

Southern Conservation District

Special Board/Committee Meeting Minutes

August 26, 2025

10:00 AM

The Southern Conservation District Board of Supervisors met on Tuesday, August 26, 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:

Bill Harris, Vice Chair

Edgar Hendrick, Secretary

Randy Prince (Teleconference)

Rachel Prince (Teleconference)

John Farell

Steven Johnston

Curtis Murphy

Ron Testerman

Others:

Jesus Nandi Roman, WVCA

Dave Parkulo, SCD

Brian Fry, WVCA

Chris Ellison, WVCA

Katy McBride, NRCS

Open & Welcome:

SCD Vice-Chair, Bill Harris

Ron Testerman led in prayer, Steven Johnston led in the pledge.

Special Board Meeting Items of Business:

AgEP Budget Review/Correction (Cost Share 50%):

Brian Fry, WVCA

Brian Fry presented a detailed report regarding the AgEP budget and necessary corrections. He explained that, during a recent review, it was discovered that the maximum lime amounts had been miscalculated, resulting in each approval being doubled beyond the correct 50% cost-share rate. This error was promptly corrected, and all affected landowners were contacted individually by phone. Each was notified of the mistake, provided with their corrected cost-share rate, and issued updated approval letters reflecting the accurate figures. According to Mr. Fry, the responses from landowners were understanding, with some noting that the original figures had appeared higher than expected.

As a result of this correction, approximately \$10,710.55 in funds were freed, making an additional \$10,000 available for new approvals. Mr. Fry recommended that the Board allocate these funds toward approving the remaining unfunded applicants. Specifically, the proposal included five unfunded lime applicants, totaling \$4,002.35; one water system application for Mr. Jim Tolliver, totaling \$1,500.00; and two pond cleanout applications for Mr. David Sheaves and Mr. Judd Lindley, totaling \$5,000.00. Approval of these additional applicants would increase the total number of approved applicants for FY26 to 47.

The combined corrections and additional approvals resulted in total awarded project costs of \$63,900.98, with a district obligation of \$10,427.82, for a grand total of \$74,328.80. After these adjustments, a remaining balance of \$208.20 was left in the program budget. A copy of his report is attached below.

Steven Johnston made a motion to accept the new, corrected approvals, to cover all the Lime, and Unfunded applicants. Ron Testerman Seconded, motion carried.

Steven Johnston made a motion to adjourn the Special Board Meeting, Ron Testerman Seconded. Motion carried, Special Board Meeting adjourned at 10:13 AM.

Special Board Meeting Adjournment

Committee Meeting Items of Business:

Education & Marketing/Farm Field Days

Katie McBride was invited to present on behalf of the Education and Marketing Committee. She reported that the Appalachian Grazing Conference will be divided into three mini-conferences during the upcoming year, with one event scheduled for Friday, May 1, at the State Fairgrounds in Fairlea. She explained that while the Greenbrier Valley District is not in a position to assist, organizers are seeking support from neighboring districts, including the Southern Conservation

District, to provide manpower and logistical help. Responsibilities would include guiding participants, directing them to guest speakers, and assisting with general event coordination, though registration will be managed by the planning committee. McBride also noted that the conference is intended as a one-day event, likely held on the fairgrounds, with potential use of nearby facilities. Guest speakers are still being confirmed, though efforts are underway to secure an expert who spoke at a prior grazing conference and received strong reviews. In addition to formal presentations, the conference will also feature vendor displays and potential farm equipment demonstrations. Organizers are seeking both regional and local vendors to enhance the event. Because this is the first year of the split-conference format, the committee emphasized that this effort is experimental and will be adjusted in future years depending on its success. The Board discussed potential support and participation, with members raising questions about scheduling, the role of vendors, and whether local speakers might also be included to provide an Appalachian-oriented perspective on grazing practices. Members acknowledged the logistical challenges but recognized the importance of providing visible support. The consensus of the Board was to revisit the matter at a later meeting once additional details are finalized, with the understanding that a formal endorsement and potential budget or per diem considerations may be brought forward at that time.

Following this report, discussion turned to the possibility of hosting a local farm field day or open house. Members reviewed past successes of similar events held at barns and local farms, noting that successful field days require early and careful planning, coordination with vendors, and commitment from agencies such as NRCS. Suggestions included demonstrations of fencing, portable water systems, cross-fencing, chainsaw safety, and invasive species control. The Board also discussed the tradeoffs between hosting on a Friday, which may align with agency schedules, versus a Saturday, which could allow greater public participation. After further consideration, the Board reached consensus to tentatively plan an Open House and Farm Field Day on Friday, October 3, with further details to be finalized at the upcoming regular Board meeting. Plans will include identifying speakers, vendors, and demonstrations, as well as potential promotional efforts through media outlets. Members also discussed the possibility of offering small giveaways, such as fencing supplies, portable fencing kits, or donated items from local vendors, to encourage participation. Additional discussion addressed longer-term opportunities for educational outreach. Members considered the feasibility of reestablishing a tree sale, modeled after similar efforts by the Elk Conservation District, which would require careful coordination with nurseries and advance ordering. The Board also discussed leveraging available grant funds to support outreach, field demonstrations, or speaker costs. It was noted that while some opportunities may not be feasible for the current year, they remain viable for future planning.

