



BUNCOMBE COUNTY **SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT** APRIL 14, 2022 BOARD MEETING

49 Mount Carmel Road, Asheville, NC 28806

Board Members Present

Gary Higgins, Chairman; David Snelson, Secretary; Louise Scruggs, Treasurer

Others Present

Amanda Buchanan, NRCS; Avni Naik, Program Coordinator; and Jessica Hughes, Administrative Assistant.

The meeting was called to order at 10:07am.

Conflict of Interest Statement

Gary Higgins asked those in the meeting to review the conflict of interest statement, “In the interest of preserving public confidence in the actions of this Board, the chair reminds members of their duty to avoid any conflicts of interests and inquires as to whether any member knows of any conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest with respect to matters to come before the Board.”

Approval of Agenda

Please see exhibit A.

Louise Scruggs made a motion to approve the April 14, 2022 agenda, and the motion passed on the vote with all in favor.

Approval of Minutes

Please see exhibit B. David Snelson asked that the March meeting minutes be moved to the May meeting for approval to give staff appropriate time to see if there was a closed session during the NCDOT/Snelson discussion.

Supervisory Reports

There were no supervisor reports at this time.

Directors Report

Harrison was unable to attend the meeting do to an out of town conference. Her report was submitted for the record. Please see exhibit C.



RCW Scholarship

Two applications were received for the Resource Conservation Workshop in June. Higgins stated typically the board pays for one student out of board funds and the second student is paid out of county funds from the education budget. Jessica Hughes said she would speak with Harrison regarding the county budget. Higgins stated typically registration and a per diem for each student for food is paid for. Higgins requested for the board to approve the applications and discuss the finances for payment at the May meeting.

Louise Scruggs made a motion to approve two applications for the Resource Conservation Workshop with one student being paid from board funds and the second student to be paid from county funds, and the motion passed on the vote with all in favor.

NCACSP and AgWRAP Report

Anthony Dowdle was unable to attend the meeting but submitted one application and contract for Board approval.

David Snelson made a motion to enter closed session in pursuant to GS 139.8.2-142 to discuss confidential NCACSP and AgWRAP contracts on 10:32am, and the motion passed on the vote with all in favor.

Louise Scruggs made a motion to exit closed session in pursuant to GS 139.8.2-142, and the motion passed on the vote with all in favor.

Gary Higgins made a motion to approve the application for contract 11-2022-501 for \$50,000.00, and the motion passed on the vote with all in favor.

David Snelson made a motion to approve the contract 11-2022-501 for \$50,000.00, and the motion passed on the vote with all in favor.

The Board discussed potential dates for the annual spot checks. Higgins stated he would be willing to attend a half day for the spot check if another board member could attend the other half day. May 17th or May 18th would work best for the Board.

NRCS Report

Amanda Buchanan presented an update for NRCS, please exhibit D for full report.

Farmland Preservation Report

Ariel Zijp was unable to attend the meeting but submitted a written report for the record. Please see exhibit E.

Announcements

With no further business Louise Scruggs motioned to adjourn at 10:52am.

Secretary

Date





BUNCOMBE COUNTY
SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
APRIL 14, 2022 BOARD AGENDA

Call to order

Gary Higgins, Chairman

Conflict of Interest Statement

Gary Higgins, Chairman

“In the interest of preserving public confidence in the actions of this Board, the chair reminds members of their duty to avoid any conflicts of interests and inquires as to whether any member knows of any conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest with respect to matters to come before the Board.”

Approval of April 14, 2022 agenda

Board

Approval of the March 10, 2022 minutes

Board

Supervisor Reports

Board

RCW Applications

Board

Director Report

Jennifer Harrison

Area 1 Report

Cayle Aldridge

NRCS Report

John Ottinger

Farmland Preservation Report

Ariel Zijp

NCACSP and AgWRAP Report

Anthony Dowdle



Director's Report

April 14, 2022

EWP

- We requested \$3,386,608 from EWP.
 - The total anticipated project costs were reduced to **\$2,685,500**
 - \$2,014,125 for construction
 - \$201,412.50 for technical assistance (10% of construction)
 - \$671,375 local sponsor contribution (25% of total cost)
- 44 projects were selected for EWP
- The entire staff deserves a huge thank you for all the hard work they put into completing FDRs and DSRs. This was an unprecedented workload for our small team. They were incredible in their efforts, professionalism and commitment. I am so proud of Buncombe County!

