

*What a Wonderful
World*

82nd Annual Meeting



**ASSOCIATION
OF SOIL & WATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICTS**

*Harrah's Cherokee Resort
Cherokee, NC*

Jan. 4-6, 2026



*Thank you to our Platinum Level
(\$5,000) sponsor...*



*Thank you to our Gold Level
(\$2,500) sponsor...*



*Thank you to our Silver Level
(\$1,100) Sponsors...*

"What a Wonderful World"

*I see trees of green, red roses too
I see them bloom for me and you
And I think to myself, what a wonderful world.*

Dear Friends,

Hearing this song, bring tears to my eyes and a flood of sweet family memories of the day my daughter was born. Today, almost 30 years later—those lyrics bring another very special feeling—the joy of being a part of another special family – the North Carolina Conservation family. This year, 2026, marks the 82nd year since our Association was born. It is a significant milestone not only in our collective journey, but my personal journey.



I entered the conservation world in 2018 armed mainly with enthusiasm and an unquenchable thirst to learn. I am proud to report that – because of you -both my enthusiasm and desire to continue learning is even stronger than before. I have learned that Conservation is more than a stream buffer or a cover crop. It is a deep and intentional dual commitment to protecting our natural resources AND the people it serves. It is the understanding that how well we care for the earth is as important as how we care for each other.

This simple, yet powerful lesson, inspires me and millions of others in our great state. I am grateful for your friendship and support and all you do.

Happy New Year and continued blessing to you all!

With gratitude,

Barbara Bleiweis
Barbara Bleiweis

Wetlands are Wonderful

One of African-American musician Louis Armstrong's famous songs was "What a Wonderful World." Generations have appreciated his "trees of green", "skies of blue", "colors of the rainbow" and even watching babies cry and grow. What makes this world that we should respect and protect possible? Wonderful wetlands sustain all life on Earth. Wetlands are found where water covers the soil for majority of the year without drying out (evaporating). Wetlands can be found in all sorts of forms from rivers and lakes to ponds. Marshes and swamps are also wetlands. Wetlands perform multiple jobs that benefit the Earth and the hydrosphere.

One of the most important functions of a wetland is cleaning the environment. Wetlands improve water quality by filtering out pollutants. Pollutants such as fertilizer, pesticides, and sewer waste are found in most wetlands. Three of the most effective methods for removing pollutants are nutrient removal, sediment trapping, and chemical detoxification. These methods improve the cleanliness of the water to benefit of plants, animals, and people.

Wonderful wetlands are home to many species of plants and animals that would not be able to survive in any other ecosystem. Wetlands allow animals as diverse as birds, fish, and pollinators to have an easy water source and provide the correct conditions for trees and plants to thrive and produce oxygen required for human life. Ingredients used in certain medicines are derived from wetlands' soil and plants. Aspirin used to treat headaches, heart disease, and high blood pressure is possible because of wetland vegetation. Wetlands even help the economy by providing natural resources such as fish, berries, and drinking water for sale.

Another beneficial use of the wonderful wetlands is natural protection against flooding. Whenever large amounts of rainwater or runoff enter the wetlands, they are able to act as a natural sponge that absorbs the water and slowly redistributes it into rivers and streams. This process reduces the amount of water entering the bodies of water and land which prevents problems like flash floods. By lessening the volume of water entering at once, this also means less erosion. Erosion weathers away at rocks, which increases pollution and sedimentation in a body of water. Wetlands limit erosion's negative effects. In these ways, wetlands protect the planet and its people. In a time when many in the United States and world are worried about devastation from natural disasters, respecting and protecting wetlands is necessary.

Wetlands help to create life as we know it by providing an environment for organisms we could not have any other way. Wetlands keep the Earth clean, improve water quality, and serve as a home to many plant and animal species that are important for our over all ecosystem. While Louis Armstrong did not sing about wetlands, they really are a wonderful part of our world.

