



E-mail Update

APRIL 14, 2008

WWW.NCADFP.ORG

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 3

Events

4/17- Agritourism Networking Association Workshop – 4-7:30pm - Iredell County Cooperative Extension Office, Statesville. Registration deadline is April 15. Call Wendy Wilson at (704) 819-7545 or e-mail at lazy5ranch@aol.com.

4/24- Agritourism Networking Association Workshop – 4-7:30pm - Tarkil Branch Farm's Homestead Museum, Beulaville. Registration deadline is April 22. Call Tami Thompson at (919) 934-1132 or e-mail at dtdjthompson@sprintmail.com.

5/1 – Agritourism Networking Association Workshop – 4-7:30pm - Pleasant Valley Farm, Old Fort. Registration deadline is April 29. Call Marilyn Cade at (828) 675-4856 or e-mail at marilyn@mountainfarm.com. Workshops run from 4 -7:30 p.m.

5/1 - Putting Trees to Work in Your Community Workshop – 9am-3pm – Forsyth County Center – Winston-Salem – Registration deadline is April 23rd.

ADFP Trust Fund News

ADFP Trust Fund grant applications were due in December 14, 2007. Grant award recipients for the 2007-08 grant cycle will be announced in the summer of 2008. Thank you to everyone who submitted an application! If you have additional questions, please contact Lindsay Ballance, Environmental Programs Office Manager at (919) 733-7125 or e-mail ncadfp@ncmail.net.

TradingMarkets.com, Dubuque (Iowa) Telegraph Herald N.C. leading nation in farmland lost to development

With new subdivisions fast claiming farmland, counties ringing Charlotte, N.C., are trying to slow the loss of their rural heritage. North Carolina has lost 6,000 farms and 300,000 acres of farmland since 2002, the state Agriculture Department says, more than any other state. After talking about preservation in earnest since 2000, Cabarrus County, N.C., farmers found an ally in state Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler, who has made the issue a priority. Cabarrus in 2005 became the first in the state to create agricultural districts in which farmers agree not to sell their land to developers for at least a decade. In return, the farmers are eligible for a higher percentage of state conservation grants. They're also less likely to get unsolicited purchase offers from developers. Of seven N.C. counties with such districts, four – Cabarrus, Gaston, Lincoln and Iredell – surround Charlotte. Cabarrus, in addition, is one of only three counties with state-approved, farmland-protection plans. Urban Mecklenburg, down to handful of farms, has no agricultural districts. Cabarrus has a long farming history. Sixteen farms are at least a century old, said county agriculture agent Carl Pless, and two date to 1762. About 100 full-time farmers and 600 part-timers still work the land. But "you drive through the county and see where they've cleared the trees and bulldozed the ground and built houses," Pless said, "and I'd say we're losing ground." More than 120 Cabarrus farmers have agreed to keep 11,000 acres undeveloped, he said. ...

<http://www.tradingmarkets.com/.site/news/Stock%20News/1354685/>

Voluntary Agricultural District News

Jones & Scotland counties recently passed Voluntary Agricultural District ordinances! There are currently 59 Voluntary Agricultural Districts in the state.

Web Links of Interest

Land Trust Alliance

<http://www.lta.org/farmersandranchers/index.html>

The Wilderness Society – New website called - Housing Sprawl in the Southeast - Our Vanishing Places. Watch the maps of the Southeast United States change colors from "green" to "red" between 1940 to 2030.

<http://www.tws.org/OurIssues/EasternForests/SprawlSE.cfm>

American Farmland Trust – Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements (PACE) Survey -The 2007 state and local PACE survey results are now available. To view the tables, please select from the links provided above. The tables track the progress of farm and ranch land protection programs in 21 states and 56 localities that have acquired funding and/or easements. The data in this survey is current as of January 2007, unless otherwise indicated. We have also attached a map illustrating nationwide PACE activity by state.

As of July 2007:

1. Thirty-two states have PACE activity at the state and/or local level;
2. Twenty-seven states have state-level PACE activity; and
3. Eighteen states have PACE activity at the local level.

PACE tables are available in PDF format on the Farmland Information Center Web site, <http://www.farmlandinfo.org/>. Please feel free to copy and distribute these documents as necessary. These data are used by a variety of groups including: program managers, Natural Resources Conservation Service staff, elected officials, reporters and the general public.

The Voices Project at Michigan State University Museum presents resources to build greater understanding about farmers, farming and food.

