

*The Farm Prosperity Project Partners are:*

North Carolina State University  
Dr. Jeanine Davis, Project Leader  
(828) 684-3562  
jeanine\_davis@ncsu.edu

Land of Sky Regional Council  
Tom Elmore  
(828) 251-6000  
tom@landofsky.org

Appalachian Sustainable  
Agriculture Project  
Charlie Jackson  
(828) 236-1282  
Charlie@asapconnections.org

Carolina Mountain  
Land Conservancy  
(828) 697-5777  
www.carolinamountain.org

American Farmland Trust  
National Office  
202-331-7300  
www.farmland.org

Southern Appalachian  
Highlands Conservancy  
William Hamilton  
(828) 253-0095  
william@appalachian.org

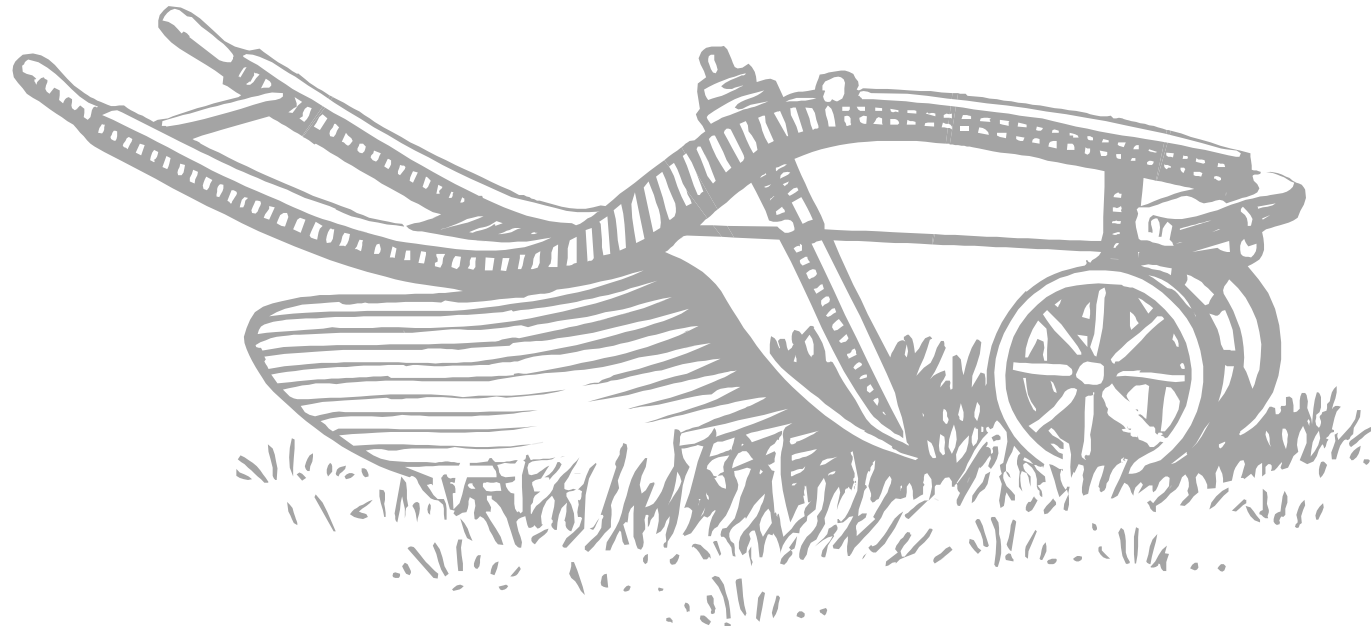
Warren Wilson College  
Laura Lengnick  
(828) 771-7003  
lengnick@warren-wilson.edu

## FARM PROSPERITY PROJECT

Contact Amy Hamilton  
at (828) 684-3562  
or amy\_hamilton@ncsu.edu  
[www.ncspecialtycrops.org/farmprosperity](http://www.ncspecialtycrops.org/farmprosperity)



*Working to  
Preserve  
North Carolina  
Mountain  
Farmland*



## ABOUT THE PROJECT



Even regional, state and national organizations, led by North Carolina State University, teamed together to conduct a grant-funded study intended to preserve western North Carolina farmland and farm heritage. The Farm Prosperity Project identified crops and farmland preservation methods that help sustain the longevity of farmland in our region. The project area includes Madison, Buncombe, Henderson, Transylvania, and Haywood counties.

This four year project is led by Dr. Jeanine Davis of NC State University with a team of cooperators from Land of Sky Regional Council, the Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project, Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy, American Farmland Trust, Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy, and Warren Wilson College. It is funded by a USDA-NRI grant. This project also collaborates with a complementary project led by University of NC– Asheville.

*North Carolina  
loses over  
30,000 acres of  
prime farmland  
to development  
each year —*

*National Resources Inventory*

## FARMER PARTICIPANTS

This project is dependent on the participation of area farmers. We recruited area farmers who had transitioned into new crops/enterprises like organics or agritourism, those who had adopted, or were considering adopting, farmland preservation techniques such as conservation easements or sale of development rights,



and traditional farmers who had not made any changes to their operations at all.

These farmers participated in several interviews and surveys over the course of the project to determine the impact their transition (or lack thereof) has had on their families, their finances and the economic situation in their surrounding communities. Twenty-three of them also helped develop and test the decision tool and farm performance indicators created in this project to help all farmers make decisions about how to keep their farms and maintain their style of living.

In return, participating farmers got free publicity through NC State University and the Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP) websites, technical assistance from our staff on new crops and farmland preservation methods, free attendance at a variety of workshops and conferences, assistance with grant and loan identification and submission to further their progress.

## OUR OBJECTIVE

Through this project, we developed decision-making tools to help farmers choose the best new crops and farmland protection methods to ensure the long-term sustainability and profitability of their farms. We also worked to educate the public about the economic importance of agriculture in WNC, and encourage local leaders to view agriculture as an important component essential to the economic vitality of the region.

Both projects are funded by grants from the "Agricultural Prosperity for Small and Medium-Sized Farms Program" of The National Research Initiative of the USDA Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service, grants #2005-35618-15647 and #2005-35618-15645

## COLLABORATION WITH UNCA

### The Farmland Values Project

This innovative research project worked to determine the non-agricultural values of farmland in Buncombe, Henderson, Haywood and Madison counties by looking at such factors as scenic beauty, environmental and wildlife benefits, and the preservation of cultural heritage.

Land use and farmland protection are on many people's minds. Our study helps people think about why farmland is important to them, and helps us all better understand the varied roles that farmland plays in our communities. We held community focus groups and conducted surveys to ask farmers, non-farming residents and tourists in the four-county area what they believe are the benefits of farmland in our region beyond its agricultural value. Geographic information system (GIS) mapping techniques were utilized in order to visualize this new and important non-agricultural value of farmland.

The end result of our work is a mapping tool that farmers, rural communities and policymakers can use to assess the threats to farmland and better understand a specific site's different values -- commercial, agritourism, heritage, and conservation. It can be viewed at [www.unca.edu/farmlandvalues](http://www.unca.edu/farmlandvalues).

Contact Leah Greden Mathews at the University of North Carolina at Asheville, at (828) 251-6551 or [lmathews@unca.edu](mailto:lmathews@unca.edu).