

North Carolina Soil & Water Conservation Partnership

**NC Dept. of Agriculture & Consumer Services
Division of Soil & Water Conservation
February 2016**

Pat Harris, Director
www.ncagr.gov/SWC/





I. NC Soil & Water Conservation Partnership

II. State Cost Share Programs

III. Legislative Efforts

IV. Other Initiatives

V. Q&A

*“Put every acre to its best
use and treat every acre
according to its needs”*

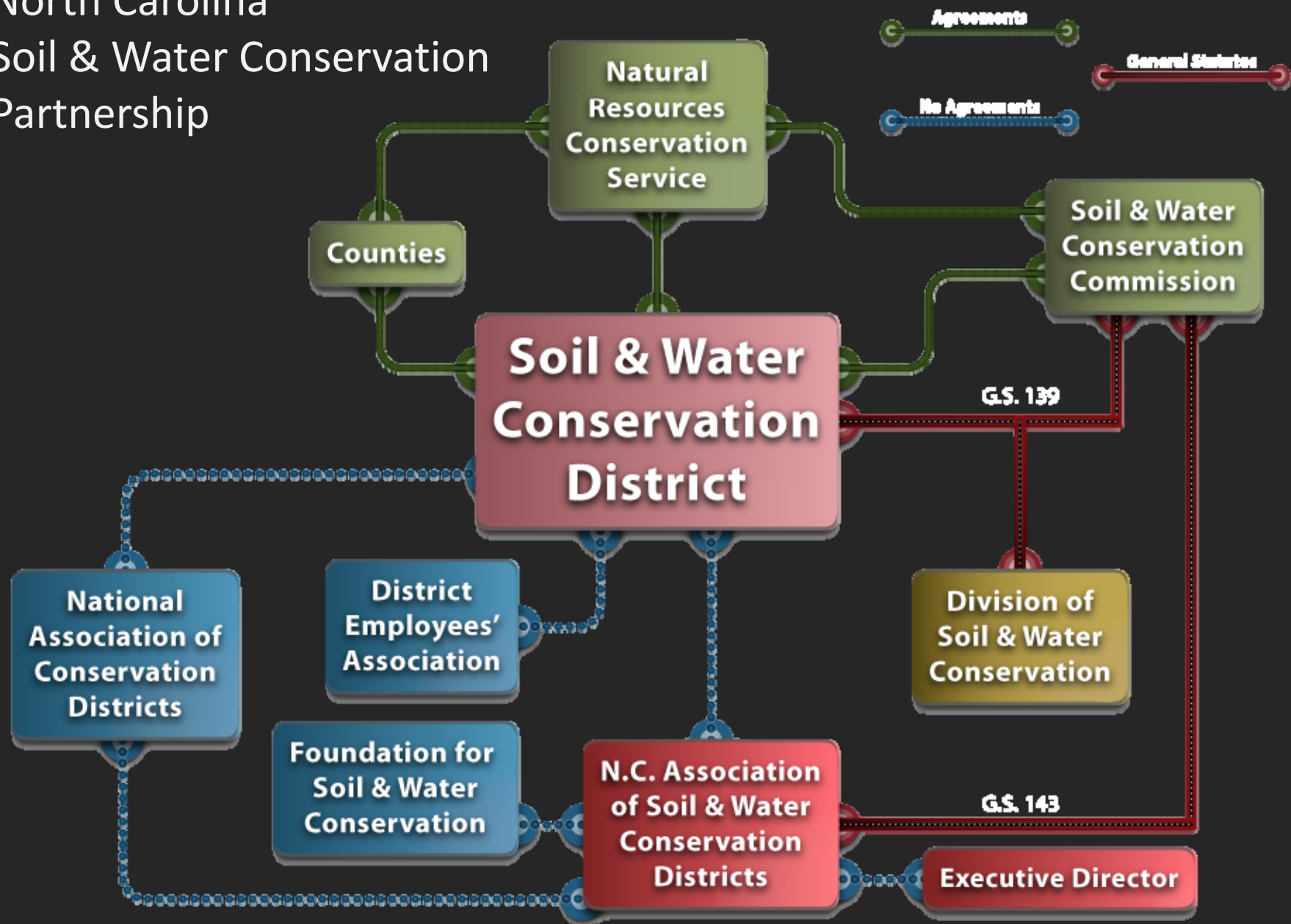




Dr. Hugh Hammond Bennett
1881 - 1960

“I consider the soil conservation districts movement one of the most important developments in the whole history of agriculture.”

