MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
for the Establishment and Continued Advancement
of the Eastern NC Sentinel Landscape Partnership

This is a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between North Carolina state agencies, federal agencies, military compatible land use supporting agencies, and private and non-governmental organizations (here after referred to as the Principals), who through collaborative efforts seek to maintain and enhance working and natural lands, water resources, conservation, and military readiness for today and tomorrow.

BACKGROUND:

Sentinel Landscapes are working and natural lands important to the Department of Defense mission and conservation priorities – places where restoring and preserving the working and rural character of key landscapes strengthens the economies of forests and farms; conserves habitat and natural resources; reduces wildfire risk to communities, facilitates adaptation to climate changes including rising sea levels, and protects vital testing and training missions conducted on military installations that anchor such landscapes. Through the Eastern NC Sentinel Landscape Partnership (here after referred to as the Partnership), the Principals will work together to advance the goals of the Partnership while working with a number of professionals across the landscape as well as established partnership efforts around the state's installations such as the Sandhills Conservation Partnership, Onslow Bight, Cape Fear Arch, Regional Land Use Advisory Commission, Neuse Urban and Rural Partnerships, South Atlantic Salt Marsh Initiative, Collaborative Coastal Habitats Initiative, and Albemarle-Pamlico Estuary Partnership. The Partnership and interested parties will assist and support willing landowners in conservation and resiliency practices that encourage compatible land use within the designated North Carolina Sentinel Landscape. The Partnership is designed to achieve landscape scale outcomes consistent with and supportive of land uses compatible with the military mission and that concurrently advances the missions and goals of the Partnership, and its long-term vision of the landscape.

PURPOSE OF THE MOU:

Establish a mutually beneficial partnership between the Principals to coordinate the delivery of the Partnership objectives, which aims to optimize the benefits of federal, state, local and other assistance to private landowners whose working and natural lands, including lands managed for wildlife and habitat conservation, also serve to protect the military mission and natural infrastructure areas of the North Carolina.

GOALS:

The Partnership will plan and execute mutually beneficial programs, projects, activities and strategies that preserve, enhance, and/or protect open space, wildlife habitat, natural and working lands and associated agricultural and forest production in areas identified as priority for the military; reduce, prevent, or eliminate restrictions that inhibit military training and testing; and thereby forestall incompatible development for a holistic approach to conservation.

ESTABLISHMENT OF A SENTINEL LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

A Partnership Advisory Committee helps facilitate interaction between the Principals. This committee shall be comprised of one or more senior-level officials, or their designee representative of the Principals (1 Federal Principal, 1 State Principal, 1 Conservation Principal, 1 Landowner Principal) with an annual or bi-annual rotation of member representation. The Advisory Committee will meet to facilitate communication and support coordination efforts of the Partnership, through the Principals and the broader base of Partnership interests. The Advisory Committee, with support from the Principals, can

establish subcommittees or working groups as needed to address topical or technical issues such as landowner engagement, science, policy, and economics. Principals can serve on the designated working groups as can other interested parties from the broader Partnership. The North Carolina State University College of Natural Resources serves as the principal coordinator and correspondence agent for the Partnership.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARTNERSHIP ADVISORY COMMITTEE:
Promote long-term working relationships amongst the Principals through collaborative efforts that sustain working and natural lands, conserve natural resources and habitats, and protect the military training and testing mission.

Determine needs, address barriers, and identify solutions and opportunities for both public and private sector programs, services, incentives, and other measures that would encourage private landowners to engage in forest, agricultural, wildlife, or habitat conservation land management activities that effectively contribute to the sustainment of military installations, ranges, and associated sea and airspace, primarily through the voluntary perpetuation and expansion of those lands.

Jointly facilitate actions that can demonstrate the advantages and efficiencies of the Principals working together for the mutual benefit of conservation, working lands, and national defense. This includes identifying and recruiting applicable new Principals, working on policy and/or legal barriers that inhibit the achievement of goals and objectives, helping to provide qualitative and quantitative metrics for annual outcomes, and supporting the development, revisions, and implementation of state action plans (e.g., forest, wildlife, watershed action plans) for consistency within the Sentinel Landscape area.

