



Richland Soil and Water Conservation District  
 2020 Hampton Street, Room 3063A  
 Columbia, SC 29204  
 (803) 576-2080 - Fax (803) 576-2088

[www.richlandcountysc.gov/rswcd](http://www.richlandcountysc.gov/rswcd) • [soilandwater@richlandcountysc.gov](mailto:soilandwater@richlandcountysc.gov)

June 14, 2021 • 6pm  
 Lizard's Thicket, 402 Beltline Blvd., Columbia, SC

#### **Commissioners Present**

Kenny Mullis, Chair  
 Jeff Laney, Vice Chair  
 Jim Rhodes, Secretary/Treasurer  
 Mary Burts

#### **Associate Commissioners Present**

Mary Frances Hendrix  
 James Kilgo

#### **Others Present**

Quinton Epps, Conservation Division Manager  
 Chanda Cooper, Education Program Coordinator  
 Robert Reese, Pollinator Garden Volunteer Coordinator  
 John Newman, Richland County Ag & Art Tour Chairman

#### **Welcome and Call to Order**

Mullis called the meeting to order at 6pm and everyone introduced themselves. Laney gave the invocation.

#### **Approval of Agenda**

Rhodes made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Burts and was unanimously approved.

#### **Approval of Minutes**

Rhodes provided one correction to the May 10, 2021 board meeting minutes. He moved to approve the May 10, 2021 minutes as corrected and the May 5, 2021 Special Called Meeting minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Burts and was unanimously approved.

#### **Special Presentation: Richland County Ag & Art Tour**

The Ag & Art Tour began in 2012 in York County and has now expanded into 11 counties, including Richland. It is administered by Clemson Extension to promote local agriculture and the arts. Richland County's Tour began in 2019 with 5 farms. The 2020 Tour was canceled due to COVID-19, but the 2021 Tour concluded yesterday and featured 11 farms clustered in Blythewood and Lower Richland. Each farm site featured diverse artists and artisans, including sculptors, glass blowers, bakers, poets, and

musicians. The Tour is free for participants. The Richland County event needs ~120 volunteers to produce.

Preliminary reporting suggests ~2,100 visitors participated in the event, which is almost twice the number of participants from 2019. Demographic data suggests older adults and families with young children are the two main groups of Tour participants. RSWCD's \$300 sponsorship for the 2020 event was rolled over into the 2021 event, and RSWCD allocated an additional \$1,000 sponsorship in May, 2021. Newman said these funds "arrived at the perfect time," since H-tax reimbursements had not yet arrived and the Tour needed cash to pay current invoices. Mullis expressed appreciation for the educational/awareness event and stated this type of event is needed in an urban county such as Richland even more than in other areas!

#### **Financial Report**

Rhodes reported a starting balance of \$56,913.96, ending balance of \$53,314.31, 5 checks totaling \$1,399.69, and payroll debits totaling \$2,199.96. The mitigation account balance is \$56,154.36.

#### **Affiliate Membership Report**

Laney reported no new affiliate members since the last RSWCD meeting.

#### **Pinewood Lake Park Pollinator Garden Report**

Reese reported the Pinewood Lake Park pollinator garden has received adequate rainfall and is blooming beautifully. A volunteer workday will be held Saturday to thin and stake plants. He has taken several photos of plants and pollinators in the Garden; Cooper will contact him to plan for social media outreach. He will include commissioners on the next volunteer invitation and is also interested in inviting Council members to participate in workdays at the Garden.

Reese also explained residents in Lower Richland are interested in the Lower Richland Tourism Plan as well as the Land Development Code revision.

#### **NRCS Report**

District Conservationist Emily Bonilla-Gonzalez was unable to attend but provided a written report (Appendix A).

#### **SCDNR Report**

Conservation Districts Program Manager Tyler Brown was unable to attend, but Cooper reported a new Memorandum of Agreement between SC's conservation districts and their state and federal partners has been developed and will be presented for review and approval at the next RSWCD meeting.

#### **Richland County Conservation Commission (RCCC) Report**

Epps reported RCCC commissioners spent most of May responding to Richland County's FY22 Proposed Budget. RCCC has sponsored the Richland County Ag & Art Tour in previous years. RCCC commissioners have met with Richland County staff members who are working on the Land Development Code rewrite; RCCC Chairman John Grego will submit Land Development Code recommendations on behalf of the RCCC. Epps and the RCCC are working with other Richland County staff members to have vacant positions posted for re-hire. The RCCC is considering several tracts of land for conservation easements or purchase. The contract for designing a bridge to replace the damaged bridge at the Mill Creek property has just been awarded. FY21 Conservation Commission grants are being closed out, and Epps is completing final reviews and reimbursements.

