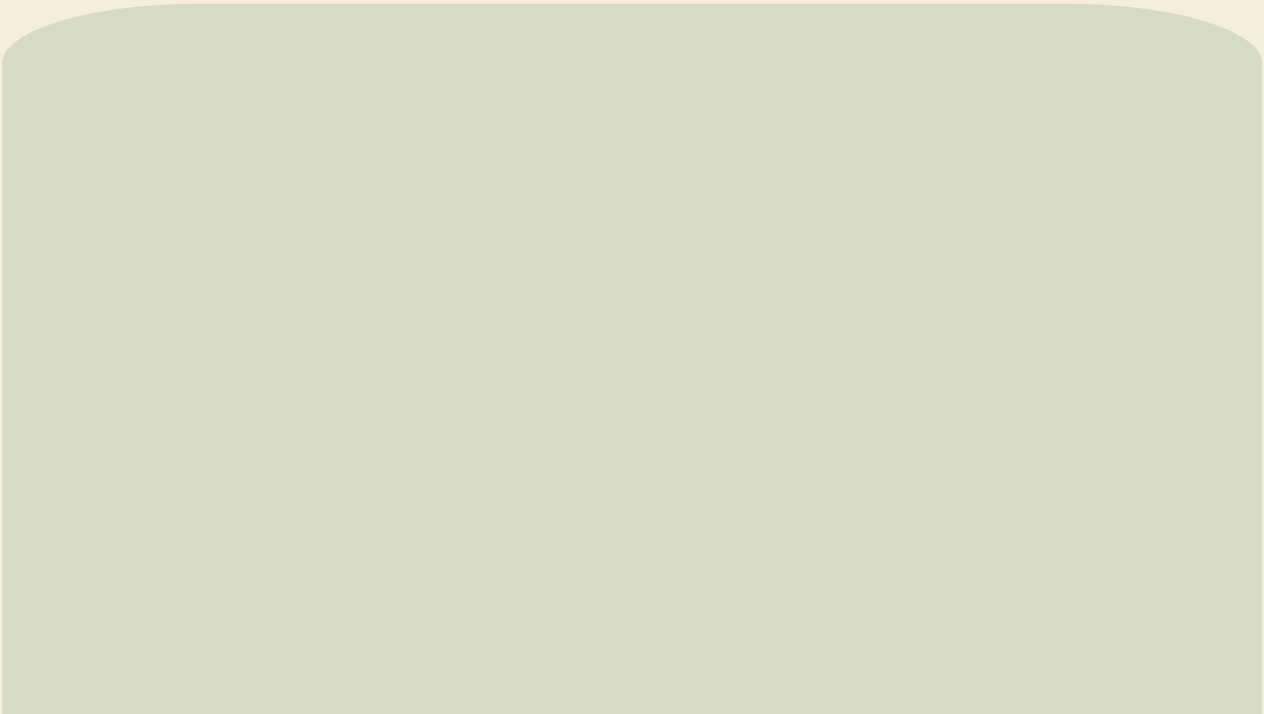


CONSERVATION WORKING GROUP UPDATE

Chatham County Board of Commissioners

October 2025

OVERVIEW



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Land

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Water

03

Climate & Sustainability

04

Natural Resources

05

Ongoing Collaboration

NEW CONSERVATION & RESILIENCY PLANNER

- Salisbury, NC



- UNC-Chapel Hill
 - B.A Biology & B.A. Environmental Studies
 - Senior Capstone - Chatham Park



- Environmental Finance Center
 - Educate public & assist with financial capacity of municipalities



- Environmental Protection Agency
 - Green infrastructure, invasive species, runoff pollution, easements, & more



- Duke Master's in Environmental Management
 - Carbon capture & coastal restoration



LAND - PARKS & RECREATION

- Chatham awarded Great Trails State Program Grants (x2)
 - Grant #1
 - Natural Surface trail
 - Improvements to Paddle Access at 15/501 Haw River Access
 - Grant #2
 - Feasibility Study for Deep River State Trail from Carbonton to Moncure
 - Public engagement & Interdepartmental Collaboration
- Quotes for South Bynum River Access Erosion Study
 - Provide options for stabilizing the banks and relocating the river access point
- Trail contract with Black Diamond Designs, Inc.
 - Build new natural surface trail at the Park at Briar Chapel and the Northeast District Park
 - Permitting work underway
- Haw River Canoe Access at US 64
 - Damaged from tropical storm Chantal in July
 - Closure of access site for over a month
 - Repairs to parking lot made and reopened in mid-August