2025 First Place 8th Grade Essay
written by Cora Stumpf, Lee SWCD

2025 NCASWCD Officers

President – Barbara Bleiweis (Mecklenburg)

First Vice President – Gail Hughes (Orange)

Second Vice President – Steve Harris
(Albemarle – Pasquotank)

Immediate Past President – Billy Kilpatrick (Duplin)

Secretary – Wayne Collier (Cumberland)

Treasurer – Josh Myers (Guilford)

NACD Board Member – Myles Payne (Alexander)

Alt. NACD Board Member – Craig Myers (Davie)

Chaplain – Tracy Warren (Beaufort)

Asst. Chaplain – Patick Baker (Pamlico)

Guest Speakers (Invited)

NC Commissioner of Agriculture Steve Troxler

Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians Principal
Chief Mitchell Hicks

NC Foundation President Jimmy Gentry

NC Grange President David Allen

SATURDAY

(Additional Registration Required)

1/3/26

12:00 PM to 6 PM

BASIC TRAINING

Oak

SUNDAY

1/4/26

12:30-2:30 PM

Ash

NCASWCD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Barbara Bleiweis, NCASWCD President, Presiding

1 Hour of Supervisor Training Credit

1:00-3:00 PM

Oak

FIRST TIMERS AND NEW SUPERVISOR ORIENTATION

Franklin Williams, Facilitator

2 Hours of Supervisor Training Credit

2:00-3:00

Beech

DEA EXECUTIVE BOARD

Lisa Marochak, DEA President, Presiding

2:00-6:00 PM

Council Fire Pre-function

REGISTRATION OPEN

2:00-6:00 PM

Pre-function Hallway

EXHIBIT HALL REGISTRATION & MOVE IN

2:00-3:00 PM

Hickory

AUXILIARY SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

Betty Mathews, President, Presiding

3:00-5:00 PM

Locust/Maple

NC SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION COMMISSION WORK SESSION

Barbara Bleiweis - Chair, Presiding

1 Hour of Supervisor Training Credit

5:00-6:00 PM

Selu Garden Cafe

PRESIDENT'S WELCOME RECEPTION

A complimentary reception will be served.

SUNDAY

7:30 PM

Locust/Maple

MEMORIAL SERVICE

Inspirational Message: Tracy Warren

Special Music: Conservation Pickers

9:00 PM

Ash

NOMINATING COMMITTEE MEETING (*If Needed)

Billy Kilpatrick Immediate Past President, Presiding

9:00 PM

Oak

INFORMAL MUSIC JAM

MONDAY

1/5/26

6:00 – 7:00 AM

Council Fire Pre-function

EXHIBITOR MOVE IN

6:30 AM – 2:00 PM

Pre-function Area

REGISTRATION OPEN

6:45 AM

Selu Garden Cafe

SUPERVISORS' BREAKFAST

Doors Open 6:30 AM

Gail Hughes Vice-President, Presiding

Invocation: Tracy Warren, Chaplain

Oaths of Office -- New Area Chairs

*Comments from Candidates for 2nd VP,
Mountain Commission and Coastal TRC Seat*

*The initials SB are on your nametag if you purchased this
meal in advance.*

7:00 AM – 6:00 PM

Pre-function Hallway

EXHIBIT AREA OPEN

7:45 to 9:00 AM

Suite 242

AUXILIARY HOSPITALITY

Coffee Provided

8:00 AM – 5:00 PM

BANQUET SEATING RESERVATIONS Registration Area

(Bring name tag to registration area make seating selection.)

MONDAY

8:30 AM

Locust/Maple

GENERAL SESSION

Welcome: Barbara Bleiweis - President, Presiding

Invocation: Tracy Warren, Chaplain

Presentation of Colors: Association Veterans

America, the Beautiful, Madison Bridges

Pledge of Allegiance: Led by President

EBCI Welcome – Principal Chief Michell Hicks

Executive Director Annual Report – Bryan Evans

NC Foundation for

Soil & Water Conservation – President Jimmy Gentry

NC Grange – President David Allen

NCDA & Consumer Services Commissioner Steve Troxler

1 Hour of Supervisor Training Credit

Wonderful World Photo Celebration

9:30 AM – NOON

Birch

AUXILIARY INFORMATIONAL SESSION & BUSINESS MEETING

See Separate Agenda for Auxiliary Activities

10:00AM

Exhibit Area

BREAK

10:30 AM

Leadership BREAKOUT SESSIONS

1.5 Hours of Supervisor Training Credit per Session

SESSION #1

Beech

Leadership in Accessibility

Allison Channell will present "Conservation for Everyone" - the Districts platform to increase conservation education outreach by providing conservation courses and materials in other languages.

