



Richland Soil and Water Conservation District (RSWCD)

2020 Hampton Street, Room 3063A

Columbia, SC 29204

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September 12, 2022 • 6pm
3147 Forest Dr., Columbia, SC 29204

Commissioners Present

Kenny Mullis, Chair

Jeff Laney, Vice Chair

Jim Rhodes, Secretary/Treasurer

Associate Commissioners Present

Dr. Jamison Browder

Logan Richardson

Charles Weber

Others Present

Chanda Cooper

Quinton Epps

Kathleen Finlay

Aric Jensen

Jennifer Mancke

Brooke Myres

Lisa Ruth

Welcome and Call to Order: Mullis called the meeting to order at 6:10pm. Rhodes gave the invocation.

Special Recognition: Myres recognized Ruth, who retired from a 30-year teaching career this summer, for her years of service as an SC Envirothon coach (2003-2022). Ruth's 2022 Spring Hill High School team took third place in the SC Envirothon forestry station. Myres explained the SC Envirothon is a program that helps students learn more about natural resources and become environmentally aware, action-oriented adults. RSWCD sponsors local teams to compete in the state competition and is also a state competition sponsor. To learn more about the SC Envirothon, visit <https://www.dnr.sc.gov/education/Envirothon/index.html>.

Special Presentation: Associate Commissioner Dr. Jamison Browder is one of 10 American teachers who received a Fulbright Award to study sustainability and environmental education in Japan this summer. Browder spoke about his experiences in Mishima, Japan—a city at the base of Mt. Fuji—saying “the city [of Mishima] has embraced clean water and healthy soil,” and these “efforts have led to many positive environmental, socio-cultural, and economic outcomes.” Mishima is also known as the “City of Water,”

and thanks to public/private/volunteer partnerships, more than forty community conservation projects have been tackled to date, including projects to restore the baikamo flower and to protect firefly habitat along the rivers. These projects are intergenerational in nature.

Introductions: Kathleen Finlay spoke on behalf of the Palmetto Garden Club, which is a member of the Garden Club of America. The Palmetto Garden Club plans to partner with RSWCD on its spring silent auction to support conservation education in Richland County.

Approve Agenda and Minutes: Rhodes moved to approve the agenda as presented; Laney seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Rhodes moved to approve the minutes from the August 1, 2022 meeting as presented; Laney seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Financial Report: Rhodes provided the following financial overview:

Operating Account (8/31/22 Statement)

- Starting Balance: \$35,872.37 (8/1/22)
- Deposits and Credits: \$2,647.50
- Expenses and Debits: \$1,035.23
- Ending Balance: \$37,484.64 (8/31/22)

Credit Card (9/5/22 Statement)

- Starting Balance: \$641.59 (8/6/22)
- Payments: \$641.59
- Purchases: \$168.36
- Ending Balance: \$168.36 (9/5/22) <paid in full 9/12/22

Easement Stewardship Account (8/31/22 Statement)

- Starting Account Value: \$53,484.27 (8/1/22)
- Ending Account Value with Accrued Income: \$52,674.89 (8/31/22)

SCACD Contribution Agreement Account (8/31/22 Statement)

- Starting Balance: \$252.51 (8/1/22)
- Ending Balance: \$252.51 (8/31/22)

PayPal Account (8/31/22 Statement)

- Current Balance: \$0.00 (8/31/22)

RSWCD's paperwork requesting the FY23 state allocation was signed this evening and will be submitted this week. RSWCD received a thank you note from the SC Conservation Districts Foundation acknowledging its \$100 contribution. Laney asked whether RSWCD's credit card is associated with any rewards programs; Cooper will investigate. Mullis announced the SC Association of Conservation Districts (SCACD) plans to expand its contribution agreement with the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service and is in the process of acquiring 501(c)3 status.

Friends of RSWCD Report: Laney reported RSWCD has received no renewals since the August meeting and has 37 active Friends of RSWCD.

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

NRCS: No report was available.

SCDNR: Myres announced the following:

- SCDNR hopes to hire two new Conservation District program assistants by early 2023. Each will cover 23 counties, and SCDNR hopes they will attend each of their counties' district meetings quarterly.
- The SC Envirothon coaches' training will be held on Saturday, February 4, 2023 and the SC Envirothon Competition on Friday, April 28, 2023.
- The statewide Local Work Group meeting report summarizing Local Work Group priorities from all 46 counties should be available later this year.

Richland County Conservation Commission (RCCC): Weber announced several projects are in progress; he hopes to report on Lake Elizabeth at the next meeting.

