

NORTH CAROLINA ASSOCIATION OF BLACK LAWYER'S
LAND LOSS PREVENTION PROJECT

**REPORT ON PRIOR STATE FISCAL YEAR PROGRAM
ACTIVITIES, OBJECTIVES, AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS
AND ITEMIZED EXPENDITURES AND FUND SOURCES**

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PERIOD: This final report covers the fiscal year of the state of North Carolina from July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012.

MISSION: The Land Loss Prevention Project was founded in 1982 by the North Carolina Association of Black Lawyers to curtail epidemic losses of Black-owned land in North Carolina. The organization was incorporated in the state of North Carolina in 1983. The organization broadened its mission in 1993 to provide legal support and assistance to all financially distressed and limited resource farmers and landowners in North Carolina.

GOALS OF THE STATE GRANT: The original goals and expectations for the activity supported by the state grant encompass the protection of North Carolina's financially distressed and limited resource family farmers and landowners from actions that may result in the loss or diminishment of their land and livelihoods. These goals and objectives are achieved through the provision of free and/or reduced cost legal assistance to North Carolinians eligible under this grant. These goals have not been revised during the course of this project.

OFFICE LOCATIONS & ASSISTANCE LINES: The office of the Land Loss Prevention Project is located at 400 West Main Street, Suite 204, Durham, North Carolina 27701. The office can be reached toll free at (800) 672-5839, and locally via (919) 682-5969.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE: The LLPP is a non-profit corporation, tax exempt pursuant to Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. A board of directors consisting of attorneys, farmers, laypersons, and community advocates governs the organization. The LLPP has two focal units -- the Litigation Unit and the Sustainable Development and Environment Unit. The Litigation Unit performs debt restructuring for farmers in crisis and multi-faceted legal work designed to preserve land tenure for traditionally underserved individuals and families. The Litigation Unit currently consists of the executive director, deputy director, six staff

attorneys, and one paralegal. Encompassed within these efforts is the work of the SmartGrowth Business Center, an internal resource, dedicated to assisting farmers through the provision of both legal representation and outreach on business law issues. The creation of SmartGrowth broadened the organization's approach to saving the family farm through the provision of proactive legal services and education focused on risk management and business development. Provided services include direct legal assistance and education on business entity formation, contractual review, counseling concerning program availability and requirements, and the addressing of credit management. SmartGrowth's practice is primarily transactional. The Sustainable Development and Environment Unit helps family farmers and landowners explore sustainable agricultural alternatives and guides business development that is environmentally friendly and economically viable for rural communities. This Unit consists of the executive director and deputy director, plus one of the above-mentioned staff attorneys as needed. The Sustainable Development and Environment Unit works with state, regional and national coalitions that support sustainable agriculture practices, sustainable development, and policy innovations.

SUMMARY OF SERVICES PROVIDED:

Litigation, advice, and brief counsel were the primary methods to meet the identified goals. In State fiscal year 2011 - 2012 (7/1 to 6/30 of the following year), the LLPP addressed legal matters in the following areas: agricultural; environmental; real property; consumer protection; wills/estate planning; civil rights; zoning, municipal services, and related issues; bankruptcy as a last-resort alternative to foreclosures (farms and/or homes); and business/agricultural business issues. The SmartGrowth Business Center addressed a variety of matters including those involving rural economic development and farmers' cooperatives. In

fiscal year 2011-2012, the LLPP handled 484 matters and served 68 counties based on client location and 71 counties based on land location. In the past three State fiscal years (each 7/1 to 6/30 of the following year for 09-10, 10-11, and 11-12), the Land Loss Prevention Project has gained \$4,507,753 in debt relief, loan modifications, and awards for clients across its practice areas. In the reporting period, the LLPP and its partners targeted outreach and technical assistance to individuals in the persistently poor 43 counties of North Carolina. These efforts were conducted through workshops, forums and seminars organized by LLPP and collaboration with other organizations. In the 2011 - 2012 fiscal year, the Litigation Unit provided in-person outreach to over 777 farmers, landowners, and individuals serving the agricultural community.

The LLPP's outreach activities included a strong risk management component. The LLPP continued to broaden the work of the SmartGrowth Business Center, which is of increasing importance in providing business law services to limited resource farmers to improve the management and profitability of their operations.

