

**North Carolina State Disaster Recovery Task Force
Environmental Preservation Recovery Support Function (RSF 7) Meeting**

Ground Floor Hearing Room
Archdale Building
512 N. Salisbury Street, Raleigh, NC 27604
February 27, 2020
2:00pm – 4:00pm

Meeting Minutes

In attendance

Lead: Toby Vinson, Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
Staff: Marlena Byrne and Ruseena Johnson, NCORR

Todd Miller, NC Coastal Federation
Veronica Bryant, NC Division of Health and Human Services (DHSS)
Shannon Deaton, NC Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC)
Keith Larick, NC Farm Bureau
Will McDow, Environmental Defense Fund (EDF)
Grady McCallie, The Conservation Network
Sandy Switzer, Triangle Land Conservancy
Chris Crew, NC Emergency Management – Mitigation (NCEM – MIT)
Jon Fletcher, [unintelligible]
Misty Buchanan, NC Dept of Natural and Cultural Resources (NCDNCR)
Rick Savage, Carolina Wetlands Association
Blakely Hildebrand, Southern Environmental Law Center (SELC)
Adam Wagner, News and Observer
Jon Buchanan, NCDNCR, State Parks
Kacey Cook, NCWRC
Will Robinson, The Nature Conservancy (TNC)

Participating by teleconference:

Tom Anderson, NC League of Municipalities
Paula Hemmer, NC DEQ
Michelle Lovejoy, NC Foundation for Soil and Water Conservation
Jim Kjelgaard, USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service

Welcome, Introductions, and Overview of Agenda

T. Vinson and M. Byrne provided a brief introduction and agenda overview. Meeting to focus on first of three topics for forming recommendations.

Presentation Regarding the NC Natural and Working Lands Stakeholder Group

R. Savage, president and founder of Carolina Wetlands Association, discussed the draft recommendations of the North Carolina Natural and Working Lands Stakeholder Group regarding climate adaptation and resiliency. The report will be provided as an appendix to the NC Climate Risk and Resiliency Plan.

Issues raised in discussion:

- Disconnect between modeling being done and benefits of nature-based solutions. How do we make that connection? How do we take advantage of existing modeling and build on it?
- NRCS Emergency Watershed Protection Program: potential for agriculture to be a big help in this—wetlands/floodplains restoration; restoring stream and wetlands functionalities; cover crops and other efforts to restore water
- holding capacity on agricultural lands.

Develop Recommendations for Increasing Implementation and Effectiveness of Nature-Based Infrastructure and Restoration

- RSF began discussion of recommendations to be provided to NCORR, NCEM and the Governor's Office, facilitated by T. Vinson and M. Byrne. This is the first of three topics proposed by the RSF at prior meetings. Three topics include: Increasing Implementation and Effectiveness of Nature-Based Infrastructure and Restoration; Capacity Building; and Data and Modeling Needs.
- Timeframe for recommendations: Need recommendations for short-term and long-term. For more formal recommendations, probably looking at longer term. But on an informal basis, state staff is already incorporating ideas that have come up in RSF discussions.
- Format for recommendations: Up to this group. Could be a formal letter and document formalizing recommendations.
- Type of recommendations: Specific recommendations are ideal. Not just policy, but also data needs, legislative proposals, procedural changes. Can build off the more general recommendations in the forthcoming Natural and Working Lands Stakeholder Group's recommendations and the NC Risk and Resilience Plan.
- Even if recommendations are broader than scope of NCEM/NCORR/Governor's Office, should still make them. Because this group combines both state staff and advocacy groups, it is a powerful tool for getting good ideas out and generating broader support.
- Next Steps:
 - Members to submit recommendations to M. Byrne prior to the next meeting on March 26, 2020, for discussion at that meeting.
 - Please provide recommendations for all three topics.
 - M. Byrne to share the housing recommendations with this group so that they can determine overlaps.
 - J. Kjelgaard of NRCS offered to present on their disaster recovery programs at one of the next meetings.
 - T. Vinson to email group a copy of the State Disaster Recovery Task Framework. Comments/edits are requested from group.

Requests from Communications and Intergovernmental Relations RSF

The Communications and Intergovernmental Relations RSF has asked if the other RSFs would provide feedback on the areas that they they've noticed a need for improved communication.

- Lack of guidance after Hurricane Florence for when it was safe to get back into the water for swimming which led to people swimming before it was safe.
- Need more messaging about chemically treated wood that was handled as driftwood so was burned by homeowners which resulted in the release of chemicals into the atmosphere
 - The fact that many people don't realize that boats need to be removed during a disaster just like houses are prepared to prevent damage to streams and rivers

- RSF requested to email M. Byrne with any additional thoughts for this.

Next Steps

- RSF to send draft recommendations to M. Byrne for discussion at next meeting.
- Potential guest speaker for next RSF meeting: Matthew Arlyn, Director of Policy for NCORR.