

MINUTES

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

Meeting Number 4

May 1, 2026

Supervisors Present:

Julia Elmore

Brandon Bowman

William Shillito

David Caldwell

Others Present:

Randy Willis, Soil Conservation Supervisor

Blake Henley, Soil Conservation Technician

Leia Hamlyn, Education Coordinator

Will Faulkner, NCRS

Julia Elmore read the following statements then called the business meeting to order at 9:08 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. William Shillito seconded. All in favor. Motion passed. Agenda approved.

William Shillito made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 6, 2026, board meeting. Brandon Bowman seconded. All in favor. Motion passed. Minutes approved.

New Business

Election of Officers

William Shillito nominated Julia Elmore to the position of Board Chair. David Caldwell seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.

David Caldwell nominated Brandon Bowman to the position of Board Vice Chair. William Shillito seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.

Brandon Bowman made a motion to ask David Caldwell to continue in the role of Secretary/Treasurer. All in favor. Motion passed.

Brandon Bowman made a motion for William Shillito to serve in the position of Area 2 Chair. David Caldwell seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.

William Shillito made a motion to move Julia Elmore to an Appointed Position. Brandon Bowman seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.

The following people were recommended in the following order to serve the remainder of Julia's current elected term:

1. Brett Little
2. David Carpenter
3. Jessica Little

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

District Operations and Technical Assistance

Item I

- A. Assisted landowners with soil sample information.
- B. Assisted Iredell Soil & Water with contracting information.
- C. StRAP – We received approval for two sites in the amount of \$375,000, submitting more information for approval of the third site.
- D. Ranking Sheets- David Caldwell made a motion to approve the Ranking Sheet for **NCACSP**. Brandon Bowman seconded. All in favor. Motion passed. William Shillito made a motion to approve the Ranking Sheet for **AgWRAP**. David Caldwell seconded. All in favor. Motion passed. Brandon Bowman made a motion to approve the Ranking Sheet for **CCAP**. David Caldwell seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.
- E. William Shillito made a motion to go to closed session so that technical staff could release confidential information regarding specific project cancellations. David Caldwell seconded. William Shillito made a motion to come out of closed session. Brandon Bowman seconded. All in favor. No action was taken during the closed session. William Shillito then made a motion to approve the Strategic Plan. David Caldwell seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.
- F. David Caldwell made a motion to approve the BMP Fund Certification. Brandon Bowman seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.

NCACSP

Item II

- A. Contract 18-2024-02-01 is nearing completion. Will be processing the RFP.

AGWRAP

Item III

- A. Contract 18-2026-802-03 has been approved by the state.
- B. Contract 18-2026-801-03 has drilled the well and will be installing the pump.

CCAP

Item IV

- No new reports at this time

Leia Hamlyn presented the Education and Outreach report:

Item V

- A. The first choice RCW candidate accepted the invitation to attend the workshop.
- B. State Envirothon was held April 24-25. One team from Catawba participated. The other team had a last-minute conflict and had to withdraw before the competition.
- C. April 17 was Bandys Ag Day. Randy and Blake presented multiple lessons on the use of drones in agriculture culminating in a drone flight demonstration. The students loved it!
- D. Summer Programs have been planned for the Library and Sipes Orchard home.

OTHER BUSINESS

Item VI

- RFPs delegated signatures need to be approved for the Strategic Plan.
- William Shillito put forth Julia Elmore's name to be listed as the first signature. David Caldwell seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.
- David Caldwell put forth Brandon Bowman's name to be listed as the second signature. William Shillito seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.

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

EQIP/CSP Catawba:

EQIP 2026: Team 5- 87 applications (5 eligible Catawba)
2 active contracts - \$90,000

CSP 2026: Team 5- 4 applications (1 in eligible Catawba)
1 active contracts - \$20,000

FY 2026 Programs

- Eligibility Deadline was 3/6/26
- Approximately \$30M for EQIP with \$8M being RPP
- New USDA Regenerative Agriculture Program announced nationwide
 - \$700M in EQIP and CSP
 - 20% of funds have to go to this Program
 - Soil Testing in 1st and 5th year of contract
 - TIMELINE

Description	Date
Application Cutoff	January 15, 2026
Program Eligibility Certification Request Letter Mailed* (to include 530.142E Conservation Program Application Checklist)	January 30, 2026
Eligibility Determination	March 6, 2026
Screening/Assessment/Ranking	May 15, 2026
Pre-approval	May 22, 2026
Quality Assurance	June 12, 2026
ACT Now and LCI Obligation	July 24, 2026
CSP/EQIP Obligation	September 18, 2026

Fieldwork: Spring is a busy time with lots of work getting started. We have multiple projects under construction. With help from NRCS Area 2 engineers we are being able to get some overdue projects started within Team 5.

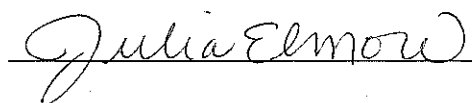
Other Notes: Mr. Tim Beard's, State Conservationist, last day was 3/27. Julius George has been named the Acting State Conservationist.

Elise McLaughlin sent the Division Report via email. Elise was attending the State Speech and Poster Contest held today in Randolph County. Advance Supervisor Training will be held July 14 in Spindale. State Envirothon was held April 24-25 at Cedarock Park in Burlington. Area 2 Fall Meeting is scheduled for October 15. NACD Meeting will be held in Cherokee August 9-12.

William Shillito led the room in a moment of silence to honor the memory of Stephen Killian who passed away suddenly on April 25, 2026. The following words of tribute were expressed by Randy Willis in notification to board members on April 27th:
 "Steve's passing is still a shock. He was huge advocate of our cost share programs and especially our education programs, to both students and adults. To say his contribution to the Soil & Water Board and the agriculture community of Catawba County will be greatly missed is an understatement."

William Shillito made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Brandon Bowman seconded. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 10:39 a.m.

Minutes taken by Leia Hamlyn.

 Julia Elmore, Board Chair