The committee also received updates regarding the Raleigh County Fair scheduled for July 10 of the following year at the Armory in Beckley, which is expected to include expanded agricultural exhibits. Concerns regarding liability insurance requirements for both the Armory and vendors

were raised, and members agreed that further investigation into insurance coverage and potential grant support would be necessary before final commitments could be made. Finally, members discussed the FSA hay testing program, which encourages landowners to test forage quality as part of soil and nutrient management. It was noted that while the program may not be feasible for the current year, the District could consider supporting hay testing costs in future years, potentially through the Aggie P program or in partnership with other districts.

It was further suggested that the District explore providing a giveaway item at the event to increase engagement. Possible items mentioned included fencing materials, portable fencing kits, or even larger donated equipment such as a sprayer. Members noted that some materials are already available in inventory, including several rolls of portable fence wire, rope, and step-in posts, which could be combined into a useful package. Consideration was also given to contacting vendors to determine whether they might contribute donations or discounted supplies to support such a giveaway.

The Board also discussed the possibility of reinstating a tree sale similar to the program historically run by the Elk Conservation District. While members expressed interest, it was noted that tree sales require significant planning and coordination with nurseries, as well as specific pickup dates for customers. Because tree orders are typically taken months in advance and distributed in the late winter or early spring, such an effort would not be feasible for the current fall but could be considered for a future spring sign-up period. Members agreed that further information would be needed, and that consultation with districts currently running successful tree sales would be beneficial.

The consensus of the Board was that both the proposed Farm Field Day and the exploration of future outreach programs such as giveaways and tree sales represent worthwhile opportunities. Planning will continue in coordination with the Education and Marketing Committee, with updates to be provided at upcoming meetings.

AgEP Enhancement/Finance:

Curtis Murphy expressed its appreciation to Brian Fry for his diligence in correcting the recent error in lime cost-share approvals. Members noted that promptly communicating with cooperators when a mistake arises is the proper course of action and commended Brian Fry for issuing corrected letters without delay. It was further observed that all applications have now been rescored, contracts issued, and projects are ready to move forward. Mr. Dave confirmed that lime is in place and will soon be distributed, ensuring timely progress of the program.

Curtis Murphy also remarked that, while the oversight was unfortunate, such errors can occur and should serve as a reminder of the importance of thoroughly reviewing reconciliation reports. He emphasized that when reports are unclear, the Board should not hesitate to request additional explanation so that all members fully understand the figures being presented. With these comments, the discussion concluded, and there being no further business raised under finance, the Board proceeded to the next agenda item. Mr. Dave reported that sufficient funds were available in the checking account and the Sediment Reserve to cover current expenditures. He confirmed that Mercer County dam maintenance work is underway, with Brush Creek scheduled

as the next project. Funds for this work are already allocated from sponsor contributions and restricted reserve accounts. The last reconciliation indicated a balance of approximately \$14,000, with all items accounted for. Debris removal is also required on Brush Creek Channel, where boulders placed by locals have obstructed the waterway. Dave Parkulo noted that while unusual, the work will be addressed to maintain proper flow.

The Board also reviewed the status of CDs (certificates of deposit), which will not be available for renewal until June of the following year. Members agreed that if additional funds are required in the interim, one of the CDs could be cashed.

Building/Equipment:

Concerns remain regarding the internet connection. Coordination with Chris Ellison and Optimum is ongoing to verify whether the District is receiving the contracted service levels. Members agreed it is important to resolve this matter to ensure reliable connectivity for meetings and daily operations. Landscaping improvements and fire escape repairs are also planned, including replacement of the current structure with a spiral stair, according to Dave Parkulo. The District's farm tractor is undergoing service for fuel issues, but all other rental equipment, including seeders and no-till drills, remains operational. Seasonal mowing is largely complete, with Potomac Valley's contract work yielding a 48 percent profit margin. Invoices to partner districts remain outstanding but are expected to be resolved shortly.

The Board discussed the possibility of equipping loaders with scales but determined that approximating bucket weights would suffice for current needs. Additional maintenance items, such as minor parking lot crack sealing, will be completed before winter as routine expenses.

WVACD Membership Dues:

The Board reviewed the status of Association dues, noting that payment of \$5,000 must be remitted by September 1 in order for the District to remain in good standing. Due to prior delays with state LOR processing, funds had not yet been transferred into the appropriate CDO account. A check was signed and will be deposited immediately, after which the bookkeeper will prepare the dues payment for mailing. Arrangements were made to secure the necessary second signature so that the check can be sent by overnight mail to ensure timely receipt.

Meeting Adjournment:

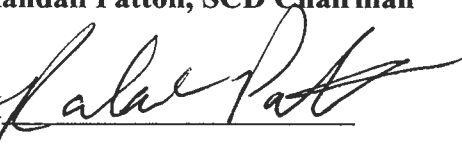
There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by the Vice-Chair.

Dates To Remember:

SCD Board Meeting: September 11, 2025 at 10:00 AM @ 463 Ragland Rd, Beckley WV, 25801

Respectfully Submitted:

Randall Patton, SCD Chairman

X  _____

Edgar Hendrick, SCD Secretary

X  _____

RH/EH/as

Recorded By: Jesus Nandi Roman, Administrative Specialist