

MOORE COUNTY WORKING LANDS PROTECTION PLAN YEARLY REPORT

2013-2014 update on goals, strategies and actions involved with the implementation of the Moore County Working Lands Protection Plan

Action 1.1.1: Update the county land use plan and develop a matrix to identify important agricultural areas and issues.

Steps taken: The Moore County Land Use Plan was updated and approved by the Board of Commissioners on November 19, 2013. The Steering committee which met for several months before the plans adoption consisted of a number of individuals from the Agricultural Community.

Action 1.1.2: Update the Working Lands Protection Plan as needed, or no more than five years following its adoption.

Steps taken: The plan will be revised in 5 years.

Action 1.2.1: Track proposed Federal and State law changes that could have an impact on the agricultural industry and inform the community of the proposed changes.

Steps taken: Any changes that are brought forth to either the Soil and Water Office or NC Cooperative Extension are posted on the county website, quarterly newsletter, or dispersed through an email list.

Action 1.2.2: Monitor and track recordation's at the County's Register of Deeds office in regard to hydraulic fracturing.

Steps taken: There were two recordation's filed in regards to hydraulic fracturing.

Action 1.2.3: Coordinate with the Sandhills Conservation Partnership to stay abreast of easements and fee simple land acquisitions in the County.

Steps taken: Sandhills Area Land Trust (SALT) did not obtain any new easements within the past year.

Action 2.1.1: Develop a partnership with the Moore County Chamber of Commerce to hold business development events for producers and buyers.

Steps taken: The Farm City Banquet is held each year in November. It brings together farmers, local agribusinesses, the Chamber of Commerce, and Partners in Progress.

The Moore County Leadership Institute is held each year by the Chamber of Commerce. This event is for new business owners. It includes a local farm tour that is hosted by Cooperative Extension.

Action 2.1.2: Explore the possibility of developing a local Moore County tracking/reporting system to improve upon the USDA Census of Agriculture statistics and thresholds for profit in various crops and agricultural products.

Steps taken: The Cooperative Extension service sent out mailings requesting cooperators to fill them out and send them back in to help get a better compilation of Agricultural statistics in Moore County.

Action 2.1.3: Conduct a study of Moore County's equine industry similar to the study the North Carolina Rural Center conducted in 2009 to document the precise size and scope of the industry, to determine its economic impact and to recommend measures for the increasing the industry's contributions to the economy.

Steps taken: Workshops were held in 2012/2013 to explore practices such as pasture management and composting.

Action 2.2.1: Hold a forum with leaders and stakeholders to create a framework for developing a local food system.

Steps taken: The Green Fields Initiative involves Lee, Moore, and Richmond Counties. The Moore County Board of Commissioners appropriated \$15,000 for a feasibility study the past year.

Action 2.3.1: Utilize the county's permitting process to promote the use of locally grown environmental horticulture and landscaping materials by developers and also by the Property Management division of Moore County.

Steps taken: A list of locally grown ornamental cooperators is being developed and will be distributed accordingly.

Action 2.4.1: Continue efforts to support workshops on agritourism covering topics such as enterprise evaluation, liability insurance, zoning ordinances, food and environmental health regulations.

Steps taken: The Moore, Lee, and Richmond County Farm School were established and began in February 2014 and were held in Aberdeen. Participants met once a month and also attended a field trip to a farm demo site once a month.

Action 2.5.1: Provide economically viable crop alternatives for biofuels to promote the continuance of farming.

Steps taken: The Voluntary Agricultural District Board explored the biofuels industry and options available during 2012/2013 and deemed that it was not a feasible option at the time. The Cooperative Extension Service continually meets with NC State representatives to explore viable options.

Action 2.5.2: Explore the use of timber harvest residues for biofuels to promote the continuance of forestry.

Steps taken: Cooperative Extension continues to meet with NC State to learn more about timber residues and the opportunities for biofuel expansion.

Action 3.1.1: Develop an updated farmland protection ordinance and promote the Voluntary Farmland Protection Plan.

Steps taken: The Voluntary Agricultural ordinance was updated June of 2012 and also in February of 2014 and is currently being revisited and is on track to be updated again by the spring of 2015.

Action 3.1.2: Explore a mechanism for the Moore County Soil and Water Conservation District to hold conservation easements.

Steps taken: The Soil and Water Board and Staff members met with Dick Fowler, the Executive Director of Soil and Water Conservation in June of 2013 to discuss conservation easement options. At that time both staff and Board members decided to table the discussion and not move forward with pursuing easement holdings.

Action 4.1.1: Expand agricultural adult education and training programs available through Cooperative Extension and Sandhills Community College.

Steps taken: The Moore, Lee, and Richmond Farm School were established in February 2013.

Action 4.1.2: Expand and enhance agriculture education programs in the public schools to prepare students for careers in sustainable agriculture.

Steps taken: The Food Corp program is maintained by the Master Gardner's Club. They work with schools to help teach students about certain plants and crops. Local FFA chapters have a number of programs that help develop students for careers in agriculture.

Action 4.1.3: Develop an on-farm/ in-forest internship program between interested farmers/foresters and school age children.

Steps taken: Cooperative Extension heads up an internship program each summer. The participants spend time with the departments of their choosing and work both in the office and out in the field for a couple of weeks. In 2013 there were 7 participants with 5 participating in 2014.

Action 4.1.4: Develop a Farm to School Program to connect elementary school children and agriculture.

Steps taken:

Action 4.2.1: Coordinate estate planning and farm transition assistance for agricultural land owners; include workshops and continuing education credits for attorneys, a directory of qualified advisors and other resources.

Steps taken: In March of 2014, Mount Olive College held a farm transitioning workshop here in Carthage. It covered a variety of topics dealing with the legal issues of estate planning.

Action 4.2.2: Provide technical assistance to landlords and tenants negotiating lease agreements and address issues like land and water stewardship; documentation record keeping PUV, loans, NCAGCSP, product share in lieu of cash payment; buyout clauses; and other issues necessary to ensure that agreements are fair and that both parties are informed and protected.

Steps taken: Cooperative Extension is planning a land lease workshop in Moore County for 2015. Exact time and date are TBA.

Action 4.2.3: When using funds pursuant to this plan to lease or otherwise convey real property rights, a property owner shall execute and duly record with the register of deeds a legally sufficient instrument of conveyance clearly showing the property and rights being leased or otherwise conveyed.

Steps taken: N/A