



Richland Soil and Water Conservation District (RSWCD)

2020 Hampton Street, Room 3063A

Columbia, SC 29204

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November 14, 2022 • 6pm

Lizard's Thicket

7938 Garners Ferry Rd, Columbia, SC 29209

Commissioners Present

Kenny Mullis, Chair

Jeff Laney, Vice Chair

Mary Burts

Associate Commissioners Present

Logan Richardson

Tim McSwain

Charles Weber

Others Present

Chanda Cooper

Quinton Epps

Aric Jensen

Jennifer Mancke

Val Morris

Welcome and Call to Order: Mullis called the meeting to order at 6:04pm. Jensen gave the invocation.

Introductions: The group welcomed Val Morris as the new Conservation Administrative Assistant.

Approve Agenda and Minutes: Mullis moved to approve the agenda as presented; Laney seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Financial Report: Cooper provided the following financial overview:

Operating Account (10/31/22 Statement)

- Starting Balance: \$37,506.65 (10/01/22)
- Deposits and Credits: \$642.50
- Expenses and Debits: \$3,393.43
- Ending Balance: \$34,755.72 (10/31/22)

Credit Card (11/5/22 Statement)

- Starting Balance: \$344.67 (10/5/22)
- Payments: \$554.21 (statement balance + reward redemption)

- Purchases: \$1,699.74
- Ending Balance: \$1,490.20 (11/5/22) <paid in full 11/14/22

Easement Stewardship Account (10/31/22 Statement)

- Starting Account Value: \$50,946.20 (10/1/22)
- Ending Account Value: \$50,881.78 (10/31/22)

SCACD Contribution Agreement Account (10/31/22 Statement)

- Starting Balance: \$252.51 (10/1/22)
- Ending Balance: \$252.51 (10/31/22)

PayPal Account (10/31/22 Statement)

- Current Balance: \$100.00 (10/31/22)

There was a donation of \$100.00 made online to the PayPal account.

The Committee budgeted \$3,000.00 for commissioners and staff to attend the 2023 Conservation Partnership Conference in Greenville. The group reviewed a plan for these funds to support travel for five commissioners, three staff and one contractor.

Friends of RSWCD Report: Since the last meeting, one Friend (Dr. Stephen E. Stancyk) has renewed their support at the \$100 level.

RSWCD has 36 active Friends of RSWCD who have contributed to RSWCD within the past 12 months. Friends receive renewal notices, either by mail or email, 12 months after their last contribution. A call for end-of-year donations and a “thank you” to current Friends will be included in RSWCD’s December e-newsletter.

Pinewood Lake Park Pollinator Garden Report: Epps reported trees have been cut to provide a better view of the lake. Epps will reach out to the trimmer haul off clipping and complete the removal of the other trees.

NRCS: A report was provided (Attachment A).

SCDNR: No report was available.

Richland County Conservation Commission (RCCC): The RCCC is working on conservation easements and is considering properties for purchase. McSwain states there are 2-3 conservation easements possibilities.

Education Report:

- Mancke and Cooper reported the following activities since the last meeting on October 17, 2022:
- RSWCD awarded Conservation Education Mini-Grants totaling \$3,250 to five schools.
- RSWCD provided two “Watershed Explorer” classroom presentations to 38 4th graders at Heathwood Hall.
- RSWCD provided poster contest materials to John P. Thomas Elementary School.

- Burts volunteered at the Wood Magic Forest Fair, leading 30 “Web of Life” programs for 680 students during the weeklong educational event.
- Intern Diana Llaca hosted two Pop-Up Seed Sanctuary events: one at the Administration Building featuring Dr. Arlene Marturano of the SC Garden-Based Learning Network; the second at the Owens Field Farmers Market.
- Staff are assisting with planning for the 2023 Environmental Education Association of SC (EEASC) conference, which will be held June 21-24, 2023 on St. Helena Island. RSWCD is a sponsor for this event.
- Staff and commissioners provided support to the SC Forage and Grazing Lands Coalition (SCFGLC) for their annual meeting, which reached approximately 40 livestock producers; as well as for a strategic planning session for the SCFGLC board of directors and one board meeting.
- Staff hosted a focus group for the Barrier Breakers summer camp program, whose goal is to teach children in underserved communities in Richland One about agriculture and related topics.
- Staff participated in the EEASC quarterly board meeting and monthly midlands meetup.
- Staff hosted the kick-off meeting for the Richland County Ag + Art Tour Committee.
- Staff participated in the SC Ag Council’s quarterly meeting.

Advocacy Report: Mullis delivered RSWCD’s annual report to County Council.

RSWCD Strategic Planning: RSWCD is in the process of updating its 2018-2023 strategic plan. The group reviewed and revised RSWCD’s existing Goals 3-5 (Appendix B).

