



Richland Soil and Water Conservation District (RSWCD)
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Meeting Minutes

March 11, 2024 6pm

Lizard's Thicket, 7938 Garners Ferry Rd, Columbia, SC 29209

Commissioners Present

Kenny Mullis, Chair
Jeff Laney, Vice Chair
Jim Rhodes, Treasurer
Mary Burts
Tim McSwain

Associate Commissioners Present

Mary Beth McSwain
Mary Hendrix
Charles Weber
Kirstin Bullington

Others Present

Quinton Epps
Chanda Cooper
Val Morris
Aric Jensen
Jennifer Mancke
Jessica Thompson
Chelsea Holliday
Jessie Egan
Jim Johnson

Welcome and Call to Order: Mullis called the meeting to order and Jensen gave the invocation at 6:03 pm. The group took turns introducing themselves.

Approve Agenda and Minutes: Laney made a motion to approve the agenda, which was seconded by T. McSwain. The motion was brought to a vote, and it passed unanimously. Additionally, Rhodes made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, which was seconded by Burts. The motion was brought to a vote, and it also passed unanimously.

Special Presentation: Jim Johnson, Regional Director of the SC Small Business Development Center (SBDC), provided an overview of the core services offered by SBDC. These services include financial management, grants, loans, business planning, starting a farm, marketing plans, social media, e-

commerce, and exporting. Additionally, he gave a synopsis of each core service and answered questions from the group.

Financial Report: Rhodes provided the following financial overview:

Operating Account (02/29/24 Statement)

- Beginning Balance: \$80,758.80 (02/01/24)
- Deposits and Credits: \$3252.28
- Expenses and Debits: \$3,844.17
- Ending Balance: \$80,166.91 (02/29/24)

Credit Card (03/05/24 Statement)

- Beginning Balance: \$1,825.84 (02/05/24)
- Payments: \$1,825.84
- Purchases: \$1,270.53
- Ending Balance: \$1,270.53 (03/05/24) <paid in full (03/11/2024)

Easement Stewardship Account (02/29/24 Statement)

- Starting Account Value: \$53,151.26 (02/01/24)
- Ending Account Value: \$53,172.51 (02/29/24)
- Ending Account Value with Accrued Income: \$53,774.74 (02/29/24)

SCACD Contribution Agreement Account (02/29/24 Statement)

- Starting Balance: \$18,772.10 (02/01/24)
- Credits: \$11,650.15
- Debts: \$18,519.59
- Ending Balance: \$11,902.66 (02/29/24)

PayPal Account (01/31/24 Statement)

- Beginning Available Balance: \$542.28 (02/01/24)
- Ending Available Balance: \$250.00 (02/29/24)

Friends of RSWCD Report: Laney reported since the last board meeting on 02/11/24, there have been no new Friends and no renewals. The current count of Friends stands at 26, three of which are Honorary Friends. Our donation goal for the fiscal year is \$5,000.00 by 06/30/2024; as of today, we have received \$2,793.00. Morris introduced and explained the sponsorship calendar.

Administrative Report: Morris reported Statement of Economic Interest reports are due by noon on 03/30/2024 and shared a thank-you note from SC Association of Conservation Districts (SCACD) for RSWCD's continued support to National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD).

NRCS: None Reported

SCDNR: Egan reported that Conservation Day at the Statehouse was well attended, with about 45 supporters, which is 10 more than last year. She also mentioned the Green Step training was successful and met the educational community goals of the SCACD. The deadline for SC Ethics filing is 03/30/24 at noon, and the SC Envirothon is scheduled for 04/26/2024. Additionally, commissioners can expect their Annual Reports to arrive any day now. Egan encouraged anyone experiencing issues with their license

plates to reach out to Jordan. Lastly, Egan welcomed two new employees to the SC Conservation team: SCACD Executive Director, Ann-Lamar Tuten, and NRCS Acting State Conservationist, Jamie Keith.

Richland County Conservation Commission (RCCC): Jensen gave a brief overview of Rural Tourism Community Service (RTCS) and described the purpose and importance for an overlay zone. Weber reported RCCC has completed their grant recommendations and now are waiting for the approval.

