

*Collaborative Natural Resource Protection and Conservation Education*



*North Carolina Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts*

# 2026 Policies, Positions & Action Items



*Building district capacities since 1944*

*P.O. Box 27943, Raleigh NC 27611*

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Fellow Conservationist,

I am excited to serve this year as President of our Association. My lifelong career has been in conservation through the District. Starting as a student intern with our federal partner, I have seen the growth of the services, science and technology to assist those who use the land to feed and clothe our nation and the world. Those who have served before us have paved a path of increased protection of our natural resources and I am excited to continue our future contributions.

Our Association and the North Carolina District Partnership has a rich history of leading the charge for voluntary implementation of conservation. I strive to assist in continuing that legacy. As we look forward to welcoming the Southeast states for the 2026 SE NACD meeting, increasing the opportunities to assist producers with innovated soil health practices and educating students and citizens, our state will continue its leadership.

This document of our policies, positions and action items will be our roadmap for 2026. As we work together this year to accomplish these goals, please know that I am committed to the efforts of each Soil and Water Conservation District across our state. Together, we will continue the legacy put forth by Dr. Bennett and the many technical, administrative and educational professionals that came before us.

Thank you all for what you do to promote conservation and serve the citizens and natural resources of our great state.

With great appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gail M. Hughes". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Gail M. Hughes  
President  
NCASWCD

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## COMMUNITY CONSERVATION

**Chair – Max Ralston James (Iredell)**

**Vice Chair – Mitchell Mullen (Mecklenburg)**

### ***Policies & Positions***

1. The Association recognizes the need for land use planning, but opposes any state or federal land use planning act that fails to delegate authority in such planning to local officials. The Association recommends that the local soil and water conservation local soil and water conservation districts become one of the main agents to develop and implement local land use plans. Local soil and water conservation local soil and water conservation districts should work to ensure adequate representation with local work groups including; but not limited to Parks & Recreation and Planning & Zoning so that good conservation practices may be implemented and maintained. Promotion of greenways, open spaces, buffers, and other green land use practices are encouraged. Actions of all officials should include adequate public hearings. **2007**
2. The Association encourages users of eminent domain for the taking of farm or forest land to prove an overriding public need exists--without a reasonable or prudent alternative--before public funds could be invested for roads, streets, water or sewer facilities, and similar items. In addition, this public need must be proven if actions taken were to decrease the productivity or adversely affect the remaining or adjacent farm and forestland. **2015**
3. The Association supports the NC Sedimentation Pollution Control Act of 1973, including the review process required by local ordinances for erosion control plans by local soil and water conservation district Supervisors, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) staff, and local soil and water conservation district staff. Each local soil and water conservation district is encouraged to work on erosion and sedimentation problems to maintain agriculture's exemption from the Act. This will be done by providing education on and promoting the use of BMPs to prevent sediment runoff. Each local soil and water conservation district is encouraged to support local sedimentation and erosion control programs. **2006**
4. The Association will continue to support an effective level of recurring funding for the NC Agriculture Cost Share Program, the Agricultural Water Resources Assistance Program, the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, and the Community Conservation Assistance Program. **2025**
5. The Association supports dedicated funding for the Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund, the NC Land and Water Fund, and the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund. The Association endorses the preservation of open space by providing incentives to landowners to preserve farm and forest land. **2019**
6. The Association supports local soil and water conservation district involvement in assisting with National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase I and Phase II Regulations to help improve surface water quality. **2007**



7. The Association supports the continual expansion of approved best management practices (BMPs) for Community Conservation projects as needs are identified by local soil and water conservation districts across the state. **2007**
8. The Community Conservation Committee urges local soil and water conservation districts to develop relationships with nonprofit organizations, land trusts, corporations, and other government agencies. **2010**
9. The Association seeks to encourage more widespread adoption of low impact development (LID) techniques. The Association encourages local soil and water conservation districts to promote the adoption of LID techniques through adoption of local government ordinances, modifications of state and local mandates for conventional stormwater management, and outreach to developers and/or builders to show the financial benefits of LID using available resources including the Wildlife Resources Commission's Green Growth Toolbox. **2014**
10. The Association will annually confer the "Outstanding Accomplishments in Community Conservation" known as the Jim Stephenson Award for an outstanding local soil and water conservation district community conservation effort. **2015**

### ***Action Items***

1. The Association requests recurring funds of \$1.5 million for Community Conservation Assistance Program (CCAP) BMP implementation, and \$225,000 for technical assistance. **2024, 2025**
2. The Association encourages local soil and water conservation districts to promote soil and water conservation BMPs with contractors, real estate developers, lending institutions, government agencies, and local citizens. To do this, local soil and water conservation districts need to provide technical assistance so that their clients will become aware of the importance of conserving all rural, suburban and urban land. Develop an ag production program for non-ag citizens by Annual Meeting 2027. **2007, 2026**

## **DISTRICT OPERATIONS**

**Chair – Madison Bridges (Cleveland)**

**Vice Chair – Dewitt Hardee (Johnston)**

### ***Policies & Positions***

1. The Association will continue as a leader to improve the quality of North Carolina (NC) soils and waters. The Association encourages the local soil and water conservation districts to expand their role in developing policies and programs with our conservation partners toward meeting the conservation challenges. This effort must retain our non-regulatory function in assisting cooperators and would be contingent on the provision of adequate funding. **2005, 2024**
2. The Association encourages the NC Division of Soil & Water Conservation to seek funds and grants to fund additional projects and personnel to assist local soil and water conservation districts in addressing soil and water quality problems and conservation issues. **2005, 2024, 2026**

3. The Association is interested in maintaining a leadership role for improving water quality and other natural resources in NC by encouraging local soil and water conservation districts to take State & Local officials on an annual tour of their best management practices (BMP's), and to express appreciation to State Representatives, Senators and local officials for their support. The Association encourages local soil and water conservation district Supervisors to maintain contact with their members of Congress, State Legislators and local officials to seek their support in funding NC Division of Soil & Water Conservation programs. **2014**
4. The Association supports additional staffing, scheduling, and formatting of statewide technical training and testing with reasonable access to all local soil and water conservation districts. **2024**
5. The Association supports local soil and water conservation district employees being properly trained in animal waste management systems and any other aspects of future technical areas. This technical training will be based on the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Field Office Technical Guide Standards and other applicable information. There needs to be continual training, so that local soil and water conservation district employees can stay current and new employees are qualified to handle the role of duties associated with inspections. **2005**
6. The Association will continue to support the conservation partnership organization's efforts to provide cooperators with the information and technical support they need to comply with regulations. Having this partnership also serves as the regulatory authority, the role traditionally served by NC Department of Environmental Quality, would threaten the partnership's historical working relationship with producers, which has been very effective in reaching resource conservation goals over the years. **2003**
7. The Association encourages all conservation partners; local soil and water conservation district supervisors and employees of the local soil and water conservation districts, NRCS, NC Division of Soil & Water Conservation, NC Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services (NCDA&CS) and Cooperative Extension Service (CES), to participate in the Basic Training and Advanced Training for Soil and Water Conservation Supervisors. **2006, 2025**
8. The Association appreciates and supports the Division for maintaining, updating and posting the NC District Directory, which includes; local soil and water conservation districts, and NRCS. **2014, 2026**
9. The Association encourages every local soil and water conservation district to involve NRCS, CES, NCDA&CS and the NC Division of Soil & Water Conservation in annual and long-range planning. In addition, the management of NRCS, CES, NCDA&CS, NC Division of Soil & Water Conservation and NC Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ) are encouraged to follow the lead in their planning processes. All local soil and water conservation districts are encouraged to list in all planning documents; NC Division of Soil & Water Conservation, NC Foundation for Soil & Water Conservation (Foundation), NRCS, CES, NCDA&CS and NCDEQ programs. **2016**
10. The Association encourages that any partner with significant policy change or operational changes that may impact another partner notify well in advance all other partners affected by the change via electronic communication. **2007, 2026**
11. The Association supports local soil and water conservation district involvement, where appropriate, in creating and implementing Local Ordinances that protect important natural resources; these local ordinances include, but are not limited to, Erosion and Sediment Control

ordinances, Low Impact Development ordinances, Stormwater ordinances, Steep Slope ordinances, and Water Conservation ordinances. **2008**

