

MINUTES

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

June 24, 2026

Present:

Denny Norris, Chair
Nate Coppenbarger
Bill Moretz
David Tucker

Michelle Kasey
Brian Bonville
Samantha Glass
Brandon Turrington

Jenny Hanifan
Daphne Carter
Elise McLaughlin
Gina Hodges

1. Denny Norris called meeting to order at 8:00 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; David Tucker 2nd the Motion. Minutes approved.

6. Approval of the agenda

David Tucker made a motion to approve agenda with changes. Nate Copenbarger 2nd the motion. Agenda approved.

7. District Report: Brian Bonville

New Applications: None

Contracts needing approval: None

Contract Updates:

A. ACSP:

95-2023-003 Ronnie Joe Brown – Livestock Exclusion System with Well. Needs extension. Well is drilled and Mr. Brown has some fencing up. Bill Moretz made a motion to ask the state for an extension. Jenny Hanifan 2nd the motion. Denny Norris stated that he wanted Bonny Bonville to put a % of work completed in the extension request. Motion to request an extension passed.

95-2024-003 Charles Norris – The State denied the requested extension. The State suggested that Mr. Norris be allowed to cancel the contract without penalty and re-apply at the new reimbursement rates in 2026. Mr. Norris has agreed to this Board discussed and agreed to allow him to cancel and reapply without penalty.

95-2024-006 Valley View Land Company – RFP submitted to the State and no extension is needed.

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

95-2024-007 Al Zimmerman – State approved extension for Mr. Zimmerman. Pre-build meeting with contractor to be held soon.

95-2025-001 Will Kulczyk – Monitoring construction.

95-2026-003 Will Kulczyk – Supplement Added 180' of road.

95-2025-002 Holland Whitesides – RFP submitted.

95-2026-002 Holland Whitesides – Supplement. Waiting on division approval.

95-2025-003 Larry Kitchens – Received designs from engineers. Waiting on division to approve before drafting supplement. Need approval for supplement \$15,000 for Big Ag Road. Jenny Hanifan made a motion to approve, Bill Moretz 2nd motion. Supplement approved by board.

95-2025-004 Diane Deal – Met with Cooperator, construction to begin in Fall.

95-2023-004 Greene – Closed out.

95-2026-001 Moretz – Working with Andrew Cox on designs for livestock exclusions and spring tank repair.

AgWrap updates:

95-2026-801 Daniel Brown - Spring development repair. Need to schedule engineer for design.

95-2026-802 Daniel Brown – Spring development. Bonville to work with Andrew Cox on designs. Property at Mast Gap.

C. CAP updates:

95-2022-502 Blue Ridge Conservancy – Extension granted by State. Permits have been issued and work to begin in July.

95-2024-501 New River Conservancy (at Green Valley Park) – All maps have been submitted. 1 week until deadline. Bonville requested an extension from the Board. Bill Moretz made a motion for an extension, Jenny Hanifan 2nd the motion. Extension granted to complete the contract.

95-2025-501 Kellwoods 1 Townhomes POA – Waiting on flood plain development permit to schedule meeting with Division engineers.

D. StRAP:

2022 Funds – Reallocated to 2024.

2024 Funds – New contractor, WildLands, was selected. Extension requested of Board. Jenny Hanifan made a motion to extend, Nate Coppenbarger 2nd the Motion. Extension granted.

2026 Funds – Funds approved by state are \$390,000. Bonville requested funding revisions on sites. Peacock lot application was withdrawn. Bonville to reallocate funds to next projects in ranking order. Two projects: 1 – Howards Creek Pond & 2 – Valle Crucis Park. Bonville asked the Board if he could reallocate funds for Hardin Park Elementary's culvert. Bill Moretz made a motion to approve this project, Jenny Hanifan 2nd. Motion passed. Bill Moretz asked if we could get a sign for this project. Bonville stated that StRAP funds would cover a sign. Up to 15% of the funds can cover administrative costs.

E. EWP Updates Gina Hodges:

Batches 1, 2 & 3 have been approved and the funding has been allocated. Waiting on review from the Feds. Have taken pics and field truthed the sites. A few sites have had some repairs made, but someone from NRCS needs to approve these repairs. Samantha Glass stated that one site had a road that had to be repaired before the project could begin.

Letters have been drafted and approved by the County Attorney.

Ms. Hodges stated that the internal EWP team will meet soon to look at the distribution between the two contractors, geographically. Ms. Hodges will be sending out notification form along with right of entry forms.

