

Chatham County Agriculture Advisory Board

Annual Update to the Board of Commissioners
July 17, 2023



Agriculture Board Members

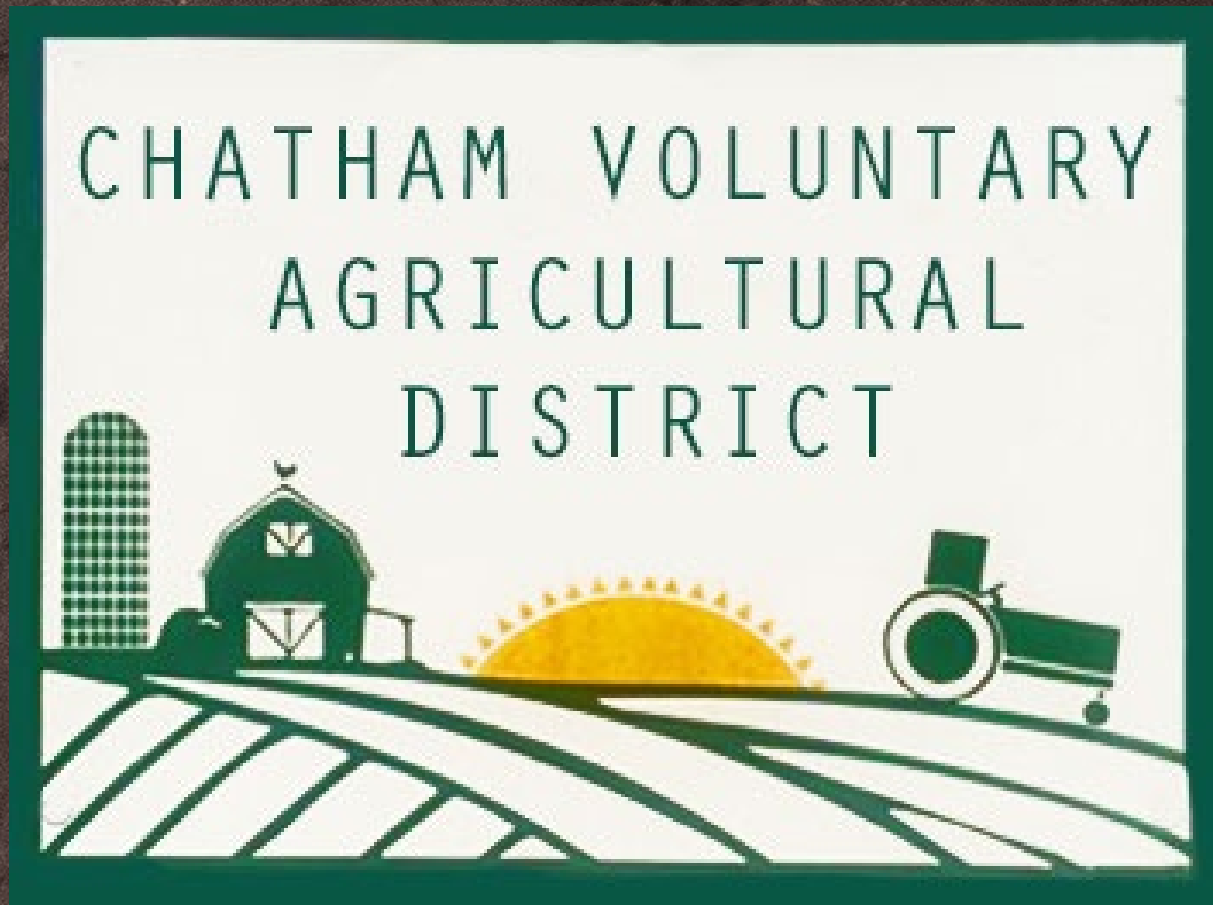
- Tenita Solanto, Chair (term expires 2024)
- Vice Chair position is currently open
- Amy Fulford, Secretary (term expires 2026)
- Sharon Day (term expires 2024)
- Christopher Hart (term expires 2024)
- Jeff Vaughan (term expires 2026)
- Dave Eskelund (term expires 2025)
- Diana M. May (term expires 2025)
- John R. Dykers, Jr. M.D. (term expires 2025)
- **Note:** County Commissioner Liaison is Katie Kenlan
- Susannah Goldston, Chatham Soil & Water Conservation District Director
- Ginger Cunningham, Cooperative Extension Chatham County Center Director