North Carolina Soil & Water Conservation Partnership



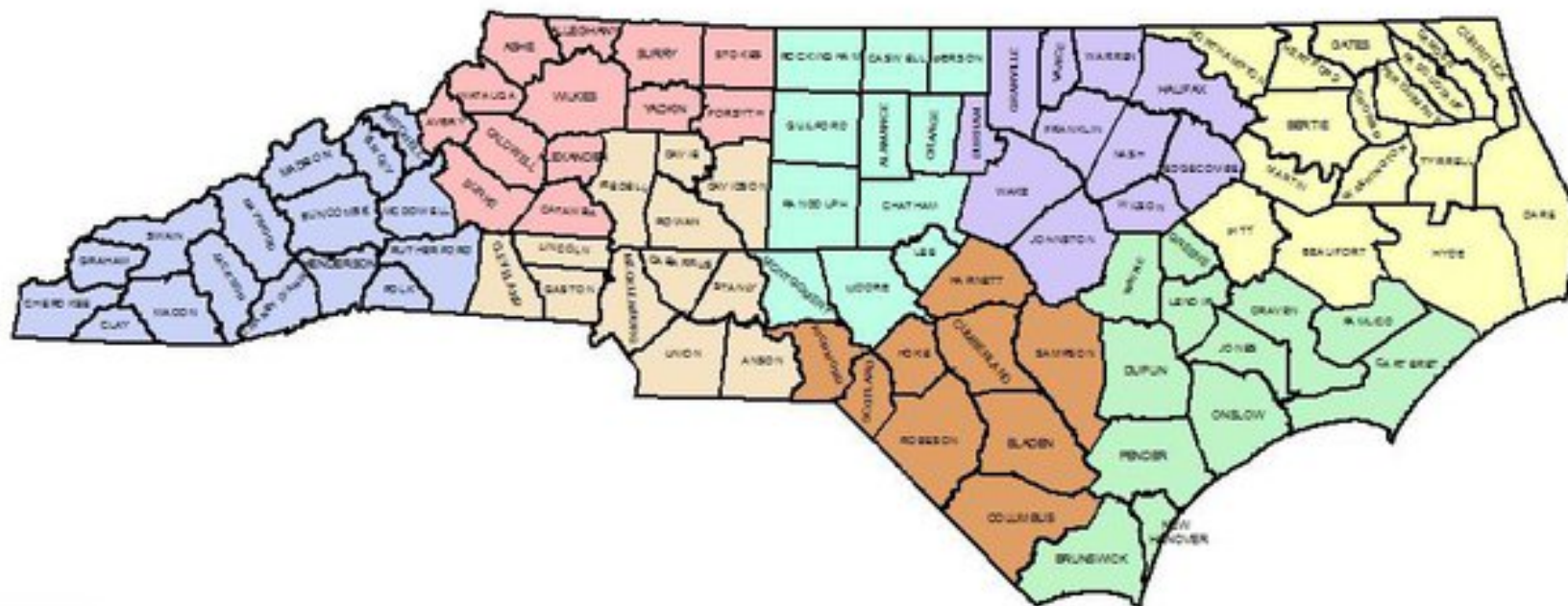


Soil & Water Conservation Districts

- § Chapter 139
- Independent units of state government
- 96 districts cover all 100 counties
- 492 officials (3 elected & 2 appointed)
- 265 local employees
- Non-regulatory; voluntary
- Identify local natural resource needs

