

## 2017 Environmental Stewardship Award Nomination

### Lazy H Livestock

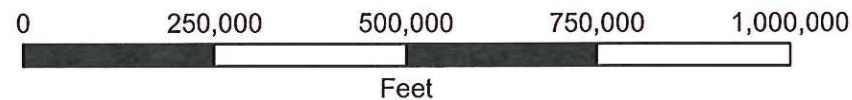
Richie Herman  
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Taylorsville, NC 28681  
828-312-9891  
[lazyhlivestock1352@gmail.com](mailto:lazyhlivestock1352@gmail.com)



## Legend

★ Lazy H Livestock Farm - Alexander County

Scale  
1" = 250,000'





# Conservation Plan Map

Customer(s): RICHARD S HERMAN

District: ALEXANDER SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Field Office: TAYLORSVILLE FIELD OFFICE

Agency: USDA-NRCS

Assisted By: Richard Grant, Lee Holcomb  
ALEXANDER COUNTY, NC



## Legend

— Minor Roads

== Major Roads

— Streams

□ Cons\_Plan

## Resource Inventory

— Watering Facility

— Fence

## Practices

W Water Well

— Watering Facility

— Fence

— Pipeline

— Stream Crossing

— Heavy Use Area Protection

Scale  
1" = 600'

0 300 600 900 1,200 Feet





# Conservation Plan Map

Date: 4/2/2013

Customer(s): DAVID L HERMAN

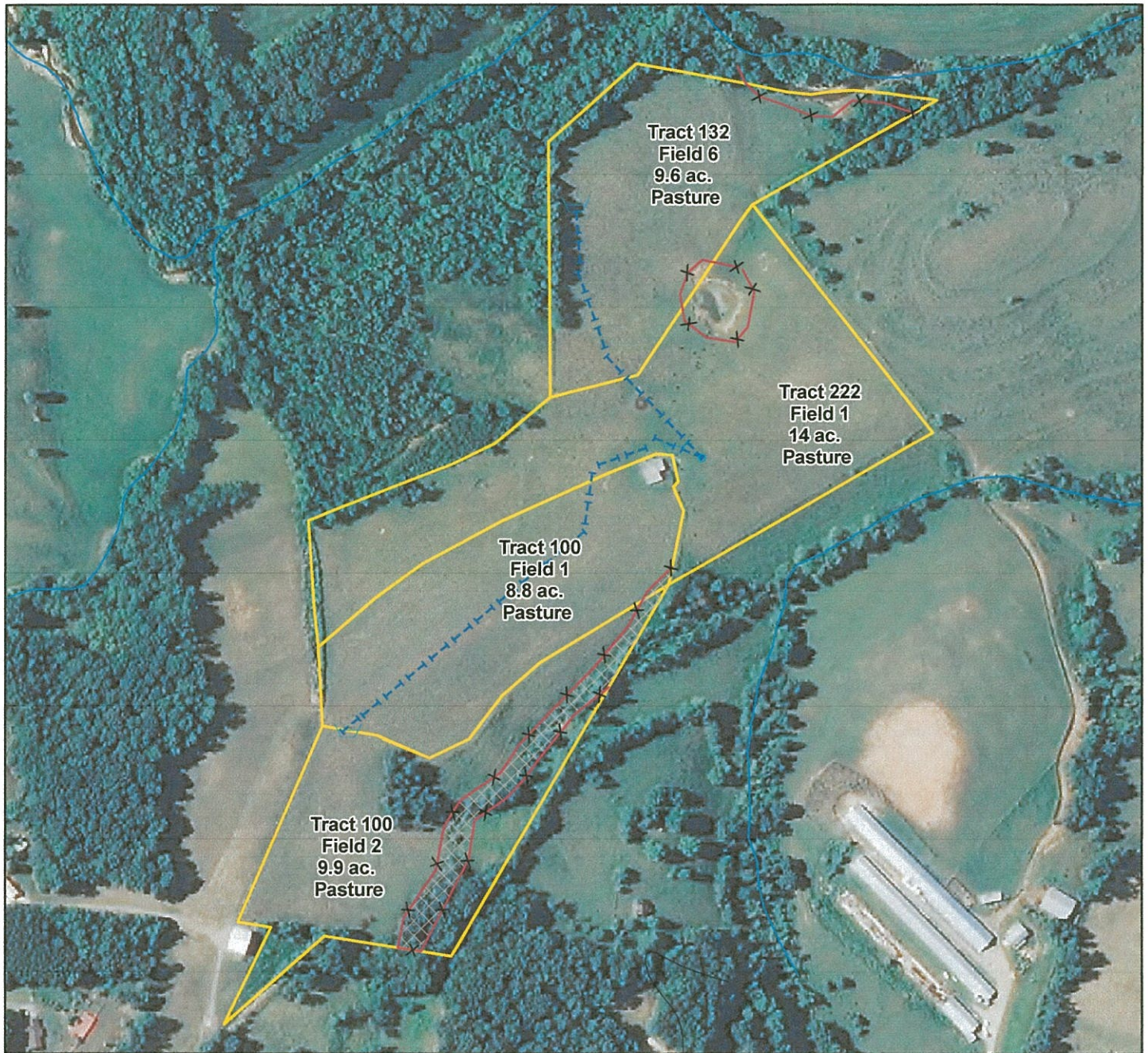
District: ALEXANDER SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Field Office: TAYLORSVILLE FIELD OFFICE

