

NORTH CAROLINA SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION BUSINESS MEETING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES September 17, 2025

Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services
Division of Soil & Water Conservation
Wayne County Agriculture Center (Farm Bureau Room)
3114 Wayne Memorial Drive Drive
Goldsboro, NC 27543

Commission Members	Guests	Guests Online
James Lamb , Vice-Chair	Bryan Evans	Sierra Digan
Billy Kilpatrick	Michael Shepard	Aaron Franks
Patrick Baker	Chris Love	Shawn Lucas
Brian Parker	Amber Rights	Emily F Bateman
Porche Spence	Kevin Johnson	Steven C Ward
Gail Hughes	Jennifer Johnson	Angie Quinn
	Tom Potter	Lorien Deaton
Commission Counsel	Tm Harrell	Rodney D Wright
Brian McGinn	Michelle Estrada	Wilkes SWC
Guests	Brad Moore	Jane Humphrey
David Williams	Darren Laytan	Mikey Woodie
Kristina Fischer	Jason Byrd	Heather Reichert
Matt Safford	Teresa Furr	James Warner
Taryn Thompson	Ronald Parks	Morgan H. Elkins
Matt Safford	Keith Larick	Mike Bowman
Kristina Fischer	Sam Edwards	Shelby Kaplan
Rick McSwain	Thomas Murphrey	12529082071(unverified)
Josh Vetter	Brandi Tatton	Brody W. Brown
John Beck	Jennifer Sparrow	Lisa Fine
Rachel Smith	Leah Boswell	Christie Watkins
Dewitt Hardee	Tim Beard	Leslie Rose
Regina Kilpatrick	Steve Sutton	Betty Brown
Tim Beard	Abner W Staples	Justin Nobles
Tinesha McNeil	Charles Sanders	Cole Strickland
Ken Parks	Donna Mills	Stephanie Alston
Julie Henshaw	Rachel Smith	Paula Day
Elise McLanghlin	Guests Online	Conor McKearney
Brandy Myers	Alexandra Dinwiddie	Wilkes SWCD
	Chuckie Bass	Daniel McClellan
	Rebecca Hanna	

I. CALL TO ORDER: Vice-Chair James Lamb called the meeting to order at 9:13a.m.

II. PRELIMINARY: Vice-Chair Lamb charged the Commission members to declare any conflict of interest, or appearance of conflict of interest, that may exist for agenda items under consideration, as mandated by the State Ethics Act.

Vice-Chair James Lamb asked all of the Commission members and attendees to introduce themselves and reminded everyone to sign the registration sheet and silence their cell phones.

III. BUSINESS:

1. **Approval of Agenda:** Vice-Chair Lamb asked for approval of the agenda. Commissioner Gail Hughes moved to approve the agenda, and Commissioner Brian Parker seconded. Motion carried.
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2. **Approval of Minutes:** Vice-Chair James Lamb asked for approval of the minutes with correction. Commissioner Patrick Baker moved to approve the minutes, and Commissioner Porche Spence seconded. Motion carried.
 - A. July 15, 2025, Work Session Meeting Minutes
 - B. July 23, 2025, Business Session Meeting Minutes

INFORMATION ITEMS

3. **Division Report:** Vice-Chair Lamb recognized Director David Williams to present. Director Williams shared

Director Williams spoke on Disaster Funding increases from Session Law 2025-26 and 2024-57, other available funding diverted from Matthew Disaster to provide disaster BMP funds for Helene. USDA Block Grant approved for \$221,236,071. Funds will be used to cover losses/repairs not covered under other USDA programs. Include TA/engineering funding for districts and division as well. No funding as of yet for counties affected by Chantel in July.

Up coming Commission Meeting.

- **November 19, Huntersville (Virtual Work Session 11/12)**
 - **January 4, Cherokee (Virtual Work Session 12/18)**
 - **March 18, TBD (Virtual Work Session 3/10)**
 - **May 20, TBD(Virtual Work Session 5/12)**
 - **July 29, Raleigh (Virtual WS 7/21)**
4. **Association Report:** Vice-Chair Lamb recognized Mr. Bryan Evans to present. Mr. Evans went over the proposed agenda for the 2026 North Carolina Basic Training for Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisors. Commissioner Billy Kilpatrick moved to approve the agenda, and Commissioner Porche Spence seconded. Motion carried. Mr. Evans stated that they are still monitoring what is going on with the General Assembly, but nothing is known yet.

- 5. NRCS Report:** Vice-Chair Lamb recognized Tim Beard. Mr. Beard gave an update of changes within the organization. Updates for EQIP and CSP consist of a push to get funds Obligated. NRCS has established a cutoff date for EQIP and CSP to be November 7, 2025. ECP programs and easement programs are about 93 percent obligated. Training for employees will be between September 29 – October 10 for professional development to better serve. Several employees have increased in level or become certified.

