



***Richland Soil and Water Conservation District***

2020 Hampton Street, Room 3063A

Columbia, SC 29204

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February 3, 2020

Lizard's Thicket, 6:00pm

402 Beltline Blvd., Columbia

Commissioners Present

Kenny Mullis, Chair

Jim Rhodes, Secretary/Treasurer

Associates Present

Mary Burts

Others Present

Quinton Epps, Conservation Division Manager

Chanda Cooper, Education Program Coordinator

Mary Hannah Lindsay, RSWCD Education Program Assistant

Carol Kososki, Richland County Conservation

Buddy Adkins, Richland County Conservation

Angela Vandelay, Wood PLC

Charly McConnell Clemson Cooperative Extension

John Blaber, Crickentree Homeowner

Commissioners Laney and Pride notified the office they were unable to attend so there is not a quorum to conduct business.

Welcome and Call to Order

Chairman Mullis called the meeting to order and gave the invocation. Everyone introduced themselves.

Financial Report

Deposits totaled \$100.00; checks totaled \$5,967.42; and the ending balance is \$51,512.85. The bank statement is balanced with the checkbook.

Twenty-five Mile Creek Watershed Status Update

Ms. Vandelay reported Richland County's Agricultural 319 Grant provided \$311,500 in Federal Funds with \$221,300 in a Non-Federal Match for a total of \$532,800. With this funding, BMPs were installed at 7 farms, septic repairs were made at 5 residences, and RSWCD purchased a

crop roller and a no till drill for use in the watershed. To date, Kershaw County's 319 Grant has provided \$83,000 of \$114,800 in Federal Funds and \$53,000 of \$46,541 in Non-Federal Match for septic repairs in the watershed, for a total of \$136,000 out of \$191,341. The remaining funds are allocated to one farm and 10 septic repairs. Once completed, the two grants combined will have addressed a total of 58 septic repairs. Water quality data shows improvement following installation of BMPs through this voluntary program, and meeting participants discussed how best to share the story with politicians. Once the Kershaw County grant is completed, then it will be a good time to tell the story and explain the success of the project. This information can be submitted for the Administrator's report with a letter from the RSWCD Chair. Chanda can work with Angela to develop a press release for Richland County PIO to share. Kenny will schedule a presentation for Blythewood Town Council; Ms. Dickerson attends these meetings.

#### Education Coordinator's Report

Ms. Cooper reported on the following RSWCD programs between November 18, 2019 and February 3, 2020: Arbor Day was celebrated at LW Conder Elementary School. Representatives were there from Richland School District Two, County Councilman Manning, Richland County Conservation Commission, SC Forestry Commission, US Forest Service, and the Richland County Public Information Office. A tree was planted, followed by an Assembly featuring acclaimed tree educator, Tim Womick.

Ms. Lindsay has been busy with 44 presentations reaching 803 participants from 17 schools across 10 County Council Districts. A school from the one remaining Council District has been targeted. Four different conservation topics are available for educators to choose from.

The Green Steps program matches mentors with teachers to provide the technical assistance and support they need to complete environmental projects. Green Steps mentor meetings were held at five schools covering 22 different projects.

Staff is still working with the Environmental Education Association of SC hosting Monthly Meet Ups. The Southeastern Environmental Education Alliance Conference will be September 24-26. The SC Envirothon Coaches Training was held this past Saturday.

Staff proved support/assistance to the SC Forage & Grazing Lands Coalition, the Midlands Local Food Collaborative and the Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education Program Advisory Councils.

In January, RSWCD applied for an Urban Agriculture Conservation Grant which, if funded, would create pollinator conservation demonstration and outreach at Pinewood Lake Park. Ms. Lindsay has also applied to the Friends of NACD Grant Program for a \$2,500 grant to fund a seed library/sanctuary which will include some pollinator seed. Seed Libraries are an excellent way to introduce ourselves to a new audience. Ms. Lindsay plans to enroll in a Master Gardener Class to acquire horticultural knowledge.