Agency: USDA-NRCS

Assisted By: LEE HOLCOMB

Land Units: Tract 100, Farm307, Tract 132, Farm 446  
Tract 222, Farm 441



## Legend

— Minor\_Roads

== Major\_Roads

— Streams

□ Herman\_David\_Lee\_Consplan

## Practices

○ Water Well

▤ Watering Facility

--- Livestock Pipeline

x Fence

Access Control

Scale  
1" = 400'

0 200 400 600 800  
Feet





# Conservation Plan Map

Date: 1/9/2017

Customer(s): DAVID L HERMAN

District: ALEXANDER SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

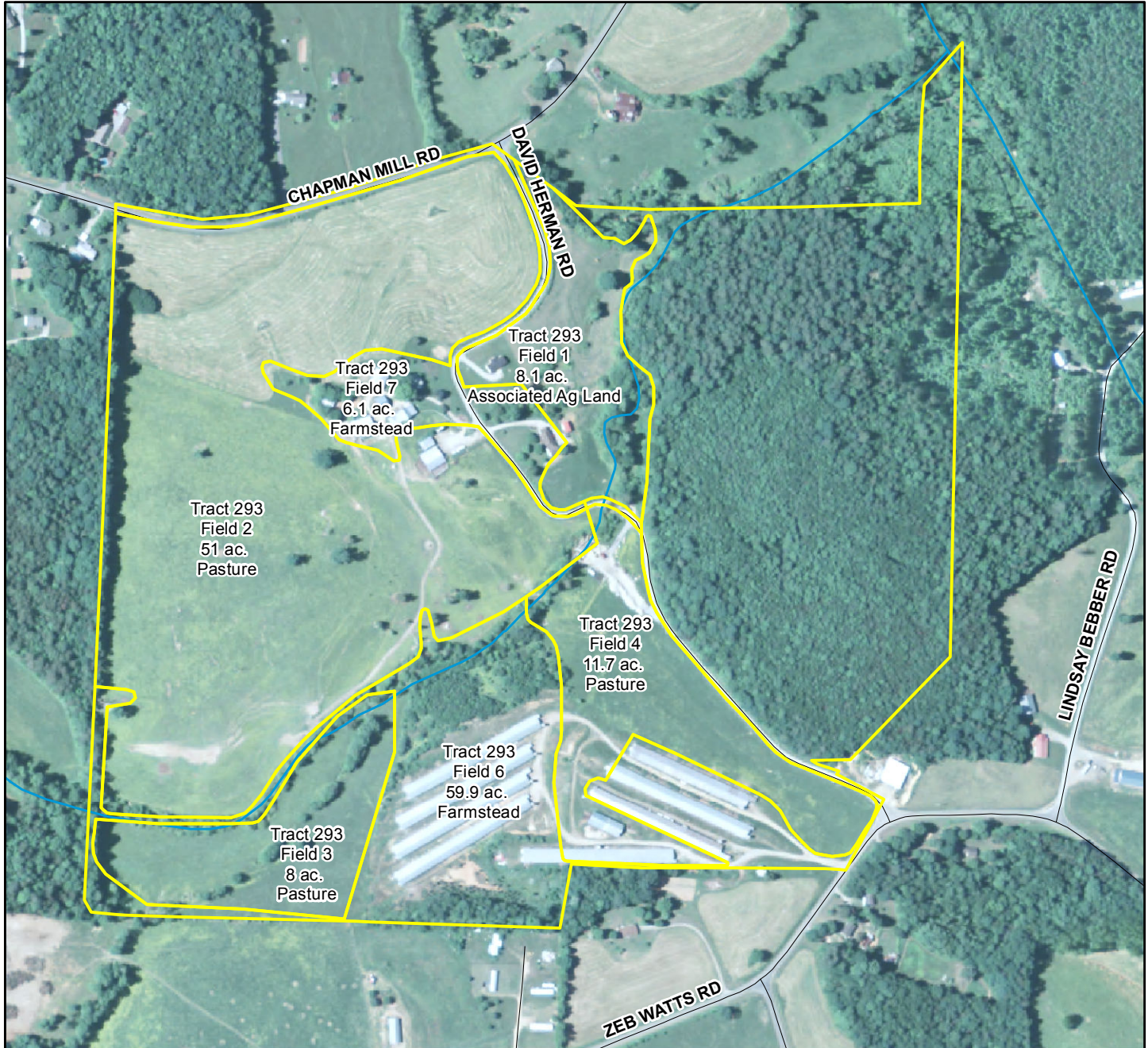
Field Office: TAYLORSVILLE FIELD OFFICE

Agency: USDA-NRCS

Assisted By: LEE HOLCOMB

Alexander County, NC

Land Units: Tract: 293



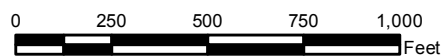
Prepared with assistance from USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service

## Legend

- Herman\_David\_Lee\_Consplan
- Minor\_Roads\_2014
- Streams



Scale 1" = 500'



## **1. Description of Operation**

Richie Herman, age 46, has been in the beef cattle business his entire life. Mr. Herman grew up in the foothills of NC, in the central part of Alexander County. Mr. Herman's farming background started in the rolling hills of Taylorsville, NC raising beef cattle, hogs, and chickens with his family. He currently has a diversified cattle operation he manages with father, David Lee Herman, and wife Teresa. Mr. Herman currently runs a nearly 200 head commercial Black Angus cow operation. The cattle rotationally graze on owned and leased land that consists of about 400 acres; mostly