



Richland Soil and Water Conservation District

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Local Work Group Meeting Report

**Thursday, August 10 • 9am-11am • Garners Ferry Adult Activity Center
8620 Garners Ferry Rd, Hopkins, SC 29061**

Attendees: Lacy Barnette, Emily Bonilla-Gonzalez, Chanda Cooper, Kip Dillihay, Jessie Egan, Quinton Epps, Michael Galiano, Charly Greenthaler, Mary Hendrix, Aric Jensen, Gabriel Kenne, Jennifer Mancke, Tim McSwain, Jodi Moon, Val Morris, Kenny Mullis, Bailey Parker, Eddie Reese, Jeffrey Riggan, Beau Sorenson, Cecelia Stucker, and Stuart White

State Priority Resource Concerns: Bonilla-Gonzalez reported the state priority resource concerns are soil erosion, soil quality, and water quality.

Richland County Priority Resource Concerns: Following discussion, the group prioritized the following resource concerns in Richland County:

Forestland:

- #41 – Terrestrial habitat for wildlife and invertebrates
- #5 – Bank erosion from streams, shorelines, or water conveyance channels
- #42 – Aquatic habitat for fish and other organisms
- #39 – Plant pest pressure
- #10 – Soil organism habitat loss or degradation and #40 – Wildfire hazard from biomass accumulation (tied for fifth place)
- Bonilla-Gonzalez noted popular forestland conservation practices include site preparation, planting trees, developing wildlife habitat, prescribed burning, fire breaks, and practices to reduce wildfire hazards.
- Discussion:
 - Participants noted that urbanization and loss of forestland are an important issue in Richland County. Conservation easements are a way USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) can address this issue. USDA-NRCS can also provide resources and technical assistance to help new producers be successful; successful farmers are less likely to take farmland out of production or sell farmland to developers. The group discussed the need to better advertise and promote USDA-NRCS programs and assistance.
 - Pests and pathogens are a problem in Richland County; foresters are on the lookout for brownspot needle blight. Dogwood blight is also an issue.

- Timber producers need financial assistance for site preparation, tree planting, fire breaks, prescribed burning, and erosion control through water bars and stream crossings.
- Wild hog management/eradication and invasive species control are needed in Richland County.

Cropland:

- #8 – Organic matter depletion
- #37 – Plant productivity and health
- #39 – Plant pest pressure
- #19 – Inefficient irrigation water use
- #22 – Pesticides transported to surface water
- Bonilla-Gonzalez noted popular cropland conservation practices include crop rotation, no-till and strip-till planting, irrigation conversions, pollinator habitat, nutrient management, and pest management.
- Discussion: Some crops are planted too close to culverts and cause erosion. Some crops are planted too close to roads and intersections and create traffic issues. Farmers should observe and respect highway rights-of-way.

Pastureland:

- #45 – Inadequate livestock water quantity, quality, and distribution
- #8 – Organic matter depletion
- #43 – Feed and forage imbalance
- #41 – Terrestrial habitat for wildlife and invertebrates
- #5 – Bank erosion from streams, shorelines, or water conveyance channels
- Discussion: Participants noted the need for more and wider riparian buffers.
- Bonilla-Gonzalez reported popular pastureland conservation practices include fences for cross-fencing and rotational grazing systems; pipelines and watering facilities; and heavy use areas.

Agricultural Waste:

- #20 – Nutrients transported to surface water
- #24 – Pathogens and chemicals from manure, biosolids, or compost applications transported to surface water
- #35 – Objectionable odors
- #22 – Pesticides transported to surface water
- #28 – Petroleum, heavy metals, and other pollutants transported to surface water
- Bonilla-Gonzalez noted popular agricultural waste conservation practices include composters to address animal waste and mortality; stacking sheds to protect manure from rainfall and reduce runoff; and native grass plantings to establish buffers.

Partner Updates:

- **SC Forestry Commission** offers services for landowners including fire breaks and prescribed burns. They also have new equipment available. They provide cost share

funding for tree establishment on a first come, first served basis. They also provide free forest management advice to anyone who calls!

