

May 28, 2025

MINUTES

Watauga Soil & Water Conservation District

971 West King Street, Boone NC 28607

May 28, 2025

Present:

Denny Norris, Chair
Nate Coppenbarger
Bill Moretz

Michelle Kasey
Brian Bonville
Brandon Turlington
Samantha Dame

1. Denny Norris called meeting to order at 8:03 a.m.

2. Denny Norris opened the meeting in prayer.

3. Ethics Awareness and Conflict of Interest Reminder:

In accordance with the State Government Ethics Act, it is the duty of every board member to avoid both conflicts of interest and appearances of conflict. Does any board member have any conflicts of interest or appearances of conflict with respect to any matters coming before the board today? If so, please identify the conflict or appearances of conflict and refrain from any undue participation in the particular matter involved.

4. Statement of Professionalism:

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

5. **Approval of the minutes** – Nate Coppenbarger made a motion to accept; Bill Moretz 2nd. Minutes accepted.

6. **Approval of the agenda** – Bill Moretz made a motion to accept with amendment; Nate Coppenbarger 2nd. Agenda accepted.

7. District Report: Brian Bonville

New Applications: None

Contracts needing approval: None

Brian Bonville stated that some of the older contracts would need extensions.

Elise McLaughlin stated that an online extension form could be filled out.

Bonville stated that he had emailed John Beck for guidance but hasn't heard back. The Cooperators needing extension are Jensen, Kuhn, Walker, Blue Ridge Conservancy and Brown.

Denny Norris stated that the Board had chosen to grant 2-year contracts so that an extension after two years could be granted by the Board instead of taking it before the State Commission. Any contracts from 2023 and newer can be extended by the Board. Bonville stated with that the only contracts that need State extensions are Green and Blue Ridge RC&D.

Mr. Norris stated that the Board needed to vote to approve the extensions for the Brown and Jensen contracts.

Bill Moretz made a motion to grant an extension to Ronnie Joe Brown; Nate Coppenbarger 2nd. Extension granted.

Nate Coppenbarger made a motion to grant an extension to Scott Jensen; Bill Moretz 2nd. Extension granted.

Contract Updates:

A. ACSP:

95-2023-004 Michael Greene – Site visit with engineer scheduled for 5/28/25.

95-2021-004 Kris Kuhn – Site visit last week

95-2023-001 Scott and Dawn Jensen – Mikey Woodie is JAA and will be going to site with Bonville. Construction almost complete.

95-2023-006 Bart and Robina Walker – Cooperators may cancel. They have been advised of the demerits associated with cancelling a contract. Cooperators may not want a feed pad cut into their hill.

95-2024-003 Charles Norris – Feed pad, HUAP, Diversion. Construction delayed due to Helene damage. Spot check was completed.

95-2024-006 Valley View Land Company – Preconstruction complete. monitoring project with Andrew Cox.

95-2024-007 Al Zimmerman – Wetland restoration system. Project to

begin in spring. Wants bog turtles. Bonville may know supplier once wetland has been restored.

95-2025-001 Will Kulczyk – Ag Road Repair. Andrew Cox to sign off as JAA – rain delay.

95-2025-002 Holland Whitesides – Preliminary design sent to Cooperator last week. Engineers want to be on site for construction due to original design faulty.

95-2025-003 Larry Kitchens – Samantha Dame to help with cultural resource review.

B. AgWrap updates:

95-2025-802 Daniel Brown – Needs new tank. Old tank failed during Hurricane. Old tank needs repair.

C. CAP updates:

95-2025-501 Kellwoods 1 Townhomes POA – Streambank restoration. Visit site last week. Waiting on Engineer to submit a design review.

95-2022-502 Blue Ridge Conservancy – Bonville stated that an extension is needed. Bill Moretz made a motion to grant an extension; Nate Coppenbarger 2nd. Extension granted.

95-2023-501 Valle Crucis Community Park – Extension needed for RFP. Nate Coppenbarger made a motion to extend contract; Bill Moretz 2nd. Extension for RFP granted.

95-2024-501 New River Conservancy – Division review of private engineer design is underway.

D. StRAP:

2022 Funds – Matt Stafford has announced that 2022 StRAP funds can be used beyond scope – so can be used for bank stabilization. Bonville is looking for a project that EWP won't cover to utilize these funds. Denny Norris stated that he had one bank repair project in mind, but it is small. Bonville stated that he has a potential list of projects.

2024 Funds – Funds to be used for project beside the office with New River Conservancy matching funds with us. Contract needs approval. Nate Coppenbarger made a motion to approve the contract with New River Conservancy to repair the stream bank beside the office; Bill Moretz 2nd the motion; contract approved.

11. General updates:

Bonville stated that he needs the Board Chair to sign and notarize the Program Funds audit to submit with the Strategic Plan. Kasey to notarize. Denny Norris mentioned that David Tucker's name needs to be removed from the County website and from the agenda.

12. NRCS Samantha Dame – Dame stated that the Local Work Group meeting will be hosted by Yancy County this year and it will be virtual. A link to a Team's meeting will be sent out soon.

EQUIP is wrapping up for the year with reduced funding. There is 1 CSP in Watauga County. 8 EWP visits have been done this week. The Corp. of Engineers is still working, but have been delayed due to the weather. They were supposed to be done by 6/1 but may have to extend the project due to some areas requiring additional work after original clean up after rain. NRCS is working on compliance reviews – on random selected tracts. Have been discussing signing up for Bio-Char. NRCS specs require outside Testing. NRCS has received 10 applications for stream restoration projects. None are approved.

13. RC&D – Chris Hughes – No report.

14. Division Report – Elise McLaughlin

Kristina Fischer is taking notes about Cayle Aldridge to make a book for his family to show how far his impact reached across the state. Please submit any notes or stories.

This year's CET will be held in Cherokee in August.

The Soil & Water Commissioner has approved flash grazing with a 10' setback. The Commission is leaving the discretion to the district staff on which farmers they trust to do flash grazing. Denny Norris stated that here drive-by checks can be done without having to get permission to go on the property. Most properties can be seen from the road.

Watauga County has been approved to get a full-time temporary technician's assistant for Helene recovery. More information in June.

May 28, 2025

15. Admin Report: Michelle Kasey

Kasey taught at 2Rivers to a 3rd Grade Class. A 3rd grader asked Ms. Kasey to Show his idea for turning salt water into fresh water to her "Boss". Ms. Kasey Passed around his diagram to show the Board.

Kasey to teach at the Children's Museum in June.

16. Brian Bonville:

Bonville told the Board that he met with the County last week. County Manager requested that once EWP projects begin that Soil & Water take the Lead. Bonville stated that we have additional CCAP requests.

Bonville stated that Blue Ridge Women in Ag were holding a Soil Health Workshop for farmers. Bonville asked for 5 minutes at the end of the Presentation June 1 to talk and answer questions. The workshop is from 2-4pm.

Bonville also told the Board that the Veteran Farmers invited him to give a talk June 13th at the Frontline to Farm workshop on Soil Health. He requested to use worktime for this. Board agreed.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:23 am.

Next meeting will be June 25, 2025.

Minutes submitted by: Michelle Kasey



Denny Norris, Chair

Signed 6-25-25

Dated

May 28, 2025

DRAFT