

NCDA&CS
Division of Soil and Water Conservation
David Williams, Director



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March, 27, 2024



Personnel

- **New Hires:**
 - District Operations Chief (Julie Henshaw) – **Kristina Fischer**
 - Training Coordinator (Sydney Mucha) – **Brandy Myers**
- **Vacancies (10):**
 - Engineer Tech I (Taryn Hendrickson), Engineer Tech I (Matt Hall) – Merging to establish new Engineer I
 - CREP Surveyor (Jacob Berry), Engineer Tech I (Ben Wilkins) – Due to lack of eligible applicants, considering contracting surveying services
 - Engineer II (Layne Owen) – Preparing to repost
 - Engineer II (Cindy Safrit) – Posting closed 3/1, awaiting applications
 - Sr..Eastern Regional Coordinator (Kristina Fischer) – Submitted for posting
 - Soil Scientist (Patrick Mitchell) –Submitted for posting
 - Admin. Officer (Maegan Trimnal) - Submitted for posting
 - Engineering Supervisor (Scott Melvin) – Vacancy pending (April 26)



New Part-Time staff for Forestland Conservation Planning

- Earlier in March we added a new part-time staff person in Haywood SWCD (serving 33 western counties)
- Blair Bishop, Registered/Certified Forester
- Funded through NACD TA grant
- Duties:
 - Assess forest land resource concerns
 - Provide education and outreach to landowners
 - Processing EQIP/CSP landowner applications
 - Develop/update conservation plans for forest land
 - BMP implementation assistance/oversight

DEQ Cooperation for Ag Projects

- At Chairman Langdon's direction and in response to Association action item we met with staff from DEQ (DEMLR and DWR) on March 4
- Reviewed concerns about expectations that projects on ag land would require sed./erosion control plans
- They asked the Division to share periodically a list of projects involving state/federal/local cost share
- DEQ will direct field staff to not cite construction projects that are involved in cost share
- Also addresses the requirements for buffers on trout streams
- DEQ attorney working to project a MOA to formalize the agreement.
- Still have remaining work to develop an understanding for ag projects not involving cost share that are not specifically exempted by G.S. 113A-52.01(Sedimentation Pollution Control Act)

New State Payment System

- In October State Government switched to a new system for processing payments.
- Affects supervisor payments and cost share payments, too
- We fell behind in processing payments during the transition and have not yet caught up
- Supervisors who attended the 2023 annual meeting and Commission members probably received a 1099 by mistake. The Department will be issuing a correction to those who received one.
 - You should receive a W-2 for your per diem payments

Flood Resiliency Blueprint

- Decision Support Tool to help local governments identify and plan flood resiliency projects
- Phase I report is complete
- Initial Neuse Basin Strategy has been developed
- DEQ is planning several outreach sessions in the spring
- Potentially significant opportunities for Districts to engage
 - Debris Removal
 - Ag & Community Conservation BMPs
 - Buffers, Cropland conversion
 - Water Farming
 - Pond construction/rehab – Potential pilot project

Technical Assistance Funds

- The Division has not received a recurring increase for district technical assistance since 2006.
- The Association and Division are requesting a \$600,000 recurring expansion.
- We are working to steer additional funds to districts to help with paying for staff
 - StRAP admin and Technical Assistance (up to 15%)
 - Trying to develop an agreement with NRCS to compensate districts for TA on NRCS programs (EQIP & CSP).
 - Sentinel Landscapes projects can include funding for TA

Fundamentals of Conservation Planning

- May 6 – 10
- Waynesville
- Registration is open through April 26
- Room block closes April 15



Division's New Website

Programs & Initiatives

**About Soil & Water -
Division and Districts**

**Soil and Water
Conservation Commission**

For Soil and Water Conservation Districts

**For Soil and Water Conservation District
Supervisors**