12. The Association fully endorses the NC Conservation District Employee Training & Certification Initiative. The Association supports the workgroup in carrying out the training by including this in the Program Objectives of the Association. The Association supports a survey of the current trainings, from all available partners and resources that are available to local soil and water conservation district employees. Local soil and water conservation district staff and supervisors shall provide input to the training needs or training that could be improved upon. **2010**
13. The Association encourages all local soil and water conservation district Supervisors to become aware and knowledgeable of the importance of Job Approval Authority (JAA), the level of authority currently held by technical local soil and water conservation district staff, and encourage all staff to seek the highest possible JAA for commonly used practices in the local soil and water conservation district. The Association encourages all local soil and water conservation district Supervisors to work with staff to ensure all employees have comprehensive training plans. The Association encourages all local soil and water conservation district Supervisors to seek incentives of monetary gains for staff who complete and receive JAA certification and other technical achievements from their local county government and other resources. **2011, 2015, 2019, 2025, 2026**
14. The Association supports the NC Division of Soil & Water Conservation exploring the option of utilizing engineering graduate students from NC State University (NCSU) and or other engineering schools to assist with implementation of conservation practices, as needed. **2020**
15. The Association encourages each local soil and water conservation district in the state to include, as part of each official meeting, a conflict of interest statement and statement of professionalism be read and affirmed by local soil and water conservation district officials before any business of the local soil and water conservation district is conducted. **2019, 2026**
16. The Association supports full and continued effort by the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) to enable NRCS to fill vital conservation technical assistance positions and vacancies, even during hiring freezes. These positions are crucial supports of local soil and water conservation districts' effort to provide conservation programs. **2020**
17. The Association, along with the NC Division of Soil & Water Conservation and other partners, will continue to encourage the NC Department of Transportation to allow the local soil and water conservation districts to post signs at each county line and major thoroughfare in the state in a uniform and professional manner as to be beneficial to the public. **2020**
18. The Association supports the Professional Conservation Employees Program (PCEP) in its efforts to create and maintain a database to document and track partnership employees in their efforts to enhance and expand their professional knowledge, skills and abilities. The database would track efforts such as successful completion of the training courses and workshops, securing JAA, or obtaining related certifications (e.g. Certified Conservation Planners (CCP)). **2020**
19. The Association encourages local soil and water conservation districts to support the Foundation through an annual donation to the Foundation's Sustainability Fund. **2020**

### **Action Items**

1. The Association will urge the NRCS leadership to supply a portion of their conservation technical assistance and BMP funds to the NC Division of Soil & Water Conservation, Foundation and other capable non-profits, to allocate these funds to the 96 local soil and water conservation districts for the implementation of BMPs. **2019, 2025**
2. The Association will encourage local soil and water conservation district Supervisors to establish an equal partnership with county government and to educate county officials of the importance of what local soil and water conservation districts do for the county and area. The Association shall work on a reporting model for all local soil and water conservation districts to use and adjust as needed. **2025**
3. The Association will develop a suggested salary/award system for employees receiving JAA and other certification approvals. **2026**

## **EDUCATION**

**Chair – David Harris (Durham)**

**Vice Chair – Richard Hayes (Chatham)**

### **Policies & Positions**

1. The Association encourages all local soil and water conservation districts to participate in the following educational activities:
  - a. Assist schools in developing projects on and off campus.
  - b. Obtain a conservation plan on all school grounds and recognize these schools for installing this plan.
  - c. Distribute Soil and Water Conservation materials in schools.
  - d. Support 4-H Environmental Quality Demonstration Contests, Future Farmers of America (FFA) Land Judging Contests, the Forestry Contest, and any other career conservation education programs.
  - e. Support Soil and Water Stewardship Week. Local soil and water conservation districts will be responsible for copying and distributing available materials.
  - f. Support the Resource Conservation Workshop by sponsoring a student representative. **2014**
2. The Association supports Project Food, Land & People, Project Learning Tree, Project Wild, Project WET and Ag in the Classroom as additional conservation education programs for local soil and water conservation districts. **2003, 2026**
3. The Association supports implementation of natural resource programs to be used for teacher renewal credit workshops offered by local soil and water conservation districts. **2003, 2024**

4. The Association supports the Area and State Envirothon competitions for grades 5-8 and 9-12 and encourages all local soil and water conservation districts in NC to sponsor at least one team from their local soil and water conservation district to the Envirothon competition. **2003**
5. The Association will provide \$300 cash award and \$150 travel allowance to each of the Conservation Teachers of the Year to attend the state association annual meeting awards banquet. **2003, 2019**
6. The Association encourages each local soil and water conservation district to include all children in its diverse educational programs. **2014, 2019**
7. The Association strongly encourages each of the Association's eight areas continue to sponsor two Resource Conservation Workshop counselors on an annual basis by covering their registration fee, meal costs and mileage as applicable. In addition, the Association encourages each area to give their respective counselor a stipend after he/she has completed the one-week of service at the workshop. The suggested amount of the one-week stipend is \$200.00 per counselor per week. **2014, 2026**
8. The Association requests that each local soil and water conservation district update them on any new Education contact person(s). **2014, 2024, 2026**
9. The Association Education Coordinator is encouraged to develop a list of resource materials applicable to assigned topics for poster, essay and public speaking contests. The local soil and water conservation district Educators are encouraged to assist in development and sharing of these resources at the annual Conservation Employee Training Institute. To the extent feasible, this list should be available by September 1<sup>st</sup> each new school year and will be provided to each Area of the Association. **2020, 2024, 2026**
10. The Association shall provide an educational display at the NC State Fair and at the Mountain State Fair promoting the local soil and water conservation districts of NC. **2014**
11. The Association does hereby recognize April as Environmental Awareness Month in NC and National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) Stewardship Week. The Association proclaims October as Environmental Education Month. **2003, 2024, 2025**
12. The Area I Association will be allowed to draw funds from the Association's State Fair budget for the Mountain State Fair, to be coordinated annually. A representative from the Mountain State Fair shall be appointed to the State Fair Committee by the Education Committee Chair. Also, all handouts and other materials for the Mountain State Fair shall be ordered with the material for the NC State Fair. **2014, 2025**
13. The Association shall continue to maintain a website to provide information on educational programs, guidelines and templates to be used by the local soil and water conservation districts in developing educational outreach. **2014, 2025**
14. The Association will join the NC Division of Soil & Water Conservation as a sponsor of the NC Environmental Education Certification Program. All local soil and water conservation district educators are encouraged to obtain this certification. Local soil and water conservation districts are encouraged to support their personnel in this effort both financially and with paid work time to enable the employee to accomplish certification. **2019**
15. The Association encourages local soil and water conservation districts and Areas to support Conservation Volunteers, the AmeriCorp Member Program, the Natural Resources

Conservation Service (NRCS) Earth Team Volunteer Program, and to implement local intern programs for high school and college students. **2022, 2025**

16. The Association wants to ensure that environmental education programs are accessible and relevant to current science and natural resource topics. Statewide coordination of existing programs, and the need to implement new education programs, to increase outreach efforts in environmental education are needed. The Association encourages local soil and water conservation districts to pledge financial support annually to fund an Association environmental education position. **2024, 2025**

### **Action Items**

1. The Association encourages and requests local soil and water conservation districts to embrace Soil, Water, Agriculture Training (S.W.A.T.) curriculum as a core educational program. The Association requests each Area to schedule and implement an annual S.W.A.T. teacher's workshop or activity. The Association encourages the NC Division of Soil & Water Conservation to support S.W.A.T. by providing adequate staff hours and resources to implement the statewide coordination of the program as staff to the S.W.A.T. Committee. The Association encourages the NC Division of Soil & Water Conservation to support the S.W.A.T. Committee's Action Plan objectives for recurring funding, marketing materials, facilitator and teacher workshop and strategy. **2025**
2. The Association commits to annual support of the environmental education position. The Association requests local soil and water conservation districts commit annual financial support for the environmental education position. **2024, 2025**
3. A steering-committee will be formed to include the Mobile Soils Classroom (MSC) Committee Chair, two local soil and water conservation district supervisors, representatives from the host local soil and water conservation districts, and a representative(s) from the lesson planning steering-committee. Their function will be:
  - a. Mobile Soils Classroom programs
    - 1) Create Host local soil and water conservation district Memorandum of Understanding with the Association
    - 2) Plan and schedule Annual Host Meeting
    - 3) Plan and schedule Annual Host Training
    - 4) Create a MSC trailer maintenance schedule
    - 5) Plan and schedule training on the Groundwater Simulation model
    - 6) Create a new lesson annually and update any MSC lesson plans that are currently incomplete
    - 7) Inventory and maintain resources after each use
  - b. Seek funding
  - c. Develop displays & handouts on activities for school classes and for adult field days

