

# ***Southern Conservation District***

## Special Board/Committee Meeting Minutes

July 29, 2025

10:00 AM

The Southern Conservation District Board of Supervisors met on Tuesday, July 29, 2025, at 10:00 AM in the conference room of the District Office located at **263 Ragland Rd. Beckley, WV 25801**

### **Those in Attendance:**

#### Supervisors:

Randall Patton, Chairman (Teleconference)

Bill Harris, Vice Chair

Edgar Hendrick, Secretary

Bill Cook

John Farell

Randy Prince (Teleconference)

Rachel Prince (Teleconference)

Steven Johnston

Curtis Murphy

Ron Testerman

#### Others:

Jesus Nandi Roman, WVCA

Brain Fry, WVCA

Jacob Lavender, WVCA

Morgan Dial, WVCA

Jeremy Salyer, WVCA

Judith Lyons, WVCA

John Brown, WVCA

Jay Crump, WVCA

Dave Parkulo, SCD

Marty Rae Walker

Open & Welcome

Bill Harris, Vice Chairman

Bill Cook led in prayer, Ed Hendrick Led in Pledge

**Southern Conservation District Operations and Business**

Administrative Specialist Report:

Jesus Nandi Roman, WVCA

LORS:

LOR ID: 16414

Purpose: FY26 Allocation for Mountain RC&D

Amount: \$17,575.00

AGR: New.

- ***Bill Harris suggested a motion to approve the LOR on behalf of Mountain RC&D, Ed Hendrick motioned, John Farrell seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.***

**Review/Approval of June Financial Reports:**

*District Operating Account*

*District Building Account*

*Supervisor Travel & Per Diem Account*

*CDO Account*

*District Reserve Account*

- ***Edgar Hendrick made a motion to approve the accounts, John Farrell seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.***

**Review/Approval of WVCA Co-Administered Funds:**

*June 2025*

- ***Steven Johnston made a motion to approve the Co-Administered Funds, Ron Testerman seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.***

**Items of Business:**

**Discussion of Payment Process (WVCA to SCD):**

Ed Hendrick initiated the discussion by stating that he was unclear about how the payment process works. Judith Lyons explained that the process begins with a work order. Typically, the process starts with Dave Parkulo and Judith Lyons mowing the dams twice a year as the budget allows. An estimate is provided for the work, and the West Virginia Conservation Agency also issues an estimate based on current conditions. This is the same procedure followed by Jacob Lavender. Once work is completed, the Administrative Specialist generates an invoice and sends it to Jacob Lavender for verification by the watershed manager. After verification, the check can be processed. Judith noted that work cannot proceed without a work order, as this complicates

payment processing and compliance. Jacob Lavender and Shane are responsible for generating work orders and have been involved with EWP projects. Dave Parkulo explained that during state emergencies and flood response work, Jacob sometimes experiences work overload, which can delay payment approvals. Dave suggested creating an alternative process to address delays, noting that WVCA has faced staffing shortages. Steven Johnston recommended authorizing an additional person to approve work if Jacob is unavailable. Lavender stated that he and his staff cover approximately 14 districts and agreed that while such a mechanism could help, recent delays were due to extraordinary circumstances, including flood work and limited staffing.

Judith Lyons acknowledged the challenges and agreed that better communication and internal process improvements are needed to avoid delays and cash flow issues for SCD. She emphasized that sponsor contributions and flood-related work have compounded the situation but assured that WVCA will work on improving the process. The discussion concluded with agreement to explore a backup approval mechanism and improve coordination to prevent future payment delays.

#### **Conference Room Sound System Discussion (Microsoft Teams/Video):**

Randall Patton initiated the discussion by expressing dissatisfaction with the quality of the sound system, noting previous unsuccessful attempts to address the issue, including an email he sent after receiving no response from WVCA officials. John Brown stated that he had not trained Jesus Nandi Roman on the system and acknowledged that proper training had not occurred. The conversation shifted to internet performance, with reports of slower-than-normal speeds. Jay Crump conducted multiple in-house speed tests, all yielding subpar results. The high number of connected devices was identified as a contributing factor to reduced bandwidth. Upgrades to the conference room have been made, but a mainline issue remains, as noted by Dave Parkulo. John Brown emphasized that the root problem starts with bandwidth, not equipment, and suggested a conversation with the internet provider. He also mentioned that one microphone did not work and proposed using an area microphone to improve sound pickup. Randall Patton noted that an estimate for equipment upgrades had been obtained. John Farrell clarified that the issue was the ability to hear during meetings, leading to a discussion on replacing handheld microphones with area microphones. John Brown recommended retaining the current system, as Jesus Nandi Roman had now been fully trained, but suggested enhancing the microphone setup to improve sound quality for both in-person and remote participants.

