

We have adopted a VAD ... so now what?



Watauga County

Boone, NC

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**Working lands owners, what will
keep the next generation on the
land???**

- Goal of Balance = economic (+) ecological (+) cultural

Watauga County

- 36,000 people
- 321 square miles
- 113 people per square mile
- 3% (+) growth from 2000 to 2006
- 204,300 acres total
- 58,300 acres of farmland (+) additional forestland
- ***\$66 million in agricultural receipts Watauga Co. in 2002***
- 159 Farms
- 367 acres average size of farm
- Livestock, Dairy, and Poultry 31 ranking
- * *many of these figures rounded to nearest 100.*

NC's Changing Landscape

**The state has lost over HALF
of its farms in the last 15 years.**

1950 to 2000 NC lost half of it's farmland.

Watauga County:

agriculture challenges & advantages!

- New and Improved Roads (*Highway 421*)
- Land values and agriculture viability
- **Population pressure** “Spill Over Factor”

Public perception (*value recognition and pressure to leave*)

- **Profitability**



Working Lands Tools ...

In all 100 counties today:

- Present Use Value Taxation
- Cost Share Programs (profitability)
- Right To Farm Legislation
- Technical Assistance
- Agritourism

In some counties today:

- Voluntary Agriculture District Ordinance (60 VAD's)
- County Farm Protection Program (5)
- Cost of Community Services Study (4)
- Enhanced VAD (6)
- CPT – NC DENR mapping initiative (*new partners*)
- Easements; purchase, holding & monitoring (30 ???)
- Grants such as ADFP



Voluntary Agriculture Districts

VAD's ...

... a 1st step toward preserving working lands in NC.

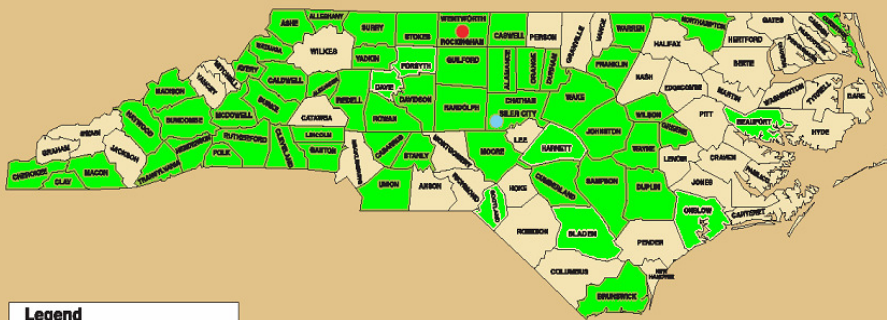


North Carolina VAD's:

- 5,200 farms
- 421,000 acres

March 2008

VOLUNTARY AGRICULTURE DISTRICTS



Legend

County Agriculture District

- Green box: Yes
- Yellow box: No

● Municipal Agriculture District
● Resolution in Accordance with County Ordinance



Steve W. Traylor, Director
 Mary Zakari, DVM, Director of Emergency Programs

NOTICE

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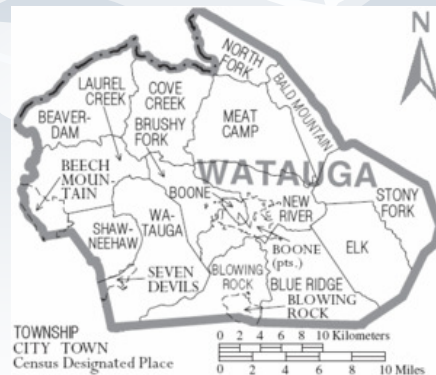
Watauga County VAD Starter Packet!

Checklist of items

- ___ Officers
- ___ Protocol and Procedure
- ___ Meeting Schedule (*topics and speakers*)
- ___ Notebook / Folders for Board Members and Staff
- ___ Forms
- ___ VAD Sign Design
- ___ Brochure
- ___ Goals
- ___ Initial Signing Ceremony
- ___ Annual VAD Ceremony event
- ___ Annual Report to your County Commissioners & NC Agriculture Commissioner
(check-up and self evaluation)
- ___ Web Site
 - ___ Cost of Community Services (*considered*)
 - ___ County Agriculture Protection Plan (*considered*)
- ___ Maintain Vision

Towns in Watauga County = MOU or EVAD

- [Beech Mountain](#)
- [Blowing Rock](#)
- [Boone](#)
- [Seven Devils](#)



Net Effect of Development on Tax Receipts

- For each \$1.00 of taxes collected:
- **Residential Development cost to tax payers = \$1.20-1.50 in NC**
- Commercial Development **cost to tax payers = \$0.38-0.76 in NC**
- Farm and Forest land in NC **cost to tax payers = \$0.30-.050**
- Nationally \$0.18-0.89, National average \$0.38
 - This is a good deal for everyone, except farmers
 - Source:http://www.farmlandinfo.org/documents/27757/FS_CO_CS_11-02.pdf

See “Cost of Community Service” studies;
Chatham, Alamance, Orange and Wake counties in NC.

VAD! What are county advantages? *The 1, 2, 3's!*

- **1 = acknowledgement.** County commissioners recognition farms & forestland? *GIS map is key.*
- **2 = back out option.** Voluntary for county & farmer.

200 farms totaling 11,000 acres

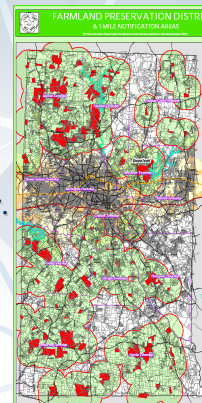
- **3 = county planning.** A plan for agriculture.