- d. Explore electronic advertising and outreach including but not limited to social media and website for Mobile Soils Classroom projects. **2014, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2024, 2026**
4. The Association will support the Soil and Water Conservation State Fair Committee in working with the State Fair Management group to increase the visibility of the Soil and Water Conservation State Fair display booth.
  - a. The Association's State Fair Committee will coordinate with local soil and water conservation districts to bring interactive education materials that can be used for the State Fair.
  - b. The Association and NC Foundation for Soil & Water Conservation (Foundation) are partnering with the Hugh Hammond Bennett Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society to research options for providing a permanent commemoration of Hugh Hammond Bennett and the history of the Soil and Water Conservation movement.
  - c. Update or replace the "Wheel of Conservation".
  - d. The State Fair Committee is encouraged to explore coordinating with the Soil Science Society of NC to provide hands-on soil demonstrations. **2018, 2020, 2021, 2024, 2026**

## FINANCE

**Chair – Bill Yarborough (Haywood)**  
**Vice Chair – Melinda James (Macon)**

### ***Policies & Positions***

1. The Association will operate by paying dues as assessed. The following dues assessment will be used to fund the Association's budget: Dues \$700 per county, effective fiscal year 2023. **2023**
2. The Association shall contribute an amount not to exceed \$1,500 to the host local soil and water conservation district and/or County in paying itemized expenses of the NC Future Farmers of America (FFA) Association to conduct an annual statewide land-judging contest. **2014**
3. The Association endorses the selection of an outside auditor to be hired to audit the financial records of the Association. The books will be closed on December 31 and audited as soon as possible thereafter and reported to the Association. A full audit will be done every third year with compilation reviews in between. **2024**
4. The Association encourages gifts and contributions to the Association Endowment Fund with interest income used to help defray expenses of the Association. Should the Association be dissolved, the Executive Committee shall place all remaining funds of the Association Endowment Fund with the Hugh Hammond Bennett Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society. **2003**
5. The Association recommends that local soil and water conservation district Supervisors who are requested to attend meetings called by the Association or government agencies pertaining

to Association business be reimbursed mileage at \$0.40 per mile rate. If overnight lodging is required, lodging and meals will be reimbursed at actual cost not to exceed the State rate. Receipts are required. **2008**

6. The Association adopts the Finance Committee recommendation that the Association provide funds for travel expenses for the following meetings: National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) and Southeast NACD Meetings \$2,000 per delegate, up to 8 delegates for the NACD meeting and \$1,500 per delegate, up to 8 delegates for the Southeast NACD Meeting. **2025**
7. The Association will be responsible for one room and banquet costs (up to 6 tickets) per regional winner to defray Conservation Farm Family expenses to attend the annual meeting. The Area/local soil and water conservation district will be responsible for all other expenses. **2016**
8. The Association will provide \$1,200 to help cover costs of sending the NC Envirothon Committee Chairman, or his designee (giving local soil and water conservation district Supervisors first priority) to two National Envirothon Committee Meetings. **2003**
9. In the case of death of any past or present supervisor, the Association will send a memorial of \$50.00 to the endowment fund annually for each supervisor recognized at the Memorial Service at the Annual Meeting. **2025**
10.
  - a. There will be a \$50.00 differential between Annual Meeting early registration and registration at the door. (An attendee saves \$50.00 by registering early.) An exception will be made for new supervisors whose service begins on or after the registration deadline. The State Association Executive Committee will set the registration deadline each year.
  - b. The Finance Committee will give no refunds of Annual Meeting Registration fees after the Wednesday prior to the start of the Annual Meeting without special approval of the Executive Committee. **2025**
11. Special requests for approval of refunds must be presented to the State Association Executive Committee. Approval or disapproval of such special requests or emergency situations is solely at the discretion of the State Association Executive Committee. **2005**
12. The Finance Committee institutes a past dues collection policy as follows:
  - a. The Association President will send a letter to the local soil and water conservation district chairman of any local soil and water conservation district with any dues outstanding as of September 1. **2014**
  - b. The Association President or designee will call the local soil and water conservation district chairman of any local soil and water conservation district with any dues outstanding as of November 1. **2014**
13. The Association has the right and expectation for existing and new programs to collect an administration fee up to 15%. **2021**



## **Action Items**

1. The Association shall redesign the website to improve accessibility and navigation for documents and event registrations. **2026**
2. The Association shall establish an online payment option for the NCASWCD to accept payments and donations. **2026**

## **LEGISLATIVE**

**Chair – Craig Frazier (Randolph)**

**Vice Chair – Bill Alston (Randolph)**

### **Policies & Positions**

1. Each local soil and water conservation district shall submit annually the name of a local soil and water conservation district supervisor who will serve as an active Legislative Liaison to the Association for that local soil and water conservation district. Area Legislative Delegates will assist with getting names from each local soil and water conservation district within their Area and report those findings to the Association's Legislative Chair and Executive Director. **2022**
2. The Association expresses its appreciation to the members of the General Assembly for their continued support given to the Agriculture Cost Share Program for Nonpoint Source Pollution Control (ACSP), the Community Conservation Assistance Program (CCAP), the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), and the Agricultural Water Resources Assistance Program (AgWRAP), Disaster Funding, the Streamflow Rehabilitation Assistance Program (StRAP), and their support in sustaining the local conservation infrastructure in local soil and water conservation districts and funding through the NC Soil & Water Conservation Commission and the NCDA&CS Division of Soil & Water Conservation. The Association strongly encourages the General Assembly to continue to provide strong support for non-regulatory programs delivered through local soil and water conservation districts. **2026**
3. The Association supports the restoration of full technical assistance funding for the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to the level required to have one NRCS field employee per local soil and water conservation district. **2025**
4. The Association supports recognition by the Environmental Protection Agency, state and local water quality programs that nonpoint source program funding seriously lags behind point source programs, and is not allocated to NC based on the attributed nonpoint source proportion of the water quality problem. **2014**
5. The Association supports federal and state legislation or other action to compensate landowners, through tax benefits or other incentives, for conservation actions taken in response to federal and state regulations for wetlands, animal waste management, buffers, threatened and endangered species, and other water quality related programs. **2025**
6. The Association believes that a collaborative and coordinated effort by the Section 319 Program is essential to achieve clean water goals, and urges the NC Congressional Delegation to support the continued funding of the Section 319 grant program. **2007**

7. The Association will take action through NACD (e.g., via resolutions) to ensure NC plays a leadership role in dealing with national conservation issues. **2003**
8. The Association supports common conservation goals and actions taken through the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA), the National Association of State Conservation Agencies (NASCA), the Association of Conservation Executive Directors (ACED) and the National Association of State Foresters (NASF). **2023**
9. The Association strongly opposes any barriers such as no rise studies, and air quality permits for burning, that prevent or impede conservation planning and the implementation of BMPs for landowners. **2025**
10. The Association supports that Supervisors for North Carolina always serve as non-partisan elected and appointed positions. **2020**
11. The Association requests that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)-NRCS accept and provide assistance with supervisors interested in participating in any program that could assist with the local soil and water conservation districts to legally hold and legally monitor conservation easements of working lands. **2018**
12. Any new or existing funding request should not come from any existing North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services (NCDACS) funds unless so specified. **2021**
13. The Association supports the permanent reinstatement of the NC State tax credits for conservation easements for farm and forest lands, military buffers, floodplains, and public access. **2023**
14. The Association supports the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) working closely with the appropriate congressional committees to re-establish general and adequate technical assistance funding for NRCS personnel within USDA that is separate and independent from Conservation Programs that are delivered through each occurring Farm Bill. **2023**
15. Local soil and water conservation district supervisors are encouraged to establish strong working relationships with their local NC General Assembly members. **2026**
16. The Association will support the efforts to enhance benefits to landowners participating in VAD or Enhanced VAD. **2024**

### **Action Items**

1. The Association will work with the NC General Assembly to remove maximum caps on state cost share programs administered by the NC Soil & Water Conservation Commission under NC G.S. 106-850 (6) NC Agricultural Cost Share, 106-860 (b) (4) Community Conservation Assistance, and 139-60 (c) 1 & 2 Ag Water Resources Assistance. **2025**
2. The Association will seek increased funding for the ACSP best management practices and technical assistance. The Association will request additional amounts of \$4.0 million for best management practices and \$600,000 for local soil and water conservation district technical assistance. **2023**
3. The Association shall work with NACD and other partners to support an increase in the federal funding rate for the construction phase of the PL-566 Watershed Rehabilitation Program from

the current cost share rate of 65% federal and 35% local to a cost share rate of 90% federal and 10% non-federal when the project is designed to meet the federal NRCS standard. Furthermore, the Association shall work with NACD and other partners to allow a construction cost share rate of 65% federal and 35% local when the rehabilitation project is designed to meet applicable State Dam Safety hydrologic criteria for principal and auxiliary spillways with concurrence from appropriate State Dam Safety officials and the NRCS Conservation Engineering Division. **2023, 2024**