- **SC Forage and Grazing Lands Coalition** writes grazing plans for producers and provides technical assistance, workshops, and outreach programs focused on good grazing practices and soil health.
- **SC Department of Natural Resources (SC DNR) Conservation Districts:** Jessie Egan and Jennifer Morris have recently joined the SC DNR Conservation Districts team and will be supporting soil and water conservation districts statewide.
- **Clemson:** Local agents are available to assist landowners and provide education programs. Charly Greenthaler tests center pivot irrigation system efficiency and can advise producers about irrigation system upgrades. Lacy Barnette is a new member of the horticulture team working on leafy green commodities within the ClimateSmart program. The ClimateSmart beef team has just completed their first round of workshops; leafy green workshops will be held later this month, and peanut workshops will be at the end of this month and into next month. Currently, these workshops are only available to producers who are enrolled in the ClimateSmart initiative; later, they will be open to the public.
- **Soil Health Labs** will launch a multimedia outreach initiative to promote USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) opportunities later this year or early next year.
- **Gills Creek Watershed Association (GCWA)** has a new executive director, Bailey Parker. They have launched a new Watershed Champions certification program to promote water-wise practices such as planting native species and reducing impervious surfaces. They just settled a lawsuit with Congaree Riverkeeper, City of Columbia, and a previous owner of a scrapyard located along Gills Creek over pollution concerns. The settlement requires the current owner of the scrapyard to act to clean up the site and prevent further pollution. GCWA has revamped their Adopt-A-Stream program to involve community members in the watershed. They will host a Riversweep on September 16. Follow them on Facebook, Instagram, and at GillsCreekWatershed.org.
- **Congaree Land Trust** works (mostly) with private landowners to protect land through conservation easements. In Richland County, they hold easements on 35 properties covering ~18K acres; they expect to add ~10K more acres in the next year. They work with the Department of Defense to maintain lands around McEntire Joint National Guard Base, Shaw Air Force Base, Fort McCrady, and Fort Jackson in compatible land uses (e.g., working lands and green spaces).
- **USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)** is concluding FY23 Environmental Quality Incentives Program and Conservation Stewardship Program contracts; the next deadline to apply for these programs is October 6. NRCS is hiring district conservationists, soil conservation technicians, and soil conservationists. Let outreach coordinator Jodi Moon know about upcoming meetings so she can attend and promote NRCS's missions and programs. (The SC Mitigation Association could help share job announcements with interested graduates.)
- **National Association of Conservation Districts** has received a \$90 million grant for climate smart commodities projects. A call for concept proposals will be released soon.

They have also received funding to fence feral swine out of pastures in partnership with local soil and water conservation districts.

- **Richland Soil and Water Conservation District** offers mini-grants and technical assistance to support school conservation projects. The 2024 national stewardship theme is “May the Forest Be with You Always.”

2023 LOCAL WORK GROUP - Review the list of available NRCS resource concerns and choose your top 3 for each landuse at the bottom of page two.

Categories	NRCS Resource Concerns
Soil	1. Sheet and rill erosion
	2. Wind erosion
	3. Ephemeral gully erosion
	4. Classic gully erosion
	5. Bank erosion from streams, shorelines, or water conveyance channels
	6. Subsidence
	7. Compaction
	8. Organic matter depletion
	9. Concentration of salts or other chemicals
	10. Soil organism habitat loss or degradation
	11. Aggregate instability
Water	12. Ponding and flooding
	13. Seasonal high water table
	14. Seeps
	15. Drifted snow
	16. Surface water depletion
	17. Groundwater depletion
	18. Naturally available moisture use
	19. Inefficient irrigation water use
	20. Nutrients transported to surface water
	21. Nutrients transported to groundwater
	22. Pesticides transported to surface water
	23. Pesticides transported to groundwater
	24. Pathogens and chemicals from manure, biosolids, or compost applications transported to surface water
	25. Pathogens and chemicals from manure, biosolids, or compost applications transported to groundwater
	26. Salts transported to surface water
	27. Salts transported to groundwater

Water (cont'd)	28. Petroleum, heavy metals, and other pollutants transported to surface water
	29. Petroleum, heavy metals, and other pollutants transported to groundwater
	30. Sediment transported to surface water
	31. Elevated water temperature
Air	32. Emissions of particulate matter (PM) and PM precursors
	33. Emissions of greenhouse gasses (GHGs)
	34. Emissions of ozone precursors
	35. Objectionable odors
	36. Emissions of airborne reactive nitrogen
Plants	37. Plant productivity and health
	38. Plant structure and composition
	39. Plant pest pressure
	40. Wildfire hazard from biomass accumulation
Animals	41. Terrestrial habitat for wildlife and invertebrates
	42. Aquatic habitat for fish and other organisms
	43. Feed and forage imbalance
	44. Inadequate livestock shelter
	45. Inadequate livestock water quantity, quality, and distribution
Energy	46. Energy efficiency of equipment and facilities
	47. Energy efficiency of farming/ranching practices and field operations

From the list above, select the top 3 natural resource concerns (RC) you feel need to be addressed. Number 1 being the most important issue. Only enter the number of the RC (1-47).

Ranking	Forest	Crop	Pasture	Ag Waste
1st	# 41	# 8	# 45	# 20
2nd	# 5	# 37	# 8	# 24
3rd	# 42	# 39	# 43	# 35

Select County: Richland