



CHATHAM COUNTY SUSTAINABILITY

2025 BUDGET RETREAT



OVERVIEW

- Climate/Resilience
- Conservation Working Group
- Watershed Protection
- Land
- Natural Resources

CLIMATE/RESILIENCE

- Sustainability and Finance staff have filed with the IRS for over \$218,000 in Inflation Reduction Act direct pay funds. The projects included two solar panel systems, two EV charging stations, an electric vehicle for the Parks and Recreation department, and a geothermal HVAC system.
- Chatham awarded funding from federal Climate Pollution Reduction Grant to build electric vehicle charging stations. Overall utilization of EV charging infrastructure has increased.
- The Greenhouse Gas Inventory project for 2023-2024 has begun. Our sustainability intern is gathering data now and will be presenting the results to the Board in the spring.
 - Important to document this time prior to the addition of Wolfspeed, Vinfast, MetOx, and the associated development these major projects will likely bring.
- Enpira dashboard for energy tracking is in draft form and we are verifying the data model.
 - The aggregated power and natural gas data Enpira collected has already been used to apply for an Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant through the State Energy Office.

CLIMATE/RESILIENCE

- First heat season with the Chatham County Heat Action Plan:
 - Pre-heat season kick-off meeting occurred on April 25th, bringing together various county departments, the Town of Pittsboro and Siler City staff, Chatham Hospital, and several community-based organizations.
 - Developed educational materials about preventing heat-related illnesses and ongoing monitoring of heat-related illness emergency calls.
 - Programming for assisting families with high energy bills from cooling and distributing box fans to those without AC.
 - Established cooling centers with water and seating at the three libraries.
 - Created misting stations at county parks for those unable to visit the cooling centers.
 - Entered into collaborative with local governments around the state to strengthen our Heat Action Plans
- Ongoing collaboration to use the awarded Energy Futures Grant funds to establish the three libraries in Chatham County as Resilience Hubs.

CLIMATE/RESILIENCE

- Chatham County Waste Reduction & Recycling Enthusiast Program (WREP) has begun and the first class has graduated from the training program.
- The Waste Composition Study has been completed for 2024. The results have been posted to the Solid Waste & Recycling website. Several of the key findings from the study were included in the flyer that will be mailed with the new decals in February 2025.
- Signage installed to promote safety on the Haw River, project included in Regional Resiliency Portfolio from Central Pines Regional Council.

CONSERVATION WORKING GROUP

- Purpose: Bring together departments addressing the County's environmental goals on a regular basis to discuss ongoing work and find opportunities to collaborate.
- BOC Update Schedule: semi-annual, in-person presentations.

UPCOMING CWG COLLABORATION

- Conservation Goals Dashboard and Implementation Plan Project
 - Establish consensus- and equity-based metrics for Comprehensive Plan environmental goals, develop a public dashboard for tracking progress made towards those goals, and create an implementation plan for achieving remaining goals.
 - Stakeholder meetings have begun and the contractor is compiling the information gathered from these. Expect more updates in the coming months.
- The CWG has joined the Grant Assistance Program at Central Pines Regional Council and will be engaging in a workshop to identify and prioritize projects for large funding opportunities.
 - Central Pines grant staff has already assisted with several grant applications this fiscal year

WATERSHED PROTECTION

- Ongoing feasibility study for Advanced Metering Infrastructure (increased data on home water usage, leaks in water utility lines are discovered and addressed faster)
- New GIS Hub subscription used to develop the “Rivers of Chatham” website, offering real-time updates on safety conditions, info on water quality, and helpful tips for trips along our rivers. “Rivers of Chatham” was showcased at the National ESRI Conference in San Diego.
- Collaboration with Watershed Protection and GIS to create new symbology for SCMs, watershed protection tab on land records viewer and additional SCM name types.
- Ongoing feasibility study to address erosion at the South Bynum River Access on the Haw.
- Education and Outreach is ongoing with 4 major events so far this calendar year reaching 738 people.

WATERSHED PROTECTION

- Ongoing development review focused on protecting water quality as growth increases:
 - 880 Erosion Control Inspections
 - 37 Riparian Buffer Reviews
 - 4 USGS/NRCS Confirmations
 - 19 Stormwater Control Measure Inspections
- Increased focus on stormwater to account for rapid growth:
 - Developing new online forms to increase efficiency of stormwater review and streamline contact/questions between staff and developers/owners.
 - Increasing overall data collection of stormwater control measures.
 - Implemented new process for ensuring adequate documentation of stormwater control measures on commercial projects.

LAND

- The Farmland Preservation Trust Fund approved the first three awards.
- The updated Farmland Preservation Plan has been adopted.
- The Farmland Preservation Workshop in June saw 80 participants.
- GIS staff have been collaborating with departments to develop new/updated public tools:
 - Parks & Recreation Viewer (filters/layers for amenities, facilities, trails, etc.)
 - Land Records Viewer (filters/layers for floodplains, zoning, cons. easements, etc.)
 - Conservation Viewer – In Progress (habitat and species data, managed land, etc.)
- Ongoing research on creating public funds for trails and land conservation.

NATURAL RESOURCES

- The ongoing county-wide Natural Heritage Program Inventory has received permission to survey over 7,000 acres of properties.
- Parks & Rec and Environmental Quality shared internship project to develop an invasive species control program for county-owned parks and worked with the State and Chatham Cooperative Extension to re-start the landfill pollinator project.
- Ongoing educational programming:
 - Chatham Conservation Partnership Webinar on Bumble Bee Conservation – 115 participants
 - Chatham Conservation Partnership Webinar on Fireflies – 120 participants
 - 13 Pollinator Garden Tours in Q2 – 330 participants
 - Landscaping for Pollinators at the Native Plant Conference in Cullowhee – 25 participants
 - Identification of North Carolina Pines Workshop – 17 participants
 - Tree Identification and Forest Ecology Walk at Carolina Meadows – 27 participants
- Chatham County being considered by NCDOT for a study on creating wildlife crossings around roadways.



QUESTIONS?

THANK YOU!