ACTION ITEMS

- 6. Consent Agenda:** Vice-Chair verified if these were the same items that was discussed at the Work Session (9-9-2025). Vice-Chair Lamb asked for a motion for the consent agenda items 6A – 6D previously discussed at length in Work Session (9-9-25). Commission Billy Kilpatrick moved to approve 6A – 6D as discussed in work session. Gail Hughes seconded the motion. Motion carried.

6E. Additional Supervisor Appointments: Ms. Kristina Fischer presented the additional supervisors appointments that were submitted after the Work Session. Motion to approve called by Brian Parker. Second by Patrick Baker. Motion carried.

- Jonathan D. Sedberry, Montgomery SWCD, filling the unexpired appointed term of Donald A. Thompson due to health concerns, filling elected term 2024 - 2028.
- Betty Brown, Nash SWCD, filling the unexpired elected term of Bobby Joe Fisher for 2022-2026

6F. Additional Supervisor Contracts: Vice-Chair Lamb recognized Mr. John Beck to present. Mr. Beck presented the for following contracts that were submitted after the work session: Motion to approve called by Patrick Baker. Second by Gail Hughes. Motion carried.

County	Contract Number	Supervisor Name	BMP	Contract Amount	Comments
Davie	30-2026-005	Craig Myers	Livestock Mortality Mgmt System – Mortality Incinerator	\$12,319	Applicant: D & M farms on Calahaln LLC
Warren	93-2026-003	Shane B Harris	Cover Crop	\$4000	
Warren	93-2026-005	Brandon Pernell	Cover Corp	\$4000	

Total \$20,319

Total Number of Supervisor Contracts: 3

- 7. Streamflow Rehabilitation Assistance Program (StRAP) :** Vice-Chair Lamb recognized Mr. Matt Safford to present. Mr. Safford stated that no action is needed at this time.

7A. Allocation Discussion

Goal: Discuss options for Helene Allocation for future approval (not an action item today)

1. Discussion Items: Available Funding
2. Dividing Funds between High, Medium, and Low-Need Counties
3. Prioritization of Project Types
4. Single Application vs Rolling Application
5. Review of Applications & Award Process
6. Supplemental Awards

B. 50% Progress Report Summary

FY2024 StRAP Contract requires that Grantees submit a report documenting progress towards having 50% of funds encumbered towards contracts (as of August 28, 2025).

Status:

68 grantees have encumbered at least 50% of funds

36 grantees have NOT encumbered at least 50% of funds

6 grantees have not yet submitted 50% progress reports

1 grantee declined funding

\$14,037,190 currently encumbered.

8. **Technical Assistance Allocation Methodology Review:** Vice-Chair Lamb recognized Ms. Julie Henshaw to present. Ms. Henshaw stated that this is just a review of the technical assistance allocation methodology. No changes were recommended, therefore there is no action required. Allocation parameters prescribed in rule: 02NCAC 59D.0108 Technical Assistance Funds will be used to allocate technical assistance in response to requests from districts.

9. **DSWC Training and Employee Development initiative Updates:** Vice-Chair Lamb recognized Ms. Brandy Myers to present. Ms. Myers provided an in-depth overview of the Division's training initiatives, highlighting:

- **Fundamentals of Conservation Planning & CP2 Equivalency:**

The Fundamentals course has become a flagship training, offering a blend of classroom instruction, field exercises, and guided mentoring to ensure participants gain both technical knowledge and practical skills. Mentorship remains the cornerstone, with experienced professionals volunteering significant time to guide participants through real-world scenarios—resulting in high completion rates, strong participant feedback, and growing regional and national recognition. In close collaboration with Rodger Toledo (NRCS), completion now grants NRCS CP2 equivalency, a milestone that enhances participants' professional credentials and improves districts' conservation planning capacity.

- **New Employee Onboarding Pilot Program:**

Launched in March 2022, this four-stage, continuous program helps onboard new district staff with structured training, mentoring, and professional development opportunities. In 2025, 30

new employees are enrolled, with 12 trial participants having completed or in progress. This sustained pipeline strengthens workforce readiness and retention.

- **Conservation Employee Training (CET):**

CET is a conference-style event with over 200 attendees, combining workshops, skill-building sessions, and hands-on field trips to provide real-world exposure to conservation practices. Participants gain practical, transferable skills through immersive sessions, which directly strengthen conservation outcomes in their home districts.

- **EWP Surge Week:**

Surge Week began with a full-day training on Monday to prepare staff, followed by hands-on site assessments across the remainder of the week. In response to Hurricane Helene, 33 staff assessed 106 sites in four counties. This model of “train then act” created both immediate disaster response and a powerful learning experience—transforming the training into real-world application and making it a meaningful, purposeful, and unforgettable experience.

