



**Strategic Plan**  
**January 2023 – December 2027**

**Vision**

Our vision is to continue to provide leadership and support for conservation efforts in the Midlands that improve the quality and quantity of the county's natural resources.

**Mission**

The Richland Soil and Water Conservation District promotes the wise use and care of natural resources--with a focus on soil and water--for long-term sustainability in a changing environment.

**Goals**

**Goal 1:** To encourage agricultural and timber producers to adopt best management practices to conserve natural resources with a focus on soil and water.

• **Desired Outcomes**

1. Richland County farmers and timber producers will increase the utilization of Best Management Practices (BMPs) to conserve natural resources.
2. Agricultural sources of pollution will be reduced.

• **Strategies**

1. Provide and promote workshops, demonstrations, equipment access, publications, research projects, and financial support for farming techniques that encourage the wise use of natural resources and reduce non-point source pollution.
2. Promote conservation planning and conservation incentive programs.

**Goal 2:** To empower teachers and informal educators to educate students about the conservation of our natural resources.

• **Desired Outcomes**

1. Teachers will be supported in their campus-based efforts to provide environmental education opportunities for students.
2. Grade-appropriate tools and curricula for environmental education will be available to local educators.

• **Strategies**

1. Provide financial support for school-based conservation projects.
2. Provide and promote technical support for school-based conservation projects through the SC Green Steps Schools program.
3. Provide and promote professional development opportunities for teachers/educators to learn best practices in environmental education and access peer-reviewed, standards-aligned curricula such as Project Learning Tree, Project WET, Project WILD, Take Action SC, and others.

4. Provide educators with access to materials, tools, and kits to facilitate environmental education experiences for their students.

**Goal 3:** To educate and inspire students to be environmental stewards.

- **Desired Outcomes**

1. Students will have opportunities to learn about natural resources, conservation, and agriculture.
2. Students will be inspired to become environmental stewards and to support sustainable agriculture.
3. Students will be introduced to, and supported in, the pursuit of careers in natural resource conservation, agriculture, and related fields.

- **Strategies**

1. Provide classroom presentations on natural resources, conservation, and agriculture.
2. Encourage student learning about natural resources, conservation, and agriculture through contests, celebrations, and special events.
3. Support career-focused educational opportunities for students including the SC Envirothon, youth leadership programs, and internships.

**Goal 4:** To educate the general public about natural resource conservation and sustainable agriculture through education programs and awareness campaigns.

- **Desired Outcomes**

1. Richland County residents will take actions to conserve natural resources where they live, work, and play.
2. Richland County residents will understand, appreciate, and support local, sustainable agriculture.

- **Strategies**

1. Promote sustainable home and community gardening practices through the Seed Sanctuary.
2. Provide and promote workshops, demonstrations, access to tools and materials, publications, research projects, and financial support for community conservation activities that encourage environmental stewardship.
3. Raise agricultural awareness through the Richland County Ag + Art Tour.

**Goal 5:** To expand advocacy, partnership, and engagement opportunities in order to develop the resources needed to achieve RSWCD's program goals.

- **Desired Outcomes**

1. County Council, County administration, program partners, and the general public understand and appreciate the work of RSWCD.
2. RSWCD has adequate resources, including staffing and program funding, to carry out its program goals.
3. RSWCD works effectively with other organizations, entities, and agencies to implement its program goals.

- **Strategies**

1. Communicate RSWCD's programs and accomplishments to stakeholders through a robust and dynamic website, social media presence, e-newsletter, reports, presentations, and other means.
2. Leverage the Friends of RSWCD to raise awareness, support, and funding for RSWCD's programs.
3. Cultivate and maintain an active network of volunteers and advocates to support the work of RSWCD.
4. Pursue collaborations with like-minded organizations, entities, and agencies to implement program goals.
5. Commissioners will develop and maintain relationships and communications with members of County Council and County administration.
  - a. Commissioners will present an annual report to County Council each October.
  - b. Commissioners will attend County Council meetings.
  - c. Commissioners will communicate with their County Council members.
  - d. Commissioners will routinely communicate with the County Administrator and Assistant County Administrator.
  - e. Staff will provide Commissioners with information (such as program reports and photos) to facilitate Commissioners' communications with Council members.
  - f. An Advocacy Report will be included on each RSWCD regular meeting agenda. During this time, commissioners will review Goal 5, Strategy 5 and will report on progress.