

Southern Conservation District

Special Board Meeting/ Committee Meeting Approved Minutes

September 29, 2026

10:00 AM

The Southern Conservations District Board of Supervisors met on Tuesday, September 29, 2026, at 10:00am in the upstairs conference room of the district office located in Beckley, WV.

Those in Attendance

Supervisors

Chairman, Steven Johnston

Vice Chair, Bill Harris

Randall Patton

Martin West

Ron Testerman

Curtis Murphy

Bill Cook- Virtual

John Farrell- Virtual

Supervisors Absent

Randy Prince

Rachel Prince

Fred Halsey

Mark Harris

Others

Jeremy Salyer, WVCA

Dave Parkulo, SCD

Angela Feamster- Sawyers, WVCA

Lauren Holley, WVCA

Katie McBride- USDA/NRCS

Open & Welcome

Chairman Steven Johnston called the meeting to order at 10:00am.

Pledge & Prayer

Randall Patton led the pledge and Ron Testerman offered prayer.

Conservation Technicians Draft Letter

The Conservation Technicians were absent from the Special Board Meeting due to other work-related obligations. The discussion of the program will be added to October 8, 2026, Board meeting agenda.

Review for Gifts for Photo Contest Winners

The Board reviewed the advertisement for the WVACD Photo Contest, which listed awards of \$100.00 for first place, \$50.00 for second place, and \$25.00 for third place. It was noted by Ron Testerman that some participants incurred approximately \$60.00 in expenses. Upon review of the July Board Meeting Minutes there was a motion made by Bill Harris to approve the \$25.00 gifts for the winners. With Mark Harris seconding the motion. Bill Harris requested an amendment to the July motion so it would conform to the Photo Contest application provided by the WVACD Photo Contest.

Bill Harris moved to amend the original motion to conform to the Application for the Photo Contest Results. Randal Patton seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Heather Duncan Request for Grassland Committee

Heather Duncan with the WVACD requested one or two supervisors from each district to serve on the Grassland Committee. Bill Harris asked Ron Testerman if he would be interested in being on the Grassland Committee; Ron Testerman agreed to serve with Bill Harris serving as an alternate when needed.

Bill Harris called for motion and Randal seconded. Motion carried.

Conservation Related Instructions Classes within the District – Mark Harris Requesting 2 Classes Per Month for Reimbursement

The Board reviewed the request made by Mark Harris to reimburse for conservation related instructional classes given to the Southern District community. Chairman Steve Johnston stated that the classes would need to be related to conservation and that educational outreach would need to comply with district policy. He further stated that the Board would need information regarding the intended audience, date of the class, and educational materials provided. Bill Harris stated that the Policy would apply to any Board Member who wished to participate in educational outreach throughout the Southern Conservation District.

The motion to reimburse 2 classes per month given by Mark Harris was tabled pending the submission of further requests. No Action.

WVCA Easement Notification

Jeremy Salyer; WVCA, stated that information had been sent by the WVCA attorney to Southern Conservation District's Attorney John Wooten. He had not received correspondence from John Wooten and asked whether Dave Parkulo; SCD had any further updates from Mr. Wooten. Dave advised that the attorneys were working together and had requested information from the district that they did not have access to. He stated that there had not been substantial progress and that the attorneys were continuing to communicate regarding potential action concerning the easements. Jeremy Salyer stated that the Southern Conservation District would be the "Test Case" for determining how the new legislative rule concerning easements would be handled throughout the state. Dave and Jeremy stated that the matters remain a work in progress for WVCA and SCD. Dave reported that there was no final correspondence at this time.

No action.

WVCA Correspondence- Mowing of the Dams

Chairman Steve Johnston read a letter from the WVCA Executive Director Judith Lyons regarding the Southern Conservation Districts intent to mow the dams. The letter stated that the co-administered account would be placed on financial freeze and that SCD would no longer have the opportunity or authorization from the WVCA to perform work on the dams and channels.

The letter stated that the structures and channels would be contracted through the West Virginia State Procurement Office. It further referenced House Bill 5634, which was passed in March 2026 and became effective June 12, 2026, and stated that the districts would no longer have responsibility for dams, channels, dikes, and levees because ownership and responsibility had transferred to the WVCA.

Jeremy Salyer; WVCA, stated that the situation would be different if SCD were donating the mowing services and WVCA were not being charged. He explained if the Southern Conservation District paid for the work from the Co-Administered Account, it would be contrary to the legislative rule governing the funding, Legislative rule identified as 63CSR4.

