



Richland Soil and Water Conservation District

2020 Hampton Street, Room 3063A

Columbia, SC 29204

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January 10, 2022 • 6pm

Jim Hamilton – LB Owens Airport • 1400 Jim Hamilton Blvd. • Columbia, SC 29205

Commissioners Present

Jeff Laney, Vice Chair

Jim Rhodes, Secretary/Treasurer

Hemphill Pride, III

Mary Burts

Associate Commissioners Present

Tim McSwain, Richland County Conservation Commission

Charles Weber, Richland County Conservation Commission

James Kilgo, SC Rural Water Association

Jamie Browder, Heathwood Hall

Others Present

Aric Jensen, Richland County Assistant Administrator

Elizabeth Jensen, Guest

Quinton Epps, Richland County Conservation Division Manager

Chanda Cooper, Richland County Conservation Education Analyst

John McKenzie, Richland County Conservation Program Analyst

Mary Hannah Lindsay, Community Outreach Coordinator

Welcome and Call to Order

Laney called the meeting to order at 6pm and facilitated round robin introductions. Rhodes gave the invocation.

Approve Agenda and Minutes: Rhodes moved to approve the agenda and minutes from the November 8, 2021 meeting as presented. Burts seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously approved.

Water Resource Protection in the Pee Dee: Kilgo shared information about a new initiative of the SC Rural Water Association to protect farm- and forestland in the Pee Dee region through conservation easements over the next five years. \$1.5 million is available to implement these easements through a USDA-NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program agreement. The focus area for the project includes two DHEC watersheds of concern and one NRCS priority watershed. Parcels will be prioritized for protection according to their conservation value. The project team hopes to close eight easements in the five-year project period.

Financial Report: Rhodes reported the following:

1. Checking Account (11/30/21 and 12/31/21 Statements)
 - a. Starting Balance: \$39,128.86 (11/1/21)
 - b. Deposits and Credits: \$3,380.00 (November) + 1,960.00 (December)
 - c. Expenses and Debits: \$3,507.17 (November) + 3,145.50 (December)
 - d. Ending Balance: \$37,816.19 (12/31/21)
2. Credit Card (12/5/21 and 1/5/22 Statements)
 - a. Starting Balance: \$158.88 (11/5/21)
 - b. Payments: \$158.88 (November) and \$686.81 (December)
 - c. Purchases: \$686.81 (November) and \$304.88 (December)
 - d. Ending Balance: \$304.88 (1/5/22) <paid in full 1/10/22
3. Easement Stewardship Account
 - a. Starting Balance: \$56,693.78 (11/1/21)
 - b. Ending Balance: \$56,488.28 (11/30/21)
4. SCACD Contribution Agreement Account
 - a. Starting Balance: \$15,583.65 (11/1/21)
 - b. Ending Balance: \$252.51 (12/31/21)
5. PayPal Account
 - a. Current Balance: \$224.27 (1/10/22)

Affiliate Membership: Laney reported the results of the 2021 Friends Drive/Fundraiser. Commissioners set a goal to raise \$4,000 through a Friends Drive/Fundraiser in December 2021. The actual total raised was \$775. RSWCD gained 8 new and 5 renewing Friends during the Friends Drive/Fundraiser, bringing the total number of Friends to 27 (up from 21 at the last meeting).

Pinewood Lake Pollinator Garden: Epps reported the new Land Program Planner, Walker McDonald, is planning the preparation of the garden beds for spring planting.

NRCS: Emily Bonilla-Gonzalez emailed a report (Appendix A) ahead of the meeting.

SCDNR: Cooper reported RSWCD has received an Envirothon Training Trunk from SCDNR. The Trunk is available for high school team coaches to borrow for up to two weeks at a time. Envirothon coaches' training will be held February 5, and the Envirothon competition will be held April 29.