After testing, the system itself was determined to be functional; bandwidth limitations were the primary cause of poor performance. Chris Ellison, Jesus Nandi Roman, Dave Parkulo, and John Brown will address the internet issues and contact the provider. Randall Patton suggested adding a new Logitech speaker to complement the existing system, and Bill Harris supported adding new microphones. Plans were made to explore hardwiring the system to improve bandwidth and to consult Optimum about upgrading the internet service. John Brown will follow up on options

for flat microphones. Randall Patton concluded by stating he is satisfied with the current system as long as it works reliably. The matter was concluded.

**Site 12 Easement Violation Discussion:**

The board discussed an ongoing easement violation at Site 12, which has persisted for approximately two to three years. During the planning phase for a potential dam rehabilitation at the site, it was identified that a road had been constructed across the district's easement without proper authorization. Bill Harris explained the history of the issue, noting several unsuccessful attempts to contact the landowner. A new state law (Law 941) was referenced, which relates to dam agreements and changes in easement protection; however, it remains unclear whether the law affects the district's authority to enforce its easement rights.

Bill Harris stated that numerous letters have been sent to the landowner, but the situation remains unresolved and presents a regulatory gray area. Judith Lyons added that DEP previously allowed the landowner to cut through the spillway and requested DEP to re-examine this matter. Dave Parkulo expressed concern that a DEP representative had been present during prior work but did not follow up. A drainage issue at the site was also noted, which could worsen over time. The dam is subject to future rehabilitation, and part of that plan would require constructing a new access road above the spillway. Judith Lyons emphasized that the district has the right to exercise due diligence in addressing the matter.

Following discussion, ***Bill Harris suggested legal action. Ed Hendrick made a motion to authorize the district's attorney to take this matter to court to enforce the easement and remove the unauthorized road if necessary. John Farrell seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously. The discussion concluded.***

**Little Critters Traveling Petting Zoo (Marty Rae-Walker) (Fayette County):**

Marty Rae Walker presented a sponsorship request for the "Little Critters Traveling Petting Zoo," a community event to be held during the Meadow Bridge Homecoming on August 2nd. Marty Walker explained that the event is designed to engage children in agricultural education through activities such as animal interaction and contests. The total cost of the petting zoo is \$700, and Marty Walker had secured partial sponsorship, leaving a remaining balance of \$450.

Following discussion, ***Randy Prince made a motion to approve the remaining balance of \$450 from the CDO account to support the petting zoo. Ed Hendrick seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously. The discussion concluded.***

**Discussion: Garden Oaks EWP Stabilization Funding & Sponsorship:**

The board was informed that a homeowners association (HOA) adjacent to Brush Creek has expressed concerns about potential property loss due to erosion. It was clarified that this section of Brush Creek is **not part of the Southern Conservation District's maintenance responsibility**. Mercer County has stated that the issue falls under city jurisdiction because the area lies within city limits; however, the city is unwilling to sponsor any related work. Neither the county nor the city is willing to assume sponsorship responsibilities or provide the necessary funding. There is limited space between the creek and the backs of homes, making mitigation challenging and likely costly.

The HOA has not approached the district directly, and the vice chair emphasized that this update is for informational purposes only. No action was taken. The discussion concluded.

**State Fair Planning and Materials Distribution:**

The board discussed preparations for the upcoming State Fair. Promotional materials purchased by the district include approximately 1,000 pens, 1,000 keychains, 2,000 children's temporary tattoos, and other items, totaling around \$3,000 in expenditures (within the previously approved \$4,000 budget). It was agreed that half of these materials will be sent to the State Fair, with the remainder reserved for the County Fair and future events. Clyde Bailey will transport the items to the fair by August 5, and arrangements will be made to include rack cards at the booth. Volunteers are encouraged to assist at the booth during the Mercer County Fair, with setup scheduled for Thursday afternoon prior to the event. Katy McBride/NRCS will be present to help manage the booth. The booth will also feature a canopy (10x10 or 12x12) and chairs provided by the district.

Entertainment and activities during the fair will include a rodeo on Friday evening at 7:00 PM, a youth rodeo on Saturday morning at 10:00 AM, and musical performances throughout both days, including Buckeye Creek Band, The Church Sisters, and Chosen Road. Additional attractions include children's games, a magician, and other community activities. No motion was required; the board reached consensus on the plan. The discussion concluded.

