

Why have Agricultural Districts?

The State of North Carolina passed the Farmland Preservation Enabling Act in 1985, authorizing counties to establish farmland preservation programs, including agricultural districts. In 2002 Wake County adopted a Voluntary Farmland Preservation Program Ordinance, and it was updated on December 5, 2016. The purpose of the ordinance is to promote the preservation of farmland in Wake County so that development and growth will be accompanied by protection of farms from non-farm development and other negative impacts on properly managed farms, recognizing the importance of agriculture to the economic and cultural life of the county.

Who administers Wake's Voluntary Agricultural District Program?

The Wake Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors administers the Voluntary Agricultural District program in Wake County. The District Board established an Agricultural Advisory Board, composed of program participants, to help the Wake Soil & Water Conservation District Board advise the County Commissioners about issues affecting the local farm community. The Agricultural Advisory Board also reviews and approves applications that are submitted for the program.

Voluntary!

MEMBERSHIP MAY BE REVOKED AT ANY TIME BY A VOLUNTARY AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT MEMBER VIA WRITTEN NOTICE TO WAKE COUNTY.

For more information, please contact:

Wake Soil and Water Conservation District
Agricultural Services Building
4001 – D Carya Drive
Raleigh, NC 27610
Phone: (919)250-1050
Email: dthreattaylor@wakegov.com



Wake County

VOLUNTARY AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS



An opportunity for Wake County landowners to protect farmland and preserve the tradition of Wake County agriculture.

Voluntary Agricultural Districts

YOUR AGRICULTURAL LAND IS A VALUABLE ASSET TO THE CITIZENS OF WAKE COUNTY.

Citizens of Wake County derive many benefits from your farmland: clean water and air, plant and animal habitat, fresh fruits, vegetables, meat, dairy, and horticultural products, as well as scenic rural vistas. Now you can enroll in a voluntary program that demonstrates your pride and commitment to agriculture, and celebrates your contribution to the exceptional quality of life in Wake County, North Carolina.

Another Beautiful Wake County Voluntary Agricultural District



Above: Sample VAD sign for participating properties.

Wake County's Voluntary Agricultural District (VAD) Program enhances the identity of the agricultural community by encouraging the voluntary preservation and protection of farmland from non-farm development.

HOW YOUR LAND CAN BENEFIT FROM BECOMING A VOLUNTARY AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT:

RECOGNITION

The County created a handsome sign to identify your farm as a Wake County Voluntary Agricultural District. These signs will tell passersby that you, the farm owner, are committed to the preservation of the agricultural way of life in Wake County.

INCREASED PROTECTION FROM NUISANCE SUITS

Persons buying land in rural areas will do so with the knowledge that a bona fide agricultural operation exists. Agricultural Districts will be identified on county maps, which shall be displayed for public view in County offices, including the Planning Department and Register of Deeds.

ELIGIBILITY FOR PRESERVATION FUNDS

Agricultural Districts may be eligible for farmland preservation grants should funding become available from local, state, or federal sources.



VOLUNTARY AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT LAND MUST MEET THESE REQUIREMENTS:

- Be real property that is engaged in agriculture as defined in N.C.G.S. §106-581.1;
- Be managed, if highly erodible land exists on the farm, in accordance with the Natural Resources Conservation Service defined erosion-control practices that are addressed to said highly-erodible land;
- Be the subject of a conservation agreement, as defined in N.C.G.S. §121-35, between the county and the owner of such land that prohibits non-farm use or development of such land for a period of at least ten years, except for the creation of not more than three lots that meet applicable zoning and subdivision regulations*;
- And be located in the unincorporated area of Wake County, unless there is an Memorandum of Understanding with a municipality through which the county is authorized to exercise the authority of the municipality on its behalf. A Voluntary Agricultural District must consist of at least 5 acres of horticulture, 10 acres of agriculture, or 20 acres of forestry per the Present Use Value Program acreage guidelines.

*Voluntary Agricultural District Membership requires a voluntary, non-binding agreement.