



Buncombe County Board of Commissioners

Request for Board Action

Meeting Date: 9/7/2021

Consent Agenda

Department: Planning and Development

Presenter(s): Jennifer Barnette

Ag and Land Resources

Contact(s): Nathan Pennington, Planning and Development Director

Jennifer Harrison, Ag and Land Resources Director

Gillian Phillips, Long Range Planning Division Manager

Ariel Zijp, Farmland Preservation Coordinator

Subject: Establish Five Conservation Easement Projects

Brief Summary: The Buncombe County Land Conservation Advisory Board recommends approval and requests transaction costs for three easement projects, to be funded with the remaining FY21 easement funding.

The three new projects consist of the Brown Family Farm-Leicester, Full Sun Farm, and Ballard Cove. Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy will establish the easements for all three projects.

- Brown Family Farm-Leicester - \$40,000 in transaction costs establishing a 175.207 acre easement
- Full Sun Farm - \$20,500 in transaction costs establishing a 31.77 acre easement
- Ballard Cove - \$40,600 in transaction costs establishing a 59 acre easement

In addition, the Buncombe County Ag Advisory Board in partnership with Buncombe County Soil and Water Conservation District request transaction costs for two easement projects, to be funded with existing savings on nine completed easement projects. The two new projects consist of:

- Community Farm Expansion - \$36,000 in transaction costs establishing a 35.05 acre easement
- Jenkins Branch Farm - \$36,100 in transaction costs establishing a 99.42 acre easement

Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy is the owner of both properties and will donate the development rights without compensation. By protecting these two properties, Buncombe County will bridge gaps in designated priority regions as well as strengthen relationships with conservation partners and land stewards.

Nine completed easements projects will be closed out with savings totaling \$81,367, of which \$72,100 will be used to fund the Jenkins Branch Farm and Community Farm Expansion projects and the remaining \$9,267 will be moved to Future Conservation Easements.

This aligns with the 2025 Strategic Plan Goal: *Preserve farmland and environmentally sensitive tracts of land.*

No new funding is required to establish the five new easement projects.

Recommended Motion & Requested Action:

- 1) Approve budget amendment to closeout nine completed easement projects.
- 2) Approve budget amendment establishing five new easement projects.

County Manager's comments and Recommendation:

County Manager recommends as presented.