



Richland Soil and Water Conservation District (RSWCD)

2020 Hampton Street, Room 3063A

Columbia, SC 29204

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August 1, 2022 • 6pm

3147 Forest Dr., Columbia

Commissioners Present

Kenny Mullis, Chair

Jeff Laney, Vice Chair

Mary Burts

Associate Commissioners Present

Tim McSwain

Logan Richardson

Charles Weber

Others Present

Chanda Cooper

Quinton Epps

Aric Jensen

Mary Hannah Lindsay

Dr. David Shelley

Noel Myers

Carol Kososki

Welcome and Call to Order: Mullis called the meeting to order at 6:08pm. Laney gave the invocation.

Special Recognition: RSWCD recognized community outreach coordinator, Lindsay, as she leaves RSWCD for a new position with PalmettoPride. Lindsay's last day with RSWCD was July 29, 2022.

Feral Hog Control at Congaree National Park (CNP): Shelley and Myers gave an overview of the feral hog problem and of efforts to control feral hogs at the local and statewide level. CNP works closely with USDA-APHIS to control feral hogs through trap and shoot campaigns. CNP supports half of a full-time position to conduct hog management within the borders of CNP; the other half of the position is dedicated to working with local landowners to control pigs on nearby properties. There is no cost to nearby landowners for this service. CNP has recruited law enforcement personnel to assist with hog control efforts in collaboration with USDA-APHIS. In addition to personnel, CNP has recruited funding for hog control traps and gear, as well as for research and data collection.

Trap types in common use at CNP include corral traps with drop gate technology, rooting sticks, and net traps. Net traps are less expensive than corral traps and are much easier to transport across the remote, rugged terrain of CNP. A helicopter is also in use for hog control in Lower Richland. Funding for hog control efforts is available at the federal and state level. Researchers see an 80% drop in pig sightings and pig damage in areas where control measures have been pursued.

RSWCD discussed the importance of advocating for continued and increased funding for feral hog control measures in the 2023 Farm Bill.

Approve Agenda and Minutes: Laney moved to approve the agenda as presented; Burts seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Laney moved to approve the minutes from the July 11, 2022 meeting as presented; Burts seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Financial Report: Cooper provided the following financial overview:

Operating Account (7/31/22 Statement)

- Starting Balance: \$37,320.89 (7/1/22)
- Deposits and Credits: \$25.00
- Expenses and Debits: \$1,473.52
- Ending Balance: \$35,872.37 (7/31/22)

Credit Card (7/5/22 Statement)

- Starting Balance: \$3,989.97 (6/5/22)
- Payments: \$3,989.97
- Purchases: \$489.96
- Ending Balance: \$489.96 (7/5/22) <paid in full 7/8/22

Easement Stewardship Account (6/30/22 Statement)

- Starting Account Value: \$54,143.01 (6/1/22)
- Ending Account Value: \$52,667.70 (6/30/22)

SCACD Contribution Agreement Account (7/31/22 Statement)

- Starting Balance: \$252.51 (5/1/22)
- Ending Balance: \$252.51 (5/31/22)

PayPal Account (6/30/22 Statement)

- Current Balance: \$0.00 (6/30/22)

Cooper also announced Mullis, Burts, Weber, Epps, and Lindsay conducted the RSWCD's annual audit on 7/11/22. Auditors recommended all mileage reimbursement requests include the full address (not just the street address) of starting and ending locations in future. Cooper has completed the paperwork for RSWCD to request its annual state allocation of \$25,000 and will submit the request as soon as the chairman and treasurer have reviewed and signed the document. RSWCD has received a written letter of intent from the Palmetto Garden Club to partner with RSWCD to support conservation education programs through a gift of their silent auction proceeds. Burts and Weber recommended Palmetto Garden Club representatives be invited to attend the Holiday Drop-In.

Friends of RSWCD Report: Laney reported RSWCD has received two renewals since the June meeting and now has 37 active Friends of RSWCD.

Pinewood Lake Park Pollinator Garden Report: No report was available.

NRCS: No report was available.

SCDNR: Mullis announced the state budget provides for two new full-time SCDNR positions to support conservation districts.

Richland County Conservation Commission (RCCC): Weber and McSwain announced RCCC projects are continuing. Weber announced SC's Envirothon team from Spartanburg High School represented SC at the international Envirothon last week. Competing against 40 teams from the US and Canada, SC placed 17th overall, 2nd place in Wildlife, and 4th place in Aquatics.

Education Report: Cooper provided a written education report (Attachment A).

Advocacy Report: Mullis reported an NRCS representative from Washington, D.C. spent two days with SC soil and water conservation district representatives last week learning about NRCS service gaps in SC. Staff from legislators' offices were represented at the meeting, and all were educated about the purpose and function of conservation districts.

Envirothon Incentive Proposal: Following brief discussion, Burts moved to adopt the SC Envirothon Incentive Program (Attachment B) as presented. The motion was seconded by Laney and was unanimously approved.

SC Conservation District Foundation (SCCDF) Request: At its last meeting, RSWCD budgeted to provide a \$100 donation to the SCCDF, which supports programs including the SC Envirothon, Environmental Education Association of SC, and the Conservation District Employees Association. Following discussion, RSWCD agreed to proceed with the \$100 donation and consider providing a larger contribution later in the fiscal year.

November Meeting Location: RSWCD reconsidered its decision to hold its November meeting at Travinia's because the meeting room is too small. Laney moved to table the discussion until Jim Rhodes can make a recommendation. Burts seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Richland Library MOU Extension: RSWCD entered a six-month MOU with Richland Library to set up the Seed Sanctuary at Richland Library Eastover in February. That MOU expires today. Richland Library has proposed a new MOU to extend the partnership for 12 months. Following discussion, Burts moved to enter the new MOU. Laney seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

RSWCD Strategic Planning (2023-2028): Cooper announced RSWCD's existing five-year strategic plan will expire at the end of December. RSWCD will engage in a series of short strategic planning sessions during regular board meetings this fall. Cooper asked everyone to respond to a forthcoming survey and to consider RSWCD's mission, vision, and goals in preparation for the next meeting.