Jeremy stated that the WVCA -placed a hold on co-administered funds after receiving SCD's letter of intent to perform the mowings on September 10, 2026. Bill Harris raised concern about farmers receiving payments through the Agricultural Enhancement Program. Jeremy explained that the next steps would depend on SCD's actions and stated that the WVCA might take action to have another district process the Agricultural Enhancement Program payments.

Jeremy stated that if SCD used co-administered funds to pay themselves. WVCA could review the action as misuse of funds and the matter could potentially result in legal proceedings. He further stated that WVCA could not prevent SCD from using the co-administered funds, but the

WVCA would not process checks for the district. Bill Harris asked whether another district would handle the payment processes, and Jeremy stated they could potentially.

Randal Patton asked for clarification regarding payments to farmers. Jeremy advised that payment would be made but it depended on the actions of the SCD. He advised that the SCD could potentially lose their Agricultural Enhancement Program. Randall stated that he had reviewed the legislative rule but did not fully understand it and believed the provision was not in the code. Jeremy advised that the legislative rule was part of the code.

Dave Parkulo, SCD, stated that the legislative rule must be agreed upon by the state committee representing both the WVCA and the SCD. Jeremy stated that the legislative rule became effective in 2023. Dave stated that there had been misuse or misunderstanding in the explanation of the legislative rule and SCD Attorney didn't agree with the wording of the Legislative rule.

Bill Harris asked whether the matter was intended to become part of a court matter. Jeremy responded that if any party suspected misuse of funds, WVCA would be required to report the matter to the State Auditor's office and an investigation group.

Dave returned to the issue of the wording of the legislative rule and stated that the concern involved WVCA's reluctance to pay what was considered an obligation because of the easements. He advised that there had been no final determination regarding the transfer of an invoice for responsibility for payment of the mowing.

Jeremy stated that he disagreed because there was no work order. Dave responded that there had been instances in which no work order was created and that, in those circumstances, the rule would not apply. Jeremy disagreed with that statement.

Randall Patton advised that the Board should request Attorney John Wooten's attendance at the October Board meeting so that he could advise the Board and respond to the matter. Dave stated that all but 1 of the mowings had been completed and that the agency was holding up payments for another program because of the mowing issue. Bill stated that the Board had approved the mowing in the August Board meeting, Randall Patton responded that payment had not been approved by the Board.

Bill Harris made a motion not to proceed with any further mowings until the Attorney's had met. No further action.

Travel and Per Diem

Chairman Steven Johnston initiated discussion regarding travel and per diem for supervisors. He stated that there were significant expenses associated with the account and that the Board needed to monitor travel expenses and per diem more carefully to conserve funds through the winter.

Randall Patton stated that, after speaking with Dave, he understood that the operating account was in good condition if they needed to borrow from that account and that the district should avoid restricting unnecessary activities regarding travel and per diem.

Chairman Steven Johnston questioned whether meetings held by supervisors within their own counties shouldn't be considered travel and suggested that supervisors not receive a full per diem for a 40-minute meeting. Jeremy stated that the district has its own policy regarding approved expenses and recommended reviewing and refining the Travel and Per Diem policy to ensure language is clear.

Randall Patton asked whether written clarification was needed for a supervisor who participates virtually in a meeting without being the appointed member of the committee. He stated that such participation would be on the supervisor's own time unless the Board approved reimbursement. He further stated that annual and quarterly events would need to be requested at a Board Meeting to be charged to the district.

Randall Patton clarified if he participated in a meeting attended by other supervisors, he would do so on his own time. If he wished to receive reimbursement for the meeting or event, Board approval would be required. He stated that a policy adjustment would address the issue.

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Randall Patton made a motion that Board approval would be needed to reimburse for travel and per diem. Bill Harris seconded.

Expenses for Farm of the Year

The Board discussed attending the quarterly WV Association of Conservation Districts meeting on October 29, 2026, including which supervisors would attend. Further discussion was deferred pending confirmation of the number of supervisors attending.

The Board also discussed expenses for the Southern West Virginia family participating in Farm of the Year. An amount would need to be specified to cover expenses associated with attendance, including lodging, reservation fees, and travel expenses.

The matter was postponed to October 8, 2026, Board Meeting for further review.

No motion. Postponed until the next regular Board meeting.

