



Richland Soil and Water Conservation District (RSWCD)
2020 Hampton Street, Room 3063A
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Meeting Minutes

October 9, 2023 • 6pm

Lizard's Thicket, 7938 Garners Ferry Rd, Columbia, SC 29209

Commissioners Present

Kenny Mullis, Chair
Jeff Laney, Vice Chair
Mary Burts
Tim McSwain

Associate Commissioners Present

Sarah Burnham
Logan Richardson
Mary Beth McSwain

Others Present

Quinton Epps
Kirby Player
Kip Dillihay
Chanda Cooper
Val Morris
Jennifer Mancke
Aric Jensen

Welcome and Call to Order: Mullis called the meeting to order and Laney gave the invocation at 6:01 pm.

Approve Agenda and Minutes: Laney made a motion to approve the agenda, which was seconded by T. McSwain. The motion was put to a vote, and it passed unanimously. Additionally, T. McSwain made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, which was seconded by Burts. The motion was brought to a vote, and it also passed unanimously.

Special Presentation: Dr. Kirby Player, Professor of Agricultural Education at Clemson University, provided an overview of the SC Commissioner's School for Agriculture. He highlighted that 2023 marks the 20th year of the program's operation. Since 2004, the program has hosted 679 participants, with 92% of them from South Carolina. They have drawn students from 45 counties within South Carolina and an additional 16 states, making it a multi-state initiative. RSWCD and the SC Association of Conservation Districts are sponsors of the program.

Financial Report: Cooper provided the following financial overview:

Operating Account (09/30/23 Statement)

- Starting Balance: \$51,930.36 (09/01/23)
- Deposits and Credits: \$660.00
- Expenses and Debits: \$2,028.08
- Ending Balance: \$50,562.28 (09/30/23)

Credit Card (10/05/23 Statement)

- Starting Balance: \$861.09 (9/05/23)
- Payments: \$861.09
- Purchases: \$396.63
- Ending Balance: \$396.63 (10/05/23) <paid in full (10/06/2023)

Easement Stewardship Account (8/31/23 Statement)

- Starting Account Value: \$52,089.42 (08/01/23)
- Ending Account Value: \$52,248.69 (08/31/23)
- Ending Account Value with Accrued Income: \$52,491.10 (08/31/23)

SCACD Contribution Agreement Account (09/30/23 Statement)

- Starting Balance: \$252.51 (09/01/23)
- Ending Balance: \$252.51 (09/30/23)

PayPal Account (09/30/23 Statement)

- Current Balance: \$0.00 (09/30/23)

Announcements:

- Staff have submitted RSWCD's \$25K FY24 State Allocation Request.
- The SC Association of Conservation Districts (SCACD) has approved RSWCD for a \$15K contribution agreement for Farm Bill program outreach in FY24.
- The Richland County Conservation Commission has approved a \$5K sponsorship for the 2024 Richland County Ag + Art Tour.
- Staff have submitted a \$10K Environmental Education and Stewardship Grant proposal to the Dominion Energy Charitable Foundation.

Friends of RSWCD Report: Laney reported, since the previous board meeting on 09/10/23, we had two Friends to renew. A total of 13 Friends have renewed in 2023. Administrative Assistant Morris mailed out 10 "It's Time to Renew" reminders.

Administrative Report: Morris updated the group on the thank-you card received from Carol Kososki. She shared that Columbia Green Tree is hosting a tree giveaway event. There will be a ribbon-cutting ceremony in Blythewood, SC, on October 22, 2023, to commemorate a donated property. In conclusion, Morris informed the group of the upcoming SC Association of Conservation District (SCACD) Conference and requested the group to seek sponsors for the conference and vendor participation.

NRCS: None Reported

SCDNR: Mullis gave congratulatory remarks about Tyler Brown, as Brown was elected as President of the National Association of State Conservation Agencies (NASCA).

Richland County Conservation Commission (RCCC): Epps reported they are re-evaluating the strategic plan and also preparing a new annual plan to present to the County Council in March of 2024. They are still monitoring easements and continuing to work on a land deal.

