

MINUTES

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

Meeting Number 2

February 6, 2026

Supervisors Present:

Julia Elmore

William Shillito

Brandon Bowman

Others Present:

Randy Willis, Soil Conservation Supervisor

Blake Henley, Soil Conservation Technician

Leia Hamlyn, Education Coordinator

Elise McLaughlin, Area 2 Regional Coordinator

Will Faulkner, NRCS

Julia Elmore read the following statements then called the business meeting to order at 9:19 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.

Brandon Bowman made a motion to approve the agenda for the board meeting. William Shillito seconded. All in favor. Motion passed. Agenda approved.

William Shillito made a motion to approve the minutes from the January 2, 2026, board meeting. Brandon Bowman seconded. All in favor. Motion passed. Minutes approved.

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

District Operations and Technical Assistance

- StRAP – We have entered the three Helene sites into the DART database APP.
- Randy gave a presentation to the Newton City Council on February 3 about the StRAP program.
- StRAP quarterly report was submitted.
- Our budget request for FY 2027 has been submitted. We asked for an increase in the Training & Education, Travel & Transportation and Dues & Subscriptions budget lines.

- Our mid-year Outcomes has been submitted.
- Area Meeting- CVCC Workforce Solutions Complex, Boxcar for Lunch, Ag. South sponsoring the Breakfast.
- Went to Caldwell SWCD for a BMP as-built visit
- YMCA meeting about extending the stream restoration with private donations. We advised against addressing the section they were looking at and recommended a different section instead.
- Attended Statesville Grain Meeting.
- Met with NCSU soil scientist about soil organic matter study.
- Assisted a landowner with soil sample results.

NCACSP

- Contract 18-24-03-03 has completed their contract. Payment was mailed to Raleigh.
- Contract 18-24-02-01 has completed most of the fencing and is in contact with the well driller.
- Contract 18-25-04-01 is going to be starting the stock trail installation.
- Met with a potential applicant for ACSP. Sent a contract estimate to him as well.

AGWRAP

- Contract 18-26-801-03 has been delivered the specs and will be starting on the well.
- We have applied for supplemental funds for AGWRAP in the amount of \$9,500.00

CCAP

No updates at this time.

Leia Hamlyn presented the Education and Outreach report:

- February 24, 2026 – Banquet
- March 12, 2026 – Area 2 meeting hosted by Catawba SWCD at CVCC in Hickory, NC
- March 13, 2026 – Clean-up Day for Envirothon
- March 16 & 17, 2026 - NW Envirothon – Edwin McGee Center
- March 19, 2026 – Area 2 Contest Night, West Jefferson, NC

William Shillito gave a report from attending the Annual Meeting held January 4-7, 2026, in Cherokee, NC. He said the event was well attended and enjoyable. Elise McLaughlin was recognized for her work with the RCW. He attended the Executive Committee Meeting for Board Chair Stephen Killian. Voluntary Ag District issues were covered. Mr. Shillito also attended the Memorial Service. Awards were given at the Education Dinner, where the focus was on farmland preservation.

Will Faulkner presented the NRCS Team 5 Soil Conservationist's Report:

EQIP/CSP Catawba:

EQIP 2026: Team 5- 7 applications
3 active contracts - \$90,000

CSP 2026: Team 5- 1 applications
1 active contracts - \$20,000

FY 2026 Programs

- Taking new Application for both CSP and EQIP until 1/15/26. This is a National Deadline. Deferred applications have until 2/6/26
- Eligibility Deadline will be 3/6/26
- Do not yet know what Fiscal Year 26 funding or programs will look like yet.
- New USDA Regenerative Agriculture Program announced nationwide (see attachments)
 - \$700M in EQIP and CSP
 - 20% of funds have to go to this Program

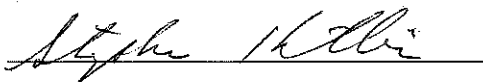
Fieldwork: Team members working on active projects throughout the team including site assessments for 313/316, pasture watering systems and high tunnels. New site visits are occurring for applications that have been taken over the last year before new fiscal year funding.

Other Notes: To help have someone in the office more regularly Maddy Oakes will start going to Alexander twice a week to help assist producers with NRCS programs.

Elise McLaughlin gave the Division Report. March 31st is the deadline for Resource Conservation Workshop applications. Area 2 Spring Meeting is scheduled for March 12, 2026. Wilkes will host Basics in Surveying on March 4th. NACD Meeting will be held in Cherokee August 9-12.

William Shillito made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Brandon Bowman seconded. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 10:05 a.m.

Minutes taken by Leia Hamlyn.

 Stephen Killian, Board Chair