4. The Association will request that the General Assembly provide \$20 million in recurring funding for the Streamflow Rehabilitation Assistance Program (StRAP) sufficient to meet ongoing program needs. **2023**
5. The Association will support NACD to change Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWPP) funding authority so that funds are available for use as authorized for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) following a disaster event. **2023**
6. The Association will seek increased funding for the statewide CCAP, established in NCGS-106 Article 73. The Association requests an increase in the amount of recurring funding to \$1.5 million for BMP funding and \$225,000 for technical assistance to assist local soil and water conservation districts with delivery of Community Conservation. **2023**
7. The Association will request the Governor and the General Assembly raise the annual recurring appropriation from \$5 million to \$15 million for the NC Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund. **2023**
8. The Association will request that the Governor and the NC General Assembly increase the appropriation of recurring funds made available each year to reimburse local soil and water conservation district Supervisors for necessary travel and training expenses to conduct their official duties by the number sufficient to meet the needs and increase matching funds by \$240,000 during the current budget process. The Association President, the NC Soil & Water Conservation Commission Chairman, and Director of the NC Division of Soil & Water Conservation, will work in concert with NCDA&CS, the Governor and the General Assembly to achieve this priority funding need. **2024**
9. The Association will seek an additional recurring appropriation of \$1,000,000 for the Agricultural Water Resources Assistance Program (AgWRAP) for financial and \$215,000 for technical assistance. Funding should not come from a reduction in other soil and water conservation cost share programs. **2014, 2024, 2025**
10. The Association shall request that the General Assembly specify in local soil and water conservation district Law (N.C.G.S. 139) that the mileage reimbursement rate for local soil and water conservation district Supervisors shall equal the current business standard mileage rate set by the Internal Revenue Service. **2023**
11. The Association requests change in legislation to authorize the Farm Service Agency (FSA) Farm, Tract, and Field Number to be included as an additional eligibility criteria for the ACSP and AgWRAP. **2023**
12. The Association requests that the Division establish a "Soil Health Program" and seek funding for best management practices (BMPs) that improve soil health just as the ACSP funds BMPs to improve water quality. **2024**

13. The Association will work with the NC Division of Soil & Water Conservation and the NC General Assembly to secure adequate staffing support for Technical Assistance, Engineering and Training. **2026**

## NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

**Chair – Donald Rogers (Johnston)**

**Vice Chair – Grace Summers (Guilford)**

### **Policies & Positions**

1. The Association recommends that local soil and water conservation districts take a stronger initiative in encouraging improved forest land management and forest health programs in their local soil and water conservation districts.
  - a. The Association recommends that all local soil and water conservation districts devote at least one meeting a year to evaluating and developing a specific program for improved forestland management in their local soil and water conservation districts, and invite the local NC Forest Service to participate.
  - b. The Association supports the following programs:
    - 1) The NC Forest Service Forest Development Program, the NC Tree Farm Programs, and Forest Stewardship and Forest Legacy Programs;
    - 2) The NC State University College of Natural Resources' Small Woodlot Research and Demonstration Program; and,
    - 3) The implementation of forest best management practices (BMPs) by forest landowners, timber buyers, and harvesting loggers when harvesting and/or re-foresting timberlands to reduce accelerated erosion, to reduce stream sedimentation and improve water quality.
  - c. The Association supports, under supervision of the NC Forest Service and other certified burners [as defined in GS 113-60.41], the practice of prescribed burning as a tool in forest management.
  - d. The Association and local soil and water conservation districts are urged to take a strong stand on increasing financial assistance for the Forest Development Program (FDP) and other forestry incentive programs and also, to work with our state and national legislators toward a better understanding of forestry practices and costs. **2013**
2. The Association supports the Wildlife Resources Commission in its program efforts to focus on cropland, forestland, and right-of-way management. **2003**
3. The Association endorses the extension of Conservation Reserve Program contracts and asks that local soil and water conservation districts encourage program participants to extend their Conservation Reserve Program contract. **2003**
4. The Association supports the partnership established to administer the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program and encourages local soil and water conservation districts to actively

promote this program to eligible landowners. The Association also supports adequate new funding for the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). **2003**

5. The Association supports the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in:
  - a. the creation and enhancement of wildlife habitat under the Working Lands for Wildlife;
  - b. the protection and enhancement of soil, water, air, wildlife, forests and natural resources under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP); and,
  - c. implementing the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) as authorized in the 2014 and 2018 Farm Bill. Continue to support the legacy easement programs (ALE) as authorized. **2022, 2026**
6. The Association supports the State's goal of preserving open space and encourages the state to consider ways to maintain private ownership of working farm and forest lands as a means of achieving this goal. **2021**
7. The Association supports preserving the state's farmland and encourages emphasis on prime farmland:
  - a. Local soil and water conservation districts to take an active role in developing and implementing state and/or local farmland preservation initiatives and creation of Voluntary Agricultural Districts/Enhanced Voluntary Agricultural Districts.
  - b. The General Assembly and local governments to provide financial and other incentives to farmers to preserve working farmlands. **2022**
8. The Association supports local soil and water conservation districts holding conservation easements generated by the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, NC Agricultural Development & Farmland Preservation Trust Fund, Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), NC Land and Water Fund, and other open space preservation programs and encourages the State to make long term funding available for monitoring conservation easements. **2019**
9. The Association recognizes and supports Waterway Cleanup and does further hereby urge every local soil and water conservation district to do their part to restore the beauty and function of our lakes and streams with promoting, supporting, volunteering, or in-kind services for the event. **2016**
10. The Association supports prescribed grazing on pastureland and encourages local soil and water conservation districts to emphasize this practice. **2015**
11. The Association encourages local soil and water conservation district supervisors to work with county officials to encourage Present Use Value (PUV) at the local level. The Association also encourages revenue sources to maintain PUV data that supports the program. **2020**
12. The Association strongly encourages the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) to request the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and NRCS, to deliver all Federal conservation assistance programs in a way that maximizes the locally led process, fully utilizes decisions and priorities formulated through local work groups, and allocates financial cost share resources and ranks program applications at the lowest possible

organizational level, preferably at the local soil and water conservation district level. The Association recommends support for a standardized advertising criterion for local workgroup meetings. **2014**

13. The Association strongly encourages the waiver or exemption of state and local permit fees associated with conservation practices included in a technically sound conservation plan meeting published approved standards. **2013**
14. The Association will encourage a forestry representative to serve on each county's voluntary agriculture district board. **2013**
15. The Association, through local soil and water conservation districts, shall identify major sources of nonpoint source pollution within each local soil and water conservation district and shall work cooperatively with the NC Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ) Division of Water Resources, other agencies and the private sector to develop and implement local and regional strategies to address identified water quality concerns. These local strategies shall be included in local soil and water conservation district Strategic Plans for NC Agriculture Cost Share Program for Nonpoint Source Pollution Control (ACSP) and offered for incorporation into NC Division of Water Resource's river basin plans and any Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs), Effluent Limitations Guidelines (ELG's), or other Implementation Strategies developed to address water quality concerns. **2019**
16. Local soil and water conservation districts are encouraged to develop strategies for addressing water quality concerns in impaired and impacted streams under the Association's Impaired and Impacted Streams Initiative and to work cooperatively with other local soil and water conservation districts, the NC Division of Soil & Water Conservation, and other entities to seek funds and implement BMPs to affect water quality improvement. **2015**
17. The Association supports the Beaver Management Assistance Program (BMAP) and local soil and water conservation districts that identify nuisance beaver problems. **2019**
18. The Association will support partners to produce training and provide education and outreach on conservation easement topics, including legal and fiduciary responsibilities with easements and land ownership for local soil and water conservation districts with yearly updates. **2017**
19. The Association supports the policies for the State of NC to conserve and/or protect our prime, unique, state and locally significant farmland, prime forestland, wildlife habitat, and natural heritage survey sites (hereinafter referred to as important farm and forestlands) and endorses agriculture local soil and water conservation districting, farmland preservation and estate planning in NC. The Association encourages all local soil and water conservation districts in NC that are located in a county without a Voluntary Agricultural District (VAD) Ordinance in place to work with their county commissioners towards adoption of a VAD Ordinance in their county. **2017**
20. The Association supports debris clean out and maintenance of rivers, creeks, streams, and canals, etc., to maintain adequate drainage and help alleviate flooding. **2020**
21. The Association supports the continuation of soil health training by the Conservation Partnership as a priority for all field employees in NC so that there is direct farmer access to quality technical assistance from conservation professionals. **2020**
22. The Association supports Conservation employees receiving education and training to ensure they understand the relationship between conservation measures and food safety, and

continues to support financial assistance provided for BMPs to maintain viable marketable products. **2020**

23. The Association supports working with local soil and water conservation districts, NC Forest Service (NCFS), NRCS, North Carolina Longleaf Coalition and others to restore the Longleaf Pine habitat of this historic, economically valuable and environmentally desirable resource. **2020, 2025**

### **Action Items**

\* Action item #1 is the top priority of this committee.

