



**Richland Soil and Water Conservation District (RSWCD)**

2020 Hampton Street, Room 3063A

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**Meeting Minutes**

May 11, 2026, 6 pm

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

**Commissioners Present**

Kenny Mullis, Chair

Mary Burts, Treasurer

Tim McSwain

**Associate Commissioners Present**

Sarah Burnham

Mary Frances Hendrix

Mary Beth McSwain

Charles Weber

**Additional Attendees**

Quinton Epps

Chelsea Holliday

Aric Jensen

Jennifer Mancke

**Welcome, Introductions, and Invocation:** Mullis called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm.

Jensen gave the invocation.

**Approve Agenda and Minutes:** T. McSwain motioned to approve the agenda. Burts seconded the motion. The motion was brought to a vote and passed unanimously. T. McSwain 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 (05/01/26 Statement)**

- Beginning Balance: \$62,257.53+ (04/01/26)
- Deposits and Credits: \$3,285.00+
- Checks: \$2,102.99-

- Expenses and Debits: \$868.30-
- Ending Balance: \$62,571.24+ (04/30/26)

**Credit Card (05/05/26 Statement)**

- Beginning Balance: \$868.30 (04/05/26)
- Payments: \$868.30
- Purchases: \$1,603.06
- Ending Balance: \$1,603.06 (05/05/26)
- Rewards: \$591.67

**\*Easement Stewardship Account (02/01/26 to 03/31/26 Statement)**

Starting Account Value: \$58,545.00 (02/01/26)

- Ending Account Value: \$58,901.14 (03/31/26)
- Account Value with Pending Dividends & Accrued Interest: \$59,094.37

**SCACD Contribution Agreement Account (05/01/26 Statement)**

- Starting Balance: \$220.01+ (04/01/26)
- Credits: \$0.00
- Debits: \$0.00
- Ending Balance: \$220.01+ (04/30/26)

**PayPal Account (04/2026 Statement)**

- Beginning Available Balance: \$0.00 (04/01/26)
- Ending Available Balance: \$751.13 (04/30/26)

\*Easement Stewardship Account statements do not arrive monthly.

**Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS):** No one from NRCS was present, and no written report was submitted.

**South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR):** No one from SCDNR was present, and no written report was submitted.

Mullis stated the Stewardship Week Field Day at Yon Family Farms was successful and well attended. The informative event addressed topics such as cattle and foraging.

Mullis reported Brooke Myres has been promoted to Conservation Districts Program Manager of SCDNR-Conservation Districts.

**Richland County Conservation Commission (RCCC):** Weber reported landowner Mr. Metz would like to donate about 20 acres of land, 90% of which is a floodplain, to the county. The property is located on the Broad River, west of I-20. RCCC will discuss this matter at its next board meeting.

RCCC is involved in the sale of the Goodwill Plantation. The sale has been a long process, and the future of the project is uncertain. Weber reported the property will most likely be purchased by SCDNR.

**RSWCD Programs:** Epps reviewed the provided RSWCD program report for April. Weber noted teams from two Richland County schools, Blythewood High School and Dutch Fork High School, attended SC Envirothon.

**Conservation Items Before County Council:** Weber reported RCCC Chair John Grego gave a presentation to County Council in April, and it went well.

Epps reported Councilmembers Branham, Livingston, and Newton declined to run again, and there will be three new councilmembers next year.

**Commissioner Advocacy:** Weber conversed with Councilmembers Branham and Weaver. County Council presented Mullis with a resolution for receiving the 2025 Hugh Hammond Bennett Southeast Regional Producer Award. Mancke thanked Councilmembers Branham, English, Newton, and Terracio for their support of the Richland County Ag + Art Tour.

### **Old Business:**

**Richland County Ag + Art Tour (RCAAT):** Holliday reported the tour is on June 6-7. The event will feature 16 tour sites at 15 locations and more than 120 artisans.

The committee received additional H-tax funding from Mackey and Weaver, making the total H-tax funds \$31,700.

The committee is still recruiting volunteers. There are 23 spots to fill.

The agritourism intern will start on Monday, May 18.

Additionally, the planning committee will exhibit at Soda City on Saturday, May 30 to promote the tour and will host the Volunteer Appreciation Party on Sunday, May 31.

The final planning committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 12.

Epps reminded attendees that the planning committee is not providing tents or tables for check-in volunteers.

**2026 Agritourism Intern:** Epps reported Matthew Amico will start on Monday, May 18.

**Local Work Group Meeting:** Holliday reported the Local Work Group Meeting will be on Tuesday, July 28, from 9 am to 11 am at Midlands Technical College Northeast, Center for Excellence in Technology, CT 109. The deadline to submit the Local Work Group Meeting date is July 30. The deadline to submit Local Work Group meeting results is September 30.

Holliday will send a meeting invitation after speaking with NRCS District Conservationist Emily Bonilla-Gonzalez.

**FY26 Branded Apparel Order:** Holliday reported the branded apparel order was placed and presented mock-up designs of the apparel.

**Commissioner Vacancy Nomination:** Mullis reported RSWCD will have two commissioner vacancies on the general election ballot in November. The deadline for submitting petitions with 100+ signatures is July 15. Attendees discussed how to obtain the petition form.

**New Business:**

**FY27 Budget Proposal:** Attendees discussed the FY26 Contribution Agreement. Mullis instructed staff to let the South Carolina Association of Conservation Districts know if RSWCD will not spend the \$20,000 in awarded funds by September 30, the end of NRCS' fiscal year.

Attendees noted if the contribution agreement does not continue in FY27, RSWCD will not receive \$20,000 in funding, and the budget will need to be adjusted.

Concerns with the proposed FY27 budget regarding the breakdown of Ag + Art Tour funds and equipment rentals were addressed.

T. McSwain motioned to approve the proposed FY27 budget as presented. Burts seconded the motion. The motion was brought to a vote and passed unanimously.

**Executive Session:** N/A

**Public Input:** Epps referred to the upcoming events listed on the agenda. Attendees discussed the upcoming primary election on June 9 and the South Carolina Commissioner of Agriculture position.

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 6:53 pm.