Education Report:

- RSWCD E-newsletter: 4,346 (-86) subscribers (loss due to several email bounce-backs from first mass email to the Ag + Art Tour guest list)
- RSWCD Facebook: 1,214 (+5) followers
- RSWCD Instagram: 733 (+8) followers
- Ag + Art Facebook: 1,027 (+5) followers
- Ag + Art Instagram: 651 (+9) followers

Richland County Ag + Art Tour:

- Dates: June 8-9, 2024
- Seeking sponsors: goal \$15,000
 - \$5,000 - Richland County Conservation Commission (RCCC)
 - \$7,900 – H- Tax Allocations (Terracio, Newton, Grant)
 - \$5,000 – Additional Sponsorship
- Recruiting Tour Sites: Max = 20
- Planning meeting: 10/19 @ 1pm
- Kershaw AAT Consultation

Seed Sanctuary:

- > 6814 packets distributed since 2/1/23
- 780 mail requests since 2/1/23
- 65 individual volunteers; Joseph Ravindran
- Distribution continues at 2020 Hampton St. & Richland Library Eastover
- 109 packets Pop-Up @ Richland Library Blythewood

Pollinator Conservation:

- Pollinator Corridor Coalition Kickoff

Watershed Explorer:

- Lake Carolina Elementary School (6 classes)
- Lonnie B. Nelson Elementary School (2 classes)

Soil Science Presentation:

- University of South Carolina for elementary science educators

4-H Volunteer Conference of Southern States:

- Soil Science education kit was presented at the conference by Rosemary Martin Jones, Richland County 4-H representative

2024 Poster Contest:

- Entries due April 12, 2024

2024 SC Envirothon:

- Coaches’ Training: February 3, 2024
- SC Envirothon: April 26, 2024
- RSWCD has budgeted to cover registration fees (\$175) and coach stipends (\$500) for up to three teams. We currently expect participation from Dutch Fork High School and the CATE Center.

Conservation Education Mini-Grants:

- Received 9 applications
- Deadline closed on October 2, 2023
- Could be considered for up to \$1,000
- 6 Reviewers (Richardson, Mancke, Burts, Hendrix, McSwain, Weber)

Adopt-A-Stream Kit:

- Two Friends of Congaree volunteers continue to use the kit monthly

Green Step School Mentorship:

- HERO Homeschool
- Green Charter School
- Lexington County Council recognition for five RSWCD-mentored schools

Additionally, Cooper reported on the different sessions and trainings RSWCD delegates attended in the previous month. She made mention of the upcoming Annual Meeting of the SC Forage and Grazing Lands Coalition on October 25, 2023.

County Council Report: None reported

Advocacy: Mullis presented the RSWCD Annual Report to Council on 10/03/2023. Epps encouraged the group to find creative ways to keep their councilmembers informed about the activities and achievements within RSWCD and RCCC.

Old Business: Cooper introduced the FY 2022-2023 Annual Report pamphlet she created. The report was organized around RSWCD’s Strategic Plan and included the vision and mission statements, the five district goals, accomplishments, awards and recognitions.

New Business:

- SCACD Elections
- Mullis presented the slate of candidates nominated for SCACD offices by the SCACD executive board: Ben Setzler, President; Kevin Yon, Vice President; Mike Stewart, Treasurer; and Beth White, Secretary.
- **T. McSwain made a motion to accepted the nominees as presented which was seconded by Burts. Motioned passed unanimously.**
- Budget Amendments: SCACD Dues & SC Commissioner’s School for Agriculture

- Cooper made a recommendation to recategorized SC Commissioner’s School for Agriculture sponsorship (\$500) from “Memberships & Donations to “Youth Programs” and to increase the SCACD dues from \$600 to \$750.00.
- **Laney made a motion to accept Cooper’s recommendations which was seconded by T. McSwain. Motion passed unanimously.**

Executive Session: N/A

Public Input: Laney is pursuing Half Moon Outfitters and BB Barnes as Friends of RSWCD and recommended other attendees remind those businesses of the request for support.

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

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7:07 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kenny Mullis, Chair

Val Morris, Conservation Administrative Assistant