



Richland Soil and Water Conservation District (RSWCD)

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Meeting Minutes

September 8, 2025, 6 pm

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

Commissioners Present

Kenny Mullis, Chair

Jeff Laney, Vice Chair

Mary Burts

Tim McSwain

Associate Commissioners Present

Bailey Mullis

Charles Weber

Additional Attendees

Emily Bonilla-Gonzalez

Quinton Epps

Chelsea Holliday

Emilia Keesey

Jennifer Mancke

Jessie McNevin

Willie Sharpe

Jessica Thompson

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

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

Reports:

Financial: Thompson gave the following financial report:

Operating Account (08/31/25 Statement)

Beginning Balance: \$60,352.81+ (08/01/25)
Deposits and Credits: \$0.00+
Checks: \$3,210.58-
Expenses and Debits: \$2,150.73-
Ending Balance: \$55,051.50+ (08/31/25)

Credit Card (08/05/25 Statement)

Beginning Balance: \$303.84 (07/05/25)
Payments: \$303.84
Purchases: \$717.29
Ending Balance: \$717.29 (08/05/25)
Rewards: \$606.01

Easement Stewardship Account (7/01/25 to 7/31/25 Statement)

Starting Account Value: \$56,652.07 (7/01/25)
Ending Account Value: \$56,452.17 (7/31/25)
Ending Account Value with Accrued Income: \$56,452.17

SCACD Contribution Agreement Account (08/01/25 Statement)

Starting Balance: \$220.01+ (08/01/25)
Credits: \$0.00+
Debts: \$0.00-
Ending Balance: \$220.01+ (08/31/25)

PayPal Account (07/2025 Statement)

Beginning Available Balance: \$1,735.42 (08/01/25)
Ending Available Balance: \$1,735.42 (08/31/25)

K. Mullis noted attendees at the South Carolina Association of Conservation Districts (SCACD) Mid-Year Meeting learned the Contribution Agreement has officially been extended for three years, resulting in \$1,000,000 in funding.

Thompson noted district staff still need to move the funds in the PayPal account.

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS): Bonilla-Gonzalez reviewed the provided NRCS report. She continued to work on active contracts and Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) applications for FY25, noting the fiscal year ends on September 30. She also emphasized the deadline for new applications for either EQIP or CSP for FY26 is October 4, 2025.

South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR): No one from SCDNR was present, and no written report was submitted. K. Mullis praised the SCACD Mid-Year Meeting and noted SCDNR was well represented at the event.

Richland County Conservation Commission (RCCC): Weber reported RCCC has many projects underway, one of which is the ENRICH tour. He promoted the tour and encouraged

attendees to pick up posters and flyers. He also asked attendees to inform RCCC if they noticed any historical sites missing from the tour so those sites could be considered for inclusion in the next iteration.

RSWCD Programs: Thompson reviewed the provided RSWCD program report.

Bonilla-Gonzalez asked about the Feral Swine Exclusion Fence Funding Program, noting NRCS had received many calls inquiring about it because their contact information was included in the application materials. K. Mullis responded stating the program has received 40 applications and funds have not yet been obligated.

Conservation Items Before County Council: K. Mullis will present RSWCD's annual report before County Council on October 21.

Epps reported RCCC routinely has the mitigation credit sales before County Council. Additionally, the Crane Creek Watershed Management Plan was recently approved by Council. The plan focuses on improving water quality by addressing watershed issues, and next steps include hiring a consultant to implement the plan. Epps also stated repairing the Jordan Memorial Boat Ramp, a project RCCC has taken on, will be before Council on September 9.

Commissioner Advocacy: Burts spoke with Forest Acres City Councilman David Black about the Seed Sanctuary program. K. Mullis stated Jackson Moody with the National Association of Conservation Districts reached out to promote the Seed Sanctuary as a success story.

Old Business:

SC Conservation District Training: Thompson reviewed the process for accessing the SC Conservation District Training for those who have not yet completed it. All commissioners and district staff must complete the training, and the deadline for completion is November 15. K. Mullis noted SCDNR Area Representative Jessie Egan will attend the October board meeting to distribute certificates to those who have completed the training. He also stated SCDNR hopes to report a 100% certification rate for all SC conservation districts at the Partnership Conference in January.

FY26 Budget Proposal: Thompson began presenting the proposed budget. McSwain motioned to approve the budget as presented pending Treasurer Jim Rhodes' review and approval. Burts seconded the motion. Discussion began. McSwain modified his motion to approve the current known expenses after Rhodes has reviewed and approved the budget. The amended motion was brought to a vote and passed unanimously.

Thompson presented the remainder of the FY26 budget proposal. The budget was amended to reflect the increase in dues for SCACD.

McSwain motioned to approve the amended budget pending Rhodes' review and approval of the amended budget. Burts seconded the motion. The motion was brought to a vote and passed unanimously.

New Business:

Strategic Plan Review: Thompson stated goal 5 of the strategic plan is being met through the strategies listed in the current strategic plan. Mancke stated the district also attends community meetings. McSwain noted community meetings can fall under Goal 4. Attendees agreed goal 5 required no changes.

Credit Card Holder: Epps reported due to fraudulent charges, the district credit card was cancelled. Staff are in the process of transferring the credit card holder to Thompson and obtaining a new credit card in her name.

Conservation Education Programs: Thompson reviewed educational programs for FY26. Regarding Conservation Education Mini-Grants, there will be one mini-grant cycle for the 2025-2026 school year. Applications are due on September 25, 2025, and projects must be completed by June 12, 2026. Entries for the Youth Conservation Poster Contest must be submitted by April 10, 2026. The SC Envirothon competition is April 17, 2026. A coaches' training for the competition is scheduled for February 7, 2026.

Executive Session: Laney motioned to go into executive session to discuss a personnel matter. McSwain seconded the motion. The motion was brought to a vote and passed unanimously. Burts motioned to come out of executive session. McSwain seconded the motion. The motion was brought to a vote and passed unanimously. No action was taken during executive session.

McSwain motioned to approve the contract for the RSWCD contractor. Burts seconded the motion. The motion was brought to a vote and passed unanimously.

Public Input: Emilia Keeseey, a University of South Carolina student involved with the Office of Sustainability, and Willie Sharpe, a farmer in Eastover, introduced themselves.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7:54 pm.