Chatham's Ag Stats

- AVG over \$422 Million annually
- \$125M in cash receipts
 - 1,116 farming operations (98% identified as family farms)
 - Over 1/3 of 1,700+ ag producers are female
 - Chatham's rankings within the state:
 - Top county in # of native plant nurseries
 - 2nd in beef cattle (3rd in overall cattle production)
 - 2nd in sheep and goat production
 - 3rd in equine population
 - 9th in hay production
 - 15th in dairy cattle population
 - 17th in broiler production (poultry) and steadily rising
- Additional \$297M in forestry sector output, supporting 1,297 jobs with annual payroll of \$63M

Chatham County's Current VAD Stats

- 423 parcels
- 16,564.854 acres



Chatham Farmland Preservation Plan

- Currently being updated with an ETA by the end of 2023
 - Contracted with Mt. Olive College for agricultural surveys & interviews
 - # received
- Farmland loss is irreversible!
 - NC ranks 2nd in the nation in potential agricultural land lost by 2040
 - Protect, Preserve, and Enhance Farmland in Chatham to balance continued major developments and soil disturbance
- Chatham Agricultural Preservation & Development Trust Fund
 - Approved by the commissioners in 2022 with a starting fund of nearly \$1million (Article 46 revenue earmarked for agriculture preservation & enhancement)
 - Commissioners approved the hire of a Farmland Preservation Specialist for 2023-2024 to implement FPP programs and efforts

Why focus on the soil?

- Civilizations are built and destroyed upon it
- Soil is a filter and storage unit for our water supply- determines water quality and quantity
- The microbiology in soil is a strong determining factor for nutrient uptake and many diseases
- Soil Health → Animal and Human Health
- Mental, physical, and emotional health is near impossible without a healthy gut and microbiome
- Soil is a farmer's REAL bank account (add more than you take)
- Site soil preparation pays off now and decades from now

