



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

2020 Hampton Street, Room 3063A

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**Meeting Minutes**

September 9, 2024, 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**

Sarah Burnham

Mary Beth McSwain

Charles Weber

**Additional Attendees**

Jessie Egan

Quinton Epps

Chelsea Holliday

Aric Jensen

Jennifer Mancke

Jessica Thompson

**Welcome, Introductions, and Invocation:** Mullis called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm. Laney 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 made a motion to approve the minutes. Laney seconded the motion. The motion was brought to a vote and passed unanimously.

**Reports:**

**Financial:** Thompson provided the following financial report:

**Operating Account (08/31/24 Statement)**

- Beginning Balance: \$51,207.46 (08/01/24)
- Deposits and Credits: \$0.00

- Checks: \$574.00-
- Expenses and Debits: \$2,033.83
- Ending Balance: \$48,599.63 (08/31/24)

**Credit Card (09/05/24 Statement)**

- Beginning Balance: \$1153.25 (09/05/24)
- Payments: \$1153.25
- Purchases: \$589.49
- Credit Card Rewards: \$462.32.78
- Ending Balance: \$589.49 (09/05/24) <paid in full (09/06/2024)

**Easement Stewardship Account (07/31/24 Statement)**

- Starting Account Value: \$53,810.91 (07/01/24)
- Ending Account Value: \$54,433.28 (07/31/24)
- Ending Account Value with Accrued Income: \$54,935.24

**SCACD Contribution Agreement Account (08/31/24 Statement)**

- Starting Balance: \$226.51 (08/01/24)
- Credits: \$11,184.20+
- Debts: \$11,190.70-
- Ending Balance: \$220.01 (08/31/24)

**PayPal Account (06/30/24 Statement)**

- Beginning Available Balance: \$0.00 (08/01/24)
- Ending Available Balance: \$0.00 (08/31/24)

**Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS):** Mullis reported NRCS did not have a State Engineer for several weeks. Because of this, producers were not being reimbursed. NRCS has hired an Acting State Engineer, Jim Kjelgaard from North Carolina, who will be with NRCS for 60 days while the search for a permanent engineer continues.

**South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR):** Egan reported Local Work Group meetings are concluding. The application period for the two SCDNR-Conservation District Coordinator positions has closed. SCDNR expects to fill these positions soon. Egan noted the SCACD Mid-Year Meeting is on September 16, the East Piedmont Area Meeting is on October 3, and the Partnership Conference will be held January 13-15.

Jensen reported Richland County was granted funding for projects focused on mitigating or preventing future disasters. He asked interested parties to send project ideas to him and he will forward the ideas to Richland County's grants team.

**Richland County Conservation Commission (RCCC):** Weber reported the FY24-25 grant cycle has begun. RSWCD asked RCCC for a \$7,500 donation towards the Ag + Art Tour. RCCC has approved the request and is in the process of sending the funds.

**Richland Soil and Water Conservation District (RSWCD) Programs:** Holliday reviewed the provided RSWCD Program Report.

**Conservation Items Before County Council:** Epps reported the implementation of the Heritage Tourism Marketing Plan implementation is going before Council at the end of September. In early October, several easement items will go before Council. Epps noted Berkeley County recently passed a transportation penny program with \$58.7 million allotted for a greenbelt preservation plan.

**Commissioner Advocacy:** Thompson reported John Newman, Vice Chair of the Richland County Ag + Art Tour Planning Committee has been in contact with Councilmembers Newton, Terracio, and Weaver. Administrator Brown was notified of RSWCD's 2024-2025 youth and educator programs. Jensen has been informed of various RSWCD activities. Mullis called out the SCACD Mid-Year meeting as an opportunity for advocacy.

### **Old Business:**

**Oath of Office:** Mullis and Laney were reappointed. Egan led the Oath of Office.

**RSWCD Travel Policy:** The RSWCD Travel Policy was discussed. The proposed travel policy includes per diem meal reimbursement, reimbursement after travel has been completed unless prior approval has been granted, and the Richland County Administration Building as the starting and ending address for staff mileage. T. McSwain moved to approve the proposed policy. Laney seconded the motion. The motion was brought to a vote and passed unanimously.

**Blythewood/Scout Motors Meeting Plan:** Epps reported no updates.

**SCACD Contribution Agreement Proposal:** Staff requested \$20,000 in funding from SCACD and are awaiting approval.

**Dominion Energy Grant Update:** Staff will apply for \$10,000 in grant funding from Dominion Energy for the Home Is Where the Habitat Is Educational Campaign and the Seed Sanctuary program.

**RCCC Ag + Art Tour Sponsorship Request:** Mullis referenced previous comments about the \$7,500 sponsorship request.

**Little Free Library Update:** The Little Free Library, located on the third floor of the Richland County Administration Building, officially opened on August 27. The library was well-received and is being promoted on social media. Parties interested in donating conservation-related books to the library can give them to Holliday.

**Bank Signature Authority & Credit Card Holder:** The bank signature has been updated to Mullis, Epps, and Commissioner Jim Rhodes. The District has applied for a new credit card in Epps' name.

**FSA/NRCS Urban Ag Office:** Mullis reported Washington, D.C. mandated the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and NRCS to create an office in Richland County for Urban Ag. The office is expected to be established by the end of 2024. There is potential for RSWCD to interact with this office in the future. Laney proposed Urban Ag representatives speak at a future board meeting.

**New Business:**

**2024 Local Work Group Final Report:** Thompson presented the 2024 Local Work Group Final Report. Mullis explained RSWCD must approve the report. Afterward, the data will be submitted to DNR and NRCS. Laney made the motion to approve the Local Work Group Final Report. T. McSwain seconded the motion. The motion was brought to a vote and passed unanimously.

**Executive Session:** N/A

**Public Input:** Laney conversed with a Richland County resident about Gills Creek smelling like sewage after heavy rain. He was advised to have the resident contact Bailey Parker, Executive Director of the Gills Creek Watershed Association. Mullis referenced the upcoming events listed on the agenda including the Holiday Drop-In on December 3 and the Partnership Conference in January.

**Next Meeting:** The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 14 at 6 pm at Lizard's Thicket, 7938 Garners Ferry Road, Columbia, SC 29209.

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 7:15 pm.