1. The Association will work with the state and federal partners to develop strategies to provide rapid spot treatment options for streambank stabilization that are cost effective to address landowner, producer and resource concern needs utilizing NRCS EQIP Act Now as a method for funding landowner applications that include NRCS practices 342 (Critical Area Treatment) and 612 (Tree and Shrub Establishment) in the ranking process. **2026**
2. The Association will work with NACD to ensure that revegetation of denuded areas created by contracted work through Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) be included in the scope of work for contracted debris removal and streambank stabilization activities to preserve water quality and prevent current and future erosion. **2026**
3. The Association will seek recurring funds statewide for local soil and water conservation districts and / or local governments to annually clear debris from rivers, creeks, streams, and canals, etc., to maintain adequate drainage and help alleviate flooding. **2023**
4. The Association will request the ACSP Technical Review Committee (TRC) and NC Soil & Water Conservation Commission revise the ACSP Detailed Implementation Plan to reflect a maximum maintenance period of 5 years for all agronomic practices to encourage implementation in light of the current farmland situation in our state for adoption for the Program Year beginning July 2025. **2025**
5. The Association will request the NC General Assembly and the NC Division of Soil & Water Conservation to establish an independent cost share program that will promote the use of BMPs to improve soil health, sustainability, and soil regeneration. **2024**

## **RESEARCH and TECHNOLOGY**

**Chair – Craig Myers (Davie)**

**Vice Chair – Denny Norris (Watauga)**

### **Policies & Positions**

1. The Association encourages and should seek new funding to enable the NC Agricultural Research Service, the NC Cooperative Extension Service, and United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) - Agricultural Research Service to continue and expand research and technology transfer in soil and water conservation. Key research needs include:

- a. Continue research to perfect methodologies for estimating the natural resources and economic benefits of implementation of conservation practices for various production systems. **2026**
- b. Improve methodologies for targeting limited cost share and technical assistance resources for implementing effective conservation practices. **2026**
- c. Remote Sensing and Precision Farming
  - 1) Research and demonstration on economical on-farm use of Remote Sensing Technology and Precision Farming to evaluate crop nutrient, water, and pest status and improve the efficiency of crop inputs. **2026**
  - 2) Research 'precision irrigation' systems and techniques to improve irrigation efficiency and irrigation water management. **2026**
- d. Soil Health
  - 1) Continue to promote research on evaluating and improving soil health to include Biochar and other technologies on working land. **2026**
  - 2) Research and demonstration on grazing cover crops (including both winter and summer annuals) as part of cropping systems to support soil health. **2026**
  - 3) Research and demonstration of farm implement technology that is capable of uniformly distributing cover crop seed mixes containing different sized seeds. **2026**
- e. Herbicide-resistant weed management
  - 1) Evaluate alternative weed control methods, such as heavy cover crops, alternative modes of action for pesticides and crop rotation. **2026**
  - 2) Support development of economically viable crop rotations to address herbicide-resistant weed concerns. **2026**
- f. Research and demonstration on developing new and protect existing pollinator habitat. **2026**
- g. Evaluate and demonstrate alternative techniques for waste treatment, application systems, nutrient recycling, and other procedures that use soil as a receiving medium. **2026**
- h. Develop models to quantify wetland functions and values, as well as the economic and social impact of wetlands, in order to support land-use flexibility decisions and landowner participation in environmental markets. **2026**
- 2. The Association actively promotes alternatives to tillage as a means of weed control. **2026**
- 3. The Association actively promotes the use of soil health systems to increase soil organic matter, moisture retention, and weed suppression on very low residue crops. **2026**



4. The Association supports continued research and policy development to promote effective and sustainable use of nutrients from animal wastes. **2026**

### ***Action Items***

1. The Research & Technology Committee will continue to develop a list of the priority research needs related to soil and water conservation and related research concerns.

This list will be presented, through the Association President, to the Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at NC State University, NC A&T State University and the USDA Agricultural Research Service for consideration when developing their respective research agendas.

This list will be compiled annually and presented by the June meeting following the approval of this document by the Association. **2026**

2. The Association will encourage and maintain communication between the Research and Technology Committee and USDA-ARS to continue funding opportunities for both organizations and provide mutual support when requested. **2026**
3. The Research & Technology Committee will designate a liaison to the USDA-ARS to attend the annual briefing at the Coastal Plain Soil, Water, and Plant Conservation Research Center in Florence, SC, and to identify ways for the Association and the ARS (including the Plant Science Research Unit at NC State University) to be mutually supportive. The designated liaison will report to the Committee on highlights of ARS research and findings of interest to the Association. **2026**
4. The Committee will provide recommendations to the NRCS State Conservationist for priorities for state-level Conservation Innovation Grant request for proposals. **2026**

## **WATER RESOURCES**

**Chair – Kevin Dixon (Rockingham)**

**Vice Chair – Larry Baker (Rockingham)**

### ***Policies & Positions***

1. The Association supports continuation of Drainage/Service Districts and the creation of new Districts as needed. **2019**
2. The Association urges the State and Federal Water Quality Organizations to continue funding and working together in ongoing comprehensive, integrated water quality and water quantity planning at the watershed and basinwide scale. **2020**
3. The Association actively supports the Aquatic Weed Control Program of the NC Division of Water Resources and encourages management alternatives that can minimize aquatic weed infestations. **2020**
4. The Association supports the operation, maintenance, and rehabilitation of PL-566 Small Watershed Program Structures. The Association:

- a. Encourages Federal and State funding to address rehabilitation, restoration and repair or removal of older watershed structures which have reached their design life-span and/or no longer meet safety requirements based on a change in land use, new dam safety requirements, or other factors not associated with inadequate operation and maintenance. The Association shall support the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD), World Environmental and Water Resources Congress, and the National Watershed Coalition in their work with Congress to obtain and sustain funding to support restoration and maintenance of PL-566 structures. **2020**
- b. Encourages local soil and water conservation districts to work with other local sponsors of PL-566 structures to assess the maintenance needs of these structures to enable them to continue to safely provide the benefits for which they were initially installed. **2013**
5. The Association supports the increase of recurring funding for the Agricultural Water Resources Assistance Program (AgWRAP), to expand water efficiency best management practices (BMPs) and farm pond improvements to increase resiliency against damage from future storms and it encourages the use of this program for conservation of our fresh water resources while providing fresh water for farm production. **2020, 2025**
6. The Association strongly encourages local soil and water conservation districts to develop and implement strategies to improve water use efficiency. **2021**
7. The Association supports the responsible construction and maintenance of farm ponds and the 2015 Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, Section 111 which requires the Clean Water Act, Section 404(f)(2) to be less burdensome for agricultural activities. **2015**
8. The Association encourages the authorization of funding to support scientists, engineers and health professionals to continue testing and ensure water protection statewide. Additionally, the Association encourages adequate understanding of environmental and public health implications prior to any discharge of wastewater. **2020**

### **Action Items**

\* Action items #1 through 4 are top priorities of this committee.