Public Input: Laney announced that Mullis has been inducted into the Southeast Region Conservation Hall of Fame. Burts recommended RSWCD consider JR Cash, California Dreaming, and/or LaBrasca's as potential meeting spaces with private meeting rooms.

Next Meeting: The next board meeting will be held on Monday, September 12, 2022 at 6pm at the Lizard's Thicket on Forest Drive.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7:22pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kenny Mullis, Chair

Chanda L. Cooper, Conservation Education Analyst

Attachment A: Education Report

June, 2022

Richland District's former RSWCD Community Outreach Coordinator, Mary Hannah Lindsay, accepted a full-time position with Richland County as Administrative Assistant to the Conservation Division. In this role, she will provide administrative support to both the District and the Richland County Conservation Commission. The District hosted a Local Work Group Meeting to prioritize resource concerns for FY23 Farm Bill programs; 15 people participated in the event. The District also hosted a Midlands Local Food Collaborative meeting for 15 participants. Staff mentored Green Steps School projects at one school. The District sponsored and co-hosted the 2022 Environmental Education Association of South Carolina's (EEASC's) annual conference at the Savannah River Ecology Lab; more than 70 formal and informal educators attended the event and its four pre-conference workshops. The District sponsored the Richland County Ag & Art Tour and hosted a Pop-Up Seed Sanctuary at Doko Farm in Blythewood during the event. Staff hosted a strategic planning work session for the SC Forage and Grazing Lands Coalition (SCFGLC) and provided support for a monthly SCFGLC board meeting. Staff participated in a Southeastern Environmental Education Alliance leadership team meeting, EEASC executive committee and board meetings, and an SC Envirothon steering committee meeting. Staff also led a school gardening workshop in the Clemson Extension School and Community Gardening Program's 2022 School Gardening Summer Series. District staff member Chanda Cooper was recognized as 2022 Environmental Educator of the Year by EEASC and by Richland County Council.

July, 2022

Richland District coordinated the installation of a Farmstand hydroponics growing system at Hopkins Middle School. The system was donated by Molina Healthcare and presented by the Clemson School and Community Gardening Program. The Farmstand will be used to engage students in food production, nutrition education, and STEM explorations while they grow fruits, vegetables, and herbs hydroponically. The District announced the availability of 2022-2023 Conservation Education Mini-Grants, youth conservation poster contest, and classroom presentations. The District hired Jennifer Mancke to support conservation education projects at Richland County schools and advertised for a Community Outreach Intern for the upcoming school year. Richland District's Adopt-A-Stream kit was used by two community water quality monitors. Commissioners completed the District's FY22 annual audit and reviewed and approved an operating budget for FY23. District staff provided support to the Environmental Education Association of SC, Southeastern Environmental Education Alliance, SC Forage and Grazing Lands Coalition, and SC Project Learning Tree Steering Committee. The District provided composting education programs for 25 students at JP Thomas Elementary School and HB Rhame Elementary School. Staff member Chanda Cooper completed the Clemson School Gardening for SC Educators course and the Take Action SC curriculum workshop. The District partnered with EEASC to host a composting education table at the Tasty Tomato Festival.

Attachment B: SC Envirothon Incentive

Overview: Each spring, teams of SC high school students gather to compete for scholarships and the opportunity to represent the Palmetto State at the NCF-Envirothon competition. Envirothon teams are tested on their knowledge of five areas of environmental science (wildlife, forestry, soil science, aquatics, and a current topic) and their performance on an oral presentation. Teams consist of 3-5 students plus an alternate (optional) in grades 9-12. Each team must have the support of a team coach.

A coaches' training session will be held on Saturday, DATE, from 8:45am-2:30pm at the Clemson Sandhill Research and Education Center in northeast Columbia. This training is not designed for students to attend. Interested coaches can [register for the training online](#).

The 2023 SC Envirothon competition will be held on Friday, DATE, from 8:30am-3:00pm at the Clemson Sandhill Research and Education Center in northeast Columbia. Participating teams must submit a Team Registration Form, Student Participant Waivers (1 per student), and Coach Volunteer Agreements (1 per coach). Complete registration packets are due by DATE. Forms and more details are [available online](#).

Incentives: To incentivize Richland County participation in the competition, the Richland Soil and Water Conservation District (RSWCD) will pay the team registration fee of \$175 for the first four Richland County teams who submit their complete registration packets to SCDNR. Additionally, RSWCD will provide a stipend of \$500 to the first four Richland County team coaches who submit their completed registration packets to SCDNR. (If there are multiple coaches per team, the \$500 stipend will be evenly divided amongst that team's coaches. If multiple teams share a coach or coaches, the coach or coaches are only eligible for a single \$500 stipend.)

In order to be eligible for the stipend, coaches must:

- Attend the Coaches' Training on Saturday, DATE ([register online](#))
- Submit a complete registration packet to SCDNR by DATE ([forms available online](#))
- Bring a team of 3-5 students plus an alternate (optional) in grades 9-12 to the competition on DATE ([details online](#))

Training Trunk: RSWCD has an [SC Envirothon Training Trunk](#) available for teams to borrow for two weeks at a time to help them prepare for the competition. The Trunk is available on a first-come, first-served basis. To request the Trunk, contact Mary Hannah Lindsay at lindsay.mary@richlandcountysc.gov.