cool season mixed species pastures with summer annuals such as crabgrass. The maps provided in this submittal packet are NRCS maps of most of the pastureland owned or co-owned by Mr. Herman and the remaining leased land maps are not provided.

Mr. Herman's farming operation has significantly changed over the course of 20 years. He purchased his own farm of 120 acres, which adjoins two Tracts of land his father owns, in 1995. In the late 90's, Richie built three Tyson broiler houses and utilized the pasture land primarily for waste application. In addition, Richie was stock contractor for all the (USTRC) team roping events for the Eastern United States. With this responsibility he owned roughly 600 head of Mexican Corriente cattle that traveled each week to a team roping event.

During this (10 year) period, pasture management was not a priority. Plant species typically consisted of spiny amaranth and heavily grazed common Bermuda grass. Herman made and fed around 1500 round bales of hay yearly during this period.

In the mid-2000's, Mr. Herman began converting from Mexican Corriente cattle to commercial beef stockers. He contract grazed/fed stocker cattle from 450 lbs. to a final weight of 800 lbs. During this operational change, he applied for NRCS EQIP funds to put in pressurized watering tanks, water well, and install fencing for livestock exclusion and access control to any surface waters. With EQIP funding Mr. Herman was able to begin subdividing one large pasture into three smaller pastures.