1. The Association requests funding for the Streamflow Rehabilitation Assistance Program (StRAP):
  - a. \$20,000,000 in recurring appropriations for program grants and NC Division of Soil & Water Conservation positions to continue the StRAP to support the implementation of projects that protect and restore the integrity of NC's drainage and PL-566 structures, infrastructure, and/or NC Watersheds.
  - b. In addition to recurring appropriations, request additional StRAP funds as needed for disaster recovery or other needs. **2024, 2026**
2. The Association requests United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) – Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) National Headquarters, and or state, to fund Technical Assistance at 20% of the Financial Assistance for the cost of construction for the Emergency Watershed Protection Program to cover the engineering shortfall. **2026**
3. The Association requests the NC Department of Public Safety - Emergency Management seek disaster specific "Guidelines for States and Communities on Emergency Work related to the

Emergency Watershed Protection Program and Streamflow Rehabilitation Assistance Program in Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHAs) for FEMA-4827-DR-NC” for exception to the no-rise certification at the federal level. **2026**

4. Encourage Associations with agricultural interests to continue seeking resolutions and actions from their organizations in support of revising and strengthening the NRCS policy for the Emergency Watershed Protection Program for use with removal of storm-related stream debris affecting agricultural land. In addition, the Association, National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) and USDA-NRCS should work together to allow agricultural lands to be eligible for assistance under the EWP Program Policy. **2022, 2025, 2026**
5. The Association President, Water Resources Committee chair, NRCS State Conservationist and the Directors for Energy, Minerals and Land Resources, Water Resources, and Soil & Water Conservation are encouraged to meet and begin efforts to develop a comprehensive long-range strategy to address the restoration, maintenance and safety concerns associated with PL-566 Small Watershed Program structures in North Carolina. **2014**
6. The Association encourages and requests the State of North Carolina, in conjunction with US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), to establish and enforce reasonable water quality standards on the discharge of perfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), to protect the environment and public health. **2024**
7. The Association urges local soil and water conservation districts to become active participants and leaders for local nonpoint source planning and implementation activities using a watershed approach. Individual local soil and water conservation districts are encouraged to consider multiple programs and funding sources (such as 319, Environmental Quality Incentive Program, Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, NC Land and Water Fund, Federal Agricultural Conservation Easement Program – Wetland Reserve Easements, Division of Mitigation Services, Community Conservation Assistance Program, etc.) when addressing water quality issues. **2017**
8. The Water Resources Committee authorizes the Chair to form a subcommittee to comment on active Interbasin Transfer proposals during public comment on an as needed basis. **2011**
9. The Association will request that NACD work with the US Congress to reclassify current language on jurisdiction, provide alternative language for implementation of conservation practices when owners/producers are working with a Local soil and water conservation district and/or USDA/NRCS. Or, alternatively develop an MOU with the US Army Corps of Engineers for BMPs that are allowable without an investigation or permit. **2023**
10. The Association will work with the NC Department of Insurance, through the NC State Fire Marshal, to correct the USDA-NRCS agency name and include “Soil and Water Conservation District” on the Water Point Certification Form. The Association will work with the conservation partners to develop a training and certification process for employees seeking the knowledge, skills, and abilities to conduct Water Point surveys. **2024**
11. The Association requests that the Strategic Plan for Protecting Agricultural Water Resources in North Carolina as directed in Session Law 2010-149, be updated to reflect current needs and that funding the plan be provided by the NC General Assembly. **2025**

## 2026 ASSOCIATION LEADERSHIP

### 2026 ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

<b>President:</b>	Gail Hughes (Orange)
<b>First Vice-President:</b>	Steve Harris (Albemarle - Pasquotank)
<b>Second Vice-President:</b>	Craig Myers (Davis)
<b>Secretary:</b>	Wayne Collier (Cumberland)
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Josh Myers (Guilford)
<b>Assistant Treasurer:</b>	Bill Yarborough (Haywood)
<b>NACD Board Member:</b>	Myles Payne (Alexander)
<b>Alternate NACD Board Member:</b>	Craig Myers (Davie)
<b>Chaplain:</b>	Tracy Warren (Beaufort)
<b>Assistant Chaplain:</b>	Patrick Baker (Pamlico)

### 2026 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

<b>President:</b>	Gail Hughes (Orange)
<b>First Vice-President:</b>	Steve Harris (Albemarle - Pasquotank)
<b>Second Vice-President:</b>	Craig Myers (Davie)
<b>Immediate Past President:</b>	Barbara Bleiweis (Mecklenburg)
<b>Secretary:</b>	Wayne Collier (Cumberland)
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Josh Myers (Guilford)
<b>NACD Board Member:</b>	Myles Payne (Alexander)
<b>Finance Committee Chair:</b>	Bill Yarborough (Haywood)
<b>Legislative Committee Chair:</b>	Craig Frazier (Randolph)
<b>Area 1 Chair:</b>	Matthew Reynolds (Macon)
<b>Area 2 Chair:</b>	Steve Killian (Catawba)
<b>Area 3 Chair:</b>	Keith Stanley (Chatham)
<b>Area 4 Chair:</b>	Adam Gardner (Wilson)
<b>Area 5 Chair:</b>	Hallet Davis, Jr. (Martin)
<b>Area 6 Chair:</b>	Glen Skinner (Carteret)
<b>Area 7 Chair:</b>	Neil McKenzie (Hoke)
<b>Area 8 Chair:</b>	Cheryl Correll (Rowan)

### 2026 STATE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION COMMISSION

<b>At Large Member:</b>	Dr. Porché Spence
<b>Association President Seat:</b>	Gail Hughes (Orange)
<b>Association First Vice-President Seat:</b>	Steve Harris (Albemarle Pasquotank)
<b>Association Immediate Past President Seat:</b>	Barbara Bleiweis (Mecklenburg)
<b>Mountain Region Seat - 2026-2028:</b>	Matthew Reynolds (Macon)
<b>Piedmont Region Seat – 2025-2027:</b>	James Lamb (Sampson)
<b>Coastal Region Seat – 2024-2026:</b>	Patrick Baker (Pamlico)

## 2026 ASSOCIATION LEADERSHIP

### 2026 ASSOCIATION STANDING COMMITTEES

#### **COMMUNITY CONSERVATION COMMITTEE**

Chair: Max Ralston James (Iredell)  
Vice-Chair: Mitchell Mullen (Mecklenburg)  
Recorder: Payton Lane (Johnston)

##### **Area Delegates:**

Area 1 Drew Brannon (Henderson)  
Area 2 Evan Crawley (Burke)  
Area 3 Scott Sheffield (Moore)  
Area 4 Kenyon Browning (Durham)  
Area 5 Blount Knowles (Bertie)  
Area 6 Matt Collogan (New Hanover)  
Area 7 Matthew Lindsay (Hoke)  
Area 8 Max Ralston James (Iredell)

##### **Alternates:**

Toby Bost (Forsyth)  
Shane Whitaker (Randolph)  
Mark Waller (Durham)  
Johnny Griffin (Bertie)  
  
Gary Hendrix (Hoke)  
Cierra Bradford (Iredell)

##### **Resource Contacts:**

Julie Henshaw	Division of Soil & Water Conservation
Taryn Thompson	Division of Soil & Water Conservation
J'Nay Domineck	USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service
Dru Harrison	NC Local soil and water conservation district Employees Association

#### **LOCAL SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE**

Chair: Madison Bridges (Cleveland)  
Vice-Chair: Dewitt Hardee (Johnston)  
Recorder: Jessica Stitt (New Hanover)

##### **Area Delegates:**

Area 1: James Ferguson (Haywood)  
Area 2: Michael Willis (Caldwell)  
Area 3: Kate Campau (Rockingham)  
Area 4: Dewitt Hardee (Johnston)  
Area 5: Stephen Harris (Albemarle - Pasquotank)  
Area 6: Dietrich Kilpatrick (Craven)  
Area 7: Eddie Hester (Bladen)  
Area 8: Madison Bridges (Cleveland)

##### **Alternates:**

Joe Bennett (Stokes)  
Ray Briggs (Guilford)  
  
Stuart Pierce (Hertford)  
Glenn Skinner, Jr. (Carteret)  
  
Kevin Marion (Davie)

##### **Resource Contacts:**

Amber Rights	Division of Soil & Water Conservation
Nicolai Solomon	Division of Soil & Water Conservation
Kim Poteat	USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service
Gary Holtzmann	NC Local soil and water conservation district Employees' Association

## 2026 ASSOCIATION LEADERSHIP

### 2026 ASSOCIATION STANDING COMMITTEES

#### **EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

Chair: David Harris (Durham)  
Vice-Chair: Richard Hayes (Chatham)  
Recorder: Marybeth Watkins (Brunswick)

##### **Area Delegates:**

Area 1 Charles Boyd (Haywood)  
Area 2 James Booth (Stokes)  
Area 3 Richard Hayes (Chatham)  
Area 4 David Harris (Durham)  
Area 5  
Area 6 Frank Meares (New Hanover)  
Area 7  
Area 8 Rick Karriker (Davie)

##### **Alternates:**

Gary East (Stokes)  
Anna Amoriello (Guilford)  
Tom Taylor (Warren)  
Butch Byrum (Albe – Chowan)  
Tara Hughes (Lenoir)  
  
Vicky Porter (Cabarrus)

##### **Resource Contacts:**

Elise McLaughlin	Division of Soil & Water Conservation
Lee Holcomb	USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service
Lisa Marochak	NC Local soil and water conservation district Employees' Association

#### **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Chair: Bill Yarborough (Haywood)  
Vice-Chair: Melinda James (Macon)  
Recorder: Annette Adams (Johnston)