<https://www.piedmonttrails.org/paddlethepiedmont-hawriver/>

LAND – GIS

Drone Imaging/Flyovers

- Renaissance Drive Landfill - EQ and GIS worked together to collect drone imagery of **Bidens wildflowers in bloom** at the landfill in late summer 2024 and 2025 to assess success of wildflower seeding and other management activities.
- Haw River - In addition to visual comparison, GIS will be comparing **elevation and terrain models** from LiDAR Data

2024 Digital Elevation Mapping (DEM) and Hill Shade Now Available

Information Hub – Conservation Maps, Apps, and Metrics

LAND – GIS

Drone Imagery of the Renaissance Dr Landfill



LAND – GIS

Drone Imagery of the Haw River



LAND – FARMLAND

Chatham Farmland Preservation Logo

- Grant funded - North Carolina Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation (ADFP) grant program
- Designed by Shannon Brunson of Brunson Creative Company
- Logo utilized for marketing, communication, and other public outreach on farmland preservation programs and initiatives



First Farmland Preservation Conservation Easement

- Anticipated completion within the next 6 months
- Result - permanent conservation of **58** acres of working farmland in the Silk Hope area.
- In spring of 2025, the program awarded **\$25,000** to this project through a “Transaction Funds Mini-Grant” award, which helps farmland owners who want to donate conservation easements reduce or eliminate out-of-pocket transaction expenses related to conservation easement donation.

LAND – FARMLAND

Two-Day “Farmland Transition Workshop” Series

- Designed to help landowners navigate intergenerational farmland transitions
- Workshop covered **will and estate planning, business planning, conservation easements**, and other topics associated with farmland transition between family members.
- A story about the training was featured on WCHL and its associated [Chapelboro.com website](http://Chapelboro.com)

“Certified Farm Succession Coordinator” Training program

- **Andrew Waters** was selected to participate in the program with nationally recognized curriculum offered through the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the International Farm Transition Network
- The training will take place in September and October.
- Participants who complete the program and pass an exam are eligible to become “**Certified Farm Succession Coordinators**” to assist farming families in navigating the complex emotional, legal, and business challenges of intergenerational farmland transfer.

WATER – WATERSHED PROTECTION

Events

Creek Week 2025

- March 15 – 22: 490 participants, 17 programs hosted

Storm Water Awareness Week 2025

- September 22 – 26: Focus of the week was Compliance (essential to ensure Stormwater Control Measures (SCMs) continue to function as designed)

DIY Rain Barrel Class

- September 25: Participants learned about the benefits of rain barrels and tips on how to make and install a rain barrel at home.



WATER – WATERSHED PROTECTION

Stormwater Control Measures (SCMs) Data Management Solution Project

- Collaboration with GIS that will allow management, maintenance, and collection of stormwater data utilizing Survey123

Stats since February 2025

- Completed 55 riparian buffer reviews
- Single family residential, land development, and commercial projects:
 - Issued 108 Land Disturbance Permits
 - Completed 1,761 erosion control inspections
- Land development and commercial projects:
 - Completed 37 SCM inspections
 - Received 15 Stormwater Management Plan submittals



WATER – ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

- Water Samples Pilot Program

- In collaboration with GIS, EH creating sliding fee scale program to test private well water
- EH partnered with Preserving Home to administer funds for well repairs and treatments based on testing

- PFAS Sampling near Biosolid Land Application Sites

- Biosolids are a byproduct of wastewater treatment plant process and are routinely applied to agricultural fields
- In collaboration with Orange & Alamance Counties, UNC-Chapel Hill, and NC Dept. Of Env Quality
- Research opportunity to better understand what, if any, impacts land application of biosolids has on PFAS contamination in private wells