Education Report: Mancke and Cooper reported the following:

- Mancke and Jane Hiller hosted two Green Steps School trainings for approximately 35 Richland County School District One teachers in August.
- Mancke has met with teachers at AC Moore Elementary School and PACE Academy to provide technical support for school gardens and wildlife habitat projects.
- Mancke will meet with rain garden mentor Valerie Marcil at Heathwood Hall Episcopal School tomorrow to discuss plans for an on-campus rain garden.
- Mancke spoke with 16 members of the Iris Garden Club about Green Steps Schools.
- Cooper spoke with 25 members of the Spring Valley Rotary Club about RSWCD's programs.
- The 2022-2023 national stewardship theme is "One Water." RSWCD's poster contest and class presentations will focus on this theme.
- Conservation Education Mini-Grant applications are due October 3, 2022 for fall consideration.
- RSWCD will provide a \$500 stipend to Richland County SC Envirothon coaches, per the new incentive program described at <https://richlandcountysc.gov/Government/Departments/Conservation/Soil-Water-Conservation-District/Conservation-District-News/ArtMID/1228/ArticleID/2558/Incentives-Available-for-High-School-Teams-to-Compete-in-SC-Envirothon>.
- RSWCD supports the Environmental Education Association of SC (EEASC), facilitating statewide programs including Champions of the Environment, Palmetto Environmental Education Certification Program, SC Green Steps Schools, the annual conference, and monthly educator meetups. EEASC's October Meetup will be a field trip and tour at Walther Farms in Aiken, SC, on October 11 from 4-6pm. RSWCD team members are invited to attend; Cooper will forward a meeting invitation.
- RSWCD also supports the SC Forage and Grazing Lands Coalition, facilitating the creation of conservation plans for producers statewide, winter annual forage plot demonstrations, a grazing cover crops research project in Eastover, SC, and an annual meeting.
- RSWCD will partner with Carolina Farm Stewardship Association to host a "High Tunnel On-Farm Production Planning" workshop on Saturday, October 8, from 3-5pm at Sal's Ol' Timey Feed & Seed. The event is free but registration is required at <https://www.tfaforms.com/5007984>.

Advocacy Report: Mullis plans to speak to County Council about RSWCD's program at an October council meeting.

RSWCD Strategic Planning: RSWCD is in the process of updating its 2018-2022 strategic plan. The group reviewed and revised RSWCD's mission, vision, and major goals (Appendix A). At the next meeting, it will review the strategies under RSWCD's existing Goals 1 and 2.

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 the October meeting. Rhodes seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Laney made a motion for RSWCD to meet at Doc's BBQ in October if its meeting room is available or at Lizard's Thicket if Doc's BBQ is not available. Rhodes seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Dominion Energy Grant Proposal: Cooper announced Dominion Energy's Environmental Education grant application period closes on September 30, and she would like to apply for \$5,000 in funding to support one of RSWCD's education programs (either Seed Sanctuary, Conservation Education Mini-Grants, or Poster Contest/Class Presentations). She will speak with the Dominion Energy grants coordinator about which project will be most competitive. Laney moved to authorize Cooper to apply for Dominion Energy funding, provided Mullis reviews the proposal prior to its submission. Rhodes seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Officer Elections: Laney moved to table the election of officers until the October meeting. Rhodes seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Associate Commissioner Reappointments: Five of RSWCD's Associate Commissioners (Mary Frances Hendrix, James Kilgo, Jamison Browder, Tim McSwain, and Charles Weber) were appointed in 2020 and are up for re-appointment. All five are willing to serve a second two-year term. Laney moved to reappoint all five to another term as RSWCD Associate Commissioners. Rhodes seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Public Input: Mancke reported the Lower Richland Tourism Plan (LRTP) was presented to the Richland County Planning Commission by RCCC Chairman John Grego, and the LRTP "came up again and again" as the meeting progressed—in content if not in name. "Whoever heard of a national park with no place to stay?" she asked, noting that she counted license plates from 39 states in the Congaree National Park parking lot at one time earlier this year.

Epps reported the Conservation Division is still working to fill its vacant administrative assistant position.

Next Meeting: The next board meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 10, 2022 at 6pm. The location will be announced later (either Doc's BBQ or Lizard's Thicket).

Adjournment: Rhodes moved to adjourn at 7:54pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kenny Mullis, Chair

Chanda L. Cooper, Conservation Education Analyst

Appendix A: RSWCD Strategic Plan Update

January 2018 - December 2022 Plan	January 2023 – December 2027 Plan
Vision Statement (“the what”)	
Current: Our vision is to be the leader in the Midlands for conservation efforts that improve the quality and quantity of the county’s natural resources.	Proposed: Our vision is to continue to provide leadership and support for conservation efforts in the Midlands that improve the quality and quantity of the county’s natural resources.
Mission Statement (“the why”)	
Current: The Richland Soil and Water Conservation District promotes the wise use and care of natural resources--with a focus on soil and water--for long-term sustainability.	Proposed: The Richland Soil and Water Conservation District promotes the wise use and care of natural resources--with a focus on soil and water--for long-term sustainability in a changing environment.
Goals	
Current	Proposed
Goal 1: To educate farmers in Richland County about best practices to conserve natural resources with a focus on soil and water.	Goal 1: To educate farmers in Richland County about best practices to conserve natural resources with a focus on soil and water.
Goal 2: To empower teachers and informal educators to educate students about the conservation of our natural resources.	Goal 2: To empower teachers and informal educators to educate students about the conservation of our natural resources.
Goal 3: To educate students to be future conservationists and farmers.	Goal 3: To educate students to be future conservationists and farmers.
Goal 4: To expand advocacy and partnership opportunities to promote the wise use of the natural resources of Richland County.	Goal 4: To educate the general public about natural resource conservation through education programs and awareness campaigns.
	Goal 5: To expand advocacy, partnership, and engagement opportunities in order to develop the resources needed to achieve RSWCD’s program goals.