



Richland Soil and Water Conservation District (RSWCD)
2020 Hampton Street, Room 3063A
Columbia, SC 29204
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February 13, 2023 • 6pm
Lizard's Thicket, 7938 Garners Ferry Rd, Columbia, SC 29209

Commissioners Present

Jeff Laney, Vice Chair
Mary Burts
Tim McSwain
Jim Rhodes

Associate Commissioners Present

Charles Weber
Mary Frances Hendrix
Logan Richardson

Others Present

Chanda Cooper
Quinton Epps
Val Morris
Jennifer Mancke
Mary Beth McSwain
Lacy Barnette

Welcome and Call to Order: Laney called the meeting to order and Rhodes gave invocation at 6:02pm.

Approve Agenda and Minutes: Rhodes moved to approved the agenda and minutes which was seconded by Burts. Motion passed unanimously.

Special Presentation:

Lacy Barnette with USC Soil Health Labs gave an overview of Soil Health and Associated Management. She spoke of five principles for Key Soil Health which are soil covering, living root in soil, minimum disturbance, maximize diversity and integrate animals. She spoke of the benefits for keeping soil covered and they are, it protects the soil, conserve soil temperature and moistures and is a carbon source for decomposers.

Financial Report: Rhodes provided the following financial overview:

Operating Account (01/31/23 Statement)

- Starting Balance: \$78,224.66 (01/01/23)

- Deposits and Credits: \$3,409.24
- Expenses and Debits: \$2,983.35
- Ending Balance: \$78,650.55 (01/31/23)

Credit Card (2/5/23 Statement)

- Starting Balance: \$467.00 (01/5/23)
- Payments: \$ 467.00
- Purchases: \$1,554.72

Ending Balance: \$1,554.72 (02/5/23) <paid in full 2/7/23

Easement Stewardship Account (11/30/22 Statement)

- Starting Account Value: \$50,881.78 (11/1/22)
- Ending Account Value: \$51,103.28 (11/30/22)

SCACD Contribution Agreement Account (12/31/22 Statement)

- Starting Account Value: \$51,033.49 (12/1/23)
- Ending Account Value: \$51,049.07 (12/31/23)

PayPal Account (12/31/22 Statement)

- Current Balance: \$610.76 (01/31/23)

Friends of RSWCD Report: Since the last board meeting on 01/09/23, three Friends have renewed for a total contribution of \$1,850. RSWCD has 40 current Friends. Val mailed “it’s time to renew” notices to people who contributed in January, February, and March 2022 this week.

Pinewood Lake Park Pollinator Garden Report: No report available.

NRCS:

Programs:

EQIP

- On Active Contracts
 - Working on practice checkouts, contract reviews and modifications.
 - Working on practice design and establishments
 - Reviewing new EQIP practices and standards
- EQIP FY23
 - Completed Work Priority Tool and Review process for applications
 - Working on site visits and planning to complete assessments and ranking

CSP

- Active CSP
 - Working on payments for producers that picked Calendar year 23 for payments
 - Working on Contract reviews and certifications.

General:

- Completed trainings and attended virtual meetings and teleconferences
- Working on practice design and implementation
- Working with Farm Bill Biologist Garet Litwiler training planning and site visit
- Completed mandatory training on Aglearn

SCDNR: The DNR – Conservation Districts team is hiring three positions (administrative assistant, Program Coordinator II/Upper State, and Program Coordinator II/Lower State).

DNR hosted the SC Envirothon Coaches Training on 2/4/23. More than 30 people participated in the event. The SC Envirothon will be held on 4/28/23. SC Envirothon volunteer assignments are ongoing.

Richland County Conservation Commission (RCCC): Weber reported the grant presentations for the Natural Resources Committee (NRC), FY23-24 grants were completed on 02/08/2023. Epps submitted the annual budget for FY23-24 to Richland County Administration, noting the final approval for the budget would be in June 2023.