MONDAY

SESSION #2

Ash

Leadership in Innovation and Collaborative Partnerships

Myles Payne, Kayla McCoy, Celeste Maus, Pamela Bowman, Tyler Cornett and President Jacob Lubbe of Gateway Recycled will present current projects through innovation and collaboration with local businesses and agencies to help producers lower costs, assist the public and increase outreach through awareness and education.

SESSION #3

Comedy Zone

Leadership in Managing Growth and change

Kristina Fischer/ Bryan Evans - Panel discussion on District opportunities for Supervisor recruitment, and compliance with attendance and training requirements and the role the Commission plays. The recruitment of new supervisors will also be discussed in the context of the changing demographics of conservation leaders.

SESSION #4

Hickory

Leadership in Outreach and Education

Gail Hughes, Jessica Wilson, Jessica Davis This session will discuss multiple and creative ways to connect with and educate communities on conservation.

The Association's Education Coordinator, Jessica Davis, will share her work in developing unique education programs and tools.

SESSION #5

Oak

Leadership in Policy and funding Advocacy

Josh Myers, Craig Frazier, Craig Myers- Panel discussion on methods and challenges to increasing Conservation funding and its direct link to conservation perception by state and federal lawmakers.

MONDAY

NOON

Locust/Maple

CONSERVATION AWARENESS LUNCH

Craig Frazier, Legislative Committee Chair, Presiding

Guest Speaker - Representative Karl E. Gillespie -
NC House District 120

1 Hour of Supervisor Training Credit

The initials CA are on your nametag if you purchased this meal in advance.

1:30 PM

Oak

COMMITTEE CHAIRS' AND RECORDERS' MEETING

2:00-3:00 PM

RESOURCE COMMITTEE MEETINGS *

Community Conservation	Beech
District Operations Committee	Ash
Finance Committee	Hickory
Legislative Committee	Locust/Maple

Supervisor Training Credits offered based on presentations

3:00-4:00 PM

RESOURCE COMMITTEE MEETINGS *

Education Committee	Beech
Natural Environment Committee	Ash
Research and Technology Committee	Hickory
Water Resources Committee	Locust/Maple

Supervisor Training Credits offered based on presentations

** Meetings Staggered for Space Limitations*

MONDAY

6:30 PM

Locust/Maple

CONSERVATION EDUCATION DINNER

David Harris, Education Committee Chair, Presiding

Education Awards:

Envirothon Hall of Fame

EE Awards and Recognitions

The initials ED are on your nametag if you purchased this meal in advance.

8:00 PM

Locust/Maple

AUXILIARY AUCTION

9:00 PM

Oak

INFORMAL MUSIC JAM

TUESDAY

1/6/26

7:45 to 9:00 AM

Suite 242

AUXILIARY HOSPITALITY

7:30 to 5:00 PM

REGISTRATION OPEN

7:00 to 2:00 PM

Pre-function Area

EXPO OPEN

8:30 AM

Locust/Maple

GENERAL SESSION

Barbara Bleiweis President, Presiding

Invocation: Tracy Warren, Chaplain

8:45 AM

Biochar Update/Overview

Barbara Bleiweis President, Presiding

Dalton Buchanan, NCDA&CS Division

9:05 AM

Biochar Project Strategy/ funding and Practice
(Panel)

Bill Yarborough, Haywood SWCD

Cavan Fitzsimmons, USFS (Invited)

Dalton Buchanan, NCDA&CS Division

Barbara Bleiweis, President

Secretary Reid Wilson, NCDEQ (Invited)

