



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

May 8, 2023 • 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

Charles Weber
Mary Frances Hendrix
Logan Richardson
Sarah Burnham

Others Present

Chanda Cooper
Val Morris
Jennifer Mancke
Aric Jensen
Marcus Moody
Elizabeth Laffitte
Kathleen Finlay
Emily Bonilla-Gonzalez
Diana Llaca-Cruiel

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

Approve Agenda and Minutes: Burts moved to approve the agenda and was seconded by Laney. Cooper proposed amending the April minutes by moving Mary Burts from Associate Commissioner to Commissioner and under New Business: Budget Review, increasing the honoraria line item from \$100.00 to \$300.00. Laney moved to approve the amended April minutes and was seconded by Burts. Both motions passed unanimously.

Special Presentation: Elizabeth Laffitte and Kathleen Finlay with Palmetto Garden Club presented Richland Soil & Water Conservation District (RSWCD) with a \$9,000.00 check from the proceeds they

received from their online auction which took place March 2023. The funds will support RSWCD's conservation education programs.

Mullis gave special recognition to intern Diana Llaca-Curiel who recently became a graduate from the University of South Carolina. Diana has worn many hats while interning with RSWCD. She's played a vital role with growing all of the social media platforms and designing and maintaining the RSWCD newsletter. She's been the face behind the Seed Sanctuary program and serves as a community liaison on the behalf of RSWCD. We wish Diana the best of luck with her future endeavors!

Financial Report: Cooper provided the following financial overview:

Operating Account (04/30/23 Statement)

- Starting Balance: \$64,825.92 (04/01/23)
- Deposits and Credits: \$50.00
- Expenses and Debits: \$7533.79
- Ending Balance: \$57,342.13 (04/30/23)

Credit Card (05/05/23 Statement)

- Starting Balance: \$1890.82 (04/5/23)
- Payments: \$ 1890.82
- Purchases: \$2604.56
- Ending Balance: \$2604.56 (05/5/23) <paid in full 05/08/23

Easement Stewardship Account (02/28/23 Statement)

- Starting Account Value: \$51,672.70 (04/01/23)
- Ending Account Value: \$51,685.95 (04/30/23)
- Ending Account Value with Accrued Income: \$51,795.37 (04/30/23)

SCACD Contribution Agreement Account (03/31/23 Statement)

- Starting Account Value: \$12,151.75 (04/01/23)
- Ending Account Value: \$17,178.26 (04/30/23)

PayPal Account (04/10/23 Statement)

- Current Balance: \$250.00 (04/30/23)

Friends of RSWCD Report: Since the last board meeting on 04/10/23, one new Friend, Palmetto Garden Club, has joined. No Friends have renewed and there are 42 current Friends.

Pinewood Lake Park Pollinator Garden Report: No report available.

NRCS: EQIP: Bonilla-Gonzalez reported the following below and introduced Marcus Moody, the new Engineering Technician with their department. Moody gave background on his education and work history. He stated how happy he was to be a part of the team and how he looked forward to working with RSWCD.

- 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 6 preapproved for a total of \$136,870.84
 - Richland 2 preapproved for a total of \$196,571.00

CSP

- Active CSP
 - Working on Contract reviews and certifications
- New Sign Up for CSP IRA
 - Applications for IRA

General

- Complete Trainings and attended Virtual meetings and teleconferences
- Attended the dedication ceremony of the Brookland Baptist Church Ceremony Garden (Richland)
- Working on practice design and implementation
- Training Marcus Moody new Tec.
- Helped other offices complete Assessments and Rankings
- Worked with Garret Litwiler, new Farm Bill Biologist, on planning and completing certifications

SCDNR: Cooper reported at the 2023 SC Envirothon event, there were 20 student teams that participated in this year's competition. Lexington-Richland 5 FFA represented Richland County. Several Richland County staff members, commissioners, and volunteers assisted with judging the Oral Presentations competitions and grading the event. The SC Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) helped coordinate the recognition of stewardship week in South Carolina. Governor Henry McMaster issued a proclamation declaring April 30–May 7, as Soil and Water Stewardship Week in SC. Cooper reported May 2, 2023, was Conservation Day at the State House. Many representatives from RSWCD attended. Lastly, Cooper reported, SCDNR issued the 2022 Conservation District Annual Report, which listed highlights of achievements RSWCD accomplished this year.