Richland County Conservation Commission (RCCC): Weber, McSwain, and Epps reported the following RCCC activities:

- Submitting comments on the Land Development Code
- Exploring mitigation credit opportunities
- Seeking to purchase properties
- Developing FY21-22 and FY22-23 annual plans
- Preparing for Lower Richland Tourism Plan council worksession

Education: Lindsay and Cooper reported the following accomplishments since the last meeting:

- Dominion Energy awarded a \$5,000 grant to support the Seed Sanctuary program.
- RSWCD is working to launch a Seed Sanctuary at Richland Library Eastover.
- Lindsay plans to provide pop-up Seed Sanctuary opportunities at community events.

- RSWCD partnered with Columbia Water to provide a Blue Thumb Award (gardening prize pack) to Seed Sanctuary participant and volunteer Bridgette Goff.
- RSWCD provided classroom education programs to 40 students at 2 classes at Brockman Elementary and 10 students in 1 class at the Cutler Jewish Day School.
- Staff mentored a science fair project at Dutch Fork Elementary School. Burts announced the science fair competition, which she plans to judge, has been postponed or canceled.
- Heathwood Hall 4th graders borrowed the Rainfall Simulator.
- Ian Saracila and Eli Crisan continue to use the Adopt-A-Stream monitoring kit.
- 2022 conservation poster contest entries are due April 15, 2022.
- RSWCD has 3,068 e-newsletter subscribers, 1,019 Facebook followers, 457 Twitter followers, and 551 Instagram followers.
- Approximately 50 people attended the Conservation Holiday Drop-In in December.
- RSWCD co-hosted the November Midlands Meetup and Officer Inauguration for 16 environmental educators, in partnership with the Environmental Education Association of SC (EEASC). During this event, outgoing EEASC president Chanda Cooper “passed the torch” of leadership to incoming president Chenille Williams.
- RSWCD also supported the December Midlands Meetup for 18 participants.
- RSWCD supported several other statewide EE initiatives in partnership with EEASC, including a quarterly EEASC board meeting, 2022 conference planning, EEASC history project, mini-grant awards, executive director search and hiring, and SC Green Steps School funding proposal.
- RSWCD is supporting the SCCDEA Training Committee by assisting with surveying conservation district employees and planning 2022 training sessions.
- RSWCD hosted the Midlands Local Food Collaborative’s board meeting for 13 participants.
- RSWCD is supporting several activities of the SC Forage and Grazing Lands Coalition, including conservation planning for producers statewide, winter annual forage plot demonstrations, a grazing cover crops research project in Eastover, soil health education, and scholarships for SC producers to attend the National Grazing Lands Coalition conference.

Advocacy: Several commissioners shared the RSWCD’s annual report with council members. Several council members attended the Conservation Holiday Drop-In.

Richland Library MOU: Staff recommended RSWCD enter an MOU with Richland Library in order to launch a Seed Sanctuary pilot program in the Library’s Eastover location. Following discussion, Rhodes moved to approve the MOU as presented. Pride seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously approved.

SCACD Policy/Position Statements: Cooper announced the Policy/Position statements are available and were included in commissioners’ packets. We will review these statements in sections in upcoming RSWCD meetings in preparation for updating RSWCD’s strategic plan.

Next Meeting: ~~February 14, 2022 at 6pm; location TBA.~~ **UPDATE (1/28/22): RSWCD will not meet in February. The next meeting will be on March 14, 2022, at 6pm at the Jim Hamilton – LB Owens Airport, 1400 Jim Hamilton Blvd.**

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7:30pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kenny Mullis, Chair

Chanda L. Cooper, Conservation Education Analyst

Appendix A: NRCS Report

**NRCS Monthly Report
January 10, 2022**

Programs

EQIP

- On Active Contracts
 - Working on practice checkouts, contract reviews and modifications.
 - Regular management of active contracts
 - Working on contract modifications
- EQIP FY22
 - 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
 - Total applications Eligible 62 Calhoun 40 Richland 22

CSP

- Active CSP
 - Working on payments for producers that picked Calendar year 22 for payments
 - Completed obligations and modification of CSP renewals 2 applications from Richland.
 - Completed certifications and Payments for producers in 2021

General

- Completed Certified planner level 3 training and certification process
- Complete Trainings and attended Virtual meetings and teleconferences
- Working on practice design and implementation