



Richland Soil and Water Conservation District (RSWCD)
2020 Hampton Street, Room 3063A
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Meeting Minutes

June 12, 2023 • 6pm

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

Commissioners Present

Kenny Mullis, Chair
Jeff Laney, Vice Chair
Mary Burts
Tim McSwain

Associate Commissioners Present

Charles Weber
Mary Frances Hendrix
Logan Richardson
Sarah Burnham

Others Present

Quinton Epps
Chanda Cooper
Val Morris
Jennifer Mancke
Aric Jensen
Emily Bonilla-Gonzalez
Michael Galiano
Matt Schnabel

Welcome and Call to Order: Mullis called the meeting to order and Jensen gave the invocation at 6:01pm.

Approve Agenda and Minutes: McSwain made a motion to approve the agenda, which was seconded by Burts. The motion was put to a vote, and it passed unanimously. Additionally, McSwain made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, which was again seconded by Burts. The motion was brought to a vote, and it also passed unanimously.

Special Presentation: Matthew Schnabel, Environmental Education Coordinator for the SC Forestry Commission, and Coordinator of SC Project Learning Tree (SCPLT), gave a synopsis of the programs that are available through SCPLT. He also gave accolades to Cooper for assisting the SCPLT with many projects. In addition, Schnabel thanked Richland County Conservation Commission (RCCC) for the grants

they awarded to Friends of Harbison State Forest to complete an ADA walking trail and several other projects.

Financial Report: Cooper provided the following financial overview:

Operating Account (05/31/23 Statement)

- Starting Balance: \$57,342.13 (05/01/23)
- Deposits and Credits: \$12,602.50
- Expenses and Debits: \$7,929.69
- Ending Balance: \$62,014.94 (05/31/23)

Credit Card (06/05/23 Statement)

- Starting Balance: \$2604.56 (06/05/23)
- Payments: \$ 2604.56
- Purchases: \$3637.26
- Ending Balance: \$3637.26 (06/05/23) <paid in full 06/08/23

Easement Stewardship Account (05/31/23 Statement)

- Starting Account Value: \$51,685.95 (05/01/23)
- Ending Account Value: \$51,724.29 (05/31/23)
- Ending Account Value with Accrued Income: \$51,912.56 (05/31/23)

SCACD Contribution Agreement Account (05/31/23 Statement)

- Starting Balance: \$17,178.26 (05/01/23)
- Ending Balance: \$12,547.75 (05/31/23)

PayPal Account (05/01/23 Statement)

- Current Balance: \$250.00 (05/31/23)

Friends of RSWCD Report: Since the last board meeting on 05/08/23, there are no new Friends and we currently have 42 Friends.

Pinewood Lake Park Pollinator Garden Report: No report available.

NRCS: Bonilla-Gonzalez reported the following:

EQIP

- On Active Contracts
 - Working on practice checkouts, contract reviews and modifications
 - Working on practice design and establishments
- EQIP FY23
 - Completed Assessments and Ranking for all applications
 - Started working on contracting documents for preapproved applications
 - Some of the funding pools are not released with preapprovals
 - Breakdown of applications:
 - Calhoun County 11 preapproved
 - Richland County 10 preapproved
 - Obligated contracts 1 Richland County and 2 Calhoun County

CSP

- Active CSP
 - Working on contract reviews and certifications
- New Sign Up for CSP IRA extended until June 30, 2023
 - No applications so far

General

- Complete trainings, attended virtual meetings and teleconferences
- Site visit for new customers 3 in Richland County and 1 in Calhoun County
- Working on practice design and implementation
- Training Marcus Moody new Tec.
- Participated in the 4th grade field trip to Congaree Bluff
- Worked with Garret Litwiler, new Farm Bill Biologist, on planning and completing certifications

SCDNR: Cooper reported the SC Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) filled two of their coordinator positions, the 2022 Annual Report is available and the commissioner license tag issues have been resolved.

Richland County Conservation Commission (RCCC): Weber reported the FY23-24 budget was approved by County Council. There was conversation of the development of Scout Motors and how it may have an environmental impact in the area.

Education Report:

- RSWCD E-newsletter: 3,880 (+370) subscribers
- RSWCD Facebook: 1,190 (+9) followers
- RSWCD Instagram: 703 (+13) followers
- Ag + Art Facebook: 1,002 (+85) followers
- Ag + Art Instagram: 579 (+71) followers

Ag + Art Tour Kickoff Event at Sandhill REC featured two farm tours with talks by nine researchers; four special artisans; and special exhibits provided by Richland County 4H, SC Wildlife magazine, SC Garden-Based Learning Network, and the SC Farm Bureau Combine Simulator. Master gardeners provided a sneak peek of the new Sandhill Children's Garden, and RSWCD provided an exhibit about the Ag + Art Tour and Seed Sanctuary.

