



PUBLIC INFORMATION

ITEM NO. 3.

DATE OF MEETING: November 1, 2010

REQUESTED BY: Board of Commissioners

SHORT TITLE: Presentation Regarding the USDA Wildlife Services Program

BACKGROUND: At a prior meeting the Board discussed the USDA Wildlife Services beaver management program for Pender County, specifically the issue of private landowner financial contributions for beaver management services. The County's current program does not require a landowner contribution, though some counties do require such.

Ms. Rachael Swartz, a Wildlife Officer for this program, is present to provide the Board and public with an overview of the County's current program, and options/issues for amending the program to provide landowner financial contributions.



Pender County Board of Commissioners
805 S. Walker Street
Burgaw, NC 28425

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Animal and Plant
Health Inspection
Service

Wildlife Services

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Dear County Commissioners,

This letter is an update on beaver damage management services conducted in Pender County by USDA Wildlife Services as part of the Beaver Management Assistance Program (BMAP). This update covers the 12-month period October 1, 2009 through September 30, 2010 (the Federal Fiscal Year). During this period, I resolved beaver damage problems at 53 sites throughout the county. Fifty-one private landowners, businesses, and the Department of Transportation benefited from these services. Ninety five beaver dams were removed (37 using hand tools and 58 using explosives). Only beaver and their impoundment's causing damage were removed. The intent of the program is not to eradicate beaver in Pender County but to lessen the damage they cause.

The BMAP was created by state legislative action in November 1992 with the express purpose of helping manage ever-increasing damage problems caused by beaver on private and public lands. The BMAP is overseen by an Advisory Board made up of representatives from the NC Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC – Chair), NC Department of Transportation, NC Department of Agriculture, NC Division of Forest Resources, NC Soil and Water Conservation Division, NC Cooperative Extension Service, NC Farm Bureau Federation, NC Forestry Association, and USDA Wildlife Services.

Pender County received approximately one-third of a work-year through the BMAP \$4,000 participation fee and two-thirds of a work-year under a separate Cooperative Service Agreement in the amount of \$56,000. BMAP activities in Pender County prevented the loss of, or damage to, \$252,393 in resources (\$151,586 in timber, \$9,607 in crops/pasture, \$28,700 in roads/bridges, \$31,500 in dams/ditches, and \$31,000 in other resources such as landscape plantings, golf courses, and residential buildings).

Comparing Pender County expenditures to savings, the estimated cost-benefit ratio was a favorable 1 to 4.21, in other words, for every \$1.00 spent, over \$4.21 in resources was saved.

An important aspect of the BMAP is the education of landholders about both the positive and negative consequences of living with beaver on their property so that they can make an informed decision as to the best management strategy. We also educate the general public through presentations on beaver habits, ecology, and damage management. In FY 2010, I gave 3 presentations/workshops to civic and school organizations, private and professional groups, governmental agencies, and others. Over 100 people attended these presentations. I also conducted 3 interviews to the news media.

In April of each year, the NCWRC will send a letter to each county advising it of program eligibility. In order for landholders to receive direct beaver damage management assistance through the cost-share BMAP, a county must commit the \$4,000 participation fee no later than September 30 of that year set forth by General Statute 113-291.10. BMAP participating counties can expect to receive service based



October 23, 2010



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on the number of counties opting to participate in any particular fiscal year and the amount of funding the program receives. In FY 2011, 41 counties opted to participate. The \$4,000 a county contributes is a participation fee which allows private landowners the opportunity to participate in the cost share BMAP. Services provided will be on both public (DOT) and private lands in the county. Some counties may receive more service and some less depending on the demand for BMAP services in that county and the geographical area in which a wildlife specialist works.

Pender County first joined BMAP in October 1994. In March 1999, responding to public complaints and requests for additional services to meet the growing demand for services, Pender County requested additional beaver damage management assistance above and beyond what the BMAP provided. The additional service continues to be provided and the agreement renewed each year as the demand for BMAP services remains high. Currently, Pender County is receiving approximately one-third of a beaver wildlife specialist's time through the \$4,000 BMAP participation fee. In addition, Pender County is receiving two-thirds of a work year and paying for the participants cost share fees through the \$56,000 cooperative service agreement.

As implemented in 1994, participant residents appreciate the county's proactive approach in addressing concerns due to beaver activity. Landowners have provided positive feedback since the beginning of the program for services they have been provided by the county providing the \$125 per dam removal fee and the \$20 per site visit charge established by the BMAP Advisory Board. Of the forty one participating counties, Pender County is the only one paying the cost share for private landowners. If landowners were required to pay, that would generate savings in funds such as the \$6,000 of the \$56,000 Cooperative Service Agreement. However, Pender County residents have received services since the program's establishment in 1994 without having to pay the participant cost share fee and if that were to change it may create landowner complaints. If you were to decide to change the current participation cost share policy and have the landowners cover those fees, the current Cooperative Service Agreement could be amended.

The BMAP continues to be a popular program among landholders, counties, municipalities, businesses, and the DOT. Landholders requesting BMAP services are threatened with significant losses as a result of beaver activity, as evidenced by the demand placed on BMAP services. We know you need to plan early to include this information in future budgets so hopefully this has answered any questions you may have. Should you need further assistance or information please contact me at 910-540-6708.

Very respectfully,

Rachael Schwartz Wildlife Specialist



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APHIS is an agency of USDA's Marketing and Regulatory Programs