Legal Assistance: Selected Case Summaries

The following summaries present a sample of the cases/matters handled by the LLPP staff which is in addition to those of the SmartGrowth Business Center reported below:

- A Bertie County crop farmer with a wife and two children contacted the Land Loss Prevention Project regarding his inability to make his annual payment to Farm Service Agency and purchase crop insurance, placing him in jeopardy of losing his farming operation. He had a first and second mortgage with a bank that he was able to make payments on but owed FSA \$304,000 that was secured by their home and his equipment, with the remainder being unsecured. After the client received a Denial of Primary Loan

Servicing and Intent to Accelerate notice from FSA, the LLPP filed a Chapter 12 bankruptcy plan that reduced the amount of his obligation to FSA and reduced his annual payment allowing him to make payments on his first and second mortgage, retain the home, and keep his farming operation. The plan was approved by the court in August 2011.

- A homeowner in Iredell County contacted the LLPP with reports of harassment by the daughter of a man who, before he passed away, had given the homeowner a life interest in 2.862 acres situated in the middle of an 80-acre tract owned by the daughter. The daughter had been threatening to tear down a fence surrounding the client's property that holds her horses. She had also threatened to reconnect the client's well water to a different supply from its current connection. The client had a well easement located on another neighbor's property, property owned by a home building company. The neighboring property was undergoing development, and there was a question as to the daughter's intentions with regard to retaining the 80-acre tract. The matter was resolved without litigation by the LLPP with the daughter acknowledging that neither the well nor the well easement is located on property owned by the daughter. The threats ceased.
- The LLPP forestalled foreclosure for a 19-month span while negotiating with the client's lender, providing a widowed senior citizen the opportunity to close on a different loan with a new lender on November 29, 2011, pay off her delinquent loans, and preserve her Alamance County home and two acres.
- A third generation heir to a 14+ acre parcel of family farmland in Martin County contacted the LLPP in December 2008 to stop an attempted sale of the farmland by a developer who had purchased an interest from a non-family member. The seller

purported to be conveying fee simple interest to the developer in the entire parcel. The LLPP was successful in stopping the sale and subsequently filed a quiet title action. Through the litigation, investigative and mediation process, it was determined that the developer had in fact acquired a 1/24 interest in the property but not the 100% interest that he had originally thought he was purchasing. Through negotiations with opposing counsel, who represented the developer and a bank, the Land Loss Prevention Project was successful in reaching a settlement agreement in April 2012, three days prior to a scheduled trial, wherein the developer would deed back the 1/24 interest that he acquired in exchange for a monetary payment on the part of the LLPP's client, thereby keeping the land in the family.

- A Cleveland County farmer represented by the Land Loss Prevention Project prevailed in his *Pigford* Black farmer class action discrimination claim against the USDA in the first quarter of 2010. The Arbitrator in his decision on reexamination awarded the farmer \$1,093,500.00; the forgiveness of any debt incurred by him in the relevant Farm Ownership and Operating Loan Programs from April 7, 1981 forward; and a return of any monies collected from him for debt payments in those programs from April 7, 1981 forward. The Litigation Unit's multi-year involvement with the client was ongoing to facilitate the orderly provision of relief by the government and assist the client in accessing appropriate professional resources to address various planning issues. In 2010, the client received the first deposit of \$1,093,500. Following governmental accounting to discern the amount due and governmental administrative coordination, in the first quarter of 2012, the client received debt relief in refunded payments and loan write-offs totaling \$551,938. As of 2012, the client has received in total \$1,645,438. Further, he and his

wife remain in their home and the client's immediate family retains control of the farmland, as was his desire.

- A Durham County couple with multiple school age children contacted the Land Loss Prevention Project to defend against a pending foreclosure brought by a large bank. Following the LLPP's having obtained a continuance of the foreclosure hearing and submitted a request for information regarding the loan, the lender, through its substitute trustee, obtained an order of sale based on a court hearing held without the legally required notice to either the homeowners or the LLPP as attorney of record. An eviction hearing also was initiated by the lender after the lender purchased the property back at the foreclosure sale. The Land Loss Prevention Project contested the validity of the foreclosure sale and was successful in obtaining an order vacating the previous order of sale and foreclosure sale. Shortly thereafter, the LLPP's client received a loan modification application packet from the lender and has recently obtained a loan modification on favorable terms to the family. In April 2012, the previously initiated foreclosure proceeding was dismissed. Through the LLPP's advocacy, the residence was regained and the couple and their children are safely back in their home, now with a manageable mortgage.
- In an ongoing matter, the LLPP has been working in Halifax County with multiple stakeholders from a multi-county area on proposed bylaws for the planned formation of a regional non-profit organization addressing land-based community economic development.