Dr. Todd Campbell, USDA/ARS

Wonderful World Photo Celebration

ELECTION – Coastal TRC Seat

10:00 – 10:30 AM

Exhibit Area

BREAK

TUESDAY

10:30AM

Locust/Maple

GENERAL SESSION Resumes

Barabara Bleiweis President, Presiding

Milton Heath Lecture –

Envirothon- Building Future Conservationist Area 1 Education Team

1 Hour of Supervisor Training Credit

AWARD PRESENTATIONS

Length of Service

NCASWCD Outstanding Employees of the Year and
District Awards

9:30 –Noon

Ash

AUXILIARY INFORMATION SESSION and BUSINESS MEETING

NOON

Hickory/Oak

DEA LUNCHEON

Lisa Marochak, DEA President, Presiding

*The initials DL are on your nametag if you purchased
this meal in advance.*

1:30 PM

Beech

NRCS STAFF MEETING

1:30 PM

Locust/Maple

NCASWCD BUSINESS MEETING

Gail Hughes - 1st Vice President, Presiding

Parliamentarian, TBD

TUESDAY

REPORTS

NRCS Comments	Tim Beard, State Conservationist
District Employee's Association Report	Lisa Marochak, President
Auxiliary Report	Betty Mathews, President
RC&D Report	Matt Settlemyer, RC&D
	Southwest Council ED
Division Comments	David Williams, Director
Foundation Report	Jimmy Gentry, President
	Amanda Sand, Exec. Dir.

1 Hour of Supervisor Training Credit

ACTION ITEMS

Nominating Committee Report	Billy Kilpatrick
Other Actions Items (TBD)	
Committee Reports	Committee Chairs

6:30 PM	Council Fire Ballroom
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BANQUET

Barbara Bleiweis, President, Presiding

Invocation: Tracy Warren, Chaplain

TUESDAY

OUTSTANDING N.C. CONSERVATION FARM FAMILY AWARDS

PIEDMONT REGION	Thomas Family Farms
MOUNTAIN REGION	Lingerfelt Family Farms
President's Awards,	Barbara Bleiweis
NC Foundation Presentation	Jimmy Gentry, President
Outgoing President's Remarks	Barbara Bleiweis President
Installation of 2026 NCASWCD President	
Handing Over the Gavel	Barbara Bleiweis, 2025 President
Incoming President's Remarks	Gail Hughes, 2026 President

