

Item Title: State of North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Agreement for the Protection, Development and Improvement of Forest Land in Wake County, North Carolina

Specific Action Requested:

That the Board of Commissioners approves the State of North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services agreement for the protection, development and improvement of forest land in Wake County, North Carolina and authorizes the Chairman of the Wake County Board of Commissioners to execute the agreement.

Item Summary:

The North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services ("Department") submitted to Wake County Fire Services its FY 2017 "Agreement for the Protection, Development and Improvement of Forest Land in Wake County, North Carolina." This agreement sets forth the County's obligation to reimburse the Department for 40% of the total cost of the legally appointed and equipped County Forester or Forest Ranger for all official services rendered, at a fair rate of pay as established by the NC Department of Agriculture. The Agreement also provides for the Forester or Forest Ranger to periodically or at the request of the Wake County Board of Commissioners present statements of work being done within the County so that the Board may be fully informed regarding Forestry finances and activities within the County. Funding for the Forest Ranger totals \$166,371 of which the County agrees to pay 40% or \$66,548. This has been an annually recurring agreement that is funded through the Wake County Fire Tax District as part of System Wide Expenses. Pursuant to NCGS §106-898, County funds are not to replace, but supplement State and federal funds and Department appropriations shall not be expended in a County unless that County contributes at least 25% to the total cost of the forestry program. The statute requires that the expenses are specifically authorized by the Board of County Commissioners under prior written agreement with the Commissioner. The County Attorney's Office advised that compliance with the statute requires that the Chairman of the Board of Commissioners execute the agreement.

Attachments:

1. State of North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Agreement (Forest Ranger)
2. NCGS §106-898, Duties of Forest Rangers; Payment of Expenses by State and Counties