

MINUTES

Farmland Protection Program Durham Soil and Water Conservation District

Meeting Number: 8 (Farmland Protection Advisory Board) Date: December 18, 2025

Advisory Board Present:

Nicole Connelly – Chair, Little River VAD
Deborah Luecken – DOST Representative
John Cowan – Cape Fear VAD
Carolyn Rose-Seed – At Large
Samantha Gasson – At Large
David Harris – SWCD Board
Helena Cragg – At Large
Mark Waller – Farm Bureau Representative
Kenny Browning – Eno River VAD

Others Present:

Lisa Marochak – Soil & Water
Sherry Scully – Soil & Water
Jill Fusco – Open Space & Real Estate
John Lyttle – Cooperative Extension
Dustin Brewer
Andrew Branan
Donna Stainback
David Hoffman

The regular monthly meeting of the Farmland Protection Advisory Board was held on Thursday, December 18, 2025 at Durham Farm Bureau. This meeting was called to order at 10:32 am by the chair, Nicole Connelly.

1. Nicole Connelly opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.
2. **Approval of November Board Minutes** – Motion made by Kenny Browning to approve the November meeting minutes as submitted. Samantha Gasson seconded the motion. All in favor; motion passed.
3. **Financial Report** – Lisa Marochak provided update of account expenditures for past month. Follow up provided of Jordan High School FFA's request for financial support of feed expenses for livestock show steers. Total request for \$600. Discussion concluded with decision to support education requests at the end of fiscal year if funds remain in budget.
4. **Breakfast Recap** – Sherry Scully announced that 45 people registered and 32 were in attendance for (12/18) morning Farmer and Landowner Breakfast. Next month's breakfast notification will be shared on Friday.
5. **Farmland Protection Plan Update** – Lisa Marochak notified board that the contract amendment has been signed by contractor, Foothills Regional Commission. Staff is expecting to receive all data collected by contractor soon.
6. **Easements/Open Space** – Jill Fusco present to provided report: Wesley Poole's conservation easement has closed. Seven projects equivalent to 254 acres are in process for the Farmland Preservation program.
7. **VAD Update** – Shery Scully informed board that two of the three properties, once owned by Steve Holder (94 acres) are under development and have therefore been removed from the VAD program.
8. **Soil & Water Conservation District Update** – Lisa Marochak made Board aware of the District's upcoming events and opportunities: education contests are open, multiple BETC projects have been completed through a \$60,000 grant, and stream easement project construction is underway.
9. **Cooperative Extension Update** – John Lyttle provided details of upcoming events:
 - December 16 – CEFS workshop on fruit production, 12-1pm
 - Jan 21-Mar 18 – Small Farm Boot Camp

- March 2-June 15 – NC Farm School

10. **Durham Open Space and Trails Commission Update** – No meeting held since last meeting.

Adjourn – Sherry Scully requested an approval for December 4 meeting minutes. Mark Waller made motion for December 4 minutes to be approved. David Harris seconded motion. All in favor; motion passed.

Lisa Marochak asked Board to consider 2026 meeting dates. All present were in agreement that the third Thursday evening of each month at 6pm should continue.

With no additional business, Chair Connelly adjourned the meeting at 11:15am.

Nicole Connelly
Chairman

Sherry Scully
Soil and Water

January 15, 2026
Date approved