FY 27 AG-EP Publications

Chairman Steven Johnston stated that he was unsure what the Southern Conservation District had done previously regarding newspaper listings for co-operators receiving Ag-EP payments.

The board discussed placing sign-up information on the billboard but noted that newspaper listings had not previously been placed as paid advertisements. No action was required.

With no further business Randall Patton made a motion to adjourn the Special board meeting. Ron Testerman seconded; motion carried.

Adjournment of the Special Board Meeting

The Southern Conservation Committee Meeting

Chair- Bill Harris: Building

Bill Harris reported that the district was awaiting the contractor's bid to seal and restripe the parking lot of the SCD Office building. He stated that individuals had reported difficulty accessing the parking lot and that the district was working to address the issue as soon as possible.

Randall Patton asked whether anything had been done regarding the sanitary board. Dave advised that the city had not contacted him, but that the current deconstruction season was progressing and time was becoming limited. Dave stated that the issue had been ongoing for approximately five years.

Bill Harris asked whether the city could hire the SCD crew to address the issue. Dave stated that, if it were his crew, it would already have been addressed. He explained that the city was waiting for an engineer and had not contacted the district regarding corrective work. He was aware that flooding had affected Childers's Air Conditioning building.

Dave discussed the anticipated work but stated that he was uncertain about the city's plans for the project. Bill Harris advised that the district should reach out to the city. Dave stated that he would make contact and assumed the city had been notified because of the flooding at Childers's.

Bill Harris asked whether there were anticipated issues with the building's furnace before we entered the cold months. Dave stated that he could not anticipate any issues until the furnace season was underway.

Bill Harris also asked whether the parking lot sealing and restriping project would exceed \$5,000 and that any amount exceeding \$5,000 would require further board approval.

Chair- Randall Patton: Equipment

Randall Patton reported that, to his knowledge, all equipment was in good condition. He reviewed work completed by the SCD crew during the preceding two weeks.

The demolition project in McDowell County involved the removal of seven structures. Randall discussed the amount of work completed and the benefit of removing the structures from the roadside. He noted that a significant amount of trash was included in the projects and that two structures remained to be addressed, with work expected to begin in March 2027.

Randall and Dave stated that usable stone from one of the homes might be of value to the district. Bill Harris asked whether there would be an efficient way to transfer the stone without breaking it. The Chairman advised that the stone was heavy and would likely require additional equipment to load and transport, making the time and expense impractical.

Randall stated that approximately 10 tons of garage had been removed from the McDowell demolition project and that he had volunteer collecting trash from the creek. Forty bags were removed on Monday 9/27/2026. He emphasized the importance of the project to the town because the site was located directly off the main road.

Chair- Randall Patton: Finance

Randall stated that his primary financial concern was travel and per diem, which had been discussed in connection with the policy adjustment considered during the Special Board Meeting.

Chair- Ron Testerman: Ag Enhancement

Ron Testerman reported that the exigency program had ended and that the area was no longer experiencing drought conditions. He noted that Virginia remained under drought conditions.

Ron reported that he attended the Grassland Judging competition. Four teams participated; Ripley, Cabel, Nettler, Monroe and Tygart Valley. He stated that the teams finished in that order from awards. Ripley placed first and advanced to the Mid- America Grassland Management Contest in June 2027. He credited Katie McBride for doing a great job.

Chair- Mark Harris: Education

Mark Harris was absent due to other obligations. Bill Harris discussed Farm Field Days and the educational programming that could be offered at those events. Randall Patton commented positively on the previous event held at Ron Testerman's farm.

Bill stated that preparation should begin for the next Farm Field Day in Spring 2027. Potential educational topics included extended grazing, aerial drone spraying for weed and brush control, virtual fencing, and temporary or portable fencing. The Board also discussed conducting a fencing demonstration.

Curtis Murphy identified attendance as the primary challenge for primary Farm Field Days and emphasized the importance of encouraging participation. Bill discussed attendance at the

previous event and estimated approximately 10 participants. Ron Testerman estimated approximately 20 people in addition to Conservation District personnel. He emphasized the goal of attracting famers and their families, as well as other participants interested in learning about agricultural and conservation-related practices.

The Chairman stated that spring would be an appropriate time to host another Farm Field Day because fall events can be difficult for families to attend due to Fall activities.

Bill Harris stated that the district intends to continue expanding conservation education and providing information to the farming community. He suggested using sign ups at future events so participants could receive information about the topics and activities offered. He also recommended selecting a farm that is easily accessible to the public to encourage attendance.