Outreach, Education, and Collaborative Efforts

In addition to the SmartGrowth Business Center presentations documented below, the Land Loss Prevention Project has been engaged in outreach and education extended to both client and professional communities and covering a variety of its practice areas. Written educational material addressing a range of land retention issues affecting farmers, homeowners, and landowners was updated by the LLPP and distributed. A sampling of events follows.

- On July 20, 2011, the Land Loss Prevention Project presented at a gathering at Mt. Gilead Baptist Church in Durham, N.C. on land preservation, foreclosure defense, predatory lending issues, and estate planning.
- On August 4, 2011, the LLPP spoke at a collaborative meeting in Roanoke Rapids, N.C. on issues involving formation, operating and dissolving a non-profit corporation under North Carolina law and obtaining tax-exempt status for a non-profit corporation under the Internal Revenue Code.
- On August 17, 2011, the LLPP presented at Bethel Friends Church in Asheboro, N.C. as part of a panel, providing an overview of the LLPP's services as well as addressing mortgage foreclosure; Chapter 12, 7, and 13 bankruptcy; and mortgage payment assistance programs available. The audience consisted of poultry farmers affected by the Townsends Poultry bankruptcy filing. Also present on the panel were representatives from the N.C. Department of Agriculture, the Rural Advancement Foundation International, and N.C. Cooperative Extension. Approximately 200 people were in attendance.

- On August 25, 2011, the Land Loss Prevention Project presented to an audience of approximately 100 poultry growers, giving an overview of Chapter 12 and 13 bankruptcy at the Carolina Stockyards in Siler City, N.C.
- The LLPP presented to students in the environmental law class at North Carolina Central University's (NCCU) School of Law regarding the cross-border issues of uranium mining and milling should the Virginia moratorium on such activities be lifted as is being considered by the Virginia state legislature. Following discussions with the LLPP concerning the emergent issue, the professor adopted the exploration of the topic as a focal point of the 2011 fall semester class and invited the participation of a community resident. As part of the class, the students crafted analyses exploring the potential environmental justice issues in the affected communities.
- On October 15, 2011, the LLPP participated in a panel presentation at the N.C. Environmental Justice Network Summit in Whitakers, N.C. on the Virginia uranium mining question and cross-border issues.
- On November 5, 2011, the LLPP returned to Mt. Gilead Baptist Church in Durham, N.C. to present on estate planning with a focus on wills and trusts.
- On November 17, 2011, the LLPP spoke at the Raleigh Charter High School Environmental Justice Night to interested students and two adults with a co-presenter from National Institutes of Health/National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences. Topics addressed by the LLPP included an overview of the organization and involvement in environmental justice issues, the history of environmental justice, environmental issues in N.C., and youth involvement in environmental justice.

- On December 3, 2011, the LLPP spoke at the Greensboro Public Library in Greensboro, N.C. at the “Your Home, Your City” conference put on by the Department of Planning and Community Development of the City of Greensboro. Topics covered by the LLPP included mortgage foreclosure and prevention, heirs’ property, legal forms of property ownership, adverse possession and the importance of wills in estate preservation and planning. The LLPP also operated an information table at the event, distributing literature on property preservation issues.
- On February 21, 2012, the LLPP presented and conducted intake at the Tillery Community Center, in Tillery, N.C. The presentation was entitled “Planning for the Future of Your Land and Home” and traced the life cycle of a fictional parcel of land with a home, addressing such issues as recognizing and protecting oneself from predatory lending and foreclosure, wills and estate planning, and avoiding heirs’ property pitfalls. Intakes were performed for individuals needing assistance with issues involving heirs’ property, property retention and will preparation.
- On April 30, 2012, LLPP attorneys presented on “Planning for the Future of Your Land and Home” at the South Granville Senior Center in Creedmoor, N.C.
- On June 7, 2012, the LLPP presented at a collaborative meeting held in Scotland Neck, North Carolina, attended by multiple regional organizations on the legal requirements for forming a non-profit corporation. The alliance focuses on fostering regional environmental health, economic development, and social justice.
- On June 28, 2012, the LLPP conducted foreclosure prevention outreach at the Cooperative Extension Office in Plymouth, N.C. in collaboration with New Life CDC and the N.C. Housing Coalition.