RSWCD's Facebook page has 662 likes with 751 followers. The Twitter account has 412 followers and the recently launched Instagram page already has 195 followers. Ms. Cooper

announced Jennifer Mancke has been selected as the State Conservation Teacher of the year and will be recognized at the Partnership Conference in February.

### Crickentree

Chairman Mullis explained Yancey McLeod made a presentation at the November meeting requesting RSWCD consider holding an easement on a proposed 250' buffer. RSWCD would be more interested if the entire property was part of the proposed easement as opposed to a small buffer area around the edge. RSWCD Commissioners have not yet had an opportunity to discuss the matter or make a decision on the easement proposal. Mr. Blaber, a Crickentree landowner, was present to learn of any updates on the proposal. E. Capital, the property landowner and Councilwoman Dickerson are open to a 250 buffer so when a developer acquires the property, 35-40% of the property cannot be developed. Mr. McLeod is trying to put together some buyers to purchase the property. Quinton explained the buffer is more of a setback between two neighborhoods. Setbacks are usually handled in zoning during the development phase.

### Conservation Manager's Report/Richland County Conservation Commission (RCCC) Update

Mr. Epps reported officers were re-elected to serve new terms at RCCC's last meeting. The county is currently in the process of rewriting the land development code. RCCC has provided detailed comments on both the Land Development Code, ordinances/regulations dealing with land development and Land Development Manual, technical aspects referenced in the code. Chairman Mullis attended this meeting since the Administrative Assistant position change was on the agenda. Under the proposed change, Ms. Fisher would report to Robin Carter, CP&D, rather than to Mr. Epps. A verbatim transcript is available of the discussion and will be emailed to Commissioners. A follow-up meeting was held with the county Administrator, Councilman Chip Jackson and Councilman Paul Livingston, Chair. RCCC and Chairman Mullis have sent a follow-up letters further indicating their concerns. Mrs. Kososki indicated she is working on an additional letter since a response has not been received from Administration.

### *General Discussion*

Mr. Blaber questioned the status of the conservation easement Yancey McLeod is proposing, as he was under the impression it would be discussed at this meeting. Chairman Mullis explained Commissioners were going to discuss the proposal tonight; however, there is not a quorum. Chairman Mullis added there is no clear plan for an easement in place yet. Mr. McLeod previously presented two options, an easement on the entire property and a 250' setback. A setback does not qualify for an easement. Mr. McLeod is looking for a conservation buyer for the entire property.

### Conservation Manager's Report continued

RCCC voted to give \$500 to the Ag & Art Tour for 2020. A meeting was held with stakeholders to brainstorm what a Heritage Center, a project with the Library and part of the Lower Richland Tourism Plan would look like. The Legal Services contract is still being worked on by Procurement. Recommendations on the applications for the Land Program Planner position have been provided to Administration. The Congaree Biosphere MOU is still under discussion. Nancy Stone-Collum is on the Plastic Bag Ordinance Committee which is working hard to develop a proposed plastic bag ordinance.

NRCS Report

Emily Bonilla-Gonzalez did not respond or supply a written report.

Guest Remarks

Charly McConnell, Clemson Cooperative Extension, explained her position is new, based in Lexington and her territory extends from York County to Orangeburg and includes Richland. This endeavor is creating a private well program where people come in to have their water tested. Planning is underway for a Master Irrigator Program for farmers. Chairman Mullis mentioned the Aiken Mobile Irrigation Lab Pilot Project is available now to participants.

Associate Commissioner's Report

Associate Commissioner Burts worked on Arbor Day, the Science Fair, and completed her Commissioner Application Paperwork.

The next meeting will be held Monday, March 9, 2020 at the Lizard's Thicket on Beltline Blvd.

Respectfully Submitted,



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Kenny Mullis, Chair



Charlie Fisher, Admin. Asst./CC