- **Mentoring Program Launch:**

A new statewide mentoring program is launching soon. This program aims to build relationships, share institutional knowledge, and strengthen staff capacity across districts.

- **Best Management Practices Trainings:**

These trainings directly support staff technical skills and abilities, help participants progress toward Job Approval Authority (JAA), and offer a practical way to apply conservation principles in the field.

- **Training Approach:**

The Division’s training model is grounded in adult learning theory, current training trends, communication and collaboration, hands-on and interactive learning, and continuous evaluation for improvement. This holistic approach blends professional development, mentoring, and recognition of district achievements to create an evolving program that remains relevant and impactful.

Call to Action:

District boards are encouraged to support these initiatives by hosting events, mentoring staff, and encouraging attendance at trainings. Participation and engagement at all levels are key to growing and sustaining the program.

Acknowledgments:

Brandy recognized the contributions of Rodger Toledo (NRCS), mentors, Joshua Vetter, the Technical Training Committee (three members present in person, several virtually), Division staff, District staff, and partnership staff. Their collaboration and support make these programs possible.

10. Special Request: Vice-Chair Lamb asked if there were any special requests. Mr. John Beck introduced the representatives from Camden County.

Camden SWCD: post-approval for contract 15-2025-005 . Supervisor Mr. Abner Wayne Staples – introduced Steve Suttan to ask for approval of the project. The previous employee did not complete all the necessary work on the contract before he left, but the producer

understood that he was approved to proceed with installation. The District is requesting for post approval for the contract. Billy Kilpatrick motioned to approve the contract. Gail Hughes second. Motion approved.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS: Vice-Chair Lamb asked for any public comments.

Gail Hughes recognized that James Lamb received an award for Outstanding Alumnus for the College of Ag and Life Sciences for NCSU.

RECESS: Vice-Chair Lamb called for a recess of the Commission meeting to hold the Hearing regarding the Inquiry Committee Determination and Referrals that is scheduled for 11:30 a.m.

V. 11:30 a.m. Hearing regarding Inquiry Committee Determination and Referrals – Vice-Chair Lamb called the hearing to order at 11:30 a.m. Counsel McMinn reminded Commission members to base verdict only on information presented today.

Kristina Fischer presented the following:

COMMISSION HEARING RE: INQUIRY COMMITTEE DETERMINATION AND REFERRALS

Grounds for removal of District Supervisors are set forth in G.S. 139-7; any supervisor may be removed by the Commission upon notice and hearing for neglect of duty. Under 02 NCAC 59A .0301 (a), evidence of neglect of duty shall include, but is not limited to, the failure to attend three consecutive regularly scheduled district meetings, except when prevented by illness. Evidence of neglect of duty shall also include the failure of sitting Supervisors to meet training requirements set forth in 02 NCAC 59A Section .0200.

The Inquiry Committee outlined in 02 NCAC 59A .0302 met in May 2025 and has sent supervisor Edward Jones to the Commission for a hearing for neglect of duty.

Non-attendance at local board meetings, Edward Jones - Forsyth SWCD:

02 NCAC 59A .0301(c) requires District boards to notify the Commission in writing of any member that has failed to attend three consecutive regularly scheduled meetings, except when prevented by illness of the Supervisor. Notification from the District shall include explanation for non-attendance and the actions that the District board has taken to address the Supervisor's attendance.

Edward Jones – District Supervisor of Forsyth SWCD has been incarcerated. He has missed all meetings since attending in January 2025.

The Inquiry Committee did not receive correspondence from Supervisor Jones. The Committee met in July 2025 and determined that there was evidence of neglect of duty. Correspondence related to this hearing was sent to Supervisor Jones and to his SWCD Board Chair. The letter sent Supervisor Jones was returned as undeliverable, “addressee unknown”.

Vice-Chair Lamb asked if there was a motion regarding Edward Jones. Commissioner Patrick Baker moved to remove from office for neglect of duty. Billy Kilpatrick seconded. Motion carried.

Resumption: At the conclusion of the hearing, Vice-Chair Lamb called for the Commission meeting to resume and asked if there were any other public comments.

Director Williams expressed appreciation to the Wayne SWCD supervisors and staff and to the County officials present. He noted their helpfulness in arranging for space for the meeting. He also expressed appreciation to the Wayne SWCD staff as well as others in attendance for the track record of leadership and cooperation in holding training events in support of the Commission's Job Approval Authority efforts.

VI. ADJOURNMENT: Vice-Chair Lamb asked if there was a motion to adjourn. Patrick Baker offered a motion, and Brian Parker seconded. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 12:11p.m.

David B. Williams, Director
Division of Soil & Water Conservation, Raleigh, N.C.

Tinesha McNeil, Recording Secretary

These minutes were approved by the North Carolina Soil & Water Conservation Commission on November 19, 2025.