Richland County Conservation Commission (RCCC): Weber reported the Natural Resources Committee (NRC) and Columbia Rowing Club have come to an agreement which has been submitted to administration for review and approval. RCCC was presented with a plaque from Harbison State Forest, for their continuous grant support, during their ceremony opening of the new ADA trail and shelter. John McKenzie, Conservation Program Analyst, was there to receive the award.

Education Report:

- RSWCD E-newsletter: 3,510 subscribers
- RSWCD Facebook: 1,181 likes/393 following
- RSWCD Instagram: 690 follows
- Ag + Art Facebook: 804 likes/917 following

- Ag + Art Instagram: 508 follows
- Ag + Art Tour June 10-11, 2023
- Ag + Art Tour has 10 local sponsors
- Ag + Art Tour has received \$12,100 out of the \$15,000 sponsorship goal
- Ag + Art Tour has \$14,818 in matching funds as of 4/30/23
- The Statewide Ag + Art Tour Kickoff Event was well attended by Richland County Administrators
- Fifteen tour sites will be featured on the Richland County tour. Eleven will participate all weekend; three are Saturday only; one is Sunday only.
- As of 04/30/23 we've received 100 artisan applications and we've exceeded the goal and are at maximum capacity.
- An Ag + Art Tour Kickoff Event will be held at Clemson Sandhill Research and Education Center from 2-6pm on Tuesday, 5/30/23. The event will feature the Sandhill Farmers Market, Ag Combine Simulator, crafts and games for kids, two wagon-ride farm tours at 2:00 and 3:30pm, music by the Saluda River Band, nine Extension researchers on site to share their work, exhibits by 4-H, SCDNR & Richland County Farm Bureau and Farmers Market vendors.
- The Seed Sanctuary has received 571 requests for seeds-by-mail since 2/1/23. There has been one volunteer packing party with Main Street Rotary. Seeds are still being distributed at 2020 Hampton Street, Richland County Administration building and Richland Library Eastover.
- RSWCD "One Water" poster contest produced 75 student entries from 9 schools and 20 winners from 7 schools. 2022 Poster Contest had three state winners.
- Mancke has been very busy assisting and teaching with PACE Academy – Water Conservation with 8 participants, Spring Valley High School – Conservation & Human Impact on the Environment with 50 participants, East Point Academy – Wonderful Worms with 24 participants, Pine Grove Elementary Math + Science Day – Pollinator Conservation & Wonderful Worms with 125 participants and DHEC Lunch and Learn – Pollinator Conservation.
- RSWCD's Adopt-A-Stream kit is being used by three community groups each month.
- RSWCD is providing planning support for the Environmental Education Association of SC's annual conference, which will be held 6/21/23-6/24/23 at the Penn Center in Beaufort, SC.
- RSWCD provided EEASC administrative support for their fundraiser that brought in \$6,455.00 and helped submit a grant proposal for \$15,00.00 to NAAEE.
- Mullis and Cooper helped to produce a policy and procedure manual for SC Forage & Grazing Lands Coalition. Mullis continues soil health research with Jason Carter and Buz Kloot.
- RSWCD hosted the Midlands Local Food Collaborative quarterly meeting, they had 12 participants. The MLFC sponsored 6 Ag + Art Tours and they are considering hosting a Midlands Food Policy Council Summit in October.

County Council: Administrator Brown, Councilwoman Barron, Assistant County Administrators Jensen and Thomas, and other representatives from Richland County's Office of Communications and Administration attended the statewide kickoff event, along with RCCC Chairman John Grego and RSWCD Chairman Kenny Mullis.

Advocacy Report: The statewide Ag + Art Tour kickoff event at the State House was well attended with Richland County staff, RCCC and RSWCD commissioners. Mullis reported he and Mike Stewart, Chairman of Greenville District, attended the Fly-In that was held in Washington, DC.

Old Business: NA

New Business: SC Commissioners School for Agriculture is seeking sponsors for students to attend their summer program or to assist with administrative cost.

⇒ Laney moved to provide a \$500.00 sponsorship for the SC Commissioners School for Agriculture summer program and was seconded by Burts. Motioned passed unanimously.

Due to the Finance Committee annual audit and proposed FY 23-24 budget in July, Cooper suggested to skip July 10th monthly meeting and resume RSWCD monthly meetings on August 14th, 2023.

Public Input: NA

Next Meeting: The next board meeting is scheduled for Monday, June 12, 2023 at 6pm at Lizard's Thicket, 7938 Garners Ferry Rd, Columbia, SC 29209.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 6:47 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kenny Mullis, Chair

Val Morris, Conservation Administrative Assistant