1. Delivery mechanism for Commission's technical & financial programs to landowners and citizens
2. Address a wide range of land use issues...not just agriculture
3. Significant financial support from county government (e.g. stormwater; sedimentation & erosion control)
4. Buffer between regulatory programs & landowners

Areas of the North Carolina Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts



Soil & Water Conservation Commission

- § Chapter 139 & 106, Article 71
- 7 members
- Non-regulatory; voluntary
- Oversight & policy
- Appoint & remove district supervisors

1. Independent entity
2. Rulemaking authority
3. Addresses a wide range of land use concerns
4. Provides oversight & policy for state programs
5. Determine cost share allocations to districts





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DIVISION OF SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION

The Division of Soil and Water Conservation works in cooperation with the Soil and Water Conservation Commission to protect and improve soil and water resources throughout the state.

Division Mission

To foster voluntary, incentive-driven management of soil, water and related natural resources for the benefit of the environment, economy and all citizens.

www.ncagr.gov/SWC/

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Soil & Water Conservation Commission



2015 Soil & Water Conservation Commission members from left to right: Tommy Houser, Bill Yarborough, Ben Knox, Chairman John Langdon, Vice-Chairman Craig Frazier, Charles Hughes and Manly West

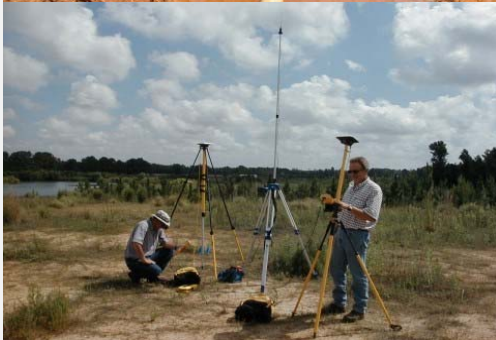
Division of Soil & Water Conservation

- § 143B-279.3(a)
- 41 appropriated positions
- 4 receipt supported positions
- Non-regulatory; voluntary

1. Mission is to foster voluntary, incentive-driven management of soil, water and related natural resources for the benefit of the environment, economy and all citizens
2. NC Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services
3. Lead state agency for agricultural nonpoint source pollution
4. Serve as staff to the Commission



North Carolina Division of Soil & Water Conservation



- ✓ Serves as staff to the Commission
- ✓ Approves contracts
- ✓ Updates cost lists & policies
- ✓ Coordinates Job Approval Authority
- ✓ Provides technical assistance
- ✓ Delivers outreach tools
- ✓ Provides design tools
- ✓ Coordinates trainings



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Cost Share Programs

ACSP

AgWRAP

CCAP

CS²

Program Reviews

Lagoon Conversion
Program

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Soil & Water Conservation Division - Cost Share Programs

The division has a variety of cost share programs available. Each program offers best management practices targeted to meet specific program goals. These programs offer assistance to address agricultural, rural and urban water resource issues. Typically 75% cost share assistance is provided to an applicant to install best management practices that benefit all citizens by improving water resources in North Carolina.

Please plan to attend a Cost Share Programs Workshop! Please submit a registration for each participant by completing the form available [HERE](#)

- **Albemarle: February 23** - Stanly SWCD office, 26032-C Newt Rd., Albemarle, NC
- **Hillsborough: March 23** - Orange SWCD office, Food Lab, 306D Revere Rd., Hillsborough, NC
- **Williamston: March 23** - Martin SWCD office, 104 Kehukee Park Rd., Williamston, NC
- **Kenansville: March 31** - Duplin Ag. Center, 165 Agriculture Dr., Kenansville, NC

These will be all day trainings with a working lunch. Trainings will be from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Workshop agenda items include:

- Top CS² questions answered
- Contract review and approval process
- District Board of Supervisor responsibilities
- Program Reviews – lessons learned
- Strategy Plan tips

