Buncombe County Board of Commissioners

Request for Board Action

Meeting Date: November 15, 2022

New Business

Department: Agriculture & Land Resources   **Presenter(s):** John Hudson, Budget

Contact(s): Jennifer Harrison, Agriculture and Land Resources Director
Ariel Zijp, Farmland Preservation Manager

Subject: Establish Three New Conservation Easement Projects

Brief Summary: The Buncombe County Agricultural Advisory Board (AAB) requests transaction costs for three easement projects from FY23 Conservation Easement project funds. The three full donation projects consist of Dragonheart Farm owned by Tarana Wesley in Sandy Mush, Larson Forest owned by Bruce and Jean Larson in Sandy Mush, and Garrett Cove Farm owned by Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy. These easements will be held by Buncombe County Soil and Water Conservation District.

• Dragonheart Farm, 31 acres in Sandy Mush - $38,000
• Bruce and Jean Larson Farm, 70 acres in Sandy Mush - $50,000
• Garrett Cove Farm, 101 acres in Sandy Mush - $25,000

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

This aligns with Buncombe County Board of Commissioner's Land Conservation Goal of *protecting 20% of Buncombe County lands by 2030.*

6,036 acres are needed to achieve the 20% by 2030 conservation goals. Since the adoption of this goal in May 2022, 590.4 acres of easement projects have been initiated. With the addition of these 3 projects - totaling 202 acres - Buncombe County will need 5,243.60 more acres to achieve this goal. Buncombe County will have conserved 77,429 acres total with the addition of these projects.

No new funding is required to establish the three new easement projects. Approving the budget amendment will allocate $113,000 of the $750,000 budgeted for FY23 Conservation Easement project funds.

Recommended Motion & Requested Action: Approve budget amendment

County Manager's Comments & Recommendation: County Manager recommends as presented