In 2011 Richie began subdividing the farm into 5 acre paddocks to allow for rotation of the stocker cattle and this is when his improved grazing management started to make a huge difference in the pasture species composition. Two strands of high-tensile electric and metal T-posts were used for cross fencing in order to allow quick removal. He reseeded heavily overgrazed pastures utilizing mixtures of cool season forages. By the end of 2011 he began rotating pastures every 3-7 days, and allowing regrowth and rest of forages.

In 2012, he quit contract grazing stocker cattle and began focusing on building a commercial herd of Black Angus cattle. He continued to subdivide pastures on his own farm, while expanding the operation onto his father's adjoining pastureland. The watering system improvements and better grazing management had significantly improved and healed all pastures from years of overgrazing.

In 2013 another adjoining Tract of land was enrolled in the NRCS EQIP program and more pasture subdivision was implemented along with watering system and livestock exclusions. This allowed for roughly 240 acres of contiguous pastures to be linked and utilized for rotational grazing of the entire commercial Angus herd with improved watering systems that

allowed for clean water for cattle to drink. This also included fencing livestock out of all the surface waters on these 240 acres of pasture to improve local water quality in the Lower Little River Watershed.

As of 2015, Richie markets cattle in a variety of ways: He direct markets beef locally as a registered meat handler, he pools truck load lots on the family farms' certified scales and sells loads of feeder cattle going to feedlots, and he finishes grass cattle for Hickory Nut Gap Farm.

After years of hard work and good record keeping, Richie received his Global Animal Partnership (GAP 4) certification in 2015.

The botanical composition of pastures originally were annual warm and cool season weeds, white clover, and common Bermuda grass. Twenty years later, with improved management and rest, the pastures consist of a mixture of cool and warm season perennials/annuals such as Tall Fescue, common Bermuda grass, Johnson Grass, White Clover, Orchardgrass, Large Crabgrass, Dallisgrass, Annual Bluegrass, with a concentration of Matua Bromegrass.

In Fall 2012, Richie Herman hosted his first forage field day/pasture walk in conjunction with Alexander County SWCD/NRCS and the Alexander Cooperative Extension Service. Dr. Jim Green, retired NCSU professor, was the main speaker and highlighted strategies for improving any grazing system. Since then, Richie has hosted numerous cattlemen groups and showcased the improvements to the farm utilizing rotational grazing principles.

He is an advocate and spokesman for improving cattle health and soil health through intensively managing pastures. He has hosted many groups on the farm, from county commissioners to cattlemen's groups, to bring awareness to environmental health by implementing these grazing practices.

## **Section 2. Stewardship practices and achievements**

Over the past fifteen years, Mr. Herman has had an active role with the Alexander Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Richie even served on the Alexander County SWCD Board of Supervisors for seven years, from 2003-2010.

The Lazy H Livestock farm is in the Lower Little River watershed of the Catawba River basin and designated as an Impaired water on the 2014 NC DWR 303(d) list for Fair Biological Integrity. The overall resource concerns on the pastureland were streambank erosion through cattle traffic, undesirable plant productivity, inadequate feed and forage for livestock, and excess nutrients and pathogens in nearby surface waters.

With the help of NRCS EQIP funding Mr. Herman has installed watering facilities with heavy use area protection, exclusion fence, interior 2-3 strand hi-tensile fencing for subdivision of pastures, stream crossings, stock trails, water wells, water pumping plants, and livestock pipeline for alternative watering systems. By fencing the cattle out of the stream, he has allowed natural streambank vegetation to replenish and re-establish along the buffer corridor. Exclusion areas benefit larger wildlife by providing travel corridors. The fresh water provided in each watering facility, from the installed groundwater wells, improves animal health through reduced pathogens entering the cattle's system. In previous years, when cattle watered in the

stream there was a large potential for water borne pathogens entering the cattle's system and depositing manure in the stream.