**Special Board Meeting Adjournment**

## **Southern Conservation District Committee Meeting**

### **Building/Equipment:**

Dave Parkulo reported that the district purchased a new loader for \$55,000 and sold the old loader for \$4,000, as well as the dump truck and trailer for \$20,000. These transactions resulted in additional funds available for equipment. The new loader, with approximately 1,900 operating hours, is expected to provide long-term service. Maintenance work continues on district dams, with three more dams scheduled for repair this week before operations move to Western and then back to Brush Creek. Additional repairs are planned for areas such as Christian Fork, which has long-standing issues.

Discussion was held regarding work order requirements for project approvals. Dave clarified that he provides cost estimates for all work but does not always wait for a formal work order when work is routine or time-sensitive. It was noted that WVCA requires work orders for payment processing, and coordination will continue to ensure compliance and timely reimbursement. Building updates included the installation of a functional outdoor sign, which can be updated by Kayla to promote district-supported events. Board members were encouraged to coordinate with Kayla for event postings. Landscaping work around the building is ongoing, with plans to add timber borders for improved appearance. The emergency fire escape remains functional but will require attention in the future.

### **Finance:**

Randall Patton and Curtis Murphy reported on the renewal of four CD's. All CDs were renewed for **11-month terms** at an interest rate of **3.8503%**. FDIC insurance coverage was confirmed for the first two CDs at \$250,000 each. Exceptions were made by the bank to ensure coverage for the remaining two CDs. The board discussed that one of the CDs is designated as the District's CD, while the others are restricted O&M funds. It was noted that the renewals were processed without changes to principal allocation. Further clarification will be sought regarding whether any funds were moved to a restricted checking account.

### **AG Enhancement:**

Curtis Murphy reported that Brian Fry and Morgan Dial reported that the farm contract evaluations and scoring are nearly complete, and the contracts should be ready for board approval at the upcoming regular meeting. During the discussion, it was clarified that once the board approves the contracts, Curtis will be authorized to issue payments upon completion of the practices without requiring further board action. It was noted that allocation amounts have not yet been determined, but funding is expected by mid-August. The board acknowledged that approvals could be made on a pending allocation basis, if necessary, to allow participants to begin work without additional delay.

**319 Water Quality:**

Ron Testerman stated that all funds for 319 had been returned after the program's completion.

**Education & Marketing:**

The board discussed several ongoing and upcoming educational activities. Members were reminded to review the bicentennial sign at the Richmond Family Farm in Raleigh County, which is recognized as a 200-Year Bicentennial Farm. Updates were also provided on the photo contest. It was noted that photo release forms had been sent to the parents of contestants Zoe Bowling, Cedric, and Lydia for signature. These forms were required for the next phase of judging, though confirmation of whether this was a second round is still pending. The board reiterated its request that photos of all entries be taken or that the entries be returned for display during the awards banquet.

Additionally, it was reported that the Mercer County Farm Bureau recently held its annual picnic, which was well attended and featured a successful chef-prepared meal. Steve Johnson was noted as playing an important role in the event. Lastly, members were informed of the upcoming Field Day scheduled for September 9 at Kentland Farm, which several members expressed interest in attending. The Pioneer Valley Farm features an extensive orchard system, including apples, peaches, cherries, and nectarines, supported by a modern irrigation system, three water supply ponds, and upgraded infrastructure.

**Public Remarks/Comments:**

**Meeting Adjournment:**

*There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by the Chair.*

**Dates To Remember:**

SCD Regular Board Meeting: August 14, 2025 at 10:00 AM @ 463 Ragland Rd Beckley WV, 25801


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Respectfully Submitted:

**Randall Patton, SCD Chairman**

X 

**Edgar Hendrick, SCD Secretary**

X 

RH/EH/as

Recorded By; Jesus Nandi Roman, Administrative Specialist

**Motions Passed (Quick Reference)**

**1. Approval of LOR for Mountain RC&D**

Bill Harris suggested approval. Ed Hendrick moved to approve the Letter of Request (LOR) for Mountain RC&D. John Farrell seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

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**2. Approval of June Financial Reports**

Edgar Hendrick moved to approve the June financial reports as presented. John Farrell seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

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**3. Approval of WVCA Co-Administered Funds (June 2025)**

Steven Johnston moved to approve the WVCA co-administered funds for June 2025. Ron Testerman seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

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**4. Authorization to Take Site 12 Easement Violation to Court**

Ed Hendrick moved to authorize the district's attorney to proceed with court action to enforce the district's easement and remove the unauthorized road, if necessary. John Farrell seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

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**5. Approval of \$450 Sponsorship for Little Critters Traveling Petting Zoo**

Randy Prince moved to approve \$450 from the CDO account to sponsor the Little Critters Traveling Petting Zoo for the Meadow Bridge community event. Ed Hendrick seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

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