

NC Sandhills Conservation Partnership- Land Protection Workgroup update 3/8/2017

Since the last NC Sandhills Conservation Partnership meeting (from 12/7/16 – 3/8/17) TNC closed on a 20.54 acre easement with Julian Johnson (Figure 1), adding the corner at the entrance to Fort Bragg on Vass-Raeford Rd to his existing easement.

Partners applied for funding for new projects from the Clean Water Management Trust fund 2017 cycle, including:

- NCWRC applied for funding to purchase the Womble, Usher, and Godwin II properties from TNC. These properties are adjacent to Sandhills Game Land and will become part of the game land.
- SALT applied for funding for one new project
- TNC applied for funding for a conservation easement on the Baker tract (along the southern Bragg boundary, across the street from Julian Johnson) and conservation easements on Lobelia Lakes, which includes 2 landowners along the Little River on the northern Bragg boundary south of Wood Lake

The NC Department of Agriculture applied for a Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Challenge grant that includes properties adjacent to Fort Bragg, Camp Lejeune, and Seymour Johnson Air Force Base. This is one tangible outcome from the recently expanded eastern NC Sentinel Landscape. The request included funds for the Lobelia Lakes conservation easements as well as some land that sits off the end of Pope Airfield in Spring Lake. The land along Tank Creek sits in the Accident Potential Zone and any incompatible development could hamper the Army's ability to fly larger planes out of Pope in the future.

The Army has instituted a "pause" in their Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) program to review administrative procedures and strategies for the program. From Dec 2016 – June 2017 ACUB partners (including TNC in NC Sandhills) are asked not to expend any funds. It is unclear if this review will result in changes to the program and how they might affect the Fort Bragg- TNC Cooperative Agreement.

Figure 1. Julian Johnson conservation easement addition, locator map.