Richie uses temporary fencing reels, temporary step-in posts, and poly-wire to further subdivide pastures and for use in strip grazing stockpiled Tall Fescue pastures. The implementation of an intensively managed rotational grazing system has improved overall plant productivity, created more docile cattle, increased desirable species, and improved manure distribution. Better management has also decreased winter feeding for the cattle operation, and in the winter of 2014 Richie fed hay less than 30 days. Even when feeding hay, he rolls hay out in less fertile areas of the farm to reduce nutrient "hot spots" from traditional feeding areas.

### **Section 3. Environmental Stewardship as a part of Lazy H Livestock's management program**

Mr. Herman has an Active Conservation Stewardship Program (CStP) contract with NRCS. Through this contract agreement he maintains detailed records on cattle movement dates, rainfall events, and fertilization of pastures.

In addition to maintaining records on pasture rotations and rainfall, Richie Herman has implemented a cloud based cattle record keeping program. He now maintains detailed birth, weaning, vaccination records on all cattle on the farm, as part of his GAP certification through the use of CattleMax software.

Herman is pursuing genetic improvement in the cow herd by utilizing artificial insemination (AI). All cows and heifers were AI bred one round prior to turning in superior cleanup bulls in 2013 thru 2016. Carcass data on calves born on farm have been collected for three calf crops and cows are being evaluated on the ability to produce a calf that will dress over 55% on grass.

As mentioned earlier, Mr. Herman held a forage field day/pasture walk on their farm in 2012. After hosting the field day, requests from local producers for grazing plan assistance increased in the NRCS/SWCD office. Richie's influence led to at least two local producers receiving EQIP assistance and implementing rotational grazing systems on their pastureland in the following year. He also attended the Western NC Grazing Clinics in Spring 2013 and was able to provide his logical thought process for implementing a grazing plan to the attendees, both in and out of the classroom.

As part of their local support, Lazy H Livestock hosted the 2015 and 2016 Regional Cattle Working contest at their farm. High School participants used Lazy H Livestock's handling facilities during the contest. In September 2015, Richie and Teresa Herman hosted Alexander County residents and officials as part of the Alexander SWCD Farm Tour. They spoke about their grazing operation, the path their farm has taken over the past 20 years, and how they market their cattle. Overall, Richie Herman's pasture based operation improves the aesthetics of the local community and provides a positive image of the cattle industry.





**Interior Fencing with Hi-Tensile. Cow/calf grazing five acre paddocks as part of rotational grazing system in November 2016. Picture by Teresa Herman**



**Concrete Watering Facility with Heavy Use Area Protection of Filter Cloth and Crusher Run Gravel. Commercial Angus cows grazing mixed species pasture in October 2014. Picture by Lee Holcomb.**





**Cattle grazing Marshall Ryegrass in April 2015, as part of their grass finishing operation.**  
Picture by Teresa Herman.



**Commercial cow herd grazing Marshall Ryegrass in April 2015 as part of their rotational grazing system. Previously grazed paddock in foreground.** Picture by Teresa Herman.





**Mixed species cool season pasture, on December 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015, with focus on regrowth of Bromegrass after two weeks rest.**  
Picture by Teresa Herman.



**A.I. sired heifer replacements and steers for grass finished market 2016 – Superior Genetics**

Picture by Teresa Herman



**Stock trails are used to move cattle from pastures to cattle handling facilities.**  
Picture by Teresa Herman



**Commercial cow herd grazing warm season Annual Crabgrass on July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2014 during a period with very little rain. Adequate rest periods have allowed establishment of desirable warm season annuals and good growth of perennials. Picture by Teresa Herman.**



**Utilizing Hay Un-roller to distribute nutrients - 2016 Picture by Teresa Herman**





**Hosted 2015/16 Regional Cattle Working Contest.** Pictures by Teresa Herman



**Speaking as part of the 2015 Alexander County SWCD Farm Tour to County Commissioners, Citizens, Carolina Farm Credit, and other local Agricultural producers.**

Picture by Leslie Meadows