State Cost Share Programs for Conservation



- ▶ Agriculture Cost Share Program (ACSP)
- ▶ Community Conservation Assistance Program (CCAP)
- ▶ Agricultural Water Resources Assistance Program (AgWRAP)
- ▶ Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)



Program Implementation

Locally Led Conservation

- ▶ Delivered through 96 local Soil & Water Conservation Districts
- ▶ NC Soil & Water Conservation Commission
 - ▶ Sets statewide rules and policies
 - ▶ Allocates funds to local districts
- ▶ Local Districts
 - ▶ Set local funding priorities,
 - ▶ Receives and ranks applications,
 - ▶ Develop conservation plans and design practices
 - ▶ Oversee and certify implementation





NC Agriculture Cost Share Program (ACSP)

- ▶ **Purpose:** reduce the delivery of agricultural nonpoint source (NPS) pollution into the water courses of the state
- ▶ Established in 1984
- ▶ Over 70 approved Best Management Practices (BMPs)
- ▶ Generally 75% cost share, based on predetermined average cost (EVAD participants eligible for 90%)
- ▶ Practices generally follow NRCS standards
- ▶ Typically 10-year maintenance requirement





Key Facts

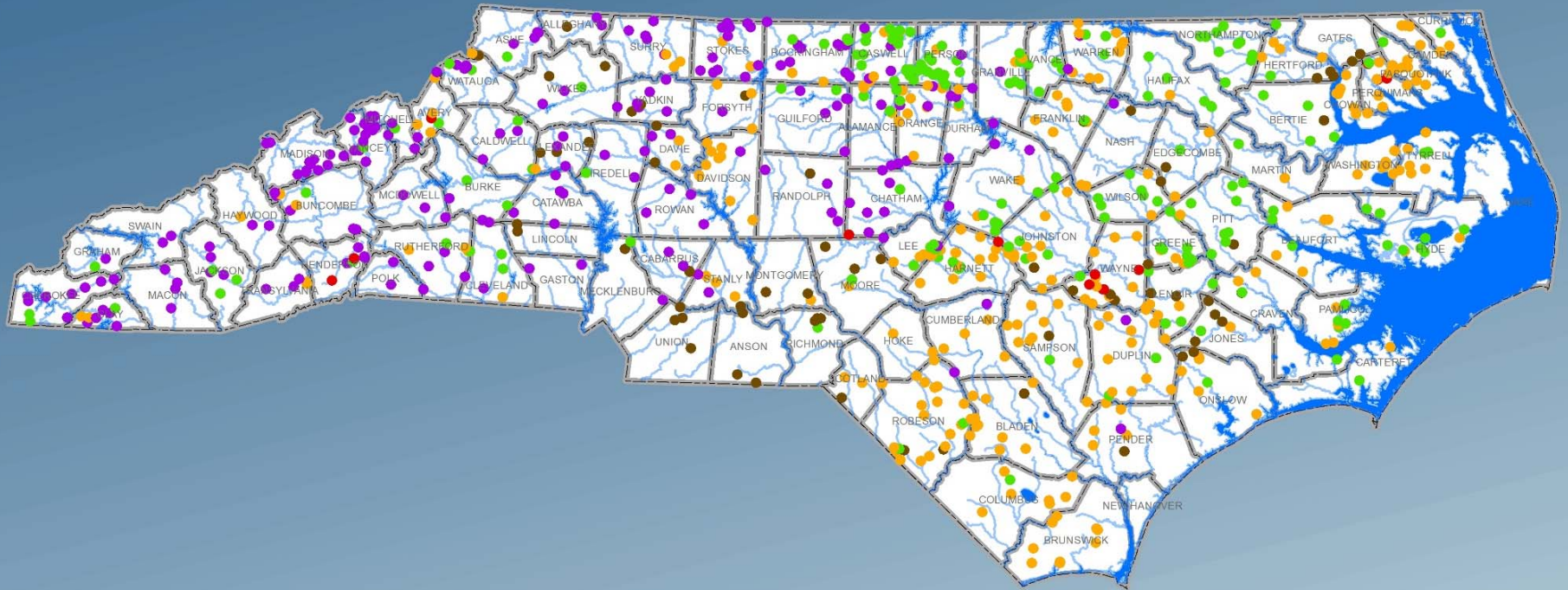
- ▶ Annual funding (non-reverting):
 - ▶ \$4.017 million for financial assistance
 - ▶ \$2.449 million for technical assistance
- ▶ Soil and Water Conservation Commission:
 - ▶ Sets program requirements
 - ▶ Allocates funds to districts
- ▶ Funds only used on agricultural land
- ▶ 75% of predetermined average cost (up to \$75,000/yr)