StRAP

- We were awarded **\$738,513** to cover the local sponsor portion of EWP
 - \$671,375 – 25% of the total anticipated construction cost
 - \$67,138 – additional technical assistance
- We submitted all projects in EWP, including those that did not receive funding
- We submitted additional projects that were not part of our EWP application
- In total we requested **\$12,165,194** for 68 total projects (includes EWP)
 - Non-EWP projects were combined into watershed level projects instead of listing each project separately. If counted separately, the total is 47 Non-EWP projects for which funding was requested
- Beyond the communication of the anticipated local sponsor award, we have not heard any additional information on what may be funded through StRAP
- I want to acknowledge the significant work Anthony put into identifying and quantifying all of the additional projects. His level of expertise is beyond impressive. I hope everyone realizes the incredible resource we have in Anthony. I also want to thank Avni for all of her contributions to this process. Her GIS skills are amazing!

Environmental Educator

- We received 92 applications for the Environmental Educator position
- 80 of the applications were from quality applicants
- We invited 10 people to interview
- The top applicants come highly recommended and are already living in Buncombe County
- The top applicants are 2 people who wish to do a job share – each work part time
 - This approach has a lot of positives
 - We are working with HR to find the funding to pay for the additional benefits
- We hope to be able to offer the job next week
- I want to thank Jessica and Ariel for all of their hard work on reviewing application materials, conducting interviews and completing reference checks. With so many qualified applicants this was a heavy lift. They did a fantastic job!

Buncombe Soil and Water District Board Meeting

April 14th, 2022

NRCS Update:

Emergency Watershed Protection Program:

Presently, Buncombe County has just returned their signed agreement to NRCS. This agreement will go to Headquarters for processing and the Official EWP Agreement will be generated within a couple of weeks. The sponsor, Buncombe County, should refer to Mary Waligora with any questions related to the agreement and the process moving forward. Jake Stokes and his staff will be the Government Representatives for Buncombe County. The Government Representatives are responsible for completing a sign off for the work performed prior to payment.

Programs Update

EQIP:

For Program Year 2022, Buncombe has a total of 25 eligible applications. These applications include pasture, crops, stream restoration and forestry practices.

	EQIP	CSP Classic		CSP Renewal
Application Deadline	October 29, 2021	March 11, 2022		April 15, 2022
Eligibility Determination	January 14, 2022	April 15, 2022		
Screening/Priority Deadline	January 21, 2022			
Assessment Deadline	March 11, 2022	July 1, 2022		November 12, 2021
Ranking Deadline	March 11, 2022	July 1, 2022		November 12, 2021
National & State Fund Pool Obligation Deadline	March 25, 2022			
Obligation Deadline	May 6, 2022	September 9, 2022		December 17, 2021

To date, 3 applications for funding have been preapproved for EQIP.

We currently have 38 active federal contracts in Buncombe County.

CSP:

For FY22 program year 3 applications have been received for CSP Classic signup period.

Other:

Agencies and Staff Offices will be asked to fully return to work in the office by May 2, 2022.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amanda Buchanan

Soil Conservationist



- **Easement Project Updates**
 - April 19- BOC consent agenda - Berner and Clark easements
 - Survey & Deed work
 - McCurry Easement – Survey in finishing up, starting deed work
 - Rosseter Easement – Survey in finishing up, starting deed work
 - Sneddon Easement – Survey in finishing up, starting deed work
 - Harvey/O’Doherty Easement – Starting Survey April
 - SAHC Teague Property Easement - Starting survey April
 - SAHC Jenkin’s Creek Easement – postponed until stream easement
 - Splendor Valley LLC Easement –initial survey visit May 3rd
 - Closing Preparations –
 - Hart Easement – Easement Closing on April 28th 2022!!
 - Currie Easement – Easement Closing on April 28th 2022!!
 - Waiting on Grant Funding
 - Sluder Easement – NCDAs approved, waiting on USDA funds
 - Ramsey Easement – NCDAs approved, waiting on USDA funds
 - Anthony Cole Farm – NCDAs Farm Visit was on 4/5/2022
 - Gary Cole Farm– NCDAs Farm Visit was on 4/5/2022
 - Jasperwood Phase 1– NCDAs Farm Visit was on 4/5/2022
 - Jasperwood Phase 2 – NCDAs Farm Visit was on 4/5/2022
- **Commissioners Environmental Subcommittee – 20% by 2030 project estimates**
- **Monitoring Visits – March/April 2022**
- **Baseline documentation visits for McCurry, Rosseter, Sneddon, Harvey – April 2022**