Will put forth a name from among the Principals supported by at least 2/3 vote of the Principals to serve as the Partnership Liaison on the State Sentinel Landscape Committee, revisited at the close of each year.

The Advisory Committee meets annually to provide feedback and ongoing development of the Partnership's Strategic Plan. The Plan is based on a 5-year planning effort with annual outcome reports due at the end of each year acknowledging achievements toward the 5-year goals. The Advisory Committee will work with the Principals to design a 30-year vision statement with 2 or 3 aspirational goals, while ensuring each 5-year Strategic Plan contributes to the achievement of that overall vision for the Sentinel Landscape in North Carolina. The Liaison of the Partnership will also share this vision statement and an overview of the incremental process to achieve that vision with the State Sentinel Landscape Committee.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF PRINCIPALS:
The Principals shall manage their own activities and use their own resources, including the expenditure of their own funds, in pursuing the goals and objectives of this MOU. This MOU is not intended to and does not create any right or trust responsibility, substantive or procedural, enforceable by law or equity against the Principals, their officers or employees, or any other person.

COMMENCEMENT AND TERMINATION:
This MOU was created (January 2017) by the initial Principals though not limited to the initial signatory Principals. This MOU can be extended or amended upon written request of any Principal and subsequent written concurrence of 2/3 of the initial signatory members. Any Principal may choose not to participate

in any activity or action embarked upon by the Principals on behalf of the MOU. Any member may terminate participation in this MOU upon written notice to the other Principals; otherwise, this MOU remains in effect until May 31, 2026, after which majority approval of the Principals is required for continuance of the MOU. As of May 31, 2023, continuance of the MOU occurs for 3 years; prior the continuance occurred at 2 years. Additional Principals may be added by simple majority approval of signatory members. The MOU shall remain effective for all non-terminating Principals.

- This initial MOU was effective January 1, 2017, through January 1, 2019.
- As of November 29, 2018, the MOU was approved for continuance through January 29, 2021. No Principal terminated participation, hence the initial Principal signature page sufficed to document continued commencement support.
- As of May 31, 2023, the MOU is approved for continuance through May 31, 2026. No Principal terminated participation, hence the initial Principal signature page sufficed to document continued commencement support. Signatory Principals were notified of changes within the current MOU, including the option to terminate participation, or the option for continuance that includes re-signing the initial signature page with a new date or allow the initial signatory page to stand as representing that organization's continuance. New Principals will provide a signature page that will be attached to the MOU along with the current signatory pages.

NON-FUND OBLIGATING DOCUMENT:
Nothing in this MOU shall obligate the Principals to transfer any funds. Specific work projects or activities that involve the transfer of funds, services, or property between the Principals will require execution of separate agreements and shall be contingent upon the availability of funds. Such activities must be independently authorized by appropriate statutory authority; this MOU does not provide such authority. Negotiation, execution, and administration of each such agreement must comply with all applicable statutes and regulations.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Principals that agree to sign hereto have come together to execute this MOU. This agreement is in effect for those who sign the agreement upon the dates of their signatures. See attached signature pages for those participating in the MOU.

MOU PRINCIPAL CONTACTS:

Principal Contacts of State Agencies and Supporting Departments or Programs:

North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

North Carolina Department of Military and Veterans Affairs

North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission

North Carolina Extension Service

North Carolina State University College of Natural Resources

Principal Contacts of Federal Agencies, Non-Governmental and Private Organizations.

North Carolina Commanders Council

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

US Fish and Wildlife Service

US Forest Service

Sustainable Forestry and Land Retention Project

North Carolina Working Lands Trust

North Carolina Farm Bureau

North Carolina Forestry Association

North Carolina Foundation for Soil and Water Conservation

North Carolina State Grange

Southeast Conservation Adaptation Strategy

The Conservation Fund

The Nature Conservancy

NC Coastal Federation

NCEast Alliance

University of Mount Olive

Brooks Pierce