Environmental Health



NC DEQ

WATER – ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

- Annual Septic Contractor Workshop
 - 6 hour continuing education for Septic Installer Certification
 - Partnership with NC Dept of Health and Human Services, State Highway Patrol, Industry Representatives, and local Septic Contractors
 - Classroom and Field Demonstrating Training
 - Contractor Workshop planned for Spring 2026
- Private Well and Septic Owner Workshop
 - Fall 2026
 - Partnership with Chatham County Cooperative Extension
 - Cover well and septic maintenance and landscaping around septic systems
- Food, Lodging, and Institution staff unofficially declared Monday, August 18th, 2025 a Food Safety Day



Environmental Health

CLIMATE & SUSTAINABILITY –TRANSPORTATION

- Move Chatham

Event	Date/Time
Pittsboro Trails & Treats Pop-up Event (Knight Farm Park)	October 18th 2 pm – 4 pm
Listening Session #1 (Chatham County Ag Center)	October 21st 12:30 pm – 3:30 pm
Siler City Fall-O-Ween (Bray Park Complex)	October 24th 6 pm – 9 pm
Listening Session #2 (Siler City Location TBD)	November 3rd
Virtual Stakeholder Meeting #1	November 14th
Virtual Stakeholder Meeting #2	January 21st

- Cape Fear River Basin Wildlife Crossing Study



CLIMATE & SUSTAINABILITY – ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Waste & Recycling Enthusiast Program (WREP)

- Second cohort started September 2025 (7 participants)
- Classes teach waste and recycling management

Food Waste Collection Pilot Program

- Grant funding to purchase equipment and signage for a pilot program to establish food waste bins at collection centers starts October 2025

Repair Café

- EQ and Parks & Recreation collaboration with Repair Café NC in June 2025
- 80 residents educated about repair of household items
- One of the residents reported feeling “empowered” after learning how to repair the item they brought in!