Executive Session: Laney moved to enter executive session to discuss a contractual matter. Burts seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved. RSWCD entered Executive Session at approximately 7:00pm and exited at approximately 7:20pm. No actions were taken during executive session. Laney moved to memorialize, in writing, the existing agreement, in place since 2016, to authorize the South Carolina Association of Conservation Districts (SCACD) to manage the SCACD Contribution Agreement bank account, and to give signatory authority to SCACD President Jeff Wilson, pending approval by RSWCD secretary/treasurer Jim Rhodes. This signatory authority can be rescinded at any time and will expire January 31, 2023. The motion was seconded by Burts and was unanimously approved.

January Meeting Location: Mellow Mushroom was discussed as an alternative for the next meeting. The Committee agreed to have January’s meeting at the Lizard’s Thicket on Garner’s Ferry Rd.

Public Input: NA

Next Meeting: The next board meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 9, 2023 at 6pm at Lizard’s Thicket, 7938 Garners Ferry Rd, Columbia, SC 29209.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7:35pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kenny Mullis, Chair

Val Morris, Conservation Administrative Assistant

Appendix A: NRCS**NRCS Monthly Report
November, 2022****Programs****EQIP**

- On Active Contracts
 - Working on practice checkouts, contract reviews and modifications.
 - Working on practice design and establishments

- EQIP FY23
 - Completed Eligibility process for applications
 - Working on site visits and planning to complete priority tool and later assessment and ranking
 - Completed letters and communicated with participants

CSP

- Active CSP
 - Working on payments for producers that picked Calendar year 22 for payments
 - Completed Assessment and ranking of CSP renewals 1 application from Richland.
 - Working on Contract reviews and certifications

General

- Complete Trainings and attended Virtual meetings and teleconferences
Working on practice design and implementation
Welcome new Farm Bill Biologist to the office Garet Litwiler (taking Dan's position)

Appendix B: RSWCD Strategic Plan

| January 2018 - December 2022 Plan | January 2023 – December 2027 Plan |
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| Goal 3: To educate <u>and inspire</u> students to be <u>future conservationists and farmers</u> <u>environmental stewards</u> . | |
| Desired Outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RSWCD will focus its youth programming on the topics of soil and water conservation and agriculture. • Number of classroom presentations will increase. • Classroom presentations will meet applicable SC academic standards. • RSWCD will develop and provide additional career-focused programming for high school students | Staff Recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will have opportunities to learn about natural resources, conservation, and agriculture. • Students will be inspired to become environmental stewards and to support sustainable agriculture. • Students will be introduced to, and supported in, the pursuit of careers in natural resource conservation, agriculture, and related fields. |
| Current Strategies: Strategy A: Focus classroom presentations on soil and water conservation, food sources, and the importance of farmers Strategy B: Expand RSWCD education presentations into local high schools. | Staff Recommendations: Strategy A: Provide classroom presentations on natural resources, conservation, and agriculture. Strategy B: Encourage student learning about natural resources, conservation, and agriculture through contests, celebrations, and special events. Strategy C: 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NA (new goal) | Staff Recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Richland County residents will take actions to conserve natural resources where they live, work, and play. • Richland County residents will understand, appreciate, and support local, sustainable agriculture. |
| Current Strategies: NA (new goal) | Staff Recommendations: Strategy A: Promote sustainable home and community gardening practices through the Seed Sanctuary. |

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| | <p>Strategy B: Provide and promote workshops, demonstrations, access to tools and materials, publications, research projects, and financial support for community conservation activities that encourage environmental stewardship.</p> <p>Strategy C: Raise agricultural awareness through the Richland County Ag + Art Tour.</p> |
| <p>Goal 5: To expand advocacy, partnership, and engagement opportunities in order to develop the resources needed to achieve RSWCD's program goals.</p> | |
| <p>Desired Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Council members and County Administration leaders will have an increased understanding and appreciation for the role of the RSWCD. • Public and private funding for RSWCD programs will increase. • Collaboration between the RSWCD and the RCCC will increase. • Richland County Greenway projects are fully funded. | <p>Staff Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Council, County administration, program partners, and the general public understand and appreciate the work of RSWCD. • RSWCD has adequate resources, including staffing and program funding, to carry out its program goals. • RSWCD works effectively with other organizations, entities, and agencies to implement its program goals. |
| <p>Current Strategies:</p> <p>Strategy A: Increase the visibility and knowledge of the RSWCD's role within the county by key stakeholders.</p> <p>Strategy B: Explore and develop collaborative partnerships with the RCCC in areas that align with the RSWCD mission and this strategic plan.</p> | <p>Staff Recommendations:</p> <p>Strategy A: Communicate RSWCD's programs and accomplishments to stakeholders through a robust and dynamic website, social media presence, e-newsletter, reports, presentations, and other means.</p> <p>Strategy B: Leverage the Friends of RSWCD to raise awareness, support, and funding for RSWCD's programs.</p> <p>Strategy C: Cultivate and maintain an active network of volunteers and advocates to support the work of RSWCD.</p> <p>Strategy D: Pursue collaborations with like-minded organizations, entities, and agencies to implement program goals.</p> |