- The Litigation Unit continues to participate in ongoing collaboration and resource building concerning the challenges posed by heirs' property through the Heirs' Property Retention Coalition. The collaborative project has involved representatives from the Central Alabama Fair Housing Center, Alabama Appleseed, the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights, Alabama Legal Services, the American Bar Association's Property Preservation Task Force, the Federation of Southern Cooperatives, Self-Help, the Southern Coalition for Social Justice, the Duke Law School Community Enterprise Clinic, and the UNC Center for Civil Rights among others.

This consortium of organizations nationwide originally submitted comments during the drafting of national model legislation concerning the issue of partition sales. The LLPP was asked to be an official Observer in the drafting process of the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws' then titled Partition of Tenancy-in-Common Real Property Act addressing partition statute reform. Pursuant to the Conference procedure, Observers have the opportunity to participate substantively in committee meetings and are encouraged to submit written comments and suggestions throughout the process. On July 15, 2010, a proposed uniform state law aimed at preserving home ownership for vulnerable families nationwide was adopted. The Uniform Partition of Heirs Property Act, drafted and approved by the Uniform Law Commission (ULC), establishes a number of important protections for owners of heirs' property. Among the protections adopted by the ULC are improved notification practices, broader judicial consideration - courts, for example, would consider how long a family has owned the land and whether that family would be rendered homeless if it were sold - and the establishment of priorities for buy-out by family members of the interest of the individual

requesting sale and physical division of the land before a forced sale would be permitted. The National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws states on its website: “The **Uniform Partition of Heirs Property Act** provides an important addition to states’ laws governing partition for heirs property, and provides heirs property owners with significant protections against unexpected and often devastating predatory speculation, including protections that wealthy property owners often have secured through private agreement. The Act will assist heirs property owners, particularly (but not exclusively) low- to moderate-income heirs owners, with preserving the integrity and value of property that has both economic and strong familial significance. It should be adopted in every state as soon as practicable.” Nevada became the first state to enact the Uniform Act and it became effective in that state on October 1, 2011. In 2012, Georgia also enacted the Act and it has been introduced in South Carolina.

- The Land Loss Prevention Project has played a significant role in advancing local food policies that would benefit minority and other limited resource farmers in North Carolina. The LLPP is an active member of the Sustainable Food NC coalition. The coalition is focused on supporting local, family, and organic farms. The work encompasses, among multiple issues, addressing increased diversity and the inclusion of limited resource farmers and consumers in planning policies and conducting research concerning local procurement policies by government agencies to enhance revenues for limited resource farmers and promote community food systems.
- The LLPP serves on the North Carolina Sustainable Local Food Advisory Council and facilitates the addressing of the rights and needs of low-income and minority landowners in the Council's priorities.

SmartGrowth Business Center: Helping Farmers Access Opportunity and Manage Risk

In keeping with its mission of preserving land for future generations, the LLPP continues to expand the services of the SmartGrowth Business Center, an internal resource, to bolster the health of the family farm. The LLPP took its existing understanding of business issues to develop its expertise further to provide front-end education to the state's community of small farmers and advocacy focusing on a proactive approach to assisting individual farm families.

During fiscal year 2011-2012, the SmartGrowth Business Center expanded its outreach efforts throughout the state. The focus has been both on publicizing the availability of the resource and its services and providing an ever-broadening range of information to farmers on business law topics. The initiative has included providing training to others serving the agricultural community. SmartGrowth presented at the following events:

- November 11, 2011: American Indian Mothers “Walking in Many Worlds” Conference, Maxton, N.C. The LLPP presented on business entities and mortgage foreclosure processes and prevention.
- January 13, 2012: Operation Spring Plant 10th Annual Conference, Cary, N.C. The presentation addressed business entity options, trademarks and service marks, foreclosures under North Carolina law, USDA mediation and the National Appeals Division (NAD) appeal process, mortgage foreclosure defense, the Home Affordable Mortgage Program (HAMP), the Home Affordable Refinance Program, the Mortgage Payment Program (MPP), Chapter 12 and 13 bankruptcies, and running a farm as a business. The title of the workshop was “Penetrating Markets, Protecting Your Investment”.

