

North Carolina Sentinel Landscapes Strategic Plan

Vision: A Convergence of military readiness, working lands and water resources, and conservation providing prosperity, health, and security of all

Mission: Through collaboration and innovation, Sentinel Landscapes will maintain and enhance working lands and water resources, conservation, and military readiness for today and tomorrow

Challenge: Unplanned development and the encroachment of incompatible land uses are threatening the health of working lands and natural systems with the same force that it threatens the viability of the military training network in eastern North Carolina

Philosophy

- Employ a strategic approach that considers science, economics, and policy to advance working lands, conservation, and national defense
- Make site-based conservation efforts in the context of sustainable landscapes and the Partnership's objectives
- Use cross-sector partnerships and collaboration to meet the Partnership's mission

Key Stakeholder Groups

- Private landowners
- Academia
- Agricultural, forestry, and natural resource agencies and organizations
- Conservation districts
- Economic development agencies and organizations
- Legislative
- Military
- Non-governmental organizations:

Goals and Objectives

Immediate (April 1, 2014-September 29, 2015)

Increase awareness, understanding, and/or problem solving ability among stakeholders (e.g. landowners, military, state natural resource and agricultural agencies, funding agencies/entities, and non-governmental organizations) by:

1. Demonstrating the value of Sentinel Landscapes to others.
 - a. Increase communication and engagement by educating individuals on how Sentinel Landscapes programs deliver benefits to both rural and urban citizens (e.g. white paper, article, website, meetings, etc.)
 - At least **75%** of key stakeholders will be able to identify program functionality and comprehend program value by **June 30, 2015**, as measured by a survey.

- At least **75%** of landowners participating in the outreach events will indicate their knowledge of working lands conservation is "improved" or "very improved" **after each outreach event.**
 - At least **90%** of training attendees will be able to describe 3 or more working lands conservation strategies **after each training workshop.**
2. Maintaining and increasing perceptions of long term viability of Sentinel Landscapes among stakeholders.
- Over **75%** of participants/stakeholders will perceive that the program aligns with their agency/organization/leaders long-term objectives and express interest in Sentinel Landscapes initiatives by **June 30, 2015**, as measured by a survey.

Middle-Term (September 30, 2015 - September 29, 2018)

1. Increase behavioral changes favorable to Sentinel Landscapes by:
- a. Enabling working landowners to maintain their lands
 - The North Carolina Forestry Association (NCFA) Working Land Trust is available to hold working land trusts and contracts by **January 1, 2015**
 - The new entity will hold working land trusts and/or contracts representing at least **1000 acres** by **September 29, 2018.**
 - At least **75%** of Train the Trainer workshop attendees will use portions of the curriculum **within the first year of completing the workshop.**
 - b. Increased enrollment in Sentinel Landscapes initiatives
 - Participants will increase by **10% each year** as measured by new applications and contracts within Sentinel Landscapes initiatives [e.g. ADFP, MBCI & Working Forests] **each year from September 29, 2015 to September 29, 2018.**
 - The number of counties developing conservation and preservation plans will increase by **at least 1 per year.**
 - The **number of private lands enrolled in Present Use Value, Voluntary Agriculture Districts (VAD), or Enhanced VADs** will increase by **5%** each year.
 - c. Increased contract length within the Sentinel Landscapes initiatives.
 - **75%** of new landowner agreements, which support North Carolina Sentinel Landscapes efforts, will have **durations of 20 or more years** by **September 29, 2018.**
 - d. Contracts and conservation easements held in the eastern North Carolina
 - Existing contracts will have a **default rate of less than 7%** by **September 29, 2018.**
2. Stakeholders will agree that the program meets their mutual objectives and promote the partnership's mission.
- a. Championing policies and regulations that support working lands, conservation, and military readiness

- At least **2** policies, laws and/or regulations will be **developed and championed** that support working lands, conservation, and military readiness at the state level by the **end of FY 2018**.
- b. Increasing collective vision and recognition between agencies, organizations, and others in Sentinel Landscapes compatible land uses
 - Sentinel Landscapes has representation from the each branch of the key stakeholder categories in **75%** of Sentinel Landscapes quarterly meetings as measured by sign-in sheet.
- c. Increased and robust interest in continued funding for the program through governmental programs, private organizations, and individual donors
 - Sentinel Landscapes efforts receive at least **\$1,000,000** in funds annually starting at the **end of calendar year 2015**.

Long Term (September 30, 2018-September 29, 2021)

Preserve compatible resource (land, water, air, and spectrum) uses for economic, social, and environmental benefits by:

1. Institutionalizing regional cooperation for compatible resource use that promotes Sentinel Landscapes
 - At least **2** other states will initiate Sentinel Landscapes efforts as a result of the efforts of the North Carolina partners by **FY 2021**.
2. Enhancing the value of working lands and living shorelines through increased conservation and/or crop opportunities
 - At least **8 new opportunities** will be created (e.g. Farmer's markets on installations, ecosystem services, renewable fuels, etc.) by **September 29, 2018**.
3. Sustaining Sentinel Landscapes for military training, conservation and working lands
 - Increasing acres of compatible resource use as to **decrease the rate of loss by 5%** under the military footprint from FY 2014 numbers by **FY 2021**.