##### **Area Delegates:**

Area 1 Melinda James (Macon)  
Area 2 Johnny East (Stokes)  
Area 3 Josh Myers (Guilford)  
Area 4  
Area 5 Manly West (Albemarle - Currituck)  
Area 6 Macon Wooten, Jr. (Lenoir)  
Area 7 Wayne Collier, Jr. (Cumberland)  
Area 8 Tommy Houser (Lincoln)

##### **Alternates:**

Wes Schollander (Forsyth)  
Bruce Whitfield (Person)  
Adam Gardner (Wilson)  
  
Tracy Grice (Scotland)  
Ben Knox (Rowan)

##### **Resource Contacts:**

Ken Parks	Division of Soil & Water Conservation
Amanda Sand	NC Foundation for Soil & Water Conservation
Elliot Swain	NC Local soil and water conservation district Employees' Association

## 2026 ASSOCIATION LEADERSHIP

### 2026 ASSOCIATION STANDING COMMITTEES

#### **LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE**

Chair: Craig Frazier (Randolph)  
Vice-Chair: Bill Alston (Randolph)  
Recorder: Kathryn Reis (Randolph)

##### **Area Delegates:**

Area 1	Pam Bell (Macon)
Area 2	Bill Shillito (Catawba)
Area 3	Bill Alston (Randolph)
Area 4	Charles Hill (Johnston)
Area 5	Maurice Berry, Jr. (Albe/Pasquotank)
Area 6	Billy Kilpatrick (Duplin)
Area 7	James Sarvis (Columbus)
Area 8	Nancy Carter (Mecklenburg)

##### **Alternates:**

Carrie Slatosky (Randolph)
Dewitt Hardee (Johnston)
Harvey Roberts (Albe/Currituck)
Lloyd Ransom (Columbus)
Tommy Porter (Cabarrus)

##### **Resource Contacts:**

Bryan Evans	NC Association of Soil and Water Conservation Local soil and water conservation local soil and water conservation districts
David Williams	Division of Soil & Water Conservation
Tim Beard	USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service
Brandy Oldham	NC Local soil and water conservation district Employees' Association

#### **NATURAL ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

Chair: Donald Rogers (Johnston)  
Vice-Chair: Grace Summers (Guilford)  
Recorder: Sherry Scully (Durham)

##### **Area Delegates:**

Area 1	Randy Cabe (Jackson)
Area 2	Ed Spivey (Caldwell)
Area 3	Chris Hogan (Orange)
Area 4	Beth Farrell (Wake)
Area 5	J.W. Spencer (Hyde)
Area 6	Marlene Salyer (Craven)
Area 7	Willie Beard (Bladen)
Area 8	Bruce Rider (Rowan)

##### **Alternates:**

Grace Summers (Guilford)
Donald Rogers (Johnston)
Wayne Black (Beaufort)
Charles Gillespie (Bladen)
Jeff Goforth (Cabarrus)

##### **Resource Contacts:**

John Beck	Division of Soil & Water Conservation
Jennifer Roach	Division of Soil & Water Conservation
Julius George	USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service
Sheri Goodlet	NC Local soil and water conservation district Employees' Association

## 2026 ASSOCIATION LEADERSHIP

### 2026 ASSOCIATION STANDING COMMITTEES

#### **RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE**

Chair: Craig Myers (Davie)  
Vice-Chair: Denny Norris (Watauga)  
Recorder: Morgan Pope (Harnett)

##### **Area Delegates:**

Area 1 Ross Young (Madison)  
Area 2 Denny Norris (Watauga)  
Area 3 George Teague (Guilford)  
Area 4 Charles Mitchell (Franklin)  
Area 5 Hallet Davis (Martin)  
Area 6 Franklin Williams (Duplin)  
Area 7 Jeff Joyner (Richmond)  
Area 8 Bruce Miller (Rowan)

##### **Alternates:**

Jennifer Hanifan (Watauga)  
Karen McAdams (Orange)  
Thomas Dean (Wake)  
  
Ryan Patterson (Harnett)  
Lloyd Phillips (Davidson)

##### **Resource Contacts:**

Rick McSwain	Division of Soil & Water Conservation
Josh Vetter	Division of Soil & Water Conservation
Brandon King	USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service
Mark Walton	NC Local soil and water conservation district Employees' Association

#### **WATER RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

Chair: Kevin Dixon (Rockingham)  
Vice-Chair: Larry Baker (Rockingham)  
Recorder: Celeste Maus (Albemarle - Chowan)

##### **Area Delegates:**

Area 1 Richard Smith (Polk)  
Area 2 Bob Lindsay (Stokes)  
Area 3 Larry Baker (Rockingham)  
Area 4 Thomas Sledge (Franklin)  
Area 5 Gerda Rhodes (Washington)  
Area 6 Donna Mills (Wayne)  
Area 7 Michael Herndon (Robeson)  
Area 8 Wayne Moser (Union)

##### **Alternates:**

Brian Parker (Wilkes)  
Charles Lucas (Montgomery)  
  
James Norfleet (Scotland)  
Arnold Weatherman (Davie)

##### **Resource Contacts:**

Matt Safford	Division of Soil & Water Conservation
Rachel Smith	Division of Soil & Water Conservation
Jim Kjelgaard	USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service
Elton Wilson	NC Local soil and water conservation district Employees' Association



## 2026 ASSOCIATION LEADERSHIP

### 2026 STATE ASSOCIATION: OTHER POSITIONS and COMMITTEES

#### Hall of Fame:

Chairman – Franklin Williams, Duplin SWCD

#### Leadership Development Committee:

Chairman – Dietrich Kilpatrick, Craven SWCD

#### Mobile Soils Classroom Committee:

Rich Hayes, Chatham SWCD

#### Past Presidents Committee:

Myles Payne, Alexander SWCD

#### Personnel Committee:

Gail Hughes, Orange SWCD – Chair (Association President)

Barbara Bleiweis, Mecklenburg SWCD – member (Association Past President)

Steve Harris, Albemarle SWCD-Pasquotank – member (Association Vice President)

Craig Myers, Davie – member (Association Second Vice President)

Bill Yarborough, Haywood SWCD – member (Association Finance Committee Chair)

Josh Myers, Guilford SWCD – member (Association Treasurer)

#### Resource Conservation Workshop Committee:

Chairman – Bruce Whitfield, Person SWCD

#### State Envirothon Committee:

Chairman – Rich Hayes, Chatham SWCD

## 2026 ASSOCIATION LEADERSHIP

### 2026 LOCAL SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT SUPERVISOR MEMBERS: SERVING ON OTHER CONSERVATION RELATED BOARDS and COMMITTEES

*\*For a complete list of Board/Committee members and activities, please visit the listed websites*

#### **Community Conservation Assistance Program (CCAP) Advisory Committee:**

<https://www.ncagr.gov/divisions/soil-water-conservation/programs-initiatives/ccap/ccap-advisory-committee>

Scott Sheffield, Moore SWCD – alternate member

#### **National Association of Conservation Local soil and water conservation local soil and water conservation districts (NACD)**

<http://www.nacdnet.org/>

##### **Executive Board:**

Franklin Williams, Duplin SWCD – Southeast Region

##### **Local soil and water conservation district Operations and Member Services Committee:**

Myles Payne, Alexander SWCD – member (board member)

Craig Myers, Davie SWCD – member (board alternate)

#### **North Carolina Ag Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund Advisory Committee:**

<http://www.ncadfp.org/>

Gail Hughes, Orange SWCD – member (Association President)

#### **North Carolina Foundation for Soil and Water Conservation Board of Directors:**

<http://www.ncsoilwater.org>

Barbara Bleiweis, Mecklenburg SWCD – member (Association Past President)

Gail Hughes, Orange SWCD – member (Association President)

Steve Harris, Albemarle SWCD-Pasquotank – member (Association First Vice President)

James Lamb, Sampson SWCD – member

Chester Lowder, Stanly SWCD – member

#### **Technical Review Committee (TRC)**

<https://www.ncagr.gov/divisions/soil-water-conservation/programs-initiatives/acsp/TRC>

##### **2026-2028 Supervisor Representative:**

Pete Anderson, Pamlico SWCD – member

# NC ASSOCIATION OF SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION LOCAL SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT PRESIDENTS

