

## MINUTES

Catawba Soil and Water Conservation District held at Newton, N.C.

Meeting Number 4

July 11, 2025

Supervisors Present:

Steve Killian

Julia Elmore

David Caldwell

Brandon Bowman

Bill Shillito

Others Present:

Randy Willis, Soil Conservation Supervisor

Blake Henley, Soil Conservation Technician

Will Faulkner, NRCS Catawba

Elise McLaughlin, Area 2 Regional Coordinator

Leia Hamlyn, Education Coordinator

Steve Killian read the following statements then called the business meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.:

*The State Government Ethics Act mandates that at the beginning of any meeting the Chair reminds all the members of their duty to avoid conflicts of interest and inquire as to whether any member knows of any conflict of interest or potential conflict with respect to matters to come before the Board. If any member knows of a conflict of interest or potential conflict, please state so at this time.*

### *Statement of Professionalism*

*Supervisors are reminded of their responsibility to uphold the laws of the United States and North Carolina and their constitutions. Business is to be conducted in a professional manner, free of bias, of interactions that violate policies or individual liberties and that address business issues only. Interactions are to be held with integrity, courtesy, honesty and in compliance with the highest ethical standards.*

David Caldwell made a motion to approve the agenda for the board meeting. Julia Elmore seconded. All in favor. Motion passed. Agenda approved.

Bill Shillito made a motion to approve the minutes from the May 2, 2025, board meeting. David Caldwell seconded. All in favor. Motion passed. Minutes approved.

**Randy Willis and Blake Henley** presented the Catawba District Operations Report.

### **District Operations and Technical Assistance**

- Gave a presentation to the BOC at the budget hearings.
- We will be hosting a farmland preservation dinner on July 29<sup>th</sup> at 6:00
- New ARC building is out for bid
- Attended a meeting that included Tom Kenny from Foothills Land Conservancy about inventorying natural areas.

- Attended the Ag. Advisory Board meeting, Jeremy Lee is the new committee chair.
- Attended a VAD meeting with county staff to discuss application process and duties.
- Assisted Iredell SWCD with BMP designs.
- Assisted Burke SWCD with BMP designs.
- Gave a presentation to 4H drone group about how we use drones in our department.
- StRAP projects updates.
- Gave a presentation to Foothills Antique Power Club.

#### **NCACSP**

- Met with a potential applicant for ACSP.
- Contract 18-24-03-01 has drilled the well.
- Contract 18-25-02-01 has been delivered the specs.

#### **AGWRAP**

No updates at this time.

#### **CCAP**

No updates at this time.

**Leia Hamlyn** presented the Education and Outreach Report.

- Two students attended the Resource Conservation Workshop in June. Read thank you note from Caitlin.
- The 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Environmental Awareness Field Days will be held on September 18, September 25, and October 2 at Southside Park in Newton. We have added an extra day this year due to overwhelming interest. Will need assistance from board members to pick up lunch for presenters and possibly help with crowd control.
- The contest theme for 2025-2026 is ***"We All Live in a Watershed"***
- Gave a presentation to the Western NC Parks Directors Assoc.

**Will Faulkner** presented the Team 5 NRCS Supervisory Soil Conservationist's Report and the Catawba NRCS Supervisory Soil Conservationist's Report.

**EWP:** In response to Helene, Team 5 will be assisting with EWP. All counties affected by hurricane requested assistance. Mr. Beard has approved the request and sent letters back to county management. Damage Survey Reports (DSRs) are being done but waiting on concurrence with Corps/FEMA. Field Damage Reports (FDRs) will have to

be done for all streambank issues but field staff can go straight to DSRs for any clearing and snagging. We have not had any approved sites yet.

**FY 2025 EQIP/CSP:**

**EQIP 2025:** Team 5- 60 applications  
Got 13 funded so far in Team - ~\$450,000

**CSP 2025:** Team 5- 13 applications  
3 applications preapproved

**Fieldwork:** Team members working on several projects, as well as assisting SWCD personnel, evaluations for FY25 EQIP, CSP, & NCACSP applications to begin this month.

**Compliance:** NRCS will be conducting their own FSA Compliance Reviews this year. The last few years NRCS has used an agreement with Technical Service Providers to conduct them. Team 5 has approximately 40 reviews that will have to be done by end of August.

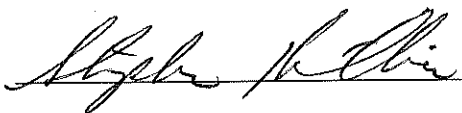
**Local Work Group:** July 22<sup>nd</sup> @ 10am McDowell is to hosting the meeting in Morganton this year to try and make it as convenient as possible for staff and supervisors to attend.

**Elise McLaughlin** gave the Division Report. Volunteers are needed for Hurricane Helene EWP assessments for SURGE week, July 28-August 1. Area 2 Fall Meeting will be held October 9, with Caldwell County hosting. The Executive Committee will meet on July 17. There is a seat on the Commission up for re-election. New replacement to be nominated at the Fall Meeting.

A letter to NRCS from 3 Area Local Work Groups to address concerns for prioritization of spot treatments, using a targeted approach, for stream bank erosion as a critical concern for agricultural communities is being considered. Brandon Bowman made a motion agreeing the Board could sign a letter if it is drafted. Julia Elmore seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.

David Caldwell made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Julia Elmore seconded. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 10:04 a.m.

Minutes taken by Leia Hamlyn.



Stephen Killian, Board Chair