on Grassed Waterway BMP policy related to the inclusion of language on subsurface drains (NRCS Code 606).
 - The wetland policy item was expanded to clarify Food Security Act (1985) wetland requirements to ensure practices do not impact cooperator federal conservation compliance.
 - An AD-1026 form update is needed when installing new drainage or maintaining existing drainage to avoid Farm Bill wetland compliance issues.

- This does not apply to wetlands converted prior to 12/23/1985.
- Discussion points:
 - There was confusion and discussion over what triggers an AD-1026 form, especially where no wetland is present. The form is not only required where there are direct impacts to wetlands, but also where drainage is being installed or maintained. There could be wetland impacts up or down stream of drain tile.
 - Annual AD-1026 form certification is already required by FSA. When doing cost-share the form update is due diligence to make sure the cooperator does not have any Food Security Act compliance issues. This was the reason for inserting the expanded guidance in the policy.
 - The AD-1026 does not always require a wetland determination; it allows the farmer to self-certify their on-farm activities and avoid farm bill compliance issues. The form triggers someone to look at the practice or land to determine if there could be a compliance issue. If not, there is no further action.
 - Concerns raised about process delays due to an additional step and potential need for processing forms and possibly, a wetland determination.
 - Follow up with NRCS and FSA is needed to find out if they have had issues with wetland compliance due to drain tile.
 - Clarification is needed on how this applies to farmers that do not participate in USDA programs.
- Action: Further clarification and consultation with FSA/NRCS; revised language to be presented at next meeting.
- 5. Proposed FY2027 Meeting Schedule**
 - Tentative dates shared; no objections raised.
 - Calendar invites to be sent.
- 6. Member Items**
 - No additional items were raised.

Meeting Adjourned: 2:48 PM