Agenda for
Buncombe County Land Conservation Advisory Board
September 17, 2025
Zoom Meeting at 8:00 am

https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87060544774

1. Call Meeting to Order – Nancy Nehls Nelson, Chair
2. Conflict of Interest – Nancy Nehls Nelson, Chair

   In the interest of preserving public confidence in the actions of this Board, the chair reminds members of their duty to avoid any conflicts of interest and inquires as to whether any member knows of any conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest with respect to matters to come before the Board.

3. Approval of Agenda for September 17, 2025, Meeting – Nancy Nehls Nelson, Chair
4. Approval of Minutes for August 20, 2025, Meeting – Nancy Nehls Nelson, Chair
5. Public Comment
6. Update from Land Conservation Agencies
   a. Land Trusts updates
   b. BC Agriculture & Land Resources update
7. Discussion, Evaluations & Decisions on New Projects presented in August 2025
   a. Pinnacle Slopes
   b. North McDaries Ridge
8. New Projects requesting funding
   a. Warren Wilson College Presentation – Jess Laggis, SAHC
   b. Hawk Creek Headwaters – Michelle Pugliese, SAHC
   c. Site Visit Dates discussion
9. Announcements & Discussions
10. Adjournment

BUNCOMBE COUNTY
LAND CONSERVATION ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
8:00 AM, AUGUST 20, 2025. IN PERSON

Members present:	Non-members present:
Robert Turner, Vice-Chair Bob Gale Nancy Edgerton Matt Fusco Bruce Schlessinger David Tuch (quorum = 5/9)	Ariel Zijp - BCSWCD Martha Ross– BCSWCD Jess Laggis – SAHC Michelle Pugliese – SAHC Hannah Coats – RiverLink Angelica Tyler – BC Staff

There was a quorum, as there were at least 5 members present. The following discussion occurred between members present:

The meeting was called to order at 8:05 am

- Vice-Chair Bob Turner called the meeting to order.

Conflict of Interest Statement: *In the interest of preserving public confidence in the actions of this Board, the chair reminds members of their duty to avoid any conflicts of interests and inquires as to whether any member knows of any conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest with respect to matters to come before the Board.*

No conflict of interest raised by the Board.

Approval of Agenda

- Bob Gale made a motion to approve August 20, 2025, agenda, seconded by Bruce Schlessinger, and the motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

- Nancy Edgerton made a motion to approve September 18, 2024, minutes, Bob Gale seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

- No public comment.

Board Chair & Vice-Chair Selection

- Mrs. Zijp suggested that the Board postpone any Chair and Vice-Chair selections because the current Chair, Nancy Nehls Nelson, was not present for the meeting.
- Mrs. Zijp clarified the current term standings of Board members. Board members whose terms are up can continue to serve until their spots are filled. There are opportunities for

Board members whose terms are up to continue to serve as an Associate member/ex-officio, so they can still provide their knowledge and help transition new Board members.

Updates from Land Conservation Agencies and BC Agriculture & Land Resources

- Jess Laggis, Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy
    - Since the last meeting, there have been two large land purchases: the Richmond Hill Park property and the Starns Cove Hightop property. SAHC is hoping to eventually divest the Richmond Hill Park property to the City of Asheville so that it can be incorporated into the existing Richmond Hill Park area. SAHC has received federal funding for one of the four Warren Wilson conservation easements and is waiting for updates on the availability of State funding. SAHC is currently under contract to purchase the 190-acre Bull Creek property from Warren Wilson.
- Michelle Pugliese, Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy
    - The Deaverview Mountain project is still underway. Buncombe County has received half of the funds for purchase through a federal grant and SAHC has received the other half from a Land and Water Fund grant through the State. SAHC will serve as a passthrough entity for Buncombe County's purchase of the property, which will hopefully occur by the end of the year.
- Hannah Coats, RiverLink
    - RiverLink has launched a new arm of the organization called "Resilience, Recovery, and Planning" to make the Rivers Arts District more resilient in the case of future flooding. The organization is working with Wildlands Engineering to restore land in the Swannanoa area. RiverLink has been expanding their "Adopt A Stream" program to help private landowners restore streambanks on their property. They are working with Equinox to engineer and build a park on Riverside Dr. and they have identified another opportunity for a pocket park in East Asheville off of Azalea Rd.
- Ariel Zijp, BCSWCD
    - The BCSWCD has been facilitating the County's EWP (Emergency Watershed Protection) Program to restore and mitigate the impacts of erosion after Hurricane Helene and protect existing human infrastructure. They are working with Land of Sky Regional Council to create a region-wide map that shows ongoing restoration projects. BCSWCD is also facilitating the NRCS StRAP program. The Board showed a lot of appreciation for the hard work that Mrs. Zijp and the BCSWCD team has done to help the community recover after Hurricane Helene.

New Projects Requesting Funding

- Pinnacle Knob Slope – Jess Laggis, SAHC
    - 43-acre conservation easement donation in the Sandy Mush area that abuts SAHC's Pinnacle Knob Preserve.
    - 5 different tributaries to North Turkey Creek and qualified as above average for TNC's Above Average Climate Resilience indicator, which is rare for agricultural land.

    - The easement reserves the right for the landowner to participate in Agriculture and Commercial Timber Harvest. There is one exclusion area and one Farm Building Area.
    - SAHC has secured some of the funds from a private philanthropist and is asking for the remaining $37,000 from the Board.
- North McDaires – Michelle Pugliese, SAHC
    - 55-acre donated conservation easement in Weaverville. The Property neighbors the North McDaires Ridge conservation easement, held by SAHC.
    - The Property is bordered by the Blue Ridge Parkway and has several natural heritage values, including 4 tributaries to Reems Creek and high elevation rock outcrops.
    - The easement will include one, 5-acre building area. It will most likely prohibit commercial timber harvest but will allow for forest management.
    - SAHC is requesting $42,000 from the Board for transaction costs for this project. Other funds are being provided by a private philanthropic donor.

<u>Announcements and Discussions</u>
There was robust discussion about different funding opportunities available for future projects. Mrs. Laggis and Mrs. Zijp explained that it is increasingly difficult for mountain properties to compete for federal and state funding, but there are other options including the AGZ grant and RCPP that could fund agricultural properties in the future.

Land trusts and board members need to schedule site visits to the Pinnacle Knob Slopes and North McDaires projects.

- Bob Turner made a motion to adjourn, seconded by David Tuch, and the motion passed unanimously.

With no other announcements or discussions, the meeting adjourned at 9:55 am.