

May 27, 2026

MINUTES

Watauga Soil & Water Conservation District
971 West King Street, Boone NC 28607

May 27, 2026

Present:

Denny Norris, Chair
Nate Coppenbarger
Bill Moretz
David Tucker
Jenny Hanifan

Michelle Kasey
Brian Bonville
Samantha Dame
Brandon Turrington

Jonathan Hartsell
Jessica Janc
Elise McLaughlin
Gina Hodges

1. Denny Norris called meeting to order at 7:58 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

Bill Moretz made a motion to approve the minutes; Jennifer Hanifan 2nd
Motion. Minutes approved.

6. Approval of the agenda

Jennifer Hanifan made a motion to approve agenda with changes. Nate Coppenbarger 2nd the motion. Agenda approved.

7. District Report: Brian Bonville

New Applications: None

Contracts needing approval: 95-2026-004 David Scott Farms IISI – Feed Pad. Bonville stated that engineers have already looked over the area to make sure the location is viable. Bill Moretz made a motion to approve the contract; Nate Coppenbarger 2nd the motion. Motion carried. Contract approved.

Contract Updates:

A. ACSP:

95-2023-003 Ronnie Joe Brown – Monitoring construction.

95-2024-003 Charles Norris – Michelle Kasey got in touch with Mr. Norris. Extension is needed. Jennifer Hanifan made a motion to approve extension request to the Cooperator; Bill Moretz 2nd the motion. Motion carried. Extension request to be taken to the June State meeting for approval.

95-2024-006 Valley View Land Company – Construction complete.

95-2026-006 Valley View Land Company – Supplement. Waiting on receipts.

95-2024-007 Al Zimmerman – Cooperator found contractor. Needs extension at the State Level. Bill Moretz made a motion to request an extension; Nate Coppenbarger 2nd the motion. Bonville to request an extension at the State level.

95-2025-001 Will Kulczyk – Needs 1 more culvert before cloth and gravel.

95-2026-003 Will Kulczyk – Supplement Added 120' of road.

95-2025-002 Holland Whitesides – Waiting on engineer letter for RFP.

95-2026-002 Holland Whitesides – Supplement. Waiting on construction completion.

95-2025-003 Larry Kitchens – Waiting on preliminary project design from engineer.

95-2025-004 Diane Deal – To begin construction soon.

95-2023-004 Greene – Closed out.

95-2026-001 Moretz – Waiting on engineer designs for livestock exclusions and spring tank repair.

B. AgWrap updates:

95-2026-801 & 802 Daniel Brown - Repair on spring tank that failed during Helene. 802 – New spring tank. Waiting on engineer designs. Property at Mast Gap.

C. CAP updates:

95-2022-502 Blue Ridge Conservancy – Requesting extension from State.

95-2024-501 New River Conservancy (at Green Valley Park) – waiting on contractor to supply topographic maps. Work is complete.

95-2025-501 Kellwoods 1 Townhomes POA – Waiting on pre-build meeting.

D. StRAP:

2022 Funds – Reallocated to 2024.

2024 Funds – Waiting on sealed plans from engineer and to schedule construction meeting. Temple Project. Bonville asked Board if they could establish deadlines for the Cooperator. Contractor is Foggy Mountain. Nate Coppenbarger made a motion to extend a 1-week deadline for Contractor to get us permits and designs. Jennifer Hanifan 2nd the motion. Motion carried. Bonville to send Cooperator letter. Deadline will be June 5th.

2026 Funds – Funds approved by state are \$390,000.

E. EWP Updates Gina Hodges:

Meeting scheduled to discuss permitting with the County Permit department on Thursday, 5/28.

Hodges asked Board about prioritization of EWP projects. Denny Norris stated that he thought the projects need to be done geographically – all in one area, start to finish in one area. Hodges discussed the reimbursement schedule. She had a conversation with the County Manager and Will Holt about whether these projects need to be billed quarterly or more often. This conversation was repeated to the Board. After talking with James Kjelgaard of

NRCS, it was communicated that NRCS would prefer quarterly billing, but would consider more frequent billing if needed.