Agriculture Cost Share Program BMPs

Soil and Water Conservation Commission Funded Best Management Practices
Contracted from July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015



Legend

BMP

- AGRI-CHEMICAL POLLUTION PREVENTION
- EROSION/NUTRIENT REDUCTION
- SEDIMENT/NUTRIENT REDUCTION
- STREAM PROTECTION
- WASTE MANAGEMENT

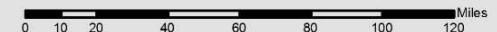
- Water Bodies
- Major Rivers
- County Boundaries

Points represent approximate BMP locations based on the latitude and longitude provided by the local soil and water conservation districts. This data represents 1,132 BMPs contracted in FY2015.



Division of Soil & Water Conservation

<http://www.ncagr.gov/SWC/>



Role of Districts

- ▶ Establish local priorities
- ▶ Solicit and rank applications
- ▶ Prepare and approve conservation plans and contracts and submit for State approval
- ▶ Oversee and assist practice implementation
- ▶ Certify installation according to standard
- ▶ Conduct maintenance spot checks and enforcement of contracts



Role of Other Partners

- ▶ Division of Soil & Water Conservation
 - ▶ Overall program development/admin
 - ▶ Approve contracts and payments
- ▶ NRCS
 - ▶ Technical standards
 - ▶ Design/Job Approval Authority
 - ▶ Advise Commission on technical aspects
- ▶ Cooperative Extension Service
 - ▶ R&D new practices
 - ▶ Tools to quantify benefits





Protecting Agricultural Water Resources in North Carolina

Welcome to Ag H2O

Ag H2O is your comprehensive source for information on the development and implementation of the strategic plan for protecting agricultural water resources in North Carolina. The strategic plan sets forth a pathway for North Carolina's vibrant agricultural sector and its farmers to lead the way in water conservation, irrigation efficiency and development of on-farm water storage capacity.

Downloads

[Strategic Plan \(pdf\)](#)

[Executive Summary of the Strategic Plan \(pdf\)](#)

[North Carolina Agricultural Water Use 2014 \(pdf\)](#)

[North Carolina Agricultural Water Use 2012 \(pdf\)](#)

[North Carolina Agricultural](#)

Agriculture - North Carolina's Economic Engine

Agriculture plays a critical role in the social, cultural and economic well-being of North Carolina. More than ever, the importance of producing local, healthy food for our growing population is increasing. Agriculture is an economic driver in rural communities and for the state of North Carolina, providing on-farm and off-farm employment for thousands of North Carolinians.





Agricultural Water Resources Assistance Program (AgWRAP)

- ▶ **Purpose:** increase water use efficiency, availability and storage for agricultural uses
- ▶ Established in 2011
- ▶ 8 approved Best Management Practices (BMPs)
- ▶ Generally 75% cost share (limited resource and beginning farmer; EVAD participants eligible for 90%)
- ▶ Practices generally follow NRCS standards or NC Dam Safety standards
- ▶ Typically 10-year maintenance requirement





AgWRAP Practices

- ▶ Water Supply Ponds
- ▶ Pond Repair/Retrofit
- ▶ Pond Sediment Removal
- ▶ Water Collection/Reuse System
- ▶ Baseflow Interceptor
- ▶ Conservation Irrigation Conversion
- ▶ Micro-irrigation
- ▶ Water Supply Well