Cost of Community Services Study and County Agriculture Protection Plan

PUV roll back funds = \$50,000 county \$'s for farmland easments

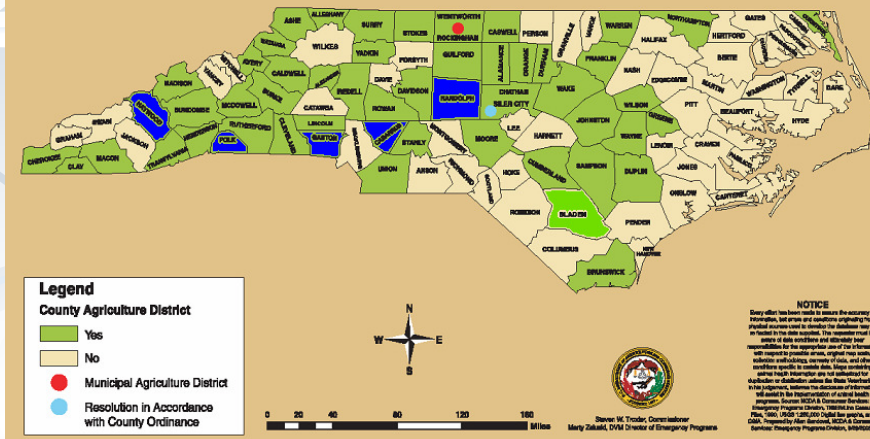
- **4 = dollars into the county.** Do county commissioners and public recognize value of agriculture?

\$44 million in agricultural receipts in 2006



Enhanced

VOLUNTARY AGRICULTURE DISTRICTS



■ Eligibility

■ Voluntary Agriculture Districts (VAD's)

- Farmland, forestland, and horticulture lands must meet the following criteria:
- the land must be part of the present use value taxation program or be determined eligible for present use value; the land must be managed in accordance with USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service guidelines with respect to highly erodible land.
- Local governments may also require a minimum number of farms within a certain area to establish a new district.

■ Enhanced Voluntary Agriculture Districts (EVAD's)

- Same eligibility requirements as VAD.

■ **Benefits**

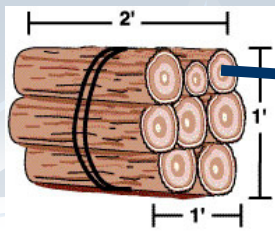
- Voluntary Agriculture Districts (VAD's)
- County has a board, for agriculture leadership, planning and vision.
- Increased protection from nuisance lawsuits if notice via computerized county land records system.
- Public hearings for proposed condemnation of enrolled land.
- Water and sewer assessments may be suspended or waived.
- Possible signage to publicize the land's enrollment in the program
- Possible flexibility in city ordinance related to farms within a city's planning jurisdiction
- Greater public awareness of the local agricultural community and increased pride.

- Enhanced Voluntary Agriculture Districts (EVAD's)
- **Includes VAD benefits.**
- **Landowners are eligible to receive a higher percentage of cost-share funds under the Agricultural Cost Share Program - as high as 90% assistance.**
- **State organizations that award grants to farmers are encouraged to give priority consideration to landowners participating in Enhanced Districts.**
- **All utility assessments may be suspended or waived if the land is in EVAD.**
- **The farm may receive up to 25% of gross sales from the sale of non-farm products and still maintain its zoning exemption as a bona fide farm.**
- **Landowners may experience fewer unsolicited requests from developers to sell the land, due to the irrevocable conservation agreement.**
- **Landowners can stabilize the use of their land while considering longer-term options, such as permanent working land conservation agreements.**

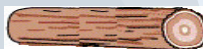
■ **Requirements**

- Voluntary Agriculture Districts (VAD's)
- The land must be subject to a conservation agreement between the landowner and the county, or local municipality that prohibits non-farm use or development for a period of at least 10 years except for the creation of not more than three lots that meet applicable county zoning and subdivision regulations.
- This agreement may be revoked at any time by the landowner after a short waiting period such as a 30 day notice in many VAD's.

- Enhanced Voluntary Agriculture Districts (EVAD's)
- Same as VAD, except it can not be revoked during the term of agreement.
- At the end of it's initial term of 10 years, the EVAD automatically renews for 3 more years unless the land owner provides prior written notice, in most cases at least 30 days.



EASEMENT



- Water Rights
- Hunting Rights
- ~~Development Rights~~ → Development Rights
- Farming Rights
- Mineral Rights
- Timber Rights

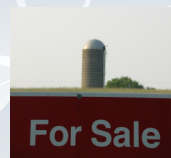


What is my easement worth?

50 acres of land

50 Home Sites = \$500,000.00 = \$10,000 / acre

Continue Farming = \$150,000.00 = \$3,000 / acre



Development Value \$500,000.00

Farm Value \$150,000.00

Easement Value \$350,000.00 (permanent) \$7,000 / acre

Generational Easement worth lower value depending on length of time 20 years, 30 years, 40 year, or 50 years.

Land Protection Partners

- American Farmland Trust
- Cooperative Extension Service
- Division of Forest Resources
- Farmland Transition Network
- NC State University Extension
- NCDA&CS
- Farm Bureau
- Grange
- Land Trusts (23)
- Natural Resource Cons. Service
- NC Forestry Association
- Soil & Water Conservation Districts (96)
- Other Partners ???

More Information

- Land Preservation Notebook at NC State University (Includes current county ordinances) <http://www.cals.ncsu.edu/wg/lpn/>
- NC Department of Agriculture & Consumer Service web site:
www.ncadfp.org/index.htm

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