CLIMATE & SUSTAINABILITY – ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

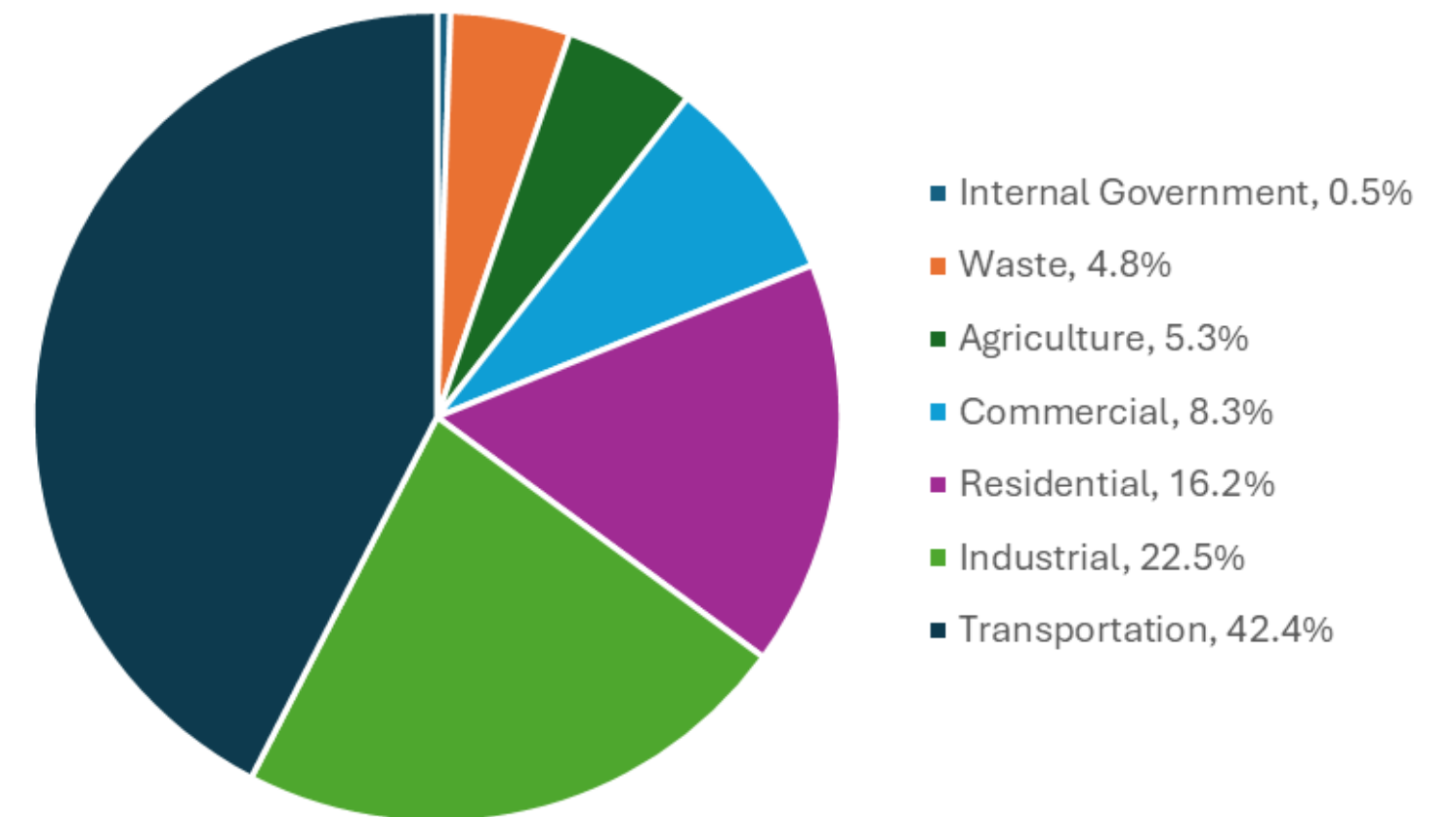
Greenhouse Gas Inventory

- Updated inventory completed in April 2025
- Full report is available on the Sustainable Community Tab on website & data is on Info Hub

Climate Retreat

- Climate Change Advisory Committee and staff developing retreat
- Two-day event: October 17th and November 6th

2024 Distribution of CO₂E in Chatham County by Sector



NATURAL RESOURCES

Natural Heritage Program Inventory

- Finalized in August 2025
- 112 sites surveyed
- 56 natural communities identified (6 new & 13 expanded)



Merry Conlin

Conservation Education: STEM in Nature & Adventure Day Camp

- Chatham County 4-H summer camps partnered with Friends of the Lower Haw, Chatham GIS, Grand Trees of Chatham to provide environmental education opportunities for youth ages 5-14.
- 28 youth engaged in activities surrounding soil exploration, nature walks, tree identification and drone technology

Sustainable Agriculture Research Project

- Data collection on three farms from May-September 2025
- Part of Cooperative Extension's three-year research project "Designing Ecologically Beneficial Habitat for Diverse Farming Systems"

NATURAL RESOURCES

Increasing Biodiversity & Enhancing Pollinator Habitat

- 9 pollinator garden tours in May & June 2025 (200 participants)

NC Cooperative Extension – Natural Resources Education & Outreach

- Tree Identification in Winter (2 workshops - 34 participants)
- Native Plants for Creeks and Streams (webinar - 124 participants)
- Aquatic Plant Identification and Management (workshop - 21 participants)



Debbie Roos

2026 NC Master Naturalist Program Planning & Recruitment

- Joint program with NC Cooperative Extension Agents (Matt Jones and Debbie Roos) and Durham, Wake, and Orange counties
- Prepares volunteers to lead stewardship, education outreach, and citizen science projects with leading environmental organizations in the Triangle
- Application period closed September 2025, classes to begin Winter 2025
- Class of 2025 finishing in December

ONGOING COLLABORATION

The Conservation Working Group meets in-person on the fourth Monday of every month

- Discuss progress on existing projects, collaborate on ideas for new projects, and connect our work with outside organizations

Central Pines Regional Council Grant Assistance Program (GAP)

- CWG departments are using the program for funding ideas and grant application assistance
- Energy Efficiency & Conservation Block Grant
 - \$350,000 grant to conduct energy audit in 13 county buildings (pending BOC approval)
 - EQ & Facilities collaboration in conjunction with grant writing assistance from GAP
 - Begins Fall of 2025 through December 2026

Conservation Dashboard and Implementation Plan

- Currently defining metrics
- Dashboard will be completed May 2026



QUESTIONS?