



RESOLUTION TITLE: RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING THE GASTON COUNTY CONSERVATION EASEMENT PROGRAM

- WHEREAS, Gaston County recognizes the importance of protecting its natural, agricultural, scenic, and historical resources for the benefit of current and future generations; and,
- WHEREAS, the preservation of these lands and resources provides economic, environmental, and cultural benefits to the citizens of Gaston County, contributes to water quality protection, supports local agriculture, and maintains the County's rural character; and,
- WHEREAS, the Gaston County Natural Resources Department, in coordination with the Gaston Soil and Water Conservation District, has identified an opportunity to strengthen local conservation efforts through the establishment of a formal Gaston County Conservation Easement Program; and,
- WHEREAS, such a program aligns with the County's long-term goals of promoting sustainable land management, protecting water quality, and maintaining the County's natural and agricultural heritage; and,
- WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners finds it in the best interest of the County to formally establish this program and to designate the appropriate authority for its implementation and oversight.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Gaston County Board of Commissioners as follows:

SEC. 1. ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM.

The Gaston County Conservation Easement Program is hereby established to protect and preserve natural, agricultural, scenic, and historical properties within Gaston County by obtaining and maintaining conservation easements over land.

SEC. 2. ADMINISTRATION.

The Gaston County Natural Resources Department shall be responsible for implementing and administering the program in coordination with the Gaston Soil and Water Conservation District. The Gaston County Natural Resources Department and Gaston Soil and Water Conservation District may adopt any policies or procedures necessary for the implementation of this program.

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I, Donna S. Buff, Clerk to the County Commission, do hereby certify that the above is a true and correct copy of action taken by the Board of Commissioners as follows:

SEC. 3. FUNDING.

As part of the regular budget process, it shall be the goal to allocate funding to the Gaston County Conservation Easement Program in an amount up to the sum of \$70,000 plus 10% of fees collected by the Natural Resources Department. All funds allocated to this program shall be used exclusively for the acquisition, protection, and stewardship of conservation easements and related conservation efforts. These funds shall not be diverted for any other purpose unless approved by the County Manager.

SEC. 4. HOLDING OF EASEMENTS.

Any conservation easements acquired using these funds shall be held and administered by the Gaston Soil and Water Conservation District, consistent with its statutory authority under Chapter 139 of the North Carolina General Statutes.

Adopted this the __ day of _____, 2026.

Chairman
Gaston County Board of Commissioners

Clerk to the Board