



N.C. Cooperative Extension
Guilford County Center (guilford.ces.ncsu.edu)
3309 Burlington Road, Greensboro, NC 27405
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2025 Guilford County Land Use and Retention Summit

August 29th, 8:30 AM-5:00 PM

Co-organizers: Marcus Williams, Alyssa McKim, and Dr. Biswanath Dari

Welcome and Introductions (9:00 AM – 9:15 AM)

-Welcome from Guilford County:

Marcus Williams, NC Extension Agent, Agriculture - Food Crops (Guilford County)

Alyssa McKim, NC Extension Program Coordinator, Food Security (Guilford County)

Natalie Owens, County Extension Director (Guilford County)

Welcome, Funding Acknowledgement, and Project Partners:

Dr. Biswanath Dari, Assistant Professor and Natural Resource Specialist (NC A&T)

♦ Farmland Preservation & Environmental Stewardship in Guilford (9:15 AM – 10:15 AM)

This session will introduce current strategies and incentives for preserving working farmland in Guilford County. Participants will learn about Voluntary Agricultural Districts (VADs), Enhanced VADs, and local conservation easements. Discussion will include best practices in land stewardship to protect soil, water, and natural resources.

Presenter:

Tesla Jefferson, Conservation & Stewardship Associate, Piedmont Land Conservancy

Scott Shoulars, ADFP Field Representative (North Central), NC Farmland Preservation

Evan Davis, Director, NC Farmland Preservation

♦ Conservation Programs, Easements & Extension Resources (10:15 AM – 11:15 AM)

A dynamic panel highlighting the tools, partnerships, and funding opportunities available to support landowners in conserving agricultural and forested lands. Panelists will share resources available through local Extension offices, USDA NRCS, Piedmont Land Conservancy, and Soil & Water Conservation Districts.



Moderator:

Melodie Melbouci, NC Extension Program Assistant, Food Security (Guilford County)

Panelists:

Eduardo Velazquez, USDA-NRCS, Soil Conservationist (Guilford County)

Tesla Jefferson, Conservation & Stewardship Associate, Piedmont Land Conservancy

Sydney Kirkpatrick, Environmental Education & Conservation Coordinator, Soil and Water (Guilford County)

Marcus Williams, NC Extension Agent, Agriculture - Food Crops (Guilford County)

Bio-Break (11:15 – 11:30 AM)

Light refreshments and time to visit with resource fair exhibitors.

◇ Understanding Heirs Property & Resolution Pathways (11:30 AM – 12:15 PM)

This panel will unpack the complex legal and historical roots of heir's property. Legal experts and land rights advocates will offer real-world strategies for families navigating tangled land ownership issues and preventing future fragmentation.

Moderator:

Dr. Biswanath Dari, Assistant Professor and Natural Resource Specialist (NC A&T)

Panelists:

Andrew Branan, Associate Extension Professor (NCSU)

Dr. Kurt Smith, Assistant Professor of Forestry and Extension Specialist, Land Retention (NCSU)

◇ Working Lunch & Film: Heirs Property in Real Life (12:15 PM – 1:30 PM)

Enjoy lunch while watching a compelling short film about families affected by disputes over heirs' property. Then, Dr. Dari will lead a guided conversation focused on real-time problem-solving approaches and available legal support resources.

Facilitator:

Dr. Biswanath Dari, Assistant Professor and Natural Resource Specialist (NC A&T)

◇ **Succession Planning & Landowner Rights (1:30 PM – 2:30 PM)**

Explore strategies to keep farmland in the family and ensure a smooth transition across generations. Panelists will cover estate planning, trusts, land use agreements, and other essential tools for agricultural landowners.

Moderator:

Dr. Biswanath Dari, Assistant Professor and Natural Resource Specialist (NC A&T)

Panelists:

Andrew Branan, Associate Extension Professor (NCSU)

Dr. Kurt Smith, Assistant Professor of Forestry and Extension Specialist, Land Retention (NCSU)

Dr. Noah Ranells, Eastern Director. NC FarmLink (NCSU)

Dr. Jameson Boone, Extension Specialist of Forestry (NCSU)

◇ **Present Use Value (PUV) in Guilford County (2:30 PM – 3:15 PM)**

Learn how Guilford's Present Use Value (PUV) taxation program supports working lands by offering reduced property tax rates. Attendees will gain a clear understanding of eligibility, application requirements, and how to remain in compliance.

Presenter:

Jennifer East, Manager, Commercial Real Property (Guilford County)

Dr. Jameson Boone, Extension Specialist of Forestry (NCSU)

Bio-Break (3:15 – 3:30 PM) Another opportunity to connect with resources and grab a refreshment.

◇ **Land Access for Beginning and Underserved Farmers (3:30 PM – 4:15 PM)**

A focused session featuring strategies and support tools for farmers who have historically faced barriers to accessing land, including matching services and cooperative models.

Presenters:

Dr. Noah Ranells, Eastern Director. NC FarmLink (NCSU)

◇ **Urban Agriculture, Zoning & Planning in Guilford County (4:15 PM – 4:30 PM)**

City planning staff discuss the policies, zoning codes, and opportunities that shape urban agriculture in Greensboro, High Point, and beyond.

Presenters:

J. Leslie Bell, Director, Planning and Development (Guilford County)

◊ Digital Tools for Landowners (4:30 PM – 5:00 PM)

A hands-on look at mapping and land management platforms that help landowners track property boundaries, resources, and land value.

Presenters:

Mitchell Byers GIS Analyst (Guilford County)

◊ Evaluation and Closing Remarks & Next Steps (4:45 PM – 5:00 PM)

Wrap up the day with reflections and a call to action. Discover how to stay connected through Extension programs, landowner networks, and upcoming training sessions.

Facilitators:

Marcus Williams, NC Extension Agent, Agriculture - Food Crops (Guilford County)

Alyssa McKim, NC Extension Program Coordinator, Food Security (Guilford County)

Dr. Biswanath Dari, Assistant Professor and Natural Resource Specialist (NC A&T)