<http://foodfarmingandcommunity.org/>

Events

N.C. Agritourism Networking Association hosting series of statewide workshops

RALEIGH – Anyone interested in starting an agritourism farm business or who wants to learn more about the state's growing agritourism industry is welcome to attend any of the five upcoming workshops across the state. Following are workshop dates, locations and contact information:

--April 3, Sen. Bob Martin Eastern Agricultural Center, Williamston. Registration deadline is April 1. Contact Peggy Edmondson at (252) 795-3192 in the evening, or e-mail at peggyedmondson@earthlink.net.

--April 8, Orange County Cooperative Extension Office, Hillsborough. Registration deadline is April 4. Call Paul Marshall at (336) 727-5284 or e-mail at riverbirchvineyards@triad.rr.com.

--April 17, Iredell County Cooperative Extension Office, Statesville. Registration deadline is April 15. Call Wendy Wilson at (704) 819-7545 or e-mail at lazy5ranch@aol.com.

--April 24, Tarkil Branch Farm's Homestead Museum, Beulaville. Registration deadline is April 22. Call Tami Thompson at (919) 934-1132 or e-mail at dtdjthompson@sprintmail.com.

--May 1, Pleasant Valley Farm, Old Fort. Registration deadline is April 29. Call Marilyn Cade at (828) 675-4856 or e-mail at marilyn@mountainfarm.com.

Workshops run from 4 -7:30 p.m.

The program for each workshop will cover such topics as defining agritourism opportunities for a farm, hospitality hints and marketing tips, liability issues, agritourism success stories and information on how to form voluntary agricultural districts in your county. The program also offers farmers and others a chance to network and learn from one another.

Cost is \$12 and includes workshop materials and dinner. Walk-ins will be accommodated as space and dinner arrangements allow.

For more information, contact Martha Glass, manager of the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Agritourism Office, at (919) 733-7887 or martha.glass@ncmail.net.

Agendas and registration forms are available at www.ncagr.com/agritourism.

Agritourism refers to value-added agricultural activities on a farm, ranch or vineyard that provide entertaining, educational and recreational experiences. For example, some farms offer hayrides, barnyard animal exhibits, pond fishing, pick-your-own opportunities, summer camps, vineyards, special events and unique meeting spaces for business retreats.

Putting Trees to Work in Your Community Workshop

N.C. Cooperative Extension Service is offering a workshop on tree protection, tree Ordinances, and working open space on May 1st and registration is now open. More information is available at

<http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/nreos/forest/ordinance/new.html#workshop>.

Registration deadline is April 23rd and the topics we'll cover include the following:

- *Urban and Community Forestry Grant program;
- *Developing effective tree ordinances;
- *Costs of Community Services studies: Comparing costs of land uses;
- *Zoning and regulation of trees (Clarify regulation of forestry); and
- *Regulation and protection of farm and forestland.

News

Durham Herald-Sun

State lifts open burning ban after recent rainfall

RALEIGH, N.C. -- The state Division of Forest Resources has lifted a ban on open burning across the state after recent rains helped reduce the threat of fire.

The ban had been in effect since Thursday, and The News & Observer of Raleigh reported that officials began issuing burning permits again on Monday.

However, agency officials urged people to be careful burning pine straw, leaves and yard debris. During the spring fire season, high winds and quick-drying forest fuels can create hazardous conditions.

Officials said they could reinstate the ban if the drought and increased wildfire activity persist. The state has had more than 1,981 wildfires this year, burning 20,483 acres.

<http://www.heraldsun.com/state/6-938389.cfm>

Golden Hay Relief extended to offer livestock owners cost-share funds for N.C.-grown hay delivered through April 30

RALEIGH – Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler announced today that Golden Hay Relief, a program that assisted drought-stricken livestock owners with the cost of transporting North Carolina-grown hay and forage to their farms, is launching a second phase. The program is open to owners of cattle, sheep, goats and equine. It is funded by a \$500,000 grant the Golden LEAF Foundation awarded to the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services last year.

The first phase of the program covered shipments of North Carolina-grown hay, corn stover and soybean fodder delivered to farms between Sept. 1 and Dec. 31, 2007. The program reimbursed livestock owners up to 50 percent of their transportation costs for those shipments. The reimbursements used about \$238,000 of the \$500,000 grant.

In the second phase of the program, the department will use the remaining grant money for reimbursements on shipments of in-state hay and alternative forage delivered this year between Jan. 1 and April 30. The department will also accept applications from livestock owners who did not apply for assistance during phase one.

“Golden Hay Relief helped facilitate the movement of almost 35,000 bales of hay, corn stover and soybean fodder across North Carolina last year,” Troxler said. “But the forage needs have continued, and it just made sense to use the remaining grant money to help these farmers and ranchers with their transportation costs. I want to thank Golden LEAF for recognizing this continuing need and approving our request to expand the program.”