- February 23, 2012: Operation Spring Plant (OSP) event featuring the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) of USDA. The event was held in Tillery, North Carolina, as the Concerned Citizens of Tillery and the Black Farmers and Agriculturalists hosted OSP and NRCS. This presentation of the greater conference was given by the Land Loss Prevention Project. The aim of the event was to provide information on agency programs offered to help small landowners improve income from their lands. The event's primary theme was "prepare your future generations of landowners to know the value of the land you own". SmartGrowth presented on "Securing Your Investment and Avoiding Farm Foreclosure", treating USDA National Appeals Division appeals, foreclosure defense and bankruptcy for farmers and wage earners, mortgage assistance programs, and intestate succession issues.
- March 28, 2012: "Small Farms Week", North Carolina A & T University, Greensboro, N.C., sponsored by the Cooperative Extension Program at N.C. A & T. Topics included foreclosure prevention and defense, USDA appeals process including mediation and National Appeals Division procedures, trademarks, business entity options, an overview of Chapter 12 protection for family farmers and family fishermen, Chapter 13 protection for wage earners, intestate succession laws, and mortgage assistance programs.
- June 7, 2012: North Carolina Association of Community Development Corporations' "Just Health and Food Summit", Rocky Mount, N.C. The presentation during multi-day conference addressed community food-based market strategies and risk management.
- June 27, 2012: 8th Annual North Carolina Minority Farmers and Landowners Conference, Rocky Mount, N.C. SmartGrowth presented to approximately 200 attendees on the following topics: use and formation of business entities, trademarks and

service marks, contracts, USDA loan programs, foreclosure prevention (both residential and farm), and mediation and National Appeals Division hearings as tools in dealing with adverse USDA decisions.

In addition to concentrated outreach listed above, an introduction of SmartGrowth services was routinely incorporated in wider LLPP outreach (covered in previous section) and SmartGrowth brochures were distributed to attendees. New resource materials geared to farmers also were also made available through online outreach (www.smartgrowthnc.com).

The SmartGrowth Business Center continues to broaden its client services. Sample matters handled by SmartGrowth in 2011 through the present include providing technical assistance allowing for the exploration of a sustainable diversification option by multiple growers affected by the announced Townsends plant closings. SmartGrowth also has provided consultation in larger litigation regarding the responsibilities of a co-tenant in the use of agricultural land. SmartGrowth continues working with a prawn farmer interested in the formation of a business entity. SmartGrowth also has been assisting a Bladen County farmers' cooperative exploring legal issues related to buying or leasing a facility for production.

Academic Internships

In an ongoing effort to encourage more young attorneys to practice public interest law or provide *pro bono* legal assistance once they become practicing attorneys, in the summer of 2011, the Litigation Unit hosted one intern from NCCU's School of Law. She continued in academic semester internships based on interest and performance. This summer (2012), the Litigation Unit hosted two law student interns, one from NCCU and another from Campbell University.

Sustainable Development and Environment Unit: Farm Policy Report

The Sustainable Development and Environment Unit (SDE) performs the agricultural policy work of the LLPP. Through this Unit, the LLPP co-led the Farm and Food Policy Project Diversity Initiative which was composed of a range of civil rights and land-focused organizations throughout the U.S. working to improve equity for socially-disadvantaged farmers and ranchers within the food system. As previously reported, the Diversity Initiative's work resulted in significant gains in the 2008 Food, Conservation and Energy Act (Farm Bill), an omnibus piece of legislation which is implemented by the United States Department of Agriculture and represents the federal government's investment in agriculture and rural development. The 2008 Farm Bill required the United States Secretary of Agriculture to resolve all civil rights claims and class actions brought against the department by socially disadvantaged producers in a fair and expeditious manner. This led to the settlements of the *In Re Black Farmers (Pigford II)* and the *Keepseagle* (Native American farmers) class actions and the administrative settlement offers in the *Love* (women farmers) and *Garcia* (Latino farmers) cases. The LLPP and its small farm partner organization consider these settlements to be a culmination of years of advocacy and outreach work. The *Pigford II* and *Keepseagle* are class action settlements and claimants are represented by a consortium of major national law firms with an appointed class counsel. The LLPP is not a member of the class counsel litigation team but through the reporting period performed limited outreach to inform the minority farm community of the settlement processes due to the need for timely filing of claims.

Selected Highlights of Policy Framework

The samplings reflect the collaborative policy framework of the Sustainable Development and Environmental Unit's engagement in furthering equitable access and increased participation of limited resource farmers and low-income communities in the program and activities of the United States Department of Agriculture. The SDE Unit works within North Carolina to ensure that established food policy boards and organizations are reflective of the interest that socially disadvantaged and limited resource farmers and landowners have in sustaining their livelihoods and rural communities. A sample of events follows.