2023 Richland County Ag + Art Tour:

- **Sponsors:** \$12,450 of \$15,000 sponsorship goal
- **Expenses:** \$8,717.79 through 05/31/2023
- **Matching Funds:** \$17,528 through 05/31/2023
- **Tour Sites:** 15 tour sites
- **Artisans:** 108 artisan assignments
- **Volunteers:** 54 volunteers were recruited

2024 Planning Begins: Feedback surveys have been distributed to volunteers and tour site hosts. The county debrief meeting will be held soon, and the statewide debrief will be held in July 20. The committee has requested \$5,000 in H-Tax grant funding and has been approved for \$2,100. Councilwoman Terracio has pledged an additional \$2,900 in discretionary H-Tax funds to make up the difference.

Seed Sanctuary:

- 601 mail requests since 02/01/2023

- 61 individual volunteers have signed up to pack seeds for RSWCD, and residents at Still Hopes continue to pack seeds as a group.
- Distribution continues at 2020 Hampton Street & Richland Library Eastover.
- Three Pop-Up Seed Sanctuary exhibits were held since the last meeting: Blythewood Farmers Market, Sandhill Farmers Market, & Soda City Market

2023 Poster Contest: One Water

- We received entries from 75 students at 9 schools.
- We recognized 20 winners from 8 schools. Winners were featured in a WACH Fox interview. RSWCD also recognized three state winners from the 2022 contest.

Classroom Conservation Programs & Green Step Schools Mentorship by Jennifer Mancke

- **School Gardening at Uhuru Academy** - 64 1st-12th grade participants
- **Vermicomposting at Harmony School** – 9 K-4th grade participants
- **Pollinator Conservation at Akoma Cares/Rosewood Public Orchard** – 16 1st-8th grade participants
- **Nature Walk at East Point Academy** – 26 4th grade students
- **School Gardening/Farmstand at A.C. Moore Elementary School** – 16 pre-K students
- **School Gardening/Farmstand at Webber Elementary School** –

Richland County Schools that have been served by RSWCD through Jennifer Mancke this school year:

- **Protect School of the Year:** East Point Elementary
- **Sustaining Superstar School:** Dutch Fork Elementary
- **Recertified Schools:** Conder and East Point Academy Elementary
- **Working Toward Certification:** A.C. Moore 3, Akoma Cares Homeschool 2, Brockman El. Montessori 5, PACE Academy 2, Institute of Innovation H.S. 3, St. Matthews K-8 1, Uhuru Academy 2, Webber Elementary 2, Piney Woods Elementary, St. Joseph Catholic School, Spring Valley HS 1, Glen Forest School 1, HERO Homeschool 4, Cola City Homeschool 3.

RSWCD's Adopt-A-Stream Kit is being used by two Friends of Congaree National Park volunteers.

EEASC Conference:

- June 21-24, 2023 St. Helena Island, South Carolina

County Council: On June 6, 2023, Cooper was recognized and proclaimed as a national Project Learning Tree Leadership in Education award recipient by our County Councilmembers.

Advocacy Report: Cooper reported

- Councilwoman Terracio - pledged \$2,900 to 2024 Ag + Art Tour
- Councilwoman Barron - participated in Ag + Art Tour; requested summer camp presentation
- Councilman Pugh – requested funding for the 2024 Ag + Art Tour

Old Business: NA

New Business: Mullis announced the SENACD conference will be in Savannah, Ga, August 6-8, 2023. He will attend as an SCACD representatives, and three RSWCD delegates (T. McSwain, M.B. McSwain, and

Mancke) would also like to attend the conference. Cooper presented a slide which gave a breakdown for the cost for each delegate. She explained to the group there isn't a line item prepared in budget for this conference because the conference will fall into the FY23-24 budget which has not been prepared. Cooper mentioned there is a sum of money in the reserve fund that could cover the travel costs.

⇒ **Burts motioned to fully fund the three delegates' travel and conference costs for the 2023 SENACD conference in Savannah, GA, which was seconded by Laney. Motioned passed unanimously.**

Executive Session: NA

Public Input: NA

Next Meeting: The next board meeting is scheduled for Monday, August 14, 2023 at 6pm at Lizard's Thicket, 7938 Garners Ferry Rd, Columbia, SC 29209.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7:25 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kenny Mullis, Chair

Val Morris, Conservation Administrative Assistant