9:00 – 11:00 PM

INFORMAL MUSIC JAM

WEDNESDAY 1/7/26

9:00 AM

Ash

**NCASWCD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
BREAKFAST MEETING**

For members of the Executive Committee and Invited
Guest Only

1 Hour of Supervisor Training Credit

Join us for the 2027
Annual Meeting

January 10-12, 2027

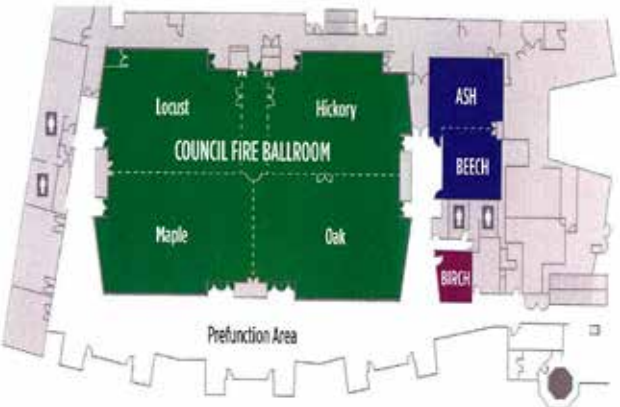
Koury Convention Center,
Greensboro, NC

Past NCASWCD Presidents

1944	<i>O.J. Holler - Rutherford Co.</i>
1945	<i>Dane S. Rhine – Gaston Co.</i>
1946	<i>A. C. Edwards – Greene Co.</i>
1947	<i>W. Herbert White – Rockingham Co.</i>
1948	<i>Wade E. Eller – Ashe Co.</i>
1949	<i>J. Hawley Poole – Moore Co.</i>
1950	<i>W. W. Eagles – Edgecombe Co.</i>
1951	<i>H. S. Hogan – Orange Co.</i>
1952	<i>W. J. Fonville – Alamance Co.</i>
1953	<i>J. T. Graham – Rowan Co.</i>
1954	<i>S. Vernon Stevens – Lee Co.</i>
1955	<i>Allen Swindell – Beaufort Co.</i>
1956	<i>Charles Ladd – Durham Co.</i>
1957	<i>B. L. Angell – Davie Co.</i>
1958	<i>Neal M. Craig – Mecklenburg Co.</i>
1959	<i>Charles L. Davis – Jones Co.</i>
1960	<i>A. W. Nesbitt – Buncombe Co.</i>
1961	<i>A.J. Flanagan – Pitt Co.</i>
1962	<i>Leon Ballance – Hyde Co.</i>
1963	<i>J.B. Slack – Randolph Co.</i>
1964	<i>James Bellamy, Jr. – Brunswick Co.</i>
1965	<i>Thomas H. Bonham – Buncombe Co.</i>
1966	<i>James T. Moss, Sr. – Franklin Co.</i>
1967	<i>Lloyd C. Bunch – Chowan Co.</i>
1968	<i>George B. Collins – Wilkes Co.</i>
1969	<i>George Winchester – Wake Co.</i>
1970	<i>William G. Sullivan – Duplin Co.</i>
1971	<i>Blair Goodson – Lincoln Co.</i>
1972	<i>A. W. Bunch – Scotland Co.</i>
1973	<i>M. E. Knight – Gates Co.</i>
1974	<i>G. C. Palmer – Haywood Co.</i>
1975	<i>C. Roy Nifong, Jr. – Forsyth Co.</i>
1976	<i>Joseph L. Williams – Duplin Co.</i>
1977	<i>John B. Harris – Burke Co.</i>
1978	<i>Stewart Adcock – Wake Co.</i>
1979	<i>Ralph Tucker – Pitt Co.</i>
1980	<i>Wade Carrigan – Iredell Co.</i>
1981	<i>D. R. Huff, Jr. – Moore Co.</i>
1982	<i>F.C. Laughinghouse – Beaufort Co.</i>
1983	<i>Charles Patton – Buncombe Co.</i>

1984	Garland Strickland – Nash Co.
1985	David Holland, Jr. – Onslow Co.
1986	H. Gray Ashburn, Jr. – Wilkes Co.
1987	John Y. Phelps, Jr. – Wake Co.
1988	William V. Griffin – Craven Co.
1989	Rebecca H. Rhyne – Gaston Co.
1990	William Butler – Bladen Co.
1991	Tom Burns – Pasquotank Co.
1992	James Ferguson – Haywood Co.
1993	Charles Snipes – Orange Co.
1994	Samuel D. Davis – Jones Co.
1995	Don Abernethy – Burke Co.
1996	John W. Finch – Nash Co.
1997	David M. O’Neal – Hyde Co.
1998	Eddie Stroup – Mecklenburg Co.
1999	Jeff Turlington – Harnett Co.
2000	Franklin Williams – Duplin Co.
2001	Jim Hollifield – Rutherford Co.
2002	Albert Troutman – Moore Co.
2003	James Mason – Hertford Co.
2004	Grover McPherson – Forsyth Co.
2005	Tom Davidson – Durham Co.
2006	Don Rawls – Pender Co.
2007	Ned Hudson – Cabarrus Co.
2008	Bobby Stanley – Columbus Co.
2009	William Pickett – Duplin Co.
2010	James Ferguson – Haywood Co.
2011	Craig Frazier – Randolph Co.
2012	Donald Heath – Craven Co.
2013	Tommy Houser – Lincoln Co.
2014	John Langdon – Johnston Co.
2015	Manly West – Currituck Co.
2016	Ben Knox – Rowan Co.
2017	Chris Hogan - Orange Co.
2018	Dietrich Kilpatrick - Craven Co.
2019	Myles Payne - Alexander Co.
2020	Samuel Green, Jr. - Vance Co.
2021	Blount Knowles - Bertie Co.
2022	Chris Hughes - Watauga Co.
2023	George Teague - Guilford Co.
2024	Billy Kilpatrick - Duplin Co.
2025	Barbara Bleiweis - Mecklenburg Co.

Cherokee Hotel and Resort Cherokee, NC



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