Element Action Plan – Short Term

Overall Program

Identifying, leveraging, developing and/or supporting programs that promote Sentinel Landscape's mission

- A minimum of **2** programs will be supported by the Partnership each year that promotes the Sentinel Landscape's mission.
- A minimum of **2** sentinel landscapes projects will be initiated and/or delivered each year.

Element 1: Coordination

- **The Steering Committee lead by NCSU** will coordinate the identification of tasks and annual funding needs for all Sentinel Landscapes elements **once a year no later than April 15**.

- **The Steering Committee led by NCSU and Texas A&M University** will communicate the value of Sentinel Landscapes by meeting and discussing opportunities for collaboration and perpetuation at the state and federal level **no later than 6 months following the finalization of the communication plan** with:
 - Office of the Secretary of Defense (Acting Deputy Under Secretary of Defense-Installations & Environment; Director-Training Readiness and Strategy, Program Director- Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Program)
 - Executive branch agencies and programs (US Secretary of Agriculture; Secretary of Commerce; Secretary of the Treasury)
 - Military Service Commands
 - US Congress/Senate
 - US Department of Interior (Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks)
 - USDA State Directors
 - Natural Resources Conservation Service
 - Rural Development
 - Farm Service Agency
 - Risk Management Agency
 - NC Department of Commerce, Division of Rural Development (Assistant Secretary)
 - NC Military Operational Leaders (Air Force, Army, Marines/Navy, Coast Guard and National Guard)
 - NC Commanders' Council
 - NC Military Affairs Commission
 - NC Governor's Military Advisor
 - NC General Assembly and Legislative Entities
 - NC Department of Agriculture (Commissioner)
 - NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources (Secretary)
 - NC Department of Transportation (Deputy Secretary)
 - Local elected officials and decision makers (city/town councils and mayors)
- **NCSU and element leads** will develop and implement a communication plan no later than **November 30, 2014**.

- Publishing a **general readership article in at least two outlets** including: Ag Review, Farm Bureau outlets, Land Trust Alliance outlets, NC Magazine, NC Electric Co-op, NC State Grange, and/or REPI newsletter no later than **May 31, 2015**.
- **NCSU and TAMU** will improve understanding of Sentinel Landscapes by presenting at no less than **1 regional meeting/conference** on Sentinel Landscapes by **June 30, 2015**.
- **NCSU** will coordinate **10 monthly conference calls** per year with at least **75%** attendance from the steering committee members **per call**.
- **NCSU** will coordinate at least **2 in-person meetings** per year and achieve representation from each of key stakeholder group in **75%** of Sentinel Landscapes quarterly meetings as measured by sign-in sheet.
- **NCSU** will maintain the website by providing **quarterly** updates (or as needed) of site content.
- **NCSU** will complete the development of the program evaluation and monitoring framework by no later than **May 31, 2015**

Element 2: Agriculture Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund

- **ADFP Trust Fund representatives** will develop a plan and place under a 20 year term easement contract **435** acres of farmland for compatible land use for military training by **September 29, 2015**.
- **ADFP Trust Fund** in collaboration with NCDA&CS and USDA-NRCS will conduct **6** workshops pertaining to working lands preservation by **November 30, 2014**.
- **ADFP Trust Fund** will develop a report of acres and location of protected compatible use lands no later than **September 29, 2015**.

Element 3: Working Forests

- **Working Forests representatives (NCFA and NCSU)** will improve understanding of Sentinel Landscapes by presenting at no less than 1 regional meeting/conference by **June 30, 2015**.
- **NCFA** will develop a white paper identifying gaps and barriers in regulations and policies impeding the conservation of working lands by **September 29, 2015**.
- **NCSU** will develop a training curriculum to educate landowners about preserving working lands no later than **April 30, 2015**.
- **NCSU** will conduct a train the trainer workshop no later than **May 31, 2015**.
- **NCSU** will conduct at least 4 outreach events by **September 29, 2015**.

Element 4: Food and Fuel for the Forces (FF4F)

- **FF4F** will improve understanding of Sentinel Landscapes by presenting at no less than 1 regional meeting/conference by **June 30, 2015**.
- Promote the use of local food in all base venues to include Mess halls, commissaries and Marine Corps Community Services activities by initiating the following activities no later than **September 29, 2015**.
 - Local food event focused on landowners
 - Marketing events such as highlighting of local foods in commissary, guest chef events, and Flavors of NC television episode
 - Farmers market on an additional installation
 - Change from canned and frozen foods to fresh, local foods

Element 5: Market Based Conservation Initiative (MBCI)

- **MBCI** will identify the average cost/acre of land conserved as bid by landowners no later than **December 31, 2015**.
- **MBCI** will describe lessons learned from the pilot project no later than **August 1, 2015**.
- **MBCI** will begin monitoring any signed contracts no later than **August 1, 2015**.
- **MBCI** will calculate monitoring cost per acre no later than **August 1, 2017**.