NRCS Samantha Glass

Ms. Glass stated that there is a DEQ fund from the EPA for debris removal. Government entities may apply now thru September. This may cover the hard-to-reach areas that have not been repaired by other programs.

Bonville to forward this information to Beech Mountain. This was followed by discussion of damage in that area. Elise McLaughlin stated that Mountain True was picking up man-made debris in the waterways.

Ms. Glass told the Board that NC has a new conservationist.

Ms. Glass also said that there were pre-applications for EQUIP coming in.

These include Bio-char initiatives to be funded.

Ms. Glass stated that she will be borrowing a rain simulator from the State to use while presenting at several educational events.

8. NRCS Brandon Turlington

Mr. Turlington stated that he had been working on compliance field visits.

9. RC&D Report – Jonathan Hartsell No report.

10. Division Report – Elise McLaughlin

Ms. McLaughlin reminded the Board about the Advanced Supervisor Training coming up July 14th.

She also stated that she had just returned from attending RCW camp. There were 72 students at camp this year with 4 students sponsored by Watauga County.

Ms. McLaughlin stated that the State had run out of funds and supervisors would not get paid for their April, May or June meetings.

The Area DIC meeting will be held on August 26th in Wilkes County. The DIC Board has asked that Division people not attend to allow districts to speak freely about issues.

There are several trainings coming up soon. Not all have dates. More information coming soon.

11. Daphne Carter, Resource Institute

Resource Institute would like to partner on two projects that would require us to be the applicant Brushy Fork Creek and bank stabilization for two tributaries on the Larry Harmon property. This request required Board approval. David Tucker stated that these projects require individual approval. David Tucker made a motion to partner with RI on the Brushy Fork Creek project. Jenny Hanifan 2nd the motion. The motion carried. David Tucker made a motion to partner with RI on the Larry Harmon project pending signature of NRCS contract; Jenny Hanifan 2nd the motion.

12. Administrative update – Michelle Kasey

Ms. Kasey asked the Board to increase Gina Hodges salary from \$30 to \$50. Bill Moretz made a motion to increase her salary; Jenny Hanifan 2nd the motion. Motion carried. Salary to be increased.

Ms. Kasey told the Board that she is hosting the Envirothon Meeting July 30th and needs permission to purchase breakfast snacks for the meeting. Bill Moretz made a motion; Nate Coppenbarger 2nd. Permission granted to purchase items for the meeting.

Ms. Kasey mentioned that she called the Board of Elections and only 1 person has filed to run for the two board seats that the terms up for re-election. The Board asked Jenny Hanifan if she planned on running and she said no. Short discussion about filling the position was followed by Mr. Norris suggesting a few people for Ms. Kasey to call.

Ms. Kasey asked Board for permission to purchase 3 logo'd hats and 3 logo'd denim shirts for Kasey, Hodges and Bonville. Hodges is making field visits in her own car and would like to be identified with Soil & Water. Bill Moretz made a motion to allow the purchase. Nate Coppenbarger 2nd. Motion passed.

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Bonville asked the Board to allow the purchase of 2 short-sleeved shirts for the summer with the logo. Bill Moretz made a motion to allow Bonville and Kasey to purchase 2 short-sleeved logo's shirts for summer. Nate Coppenbarger 2nd. Motion carried.

Bonville told the Board that he gave a Soil Health talk at Frontline to Farm Event. Bonville also has been invited to give brief soil health talk at BRQIA's Soil Health Workshop July 8th, 2026. This event is sold out.

Bonville also stated that he attended the County Commissioner's meeting and requested and was granted approval for the Rittle Fork Project.

Bonville asked the Board if it would be possible to purchase a crank auger soil core. The price is around \$300. Kasey asked Daphne Carter is Resource Institute might consider purchasing one for Soil & Water. Ms. Carter instructed Kasey to email her the request with a link to the auger Bonville preferred.

Bonville asked the Board about purchasing the bands for the No Till Drill. Kasey stated that she had requested the money for these on the new budget and it was approved.

Bonville stated that he had a meeting with Watauga Long Term Recover Group who has money for Helene damage mitigation. He was suggesting that they help one of our Cooperators.

David Tucker made a motion to adjourn, Nate Coppenbarger 2nd.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:38 am.

Next meeting will be August 26, 2026.

Minutes submitted by: Michelle Kasey


Denny Norris, Chair

Signed 8-26-26

Dated

June 24, 2026

DRAFT