Bill suggested that the Education Committee begin planning for the spring event and coordinate with other organizations and individuals to maximize participation. The chairman asked whether any additional education matters needed to be addressed. Bill suggested identifying conservation-related workshops, organizing educational materials, and completing the district's work in a manner that benefits the community.

Angela Sawyers-Feamster- Angela pointed out that she did notice an issue with the internet at the Southern Conservation District while she was providing coverage. Dave advised that the district employees didn't have this issue and the issue was caused by the agency's laptops coming in and out. Angela advised that while she has been here, she has had issues with internet connection also, not just the printer connection.

Dates to Remember

SCD Regular Board Meeting- October 8, 2026 @ 10am.

There being no further business, Randall Patton called to adjourn the Committee Meeting. Bill Harris seconded; The meeting was adjourned at 12:02pm

Respectfully Submitted,

X. 

Steve Johnston, SCD Chairman

SJ/as

Lime

<i>Name</i>	<i>County</i>	<i>Cost Share Amount Maximum</i>
Henry K. Cox Sr.	Mercer	\$ 1,372.80
Sam McKinney Jr	Fayette	\$ 807.60
Robert Scavilla	Summers	\$ 960.00
Dorry Bragg	Summers	\$ 2,070.00
Roland Osborne III	Fayette	\$ 2,500.00
Johnathan Cody	Fayette	\$ 645.60
Gladys Dale Richmond	Mercer	\$ 2,500.00
Frances Pugh	Fayette	\$ 2,400.00
Kitty Gunnoe	Raleigh	\$ 1,078.20
Janet Sue Mines	Summers	\$ 600.00
Anthony Raines	Fayette	\$ 582.00
Leslie sears	Raleigh	\$ 1,000.20
Christopher Blume	Summers	\$ 382.59
Donald R. Anderson	Raleigh	\$ 2,500.00
Wayne Rhodes	Fayette	\$ 1,527.60
John Taylor	Raleigh	\$ 619.80
Curtis Murphy	Mercer	\$ 2,221.20
Charles Hopkins	Mercer	\$ 2,192.40
George C. Ford	Fayette	\$ 866.40
David H. White	Fayette	\$ 212.40
David Mullins	Raleigh	\$ 2,500.00
		\$ 29,538.79

Exclusion Fence

<i>Name</i>	<i>County</i>	<i>Cost Share Amount Maximum</i>
James Bennett	Raleigh	\$ 2,500.00
Homer L. Plumley	Raleigh	\$ 1,748.00
		\$ 4,248.00

Pasture Division Fence

<i>Name</i>	<i>County</i>	<i>Cost Share Amount Maximum</i>
Sky Gwinn	Fayette	\$ 2,500.00
Leslie Wayne Sears	Raleigh	\$ 1,552.00
		\$ 4,052.00

Heavy Use Area Protection

<i>Name</i>	<i>County</i>	<i>Cost Share Amount Maximum</i>
Chase McLaughlin	Summers	\$ 2,000.00
Melvin Richmond	Raleigh	\$ 2,000.00
		\$ 4,000.00

Water System

<i>Name</i>	<i>County</i>	<i>Cost Share Amount Maximum</i>
Tracy Grimmett	Summers	\$ 2,000.00
		\$ 2,000.00

Pond Cleanout

<i>Name</i>	<i>County</i>	<i>Cost Share Amount Maximum</i>
Richard Barnes	Mercer	\$ 2,500.00
Ronald Ward	Fayette	\$ 2,500.00
James J. Meadows	Raleigh	\$ 2,500.00
John Ferrell	Summers	\$ 2,500.00
Nakeisha Gill	Summers	\$ 2,500.00
Jackie Gill Sr	Summers	\$ 2,500.00
		\$ 15,000.00

Invasive Species

<i>Name</i>	<i>County</i>	<i>Cost Share Amount Maximum</i>
Karen Thornhill	Mercer	\$1,000.00
Mark Meador	Summers	\$1,000.00
Debra Berry	Raleigh	\$1,000.00
		\$3,000.00

Winter Grazing

<i>Name</i>	<i>County</i>	<i>Cost Share Amount Maximum</i>
Pamela Bailey	Fayette	\$500.00
		\$500.00

Note: Nutrient Management Applications will be approved at the December 2026 Board Meeting.