

MINUTES

Catawba Soil and Water Conservation District held at Newton, N.C.

Meeting Number 5

June 9, 2026

Supervisors Present:

Julia Elmore

Brandon Bowman

William Shillito

David Caldwell

Christopher Brett Little

Others Present:

Randy Willis, Soil Conservation Supervisor

Blake Henley, Soil Conservation Technician

Leia Hamlyn, Education Coordinator

Will Faulkner, NCRS

Julia Elmore read the following statements then called the business meeting to order at 9:09 a.m.:

The State Government Ethics Act mandates that at the beginning of any meeting the Chair reminds all the members of their duty to avoid conflicts of interest and inquire as to whether any member knows of any conflict of interest or potential conflict with respect to matters to come before the Board. If any member knows of a conflict of interest or potential conflict, please state so at this time.

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.

David Caldwell made a motion to approve the agenda for the board meeting. Brandon Bowman seconded. All in favor. Motion passed. Agenda approved.

William Shillito made a motion to approve the minutes from the May 1, 2026, board meeting. Brandon Bowman seconded. All in favor. Motion passed. Minutes approved.

Randy Willis and Blake Henley presented the Catawba District Operations Report.

District Operations and Technical Assistance

Item I

- A. Assisted landowners with soil sample information.
- B. Had a meeting with the State cost share committee.
- C. Assisted Iredell SWCD with contract calculations.
- D. Attended our monthly drone meeting.
- E. Assisted Iredell SWCD with spot checks.

- F. Randy gave a presentation at the Catawba County Board of Commissioners budget hearing. The Catawba County Soil and Water Conservation District Staff comprised of the Supervisor, Technician and Education Coordinator, achieved a high level of performance measured by the following goals:
 - We exceeded our presentation goal of 12 by completing 23 presentations.
 - We exceeded our goal to encumber 95 percent of our Cost Share Allocation by encumbering 99.97 percent.
 - We exceeded our goal of completing 90 percent of all requested initial site visits within 10 days by achieving 100 percent.
- G. We've started packing and purging in preparation for the move to the new building.

NCACSP

Item II

- A. Contract 18-2024-02-01 RFP has been submitted.
- B. Meet with a landowner about ACSP.
- C. David Caldwell made a motion to approve Contract application 18-2026-03-01. Brandon Bowman seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.
- D. Brandon Bowman made a motion to approve Contract 18-2026-03-01 in the amount of \$15,517.00. This is a supplement to contract 18-2024-02-01. David Caldwell seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.

AGWRAP

Item III

CCAP

Item IV

Leia Hamlyn presented the Education and Outreach report:

Item V

- A. The first-choice RCW candidate picked up his travel stipend and is excited about the event.
- B. State Envirothon was held April 24-25. One team from Catawba participated. The other team had a last-minute conflict and had to withdraw before the competition. Bryan Evans returned the check for this team.
- C. Grass Heads/Soil Horizons program at the Maiden branch of the Library on June 2 to kick off Summer Reading program.
- D. Upcoming presentations with Sipes Orchard Home (Randy/Blake/Leia) and the Newton Library (Leia).
- E. Mini-Course presentation in June.

Will Faulkner presented the NRCS Team 5 Soil Conservationist's Report:

EQIP/CSP Catawba:

**EQIP 2026: Team 5- 87 applications
2 active contracts - \$100,000**

**CSP 2026: Team 5- 4 applications
1 active contracts - \$20,000**

11 Preapproved applications in Team 5 so far ~\$300,000

FY 2026 Programs

- **Eligibility Deadline was 3/6/26**
- **Approximately \$30M for EQIP with \$8M being RPP**
- **New USDA Regenerative Agriculture Program announced nationwide**
 - **\$700M in EQIP and CSP**
 - **20% of funds have to go to this Program**
 - **Soil Testing in 1st and 5th year of contract**
 - **TIMELINE**

Description	Date
Application Cutoff	January 15, 2026
Program Eligibility Certification Request Letter Mailed* (to include 530.142E Conservation Program Application Checklist)	January 30, 2026
Eligibility Determination	March 6, 2026
Screening/Assessment/Ranking	May 15, 2026
Pre-approval	May 22, 2026
Quality Assurance	June 12, 2026
ACT Now and LCI Obligation	July 24, 2026
CSP/EQIP Obligation	September 18, 2026

Fieldwork: Spring is a busy time with lots of work getting started. We have multiple projects under construction. With help from NRCS Area 2 engineers we are being able to get some overdue projects started within Team 5.

Other Notes:

- Local workgroup meeting 6/12 @1030 in Taylorsville
- HEL FSA compliance will start this month across the State

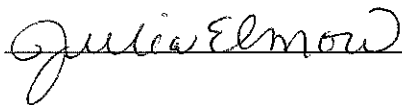
A guest presented a proposal to pursue the study of microplastics looking for an entity to co-sponsor a grant. William Shillito made a motion to put the guest in touch with a group whose mission more closely aligns with their goals. David Caldwell seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.

Elise McLaughlin sent the Division Report via email along with the resolution from the Burke SWCD Board for consideration. Some events to note in June:

- Team 3 LWG, virtual, June 1, 9:30 am
- Team 4 LWG, June 4, Stokes SWCD, 10:30 am
- Envirothon School, June 9-11, Blue Jay Point
- USDA Block Grant training, virtual, June 9, 9:00-11:00 am
- Team 5 LWG, June 12, Alexander SWCD, 10:30 am
- Special called commission meeting re: StRAP, June 16, 10:00 am

William Shillito made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Brandon Bowman seconded. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 9:58 a.m.

Minutes taken by Leia Hamlyn.



Julia Elmore, Board Chair