1944	O. J. Holler ~ Rutherford County	2001	Jim Hollifield ~ Rutherford County
1945	Dane S. Rhine ~ Gaston County	2002	Albert Troutman ~ Moore County
1946	A. C. Edwards ~ Greene County	2003	James Mason ~ Hertford County
1947	W. Herbert White ~ Rockingham County	2004	Grover McPherson ~ Forsyth County
1948	Wade E. Eller ~ Ashe County	2005	Tom Davidson ~ Durham County
1949	J. Hawley Poole ~ Moore County	2006	Don Rawls ~ Pender County
1950	W. W. Eagles ~ Edgecombe County	2007	Ned Hudson ~ Cabarrus County
1951	H. S. Hogan ~ Orange County	2008	Bobby Stanley ~ Columbus County
1952	W. J. Fonville ~ Alamance County	2009	William "Bill" Pickett ~ Duplin County
1953	J. T. Graham ~ Rowan County	2010	James Ferguson ~ Haywood County
1954	S. Vernon Stevens ~ Lee County	2011	Craig Frazier ~ Randolph County
1955	Allen Swindell ~ Beaufort County	2012	Donald Heath ~ Craven County
1956	Charles Ladd ~ Durham County	2013	Tommy Houser ~ Lincoln County
1957	B. L. Angell ~ Davie County	2014	John Langdon ~ Johnston County
1958	Neal M. Craig ~ Mecklenburg County	2015	Manly West ~ Currituck County
1959	Charles L. Davis ~ Jones County	2016	Ben Knox ~ Rowan County
1960	A. W. Nesbitt ~ Buncombe County	2017	Chris Hogan ~ Orange County
1961	A.J. Flanagan ~ Pitt County	2018	Dietrich Kilpatrick ~ Craven County
1962	Leon Ballance ~ Hyde County	2019	Myles Payne ~ Alexander County
1963	J.B. Slack ~ Randolph County	2020	Samuel Green, Jr. ~ Vance County
1964	James Bellamy, Jr. ~ Brunswick County	2021	Blount Knowles ~ Bertie
1965	Thomas H. Bonham ~ Buncombe County	2022	Chris Hughes ~ Watauga
1966	James T. Moss, Sr. ~ Franklin County	2023	George Teague ~ Guilford
1967	Lloyd C. Bunch ~ Chowan County	2024	William "Billy" Kilpatrick ~ Duplin
1968	George B. Collins ~ Wilkes County	2025	Barbara Bleiweis ~ Mecklenburg
1969	George Winchester ~ Wake County	<b>2026</b>	<b>Gail Hughes ~ Orange</b>
1970	William G. Sullivan ~ Duplin County		
1971	Blair Goodson ~ Lincoln County		
1972	A.W. Bunch ~ Scotland County		
1973	M. E. Knight ~ Gates County		
1974	G. C. Palmer ~ Haywood County		
1975	C. Roy Nifong, Jr. ~ Forsyth County		
1976	Joseph L. Williams ~ Duplin County		
1977	John B. Harris ~ Burke County		
1978	Stewart Adcock ~ Wake County		
1979	Ralph Tucker ~ Pitt County		
1980	Wade Carrigan ~ Iredell County		
1981	D. R. Huff, Jr. ~ Hoke County		
1982	F.C. Laughinghouse ~ Beaufort County		
1983	Charles Patton ~ Buncombe County		
1984	Garland Strickland ~ Nash County		
1985	David Holland, Jr. ~ Onslow County		
1986	H. Gray Ashburn, Jr. ~ Wilkes County		
1987	John Y. Phelps, Jr. ~ Wake County		
1988	William V. Griffin ~ Jones County		
1989	Rebecca H. Rhyne ~ Gaston County		
1990	William Butler ~ Bladen County		
1991	Tom Burns ~ Pasquotank County		
1992	James Ferguson ~ Haywood County		
1993	Charles Snipes ~ Orange County		
1994	Samuel D. Davis ~ Jones County		
1995	Don Abernethy ~ Burke County		
1996	John W. Finch ~ Nash County		
1997	David M. O'Neal ~ Hyde County		
1998	Eddie Stroup ~ Mecklenburg County		
1999	Jeff Turlington ~ Harnett County		
2000	Franklin Williams ~ Duplin County		

**North Carolina Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts  
Budget Worksheet**

<b>Income From All Sources</b>	<b>2025 Budget</b>	<b>2026 Budget</b>
1 Dues From Districts	\$ 70,000.00	\$ 70,000.00
2 Assn. Income-State Convention	\$ 75,000.00	\$ 95,000.00
3 Interest Income-Checking Acct.	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 2,500.00
4 Endowment Fund	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,500.00
5 Expo	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00
6 Workshops/Grants	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 150,000.00
7 District Grants thru Association	\$ -	\$ -
8 Farm Family Celebration	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00
9 Restricted Fund Admin Fees	\$ -	\$ -
10 State Envirothon	\$ 45,000.00	\$ 45,000.00
11 CET	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00
12 Conservation Awareness	\$ 6,500.00	\$ 6,500.00
13 RCW	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 40,000.00
14 Tax Reimbursement	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00
15 Environmental Ed/Outreach Position	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$ 455,500.00</b>	<b>\$ 525,500.00</b>

<b>Restricted</b>	<b>11/30/2025</b>	<b>2026 Income</b>	<b>2026 Expense</b>	<b>2026 Budget</b>
Endowment Fund	\$ 74,148.53	\$ 400.00		\$ 74,548.53
Envirothon Scholarships	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 2,500.00		\$ 10,000.00
RCW Scholarships	\$ 2,050.00			\$ 2,050.00

<b>Reserve (50% of Budgeted)</b>	<b>Budgeted</b>	<b>Used 2025</b>	<b>Remaining</b>	<b>2026 Budget</b>
Envirothon	\$ 22,500.00		\$22,500.00	\$ 22,500.00
CET	\$ 25,000.00	\$ -	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00
Food, Land, People	\$ 3,500.00	\$ -	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 3,500.00
Resource Conservation Workshop	\$ 20,000.00	\$ -	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00
Conservation Awareness	\$ 3,250.00	\$ -	\$ 3,250.00	\$ 3,250.00
Executive Director	\$ 45,000.00	\$ -	\$ 45,000.00	\$ 45,000.00
Mobile Soils Lab / Classroom	\$ 1,000.00	\$ -	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00
	\$ 203,948.53			\$ 206,848.53

<b>Bank accounts</b>	<b>Bal on 11/30/25</b>
Wells Fargo	\$ 246,317.26
Branch Banking & Trust	\$ 84,938.39
Roxboro Savings	\$ 194,084.79
 Bank balace total	 <b>\$ 525,340.44</b>
Restricted Fund balance	<b>\$ 86,598.53</b>
Reserve Accounts	<b>\$ 206,848.53</b>
<b>Unrestricted Funds</b>	<b>\$ 231,893.38</b>

<b>Disbursements</b>	<b>2025 Budget</b>	<b>2026 Budget</b>
1 NACD Assessments or Dues	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
2 Travel Expense non-Association Officers		
A. NACD Convention	\$16,000.00	\$16,000.00
B. SE Regional Meeting	\$12,000.00	\$12,000.00
C. Committee Meeting	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00
3 Expenses of NC Association Annual Meeting	\$58,100.00	\$65,000.00
4 Office Expense	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
5 Expenses of the President	\$9,000.00	\$9,000.00
6 Expenses of Vice President	\$6,500.00	\$6,500.00
7 NACD Board Member	\$7,000.00	\$7,000.00
8 Alt. NACD Board Member	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
9 Auxiliary	\$700.00	\$700.00
10 FFA Land Judging	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
11 NCDEA Donation for Secretarial Assistance	\$1,200.00	\$1,200.00
12 Education Awards	\$5,600.00	\$5,600.00
13 Teacher's Travel State Meeting	\$300.00	\$300.00
14 Endowment Fund	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
15 Envirothon Chairman Expenses	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00
16 NC Envirothon	\$45,000.00	\$45,000.00
17 Conservation Education/Previous FLP	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00
18 State Fair Booth/Mtn. State Fair Booth	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00
19 Expo	\$7,500.00	\$7,500.00
20 Farm Family Celebration	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00
21 Farm Family Prize Money	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
22 Conservation Awareness Support	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00
23 Marketing and Outreach	\$2,200.00	\$2,200.00
24 Accounting	\$4,000.00	\$4,800.00
25 Workshops/Grants	\$4,500.00	\$45,000.00
26 Executive Director	\$90,177.00	\$92,885.00
27 Executive Director Expenses	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00
28 Water Resources Conference	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
29 Expenses for Association Award Recipient	\$750.00	\$750.00
30 Audit / Annual Information Return	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
31 Insurance	\$3,300.00	\$3,300.00
32 Permits & License	\$100.00	\$100.00
33 Bank Charges	\$350.00	\$350.00
34 CET	\$35,000.00	\$35,000.00
35 RCW	\$35,000.00	\$40,000.00
36 Mobile Soils Classroom/Trailers	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
37 Contingency Fund	\$29,723.00	\$29,723.00
38 Education Outreach Position	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$455,500.00</b>	<b>\$511,408.00</b>