

# Agricultural Advisory Board

Update for Buncombe County Board of Commissioners



BUNCOMBE COUNTY



# About Us

Board Members	Community Represented
David Lee, Chair	Candler
Bruce Snelson, Vice-Chair	Leicester
Ed Bulluck	Arden
Brandon Hensley	Alexander
Loring McIntyre	Swannanoa
Annie Perkinson	Fairview
Gary Roberts	Jupiter
Terri Wells	Sandy Mush



# Purpose:

To promote agricultural values and the general welfare of Buncombe County, and more specifically:

- To **increase identity and pride** in the agricultural community and its way of life
- To **encourage the economic and financial health** of agriculture, horticulture and forestry and
- To **increase protection** from non-farm development and other negative impacts on properly managed farms.



# Board Importance

- ★ Agricultural voice in the County
  - Board has a voice representing all regions of farming in Buncombe County
- ★ Increase public awareness of the importance of farming and farmland in Buncombe County
- ★ Direct focus on Strategic Plan goal
  - Increase funding
  - Increase staffing



# Ag Advisory Board County Programs





# Farm Preservation Successes



- ✓ 20 Family Farms Protected  
**2,777.71** acres
- ✓ Raised over **\$4 million** in grant funding
- ✓ Raised over **\$11 million** in charitable donations since 2005



# Agricultural Community Successes

- ✓ Created the national award winning **Farm Heritage Trail**
- ✓ **Voluntary Agricultural Districts:**  
287 farms totaling 20,708 acres
- ✓ **Enhance Voluntary Agricultural Districts:**  
14 farms totaling 1,867 acres



# Proactive Planning

- Completed Buncombe Farmland Protection Plan 2020 – adopted Aug 2020
- GIS Project generating Farmland Community Prioritization to focus conservation efforts
- MPA Research project identifying potential ongoing funding sources for conservation
- Supporting the BC 2025 Strategic Plan Goal
  - Environmental and Energy Stewardship: **Preserve Farmland and Environmentally Sensitive Tracts**





# Challenges



- Limited county staffing
- Limited transaction cost funding
- Limited easement purchase funding
- Limited number of grant applications allowed per entity
- 38 farms totaling in **3,226 acres** still on Farmland Preservation waiting list



# Strategic Opportunity

**\$750,000 annual investment through FY26:**

- Anticipate **18 projects** initiated annually
- Approximately **70 projects** initiated by 2025
- Additional **6000 acres** of important farmland and environmentally sensitive tracts conserved

**FY21 Funding Level: \$240,000**

- \$120,000 for Ag Advisory Board easements
- \$120,000 for Land conservation Advisory Board easements

