Land Conservation Advisory Board

Update for Buncombe County Board of Commissioners
About Us

Board Members
• Greg Hutchins-Chairperson
• Nancy Nehls Nelson-Vice Chairperson
• Sara Fraser
• Joel Mazelis
• Matt Fusco
• Robert Turner
• Jacob Wiseman
• April Heesacker
• Kim Dechant
• Bob Gale
• Slater Solomon
• Garret Artz
• Kieran Roe

Knowledge and Skills:
• Local Land Trusts
• Engineers
• Landscape Architect
• Farm Owner
• Natural Resource Management
• Lawyer
• Local businesses
Purpose and History of Board

• Purpose: To promote the use of voluntary land conservation easements to preserve the beauty and ecology of Buncombe County for the economic good of the region

• Created in 2004 by BOC

• Selected 7 high priority focus areas of importance for conservation

• Have reviewed funding requests from Local Land Trusts for the establishment of conservation easements in the County
7 High Priority Focus Areas

- Scenic/Viewshed Protection
- Natural Areas Protection
- Water Quality Protection and Restoration
- Farmland Preservation
- Working Forest Protection
- Recreation/Public Access Protection
- Historical/Cultural Resource Protection
Board Importance

• Promotes, evaluates and recommends the conservation of lands within the County

• Educate the public about the importance of Land Conservation in the County, including its economic value

• Direct focus on Strategic Plan goal: Environmental and Energy Stewardship: Preserve Farmland and Environmentally Sensitive Tracts
LCAB Successes

Historic
• 64 Land Conservation Projects since 2004
• Over $6 million in County funds leveraged with private, State, and federal funds
• Funding to conserve over 75,000 acres

Recent
• 90 acre Ellis (Boyd Cove)
• Wilma Dykeman homestead
• 110 acre easement adjacent to Pisgah National Forest (Young Pisgah)
• Hickory Nut Gap Farm in Fairview
Currently Working On

- Improving standardized scoring and review procedure
- LCAB by-laws
- Coordination between LCAB and Agricultural Advisory Board
- Supporting the BC 2025 Strategic Plan Goal –
  - Environmental and Energy Stewardship: Preserve Farmland and Environmentally Sensitive Tracts
Challenges

• Limited County Staffing

• Donor awareness and recognition

• Transaction Cost Funding

• Easement Purchase Funding

• Finding Additional Funding Partners
Strategic Opportunity

FY2020 Funding Level – $240,000
  • $120,000 for Ag Advisory Board easements
  • $120,000 for Land conservation Advisory Board easements

Plan for the Future

A $750,000 annual investment divided between AAB and LCAB provides:
  • Anticipate 18 projects initiated annually
  • Approximately 70 projects initiated by 2025
  • Additional 6000 acres of important farmland and environmentally sensitive tracts conserved