Optimal soil

Central NC soil

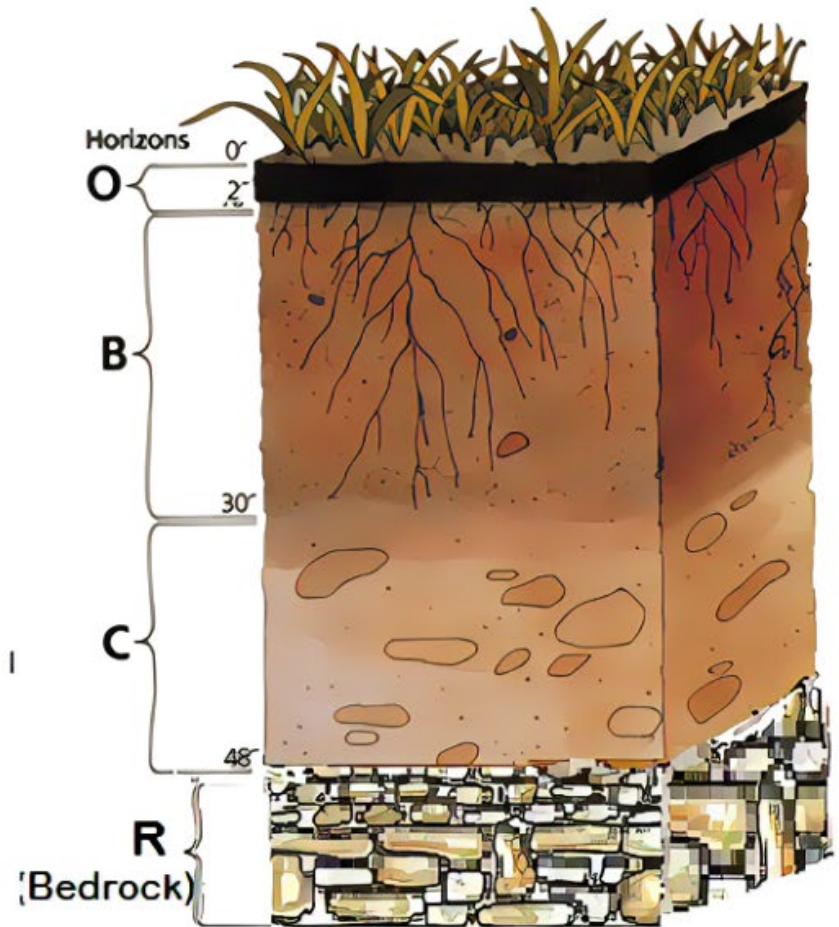
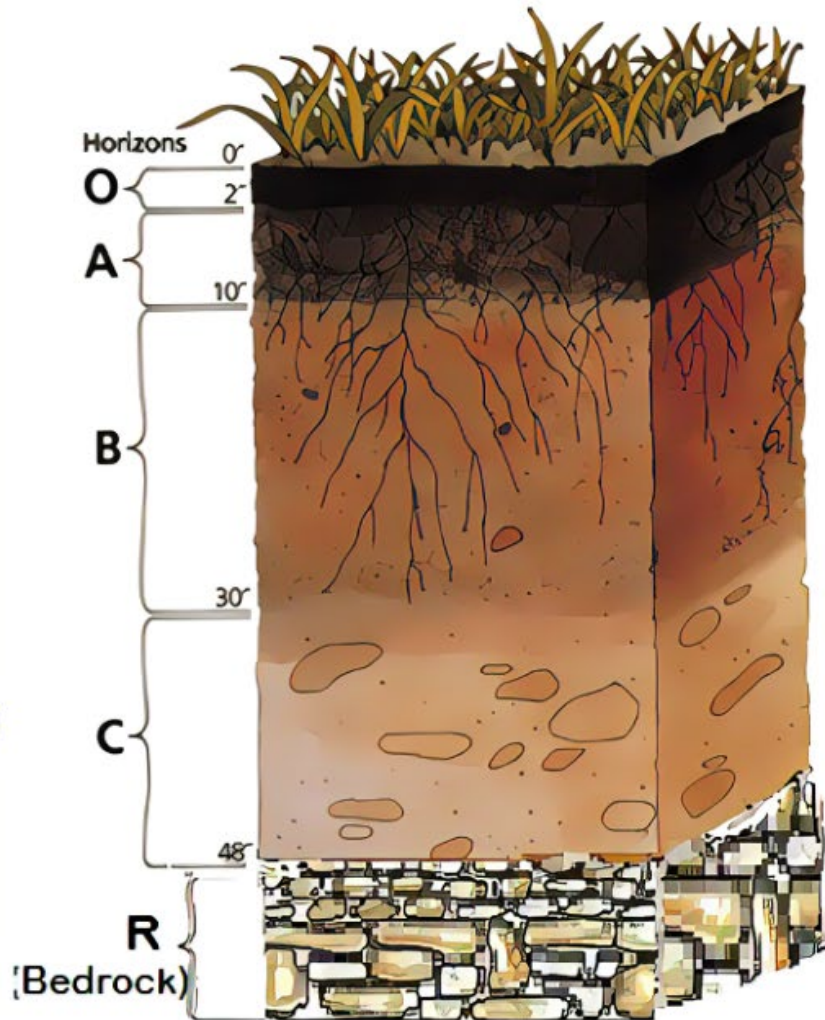


Image by US Department of Agriculture

Thank you, Commissioners, for
supporting Farmland
Preservation through the new
trust fund and farmland
preservation coordinator
position.

QUESTIONS???

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