Ms. Hodges also asked the Board if the County hires the contractors? David Tucker stated that BREC and Brushy Mountain would be doing the designs and will have to bid out the projects per County procedures. Tucker stated that the projects can be packaged together for bids.

8. NRCS Samantha Dame

Samantha Dame created a site allocation based on the initial site visits. The split was based on number of sites and projected amount of income for each. Some additional site visits will be required to make sure that each location is still a viable project.

9. NRCS Brandon Turlington

Currently doing compliance reviews. These include wetland review and erosion limits for any cooperator receiving USDA benefits.

10. RC&D Report – Jonathan Hartsell

Mr. Hartsell reported that the River Access in Valle Crucis is now complete. The final piece is the signage and they are waiting on the County for placement.

Mr. Hartsell asked the Board if they are willing to partner on a project at Rittle Fork off 194. The project would cover about 2000' of restoration along with 590' on an unnamed tributary. This project may include some bog restoration. Bill Moretz made a motion to partner with Blue Ridge RC&D on this project. Nate Coppenbarger 2nd the motion. Motion carried. Board agreed to partner with Blue Ridge RC&D.

Mr. Hartsell stated that there is also a potential project in Sweet Grass, a Blowing Rock Development. Partners would be BREC, BRRC&D along with Soil & Water. They will be applying for a DWR Grant.

Jennifer Hanifan made a motion to partner on this project, Nate Coppenbarger 2nd the motion. David Tucker abstained due to conflict. Motion passed.

11. Division Report – Elise McLaughlin

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Elise McLaughlin stated that the Envirothon School is June 9-17th in Raleigh. Team leaders for the Envirothon and teachers are invited to go. Deadline is the end of the month.

Bonville stated that the No till Drill is running now. Denny Norris stated that Kendra Phipps, Ag Agent at NC Cooperative Extension took it to the Cattleman's meeting and it was on display. Norris stated that most people didn't know what equipment we have to lease.

Bonville said that he is picking up the potato washer. He also stated that Extension is getting a walk-behind tractor.

David Tucker made a motion to adjourn, Jennifer Hanifan 2nd. Meeting closed at 9:23am.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:23am.

Next meeting will be June 24, 2026.

Minutes submitted by: Michelle Kasey


Denny Norris, Chair

Signed 7-6-26

Dated

USDA Block Grant applications are due 6/12/26. There is a Local Work Group Training 6/1/26 which will be virtual.

Ms. McLaughlin stated that 72 students have been selected to go to RCW Camp; same number as last year. Watauga County is sponsoring 4 students.

Ms. McLaughlin volunteered to transport one of Watauga County's students to camp in Raleigh. She also stated that if there was a need, she would transport other students if asked.

Ms. McLaughlin reminded the Board that Watauga County has two elected Board Seats that will need filling this year. The filing period begins in June. There will be Advanced Supervisor Training in Rutherford, NC, July 14, 2026. Contract management is one topic along with creating and maintaining a positive work environment for staff.

The NACD meeting will be held in Cherokee, NC. This meeting is appropriate for Supervisors. Denny Norris asked if Supervisors would get reimbursed for this meeting. He thought that certain delegates were picked for this State Meeting and only those were reimbursed. Elise McLaughlin to check on this. There will be a CANVA training August 19th in Yadkin County. This training will be a whole day event. Ms. McLaughlin stated that this training is appropriate for Michelle Kasey.

12. Admin Report: Michelle Kasey

Bonny Bonville gave updates.

Bonville has completed spot checks for the year. Most were check of Ag Roads.

The Strategic Plan is due June 1, 2026. No changes from last year.

Bill Moretz made a motion to accept the Strategic Plan as is, Jennifer Hanifan 2nd. Strategic Plan approved by Board to submit to the State.

Coming up June 7th, Bonny to have a walk and talk for Beech Mountain about Post Helene.

Frontline to Farm is June 11th. Bonville to give Soil Health talk.

NRCS Working Land for Wildlife Workshop is in August. Waterway management in our own area and stream care to be the topics.