Public Benefits of AgWRAP

- ▶ Reduces competition for water resources by public users
- ▶ Improves the efficient use of water while enabling the industry to produce food, fiber and other agricultural products
- ▶ Prepares the agricultural industry to weather future droughts
- ▶ Generates and protects local jobs in agriculture and agribusiness





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AgWRAP Best Management Practices FY2012-FY2016

BMPs	Contracted	Installed	Total
New ponds	\$843,497	\$494,276	\$1,337,773
Pond repairs/retrofits	\$517,036	\$153,627	\$670,663
Pond sediment removal	\$180,037	\$78,449	\$258,486
Conservation irrigation conversion	\$0	\$2,278	\$2,278
Micro-irrigation system conversions	\$40,672	\$22,513	\$63,185
Baseflow interceptors	\$11,743	\$15,191	\$26,934
Water supply wells	\$343,162	\$400,841	\$744,003





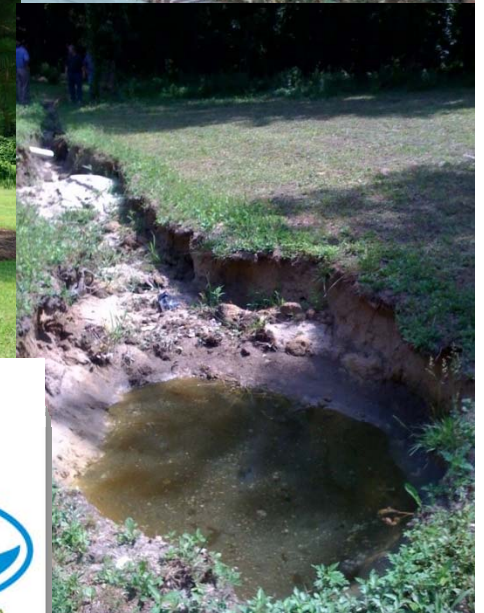
Community Conservation Assistance Program (CCAP)

- ▶ **Purpose:** reduce the delivery of nonpoint source (NPS) pollution into the water courses of the state
- ▶ 17 approved Best Management Practices (BMPs)
- ▶ Generally 75% cost share, based on predetermined average cost
- ▶ Practices generally follow standards approved by Commission
- ▶ Typically 5 to 10 year maintenance requirement
- ▶ Annual appropriation is \$193,097



CCAP Practices

- ▶ Raingarden/wetland
- ▶ Abandoned well closure
- ▶ Cistern
- ▶ Impervious surface conversion
- ▶ Streambank & shoreline protection
- ▶ Riparian Buffer
- ▶ Diversion
- ▶ Critical Area Planting





How to apply for these programs

Contact your local soil and water conservation district office!

- ▶ ACSP & CCAP – districts are allocated funding each year.
- ▶ AgWRAP –
 - ▶ a portion of the AgWRAP funding is allocated to districts for practices other than new ponds and pond repair/retrofits.
 - ▶ Applications for new ponds/retrofits compete in regional pools.
- ▶ CREP – continuous CRP signup





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How do you establish state cost share programs?

- Demonstrated need
- Determine public benefit
- Secure local district support (grassroots effort)
- Gain support from partners and stakeholders
- Secure grant funds for pilot projects
- Association and partners advocate for program
 - NCASWCD Legislative Committee establishes legislative policies, positions & action items
 - Annual meeting legislative luncheon
 - Annual legislative breakfast in the NC General Assembly cafeteria
 - Support from NCDA&CS



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Professional Development

It is important for district supervisors and conservation partnership employees to continually develop their professional skills; the more knowledge the members of the NC conservation partnership can obtain, the better equipped they are to protect and conserve the natural resources of our state.