Application deadline is May 1. Because reimbursements will be made on a first-come, first-served basis while funds last, livestock owners should submit applications quickly, Troxler said.

Applications and eligibility criteria are available online at www.ncagr.com/hayalert/goldenhay.htm or through the toll-free Hay Alert hotline at (866) 506-6222 weekdays.

Livestock owners who have purchased hay grown outside North Carolina can apply for transportation cost-share assistance through the Ag and Equine Partners Program. Information is available at www.ncagr.com/hayalert or by calling the hotline.

Winston-Salem Journal, 4/6

Plant and Hope: Congress and president can't agree on what should be in the Farm Bill

WASHINGTON - As he heads into planting season, Kevin Matthews is worried. Prices for the wheat he grows in Forsyth and Yadkin counties are at record highs, but he's afraid those prices could come crashing down. "These prices can go down just as fast as they're up," Matthews said. "The volatility in the market is just unreal at this time." As he and other farmers put crops in the ground this spring, they are doing so without an important government safety net - the Farm Bill. Through the Farm Bill, Congress resets the nation's farm policy every five years. A Farm Bill was due to be passed last year, but Congress and President Bush have been unable to agree on a new bill. Farmers say Congress' inability to act is causing them some heartburn. Included in the Farm Bill is the renewal of measures that provide payments to farmers if the prices of the crops they produce fall below a certain level. Those payments are especially important when farmers - and their bankers - make financial decisions about what to plant at a time when farmers face higher costs of fertilizer and fuel. Subsidies and payments for farmers have brought criticism from taxpayer groups who believe the payments are unnecessary and costly. But farmers say they're needed to guarantee their livelihood. "What you run into with the lack of a Farm Bill and the high input costs and the volatility in the market is a whole lot of risk before you get a reward on this crop that's fixin' to go in the ground," Matthews said. The lack of a Farm Bill, which has been temporarily extended until April 18, hasn't stopped farmers from planting. Some crops - such as corn, wheat and soybeans - are selling at record highs and that offers farmers some guarantee that their crops will be financially successful. ...

http://www.journalnow.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=WSJ/MGArticle/WSJ_BasicArticle&c=MGArticle&cid=11733552050

Fayetteville Observer

Program helps prospective farmers

RAEFORD — When Teddy Smith was a child, he would tote buckets and feed chickens on his family's Hoke County farm. Now 22, Smith is attending workshops designed to help prospective young farmers break into the business. "That was the intent, to study different things that could help on the farm, so that's what I did," Smith said. The Young Farmers Recruitment Program, a statewide venture started by N.C. A&T State University in 2004, targets prospective farmers age 25 and younger. The program is focused on teaching small-scale niche farming, such as growing organic foods or livestock. "That's where we see the opportunity for young people and for entrepreneurs to break into farming," said Keith Baldwin, the program leader for agriculture at the university. ...

<http://www.fayobserver.com/article?id=290961>

Troxler announces changes to program that provides cost-share funds for bringing in hay from outside N.C.

NCDA&CS eases some requirements, extends window of eligibility

RALEIGH – Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler today announced changes to a state program that helps livestock owners pay the cost of trucking in hay from outside North Carolina. The N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services established the Ag and Equine Partners Program last year to help owners of cattle, sheep, goats and horses with the cost of transporting hay from other states and Canada. The program reimburses farmers and ranchers for transporting out-of-state hay at a rate of 50 cents per mile round trip or \$1 per loaded mile, up to \$500 per load. Troxler announced the following changes to the program: Extended window of eligibility – Livestock owners may apply for assistance on up to four loads of out-of-state hay delivered since July 1, 2007. Previously, the program paid reimbursements on one load delivered between Sept. 1 and Dec. 3, 2007, and up to three loads delivered after Dec. 3. Lower load-size minimum – Hay loads must weigh at least 10,000 pounds to qualify for assistance. Originally, the minimum was 18,750 pounds. Lower mileage minimum – Loads must travel at least 50 miles. Originally, the minimum was 100 miles. Application deadline – All applications must be postmarked by May 1. “We certainly want to help farmers and ranchers who saw the hay shortage coming and looked after them by buying out-of-state hay last summer,” Troxler said. The program is supported by private contributions and state funds. As of April 4, payments to livestock owners totaled more than \$200,000. About \$136,000 remained in the fund. Applications and eligibility criteria are available online at www.ncagr.com/hayalert/agpartners.htm or by calling the toll-free Hay Alert hotline at (866) 506-6222 weekdays. Livestock owners who have purchased hay grown in North Carolina can apply for transportation cost-share assistance through the Golden Hay Relief Program. Information is available at www.ncagr.com/hayalert/goldenhay.htm or by calling the hotline.