- In July 2011, the Executive Director participated in a meeting at the White House with Rural Coalition, National Family Farm Coalition, Food and Water Watch and the Credit Working Group of the newly formed White House Rural Council to discuss the credit crisis that is confronting family farmers.
- In August 2011, the Executive Director and staff and members of the Rural Coalition board of directors met with Rural Development Agency on the status of the Hispanic and Women Farmers and Ranchers Claims Process.
- In September 2011, the Executive Director and farm advocate groups participated in the *Pigford II* fairness hearing held at the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia and presided over by Judge Paul Friedman. The LLPP was a signatory to several statements/comments to the judge on the settlement terms.
- In September 2011, the LLPP began implementation of a multi-state collaboration of its USDA-funded project "From Discrimination to a Future in Farming" which leverages its rich working history with several organizations with long experience in working for equity in access to USDA programs. The one-year project focuses its outreach and technical assistance to meet the needs of African-American, Latino and

American Indian producers in target counties in North Carolina, Florida, Georgia, and Michigan who have experienced discrimination or neglect from USDA to create a future for their farms. The overarching project objective is to assist socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers to participate equitably in the full range of USDA programs and in the class action settlements and adjudicated settlements.

- In October 2011, the LLPP attended the *Garcia* and *Love* (Hispanic and women USDA lending discrimination matters) status hearing that was held at the United States District Court for the District of Columbia.
- In November 2011, the LLPP and project staff attended the 2nd Annual Community-Based Organization Small Farm, Food and Rural Outlook Forum covering a wide variety of issues related to USDA programs, class action settlements and the 2012 Farm Bill.
- In December 2011, the LLPP continued its participation in the Community Based Organization forum and met with USDA leaders and other allies in Washington, D.C.
- In January 2012, the LLPP, the Rural Coalition and other advocacy groups drafted a letter to Judge Friedman of the *Pigford* case regarding concerns in the implementation and coordination of the *Pigford II* Settlement Agreement by Class Counsel.
- On January 25, 2012, Secretary Vilsack announced new settlement terms in the Hispanic and women discrimination claim matters and stated, "The Obama Administration has made it a priority to resolve all claims of past discrimination at USDA, and we are committed to closing this sad chapter in USDA's history." Secretary Vilsack further noted, "Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers who allege past discrimination are encouraged to participate in an improved claims

process.” The first round of settlement terms were rejected by representatives of these communities and political pressure was brought to bear on the Obama Administration. Hispanic and women producers in North Carolina are expected to benefit from this new settlement. In North Carolina, based on the 2007 Agriculture census, of the 52,913 farms, 7,016 women and 648 Hispanic farms were identified. [http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2007/Online_Highlights/Race, Ethnicity and Gender Profiles/North_Carolina/cpd99037.pdf](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2007/Online_Highlights/Race,_Ethnicity_and_Gender_Profiles/North_Carolina/cpd99037.pdf).

- In February 2012, the LLPP became a member of a community-based organization policy collaborative facilitated by the Rural Coalition, “Getting Our Act Together (GOAT)” on the 2012 Farm Bill. A two-day workshop with over 60 organizational representatives focused on sharing and coordinating the various approaches of all the groups on food and farm policy.
- In the months of March, April, and May 2012, the LLPP focused outreach efforts to provide information to farmers in North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida about the class settlement process and USDA programs. The LLPP in coordination with the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund worked with local farm leaders to target outreach efforts in eastern North Carolina.

Through this work, North Carolina’s small and limited resource farmers have increased access to federal farm programs. Multi-year strategies pursued by the Land Loss Prevention Project and its regional and national small farm policy partners have resulted in improvements in lending equity within the USDA and farmers’ access to capital. This May, as he reflected on the USDA’s progress generally, Secretary Vilsack stated, "Over the past three years, we have expanded farm and operating loans to Americans from all backgrounds to help raise a new crop

of producers across the country. As we expand options in agriculture, we're seeing a new vibrancy across the countryside as younger people - many of whom are now involved in local and regional production - pursue livelihoods in farming, raising food for local consumption. By leveraging USDA's lending programs for beginning farmers and ranchers and smaller producers, we're helping to rebuild and revitalize our rural communities."

Report Submitted By:

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Savonala Horne", is positioned above a horizontal line.

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