



Richland Soil and Water Conservation District (RSWCD)

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Meeting Minutes

June 8, 2026, 6 pm

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

Commissioners Present

Kenny Mullis, Chair

Jim Rhodes, Vice Chair

Mary Burts, Treasurer

Tim McSwain

Associate Commissioners Present

Shawn Goff

Mary Frances Hendrix

Charles Weber

Additional Attendees

Matthew Amico

Emily Bonilla-Gonzalez

Quinton Epps

Chelsea Holliday

Aric Jensen

Jennifer Mancke

Cameron Sabin

Welcome, Introductions, and Invocation: Mullis called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm.

Rhodes gave the invocation.

Approve Agenda and Minutes: Rhodes motioned to approve the agenda. Burts seconded the motion. The motion was brought to a vote and passed unanimously. Rhodes motioned to approve the minutes. Burts seconded the motion. The motion was brought to a vote and passed unanimously.

Reports:

Financial: Burts gave the following financial report:

Operating Account (06/01/26 Statement)

- Beginning Balance: \$62,571.24+ (05/01/26)
- Deposits and Credits: \$1,251.13+
- Checks: \$6,480.68-
- Expenses and Debits: \$1,603.06-
- Ending Balance: \$55,738.63+ (05/31/26)

Credit Card (06/05/26 Statement)

- Beginning Balance: \$1,603.06 (05/05/26)
- Payments: \$1,636.83
- Purchases: \$2,641.59
- Ending Balance: \$2,641.56 (06/05/26)
- Rewards: \$558.47

***Easement Stewardship Account (04/01/26 to 04/30/26 Statement)**

- Starting Account Value: \$58,901.14 (04/01/26)
- Ending Account Value: \$59,504.71 (04/30/26)
- Account Value with Pending Dividends & Accrued Interest: \$59,997.22

SCACD Contribution Agreement Account (06/01/26 Statement)

- Starting Balance: \$220.01+ (05/01/26)
- Credits: \$31,304.29+
- Debits: \$31,304.29-
- Ending Balance: \$220.01+ (05/31/26)

PayPal Account (05/2026 Statement)

- Beginning Available Balance: \$715.13 (05/01/26)
- Ending Available Balance: \$0.00 (05/31/26)

*Easement Stewardship Account statements do not arrive monthly.

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS): Bonilla-Gonzalez reviewed the provided NRCS report. She is working on 49 eligible Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and 16 eligible Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) applications for Richland County. Additionally, she is working on payments, site visits, expiring contracts, and modifications. Due to the government shutdown, staff is behind their regular schedule for completing EQIP and CSP applications.

NRCS has developed a restructuring plan. Attendees reviewed maps outlining the new work units of technical support and field support staff. RSWCD will be grouped with the District Conservationist over Kershaw County, and no longer Calhoun, at the start of the new fiscal year beginning October 1.

The restructuring plan moves SC-NRCS from 201 positions to 119. The number of district conservationists has been reduced from 35 to 19. Currently, 92 of those positions are filled. There is a plan to fill ten more.

Bonilla-Gonzalez noted Farm Service Agency (FSA) services for Richland County producers will still be managed at the U.S. Department of Agriculture Service Center in St. Matthews. Individuals who need to conduct business with a service center will need to travel to Calhoun County for FSA services and to Kershaw County for NRCS services. Producers impacted by the restructuring plan can request their records be changed to the service center located in Kershaw County.

Mullis reported Colton L. Buckley is the new Chief of the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR): Sabin reported Brooke Myres has been promoted to Conservation Districts Program Manager of SCDNR-Conservation Districts.

The South Carolina Association of Conservation Districts (SCACD) Mid-Year Meeting is September 14. The meeting is an opportunity to earn recertification credit for individuals certified through SCDNR online training.

Sabin noted RSWCD opted out of the Hurricane Helene Block Grant program.

Richland County Conservation Commission (RCCC): Weber provided an update on the Forestry Stewardship Plan. Due to the drought, prescribed burns are behind schedule. A controlled burn has occurred within Congaree National Forest.

County Council approved the Crane Creek Watershed Plan. RCCC is evaluating five vendors who have applied to create the plan. Evaluations are due June 10.

RCCC's FY2026 grant program will end this month. All grantees who have projects are on schedule for completion.

RSWCD Programs: Epps reviewed the provided RSWCD program report for May.

Conservation Items Before County Council: Epps reported RCCC will have an informational briefing to discuss the Broad River property.

RCCC is working with SCDNR and the SC Conservation Bank to complete the purchase of the Goodwill Estate property.

Commissioner Advocacy: Richland County Ag + Art Tour Chair Amanda Jones spoke before County Council on May 5 and invited councilmembers to attend the tour.

Councilmembers Livingston, Terracio, and Weaver attended the Volunteer Appreciation Party on May 31.

During the Richland County Ag + Art Tour in June, Burts conversed with Councilman Weaver, and Mancke spoke with Councilmembers Livingston and Weaver.

Old Business:

Richland County Ag + Art Tour (RCAAT): Holliday reported the Debrief Meeting is on Thursday, July 30 from 11 am to 1 pm at Midlands Technical College Northeast, Center for Excellence in Technology, Room 109, located at 151 Powell Road, Columbia.

2026 Agritourism Intern: Amico introduced himself to attendees.

Local Work Group Meeting: Holliday reported the Local Work Group Meeting is being promoted. The registration link is <https://tinyurl.com/2026richlandcountylwg>. Attendees discussed how to spread awareness about the event.

New Business:

FY26 Audit: Holliday asked attendees to participate in the FY26 Audit. Burts and Weber routinely participate; however, with Burts now serving as Treasurer, she cannot participate as a voting member. The date for the FY26 Audit is yet to be determined.

SCACD Area Award Nominations: Mullis explained the new SCACD Area Awards process: area winners will advance to the state competition, and state winners will advance to the national competition. Nominations are due by June 30. RSWCD decided to submit nominations for Conservation District of the Year and Conservation Teacher of the Year.

Executive Session: N/A

Public Input: Mullis reviewed the upcoming events outlined in the agenda. He noted the NRCS State Technical Committee Meeting is on June 17 at the SC Forestry Commission. Bonilla-Gonzalez added NRCS employees will attend the meeting virtually.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 6:58 pm.