



Richland Soil and Water Conservation District (RSWCD)
2020 Hampton Street, Room 3063A
Columbia, SC 29204
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January 09, 2023 • 6pm
Lizard's Thicket, 7938 Garners Ferry Rd, Columbia, SC 29209

Commissioners Present

Jeff Laney, Vice Chair
Mary Burts
Tim McSwain

Associate Commissioners Present

Charles Weber
Hemphill Pride, III
Mary Frances Hendrix

Others Present

Chanda Cooper
Quinton Epps
Aric Jensen
Jennifer Mancke
Val Morris
Tyler Brown
Mary Beth McSwain

Welcome and Call to Order: Laney called the meeting to order and gave invocation at 6:08pm.

Approve Agenda and Minutes: Cooper asked that "Ag + Art Tour Grant Application" be added to the agenda for consideration under New Business. Pride moved to approve the agenda as so amended; Burts seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. Pride moved to approve the 11/14/22 and 11/29/22 minutes as presented; Burts seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Special Recognition:

Laney and Brown recognized outgoing commissioner Pride for 20 years of service to the RSWCD. New RSWCD commissioner McSwain took the oath of office and was welcomed by Laney and Brown.

Financial Report: Cooper provided the following financial overview:

Operating Account (12/31/22 Statement)

- Starting Balance: \$55,641.55 (12/01/22)
- Deposits and Credits: \$26,156.00

- Expenses and Debits: \$3,572.89
- Ending Balance: \$78,224.66 (12/31/22)

Credit Card (1/5/23 Statement)

- Starting Balance: \$777.93 (12/5/22)
- Payments: \$ 777.93
- Purchases: \$467.00
- Ending Balance: \$467.00 (1/5/23) <paid in full 1/9/23

Easement Stewardship Account (11/30/22 Statement)

- Starting Account Value: \$50,881.78 (11/1/22)
- Ending Account Value: \$51,103.28 (11/30/22)

SCACD Contribution Agreement Account (12/31/22 Statement)

- Starting Balance: \$252.51 (12/1/22)
- Ending Balance: \$26,897.25 (12/31/22)

PayPal Account (12/31/22 Statement)

Current Balance: \$320.41 (12/31/22)

Friends of RSWCD Report: Since the last meeting, RSWCD has received \$1,200 in renewals from 13 friends. No new friends have joined and there is a total of 38 current friends.

Pinewood Lake Park Pollinator Garden Report: No report available.

NRCS: No report available.

SCDNR: Brown reminded the group of the Partnership Conference that is being held later this month in Greenville, SC and made mention of a few keynote speakers, such as Lt. Governor Evette and Milt Lowder, psychologist for Clemson University. SCDNR has moved their office from 100 Assembly St., Columbia, SC to 5 Geology Rd, Columbia, SC.

Richland County Conservation Commission (RCCC): No report was available.

Education Report:

- The Richland County Ag + Art Tour will be held June 10-11, 2023. The planning committee has been meeting monthly since November. We are recruiting sponsors (goal: \$5K); tour sites (goal: <15); and artisans. Visit <https://www.agandarttour.com/richland> for details!
- We will host a “So You Think You Wanna Be a 2023 Ag + Art Tour Site?” workshop 1/28, 2-4pm, at Doko Farm. [Register here](#).
- Thanks to a \$10K grant from Dominion Energy, RSWCD’s Seed Sanctuary will expand to include a new physical location at 2020 Hampton St., Room 3063A, and seeds by mail, beginning February 1.
- USC Sustainable Carolina students helped pack seeds in an event in late November.
- Staff and Chairman Mullis made “About the RSWCD” presentations to the East Columbia Rotary Club and Methodist Men’s Group. A slideshow and script are available if others would like to speak about our work to a community group.

- RSWCD's Green Step Schools mentor met with teachers at Montessori School of Columbia, Brockman Elementary, Spring Valley High School, and PACE Academy.
- RSWCD has hosted classroom presentations at PACE Academy, Glenforest School, Meadowfield Elementary, Dutch Fork Elementary, R2I2, and Brockman Elementary.
- Entries in the "One Water" poster contest are due April 14. Classroom presentations on this topic are available!
- Environmental Education Association of SC's annual conference will be held June 21-24 in Beaufort, SC. Details at www.eeasc.org/conference. RSWCD is assisting with conference planning and also hosted the December Midlands Meetup and an EEASC archives committee meeting.
- Staff participated in the SC Forage and Grazing Lands Coalition (SCFGLC) board training and strategic planning meeting. Staff are assisting with the development of an SCFGLC policy and procedure manual.
- RSWCD's Adopt-A-Stream kit is being used by Friends of Congaree and Spring Valley High School.
- Staff provided support for an SC Conservation District Employees Association audit training and submitted an annual report to SCDNR.
- The Conservation Holiday Drop-In was a great success!

Advocacy Report: Cooper made mention of the Holiday Drop-In and the new council members Jason Branham and Don Weaver.

Old Business: Burts moved to adopt the updated RSWCD strategic plan (Attachment A); McSwain seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

New Business: FY23 Budget Revision

Cooper presented an updated FY23 budget that reflects the new income sources of a \$10K Dominion Energy Environmental Education and Stewardship grant and a \$10K Ag + Art Tour sponsorship from the Richland County Conservation Commission. She recommended the FY23 budget be amended as follows:

- Increase line item for Ag + Art Tour expenses from \$250 to \$5,000
- Increase line item for Conservation Education Mini-Grants from \$4,000 to \$7,000
- Increase line item for Green Step Schools Coordinator from \$8,000 to \$11,000 and amend contractor's scope of work to include Ag + Art Tour program support
- Increase line item for Green Step Schools Coordinator Travel from \$600 to \$2,100

McSwain moved to approve these budget adjustments, pending the approval of Rhodes (who was not present). Burts seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

New Business: Ag + Art Tour Grant Application

McSwain moved for RSWCD to partner with a 501c3 to apply for \$5,000 in Richland County Hospitality Tax Grant Funds to support the 2024 Richland County Ag + Art Tour; Burts seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Public Input: NA

Next Meeting: The next board meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 13, 2023 at 6pm at Lizard's Thicket, 7938 Garners Ferry Rd, Columbia, SC 29209.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 6:43 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kenny Mullis, Chair

Val Morris, Conservation Administrative Assistant



**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.