BUNCOMBE COUNTY
LAND CONSERVATION ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 21, 2022

Members present:	Non-members present:
Greg Hutchins Joel Mazelis Robert Turner Nancy Nehls Nelson Jacob Wiesman Sarah Fraser Matt Fusco (quorum = 6/11)	Ariel Zijp – BCSWCD Avni Naik – BCSWCD Jess Laggis - SAHC

There was a quorum, as there were 6 members present. The following discussion occurred between members present:

<u>The meeting was called to order at 8:03 am</u>
- Chairperson Hutchins

<u>Approval of Minutes</u>
- ➢ Mr. Turner made a motion to approve the August 24, 2022, meeting minutes, seconded by Mr. Mazelis, and the motion passed unanimously.

<u>Updates from Land Conservation Agencies:</u>
- Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy
  Jess Laggis
  - Reems Creek Bowl – 229-acres, fee simple purchase, easement closed in May
  - Jim Gibson Farm – adjacent to Full Sun Farm, full donation in June
  - Scott's Ridge – 138 acres, fee simple, close to Bent Creek
  - Pisgah View State Park Ph 6 – assisted in closing ~506 acres
- Conserving Carolina
  Kieran Roe
  - Land trust representative unavailable.
- RiverLink
  Jack Henderson
  - Land trust representative unavailable

<u>Ag Advisory Board (AAB) Update- Ariel Zijp</u>
- Staff has been prepping for the FY23 fall grant season: AAB approved 5 new farmland projects during their last meeting. They are hoping to bring 3 more donation easement projects to the Board during October. With those projects, most of the easement funding

for AAB FY23 will be allocated. For LCAB, if Camp Woodson Ph II is approved by the Board and Commissioners, approximately $220,000 will remain for other projects brought to the Board by land trusts.

- Mr. Turner asked Ms. Zijp if LCAB's allocated funds could be used for AAB easements if all the funding could not be used by the end of the fiscal year. Ms. Zijp stated that it could; the money is all within one fund for conservation easements, but money is allocated to each Board based on how many projects land trusts are planning on bringing to LCAB, and how many county staff will be taking to AAB. If a project with AAB were to fall through, land trusts could request those funds through LCAB and vice versa.
- Mr. Mazelis asked Ms. Zijp for the general locations of AAB's projects. 2-3 projects are in in Leicester, one is off Sardis Rd and close to Pisgah, one is in Barnardsville adjacent to Pisgah, and one is in Weaverville off Reems Creek Rd.

<u>Camp Woodson Ph II/Little Pisgah Labs Project Vote</u>

- Camp Woodson Ph II scored a total of 75. This score was lower than Phase I, but board members discussed how the ranking layout had been changed since the last evaluation, which may have accounted for the difference. Ms. Nelson suggested sending out project scoresheets during the time of project presentations so that board members could start to think about the evaluation. Board members also talked about how certain projects would receive little to no points for a question if they didn't fit into a category on the evaluation sheet (ex. farmland value) and that could bring down the final score. Ms. Zijp agreed but stated that while that was true, is seems as though the score would generally even out because if a project ranked high in the farmland category, it wouldn't rank high in recreation/public access, but if it ranked high in that category it wouldn't rank well in farmland, thus evening out. Ms. Naik stated it seems like the "Value Added" question was added to the evaluation sheet to be a sort of catch-all so that board members could increase scoring for a good project that didn't fit neatly into certain categories.
- ➢ Mr. Hutchins made a motion to approve the Camp Woodson Ph II project, and the motion passed unanimously.

<u>Easement Purchase Criteria Discussion</u>

- Presented by Ms. Zijp. With the potential of the land conservation bond passing, Ms. Zijp wanted to walk the Board through the current project selection process and how this may be affected by additional funding. As of now, the county only funds transaction costs, but if the county begins easement purchase, a clear selection criteria and justification is necessary. Ms. Zijp stated there has been a similar discussion with AAB on their criteria and project selection process. Ms. Fraser asked staff how a project was determined to be ranked as high, medium, or low, Ms. Zijp stated that was something that would either need to be set, or that section of the ranking could be removed. Mr. Mazelis stated he would prefer that the project scores speak for themselves vs. categorizing/differentiating scores as high, medium, or low. He also stated that looking at how projects score compared to similar projects in the past would be a better way of evaluating them compared to the high/medium/low categories.
- Ms. Zijp stated staff would send the flowchart out to the Board to give them enough time to review before the next meeting. Ms.Nelson asked staff if they could add a general timeline to the flowchart as well.

LCAB Mapping

- Ms. Naik and Ms. Zijp presented updates to the priority map based on edits given by the board during the prior meeting. Priority regions were created using the priority map and a community map overlay. Protected lands were also overlayed to provide some context as to which parts of the county are already protected. Because the LCAB and AAB priority maps were fairly similar, staff combined the two to create a "Buncombe County Conservation Focus Area Map" that would encompass both boards. Board members were in agreement that the maps could be combined because they were similar. Board members suggested changing one of the focus area names to better suit the region and adding in major rivers and waterways with labels to provide context.

Board Discussion/Questions

With no further announcements and discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 9:03 am.