**Education Report**

Cooper presented the education report (Appendix B).

**Old Business: Richland County's FY22 Budget**

County Council restored general funding for RSWCD staff support during a 10-0 vote at Third Reading of the budget on June 10, 2021. Additional funding was allocated to provide 100% of a FTE administrative assistant instead of 40% of a FTE administrative assistant, which has been the arrangement for several years. However, several council members expressed reservations and concerns about the funding during discussion. RSWCD commissioners discussed the importance of keeping the advocacy program active during the coming year as we seek to educate administration and council about the programs of RSWCD. Specifically, commissioners hope to develop relationships and share information with Council members during 1-on-1 meetings. Laney and Mullis thanked staff for their hard work and dedication.

**Public Input**

RSWCD normally takes a recess in July, but since multiple commissioners will be out of town during the scheduled August RSWCD meeting, Cooper will attempt to schedule RSWCD's meeting for July 12 instead.

**Next Meeting**

TENTATIVE: Monday, July 12, 2021 @ time and location TBD

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 7:35pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

---

Kenny Mullis, Chair

Chanda L. Cooper, Conservation Education Analyst

## Appendix A: USDA-NRCS Report

### NRCS Monthly Report May 2021

#### Programs

##### EQIP

- On Active Contracts
  - Working on practice checkouts, contract reviews and modifications.
  - Regular management of active contracts
- EQIP FY21
  - Working on obligation of the EQIP applications we have 51 application in Approved or preapproved status working on getting them obligated 3 has been obligated so far total amount for the year is \$1, 062,693.00 Richland \$749,244.00
  - Completing site visits and meeting with producers to complete the planning portion.
  - Completed site visits for new producers 3Richland 2 Calhoun
- EQIP FY22
  - Completed 2 site visit for new customers and received applications

##### CSP

- Active CSP
  - Working with producers on implementations of practices.

#### General

- Complete Trainings and attended Virtual meetings and teleconferences
- Working on CTA designs
- Working on Training for Planner Certification

## Appendix B: Education Report

### RSWCD Education Report June 14, 2021

#### **For Farmers and Natural Resource Professionals**

- Hosted Midlands Local Food Collaborative (MLFC) quarterly meeting 5/19/21 for 12 participants. RSWCD holds \$4,251.37 for the MLFC.
- Supported SC Forage and Grazing Lands Coalition board meeting 5/26/21 for 12 participants.
- Contribution agreement reimbursements for farm bill program outreach will resume effective June 1, following a gap in funding which began March 15. RSWCD will miss out on approximately \$3,000 in funding due to this gap.

#### **For Teachers/Educators**

- Co-hosted Midlands Meetup for environmental educators on 5/11/21 for 13 participants.
- Co-hosted Midlands Meetup for environmental educators on 6/8/21 (# participants TBA, approximately 20).
- Sponsored and co-hosted Environmental Education Association of SC Annual Conference for 88 participants June 10-12, 2021. Conference included keynote address by Dr. David Shelley; 24 concurrent sessions; 23 sponsors and “sponsor spotlight” videos; 6 session moderators; 6 statewide award winners; and three field trips.
- Hosted Environmental Education Association of SC Annual Conference Field Trip to the 12,000 Year History Park in Cayce, SC, for 9 participants.
- Provided social media support for SC Project Learning Tree Steering Committee.
- Mentored one Green Steps School (Dutch Fork Elementary School).
- Continued to support SEEA Landscape Analysis project, which has identified 465 environmental education program providers in SC and collected detailed data about 82 of those providers.

#### **For K-12 Students**

- Recognized 22 poster contest award winners with \$25 gift cards and certificates; 85 entries.
- No word on 2020 state poster contest results or 2021 state poster contest plans.
- 2022 contest theme is “Healthy Soil, Healthy Life”
- RSWCD will present two “Outstanding Youth Awards” to recognize high school students Eli Crisan and Ian Saracila for their work with the SC Adopt-A-Stream program. We will coordinate with DHEC and Clemson to recognize these students; each student will likely receive a \$100 cash prize and a certificate of recognition.

#### **For Community Members/General Public**

- Seed Sanctuary: we have distributed 10,000 seed packets to residents since the launch of the Seed Sanctuary in April, 2020. Approximately 15 volunteers are assisting with seed packing. Approximately 100 request remain on the waitlist. Seed distribution has paused for the summer but will resume in late July. Advertisements to recruit new participants will also begin in late summer.
- May E-newsletter was distributed to 3,078 subscribers.
- Facebook: 975 follows; 2,815 people reached through our FB posts in the past month
- Twitter: 450 followers
- Instagram: 511 followers