Visit the links to the left for *training opportunities* - both hands-on training events and online resources; information on *job approval authority* - for district and division staff; information on *technical specialist designation* - for natural resource professionals; and the *Professional Conservation Employee Program* - to enhance the professionalism and accountability of the conservation partnership's employees.


NCDA&CS Division of Soil & Water Conservation, Pat Harris, Director
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Professional Development - Training Opportunities

Many training opportunities exist for conservation partnership employees and supervisors in NC - including both hands-on training activities and online resources. Please follow the links below for more information.

Division Supported Training Events

Conservation Employee Training (CET - formerly DEW) - Annual training opportunity geared toward district staff and partnership employees. Intent of the workshop is for in-depth, hands-on learning, with the opportunity to earn job approval authority.

NCASWCD Annual Meeting - Annual meeting for the NC Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts to develop policy and action items and elect leadership. Programming provides opportunity for district supervisors and partnership employees to receive training and updates from state and national leadership.

UNC-School of Government - Workshop hosted by the UNC-School of Government staff, in-depth training program provides information on supervisor responsibilities and legal requirements for soil and water conservation districts.

Available Training and Resources

District Board Training Library - A collection of training modules (videos and narrated presentations) focused on building the capabilities of local districts and helping them understand their responsibilities as entities of local government. These tools are designed to be used for self paced training, one on one facilitated training, or as part of local district board meetings. Each can be viewed in its entirety or broken down into shorter segments for viewing over time.



UNC School of Government Basic Supervisor Training

- Commission requires all appointed district supervisors to attend (2 days)
- Elected supervisors are strongly encouraged
- State provides travel funding for supervisors
- Scholarships available for district employees (2016)
- 2016 Agenda
 - Conservation Partnership
 - State Cost Share Programs
 - Introduction to legal authorities; model district exercise
 - Possibilities and pitfalls for districts





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Training Opportunities - Conservation Employee Training



The division, in conjunction with the conservation partnership, is proud to be the coordinating agency for the annual Conservation Employee Training (CET - formerly DEW).

The CET is the only statewide workshop of its kind to provide conservation district, division and NRCS employees, with in-depth training on the technical and administrative aspects of:

- Agriculture Best Management Practices
- Community Conservation
- District Law & Operations
- Environmental Education

More importantly, CET provides a networking platform for district employees to share information, openly discuss district issues and concerns, develop professional relations, identify leaders and mentors, and collectively focus efforts to enhance the delivery of district services to put conservation on the landscape of North Carolina.

2016 CET Information August 22-25


'Catch the Vision'

[Brief Draft Agenda](#)

**Registration will
open - May 1, 2016**

[REFUND FORM
Cancellation-Refund
Deadline, August 8, 2016](#)

[Hotel Information -
Deadline for Sleeping
Room Reservations - July
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Professional Development - CCP & JAA Development

Mission of the Conservation Action Team (CAT)

To address challenges and establish a consistent process for all partnership staff to obtain Job Approval Authority (JAA) and become Certified Conservation Planners (CCP) in order to improve the delivery of technical services at field level

Next Meeting - Monday, February 29, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.; MMN (919) 850-2822;
meeting link: https://ncag.adobeconnect.com/dswc_cat/

Documents & Presentations

[NC Soil & Water Conservation Partnership signed Memorandum of Agreement Jan. 4, 2016](#)
[CAT - Plan of Action revised Dec 2015](#)

NRCS (State Conservationist, State Engineer, ASTC for Operations, Technology and Field Operations);
State Division (Director, Assistant Director, Technical Services & NPS Programs Section Chiefs)
NCASWCD (ED & 2 officers); **NCCDEA** (2 officers);



NRCS Contribution Agreements

- Accelerated Technical Assistance for Conservation (ATAC)
- Conservation Technical Training Support





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2016 SE NACD Annual Meeting

**Hotel Room Block
Now Open!**



Join us in beautiful Cherokee, NC for the 2016 Southeast National Association of Conservation Districts Annual Meeting, July 31-Aug. 2, at the Harrah's Cherokee Casino Resort.