Education Report:

- Four commissioners, three staff members, and contractor Jennifer Mancke attended the Conservation Partnership Conference in Greenville.
- Quinton Epps was named Outstanding District Employee.
- Dr. Sarah Burnham of Brockman Elementary School was named Conservation Teacher of the Year (Primary).
- The Richland County Ag + Art Tour will be held June 10-11. The Planning Committee is seeking \$5,000 in sponsorships above and beyond the Richland County Conservation Commission's (RCCC's) \$10,000 pledge; these additional sponsorships will help further defray the costs of the event and will help establish a funding base for future years when RCCC funding will not be available at the same level. RSWCD hosted an Ag + Art Tour Information Session for prospective tour sites at Doko Farm on 1/28/23; 21 people attended the event. Eleven prospective tour sites have submitted their applications to participate and are under review; the Planning Committee's goal is up to 15 tour sites. Tour site applications are due March 1.
- RSWCD hosted the Midlands Local Food Collaborative's (MLFC's) quarterly meeting in January; 14 people participated, and the group voted to provide \$250 sponsorships to each of the six participating midlands counties' Ag + Art Tours. The next MLFC meeting will be held April 20, and the group will discuss plans for a Midlands Food Policy Council Summit.
- The Seed Sanctuary's new location at 2020 Hampton Street has opened and is popular; more than 300 requests for seeds-by-mail have been submitted online. The program expansion has been highlighted by several local media outlets.
- Spring Valley Rotary Club hosted a volunteer seed packing party to support the Seed Sanctuary; 15 participants packed 512 seed packets in about half an hour. The East Columbia Rotary Club plans to pack seeds in March and is interested in "intra-Rotary competition" to see who can pack the most seeds.
- RSWCD has received seven applications totaling \$6,750 in requests for spring Conservation Education Mini-Grants. We have \$3,750 budgeted for these projects. A review committee is currently evaluating applications.
- Staff hosted a "Wonderful Worms" and Seed Sanctuary event at the Richland One STEM Showcase; led a "Wonderful Worms" program for students at Brockman Elementary; and are mentoring student science fair projects at Dutch Fork Elementary.
- Mancke has mentored Green Step Schools projects at The Uhuru Academy, Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School, Brockman Elementary, and Dutch Fork Elementary since the last RSWCD meeting.
- RSWCD's "One Water" poster contest is ongoing; entries are due April 14. Morris has distributed poster paper and entry forms to interested schools.

- Two community groups are using the RSWCD Adopt-A-Stream kit. A third volunteer has inquired about the kit, but managing a third borrower does not currently seem feasible, given challenges scheduling kit drop-off and pick-up.
- RSWCD is providing support for Environmental Education Association of SC (EEASC) conference planning. The EEASC conference will be held June 22-24 in Beaufort, SC; EEASC's goal is \$15,000 in sponsorships and has so far recruited \$11,500. RSWCD is one of several conservation district sponsors. Conference registration opens this week and session proposals are due 3/1/23.
- RSWCD staff co-hosted the January and February EEASC environmental educator meetups.
- Staff are co-coordinating the EEASC spring fundraiser.
- Staff are providing support for the Green Step Schools program expansion and assisted with the development of a media release and the coordination of four Green Step School trainings statewide.
- Cooper led an "About the RSWCD" presentation for the Palmetto Garden Club. The Garden Club plans to hold a silent auction in March with proceeds to benefit RSWCD.
- Staff are providing support to the SC Project Learning Tree (PLT) Steering Committee. Cooper facilitated an SC PLT marketing committee strategic planning session in January. She will attend the national PLT conference in Stevenson, WA, March 27-30 to receive the PLT Leadership in Education Award.
- At last month meeting, the committee voted to partner with a 501C3 nonprofit to apply for the H-tax for the Ag + Art Tour for next year. The application was submitted through the Central Midlands Development Cooperation and the contact person is Gregory Sprouse.

Advocacy Report: NA

Old Business: NA

New Business: Rhodes motioned to approved Mary Beth McSwain as Associate Commissioner, which was seconded by Burts. Motion passed unanimously.

Cooper recommended supporting Columbia Green with \$500.00 for their program Three for the Bees. She stated this would be the district first time partnering with this organization and Mancke would be an instructor with the program. In addition, Cooper recommended \$200.00 to the Ag + Art Tour Preview Event for the Ag Combine Simulator. This event will take place at the Sandhill REC on Tuesday, May 30, 2023.

Rhodes made a motion to sponsor Columbia Green program Three for the Bees with \$500.00, which was seconded by Weber. Motion passed unanimously.

Burts made a motion to sponsor \$200.00 for the Ag Combine Simulator, which was seconded by McSwain. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Input: Mancke spoke on the rezoning of the Ridge Road development. She spoke of how she and other residents throughout Richland County are expressing their concerns at County Council rezoning hearing/meetings. McSwain suggested in addition to attending meetings, the residents should reach out to their council member and voice their concern with them as well.

Next Meeting: The next board meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 13, 2023 at 6pm at Lizard's Thicket, 7938 Garners Ferry Rd, Columbia, SC 29209.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kenny Mullis, Chair

Val Morris, Conservation Administrative Assistant