Winston-Salem Journal

Navy: Assessment statements to be done for five landing sites

RALEIGH - The Navy said yesterday that it will continue to pursue plans to build a practice landing field for its jet fighters by preparing environmental-impact statements for five possible sites in two states. The Navy said the environmental assessments for the sites, three in Virginia and two in North Carolina, would take more than two years to complete. A Navy statement said that the North Carolina sites are Hale’s Lake in Camden and Currituck counties and Sandbanks in Gates County. The Virginia sites were identified as Cabin Point, Dory and Mason. “These sites each have operational, environmental, and population characteristics that make them viable site alternatives for further analysis,” the Navy said in a notice of intent published in the Federal Register. An auxiliary landing field would include an 8,000-foot runway for use by pilots from Navy air bases in Norfolk, Va., and Virginia Beach, Va. The site also would have an air-traffic control tower and other support buildings. Pilots now use a field in Chesapeake, Va., to practice night carrier landings before deploying. For several years, the Navy tried to locate a so-called out-lying landing field in Washington and Beaufort counties, where they met fierce opposition from local residents and state officials concerned about an adjacent wildlife refuge. The Navy said in January that it wouldn’t try to build the field in that location. Some residents near the new sites in North Carolina have started working against the \$230 million project, saying that it would ruin their rural way of life. http://www.journalnow.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=WSJ%2FMGArticle%2FWSJ_BasicArticle&c=MGArticle&cid=11733552

Asheville Citizen Times

Land conservation is vital to N.C.’s future quality of life

It’s fashionable in some corners these days to bash conservationists, to dismiss things such as calls for land preservation as a fringe issue unworthy of public attention. Well, if you like to hunt or fish, enjoy a walk outdoors, respect our history and heritage and would like to see it protected, realize the importance of healthy farms and forests or simply have a penchant for clean air and water ... welcome to the fringe. Growth and development are hot issues in Western North Carolina. Many residents worry that we’re approaching a tipping point where overdevelopment turns this area from the place beloved by natives and visitors to just another swath of sprawl on the American landscape. Many North Carolinians are fighting to preserve the uniqueness of this state. In 2005, Land for Tomorrow, a coalition of business, local government, citizen and community groups dedicated to educating North Carolinians about protecting our land and water, issued a report called a “Five-Year Plan for Investing in North Carolina’s Land, Water, History and Future.” ... <http://www.citizen-times.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080411/OPINION01/80410052/1006/opinion>

For more information regarding the NC Agricultural Development & Farmland Preservation Trust Fund, please visit www.ncadfp.org or contact us at ncadfp@ncmail.net or (919)733-7125.

Durham Herald-Sun, Wilmington Star

NC drought map shows fewer exceptionally dry counties

RALEIGH, N.C. -- A weekly federal drought map shows recent rains have helped ease dry conditions across North Carolina. The U.S. Drought Monitor released Thursday showed only 12 counties in the "extreme drought" category, including Mecklenburg and surrounding areas and Cherokee County in the state's southwest corner.

Last week, 45 counties were in the extreme category. Drought categories are abnormally dry, moderate drought, severe drought, extreme drought and exceptional drought. No counties have been listed in the exceptional category since March 4.

<http://www.heraldsun.com/state/6-941556.cfm>

Wilmington Star

Tight economy hurts land trusts trying to raise funds to buy land

While a weak real-estate market makes it cheaper for some land-protection groups to conserve property, the tight economy is making it harder to raise money needed for large land purchases, officials of land trusts said. The Piedmont Land Conservancy protects land in Alamance, Caswell, Forsyth, Guilford, Randolph, Rockingham, Stokes, Surry and Yadkin counties. Executive director Kevin Redding and group fundraising officials told the Winston-Salem Journal that the current economic climate, coupled with rising environmental awareness brought on in part by public concern over global warming, has created a unique set of circumstances in regard to contributions. Although the flow of large contributions has declined in recent months, broad-based interest in the group, including the number of new members, is growing. Redding finds the trend encouraging. Whether the group can continue attracting high-level contributions is still a cause for concern. For conservation groups to be able to take advantage of opportunities to buy land or easements, they have to have access to large pools of money, Redding said. That means cultivating big donations from companies, foundations and individuals to pull off big projects and fulfill the group's mission. ...

<http://www.starnewsonline.com/article/20080413/APN/804132482>