Education: Cooper provided a report on RSWCD's educational activities since the last RSWCD meeting on 2/12/24:

- On 2/13/24, RSWCD co-hosted a special recognition of teacher Amy Umberger at the Environmental Education Association of SC (EEASC) Midlands Meetup at Harbison State Forest. Councilman Derrek Pugh recognized Umberger as SC's Outstanding Earth Science Teacher. Approximately 30 people attended the event.
- Cooper partnered with Cassidy Roof of the Lexington SWCD to present a professional development event for Career & Technical Education teachers in Lexington-Richland School District Five; approximately 25 educators attended.
- RSWCD hosted a Green Step Schools training for conservation district staff and commissioners statewide in coordination with the SC Association of Conservation Districts education committee, SC Conservation District Employees Association, SC DNR, and Jane Hiller. Twenty-seven people registered for the event.
- Mancke led a vermicomposting program for 26 students at Dutch Fork Elementary, a soil health workshops for 30 students at the Richland One STEM showcase, and a gardening program for the Hopkins Elementary STEM Girls Club.
- RSWCD's e-newsletter has gained 128 subscribers (4,563 total); Facebook has gained 19 followers (1,266 total); and Instagram has gained 6 followers (762 total). Holliday is now managing these assets. The Richland County Ag + Art Tour Facebook page has gained 3 followers (1,053 total) and Instagram has gained 19 followers (687 total). Thompson is now managing these assets.
- The Richland County Ag + Art Tour will be held June 8-9 and will feature 20 tour sites. Artisan applications are due 4/15. Staff will film a promotional video on 3/15. The next committee meeting is on 3/19 at 1pm. RSWCD has received \$7,900 (pledged) in H-Tax funds; \$5,000 from the RCCC; and \$2,260 in pledges from individual and corporate sponsors, thanks largely to the fundraising efforts of Hendrix, Epps, and Morris. This amount is still \$22,740 short of the \$5,000 fundraising goal for individual and corporate sponsors.
- Staff hosted a Seed Sanctuary packing party and pop-up event with USC students in the Student Nurses Association. They also hosted a pop-up event at the Cottontown Art Crawl. Volunteers will assist with a mailing party tomorrow. Holliday is switching the seed stock to warm-season seeds at all venues in preparation for a March 19 re-launch.
- Thompson developed a new website for the Midlands Local Food Collaborative.
- Thompson and Cooper finalized the SC Forage and Grazing Lands Coalition strategic plan.
- "May the Forest Be With You Always" poster contest entries are due April 12. Winners will be celebrated during Stewardship Week April 29-May 3. A governor's proclamation about Stewardship Week is expected on April 29.
- 2023 "One Water" state poster contest winners will be recognized during a special event at Stormwater Studios on March 28 at 4:30pm. Councilwoman Allison Terracio has been invited to present the awards, and Stormwater Studios will give a tour of their ecosystem restoration project, which is funded by an RCCC grant.

- RSWCD received 13 applications totaling \$11,817.95 in requests for spring Mini-Grants. RSWCD awarded \$3,000 to three projects, and The Bee Cause awarded \$1,000 to a fourth project. Winners include Caughman Road Elementary School, R212, Satchel Ford Elementary, and W.G. Sanders Middle School.
- RSWCD is a sponsor and co-coordinator of the 2024 EEASC conference, “Climate ResiliencEE: How to Save the Planet.” The event will be held at USC Upstate June 20-22.
- RSWCD’s Adopt-A-Stream kit was used by two community volunteers this month.
- Morris, Holliday, Thompson, and Mancke were trained in the Project Learning Tree and Project WILD environmental education curricula.

Conservation Items Before County Council: Epps reported the Cemetery Protection Ordinance will be on the agenda for the Administration and Finance Committee (A&F) meeting on March 26, 2024.

Commissioner Advocacy: T.McSwain reported he and Weber spoke with Councilman Pugh at the Harbison State Forest event.

Old Business: None reported.

New Business: None reported.

Executive Session: N/A

Public Input: None reported.

Next Meeting: The next board meeting is scheduled for Monday, 04/08/24 at 6pm at Lizard’s Thicket, 7938 Garners Ferry Rd, Columbia, SC 29209.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7:23 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kenny Mullis, Chair

Val Morris, Conservation Administrative Assistant