

Southern Conservation District

Committee Meeting Minutes

April 29, 2025

10:00 AM

The Southern Conservation District Board of Supervisors met on Tuesday, April 29, 2025, at 10:00 am in the conference room of the district office located at **463 Ragland Road, Beckley, WV 25801.**

Those in attendance:

Supervisors

Randall Patton, Chairman

Bill Harris

Randy Prince (Teleconference)

Rachel Prince (Teleconference)

John Farell (Teleconference)

Steven Johnston

Ron Testerman

Ed Hendrick

Curtis Murphy

Others

Dave Parkulo, SCD

Jesus Nandi Roman, WVCA

Open & Welcome

SCD Chair, Randall Patton

SCD Chairman Randall Patton called the meeting to order at 10:01 AM.

Updates on Stairwell:

Randall Patton opened a discussion on the stairwell. Mr. Patton stated that contractors had been contacted, but most declined the work due to the nature of the project. Mr. Parkulo provided information on the pricing of supplies needed for construction. The proposed plan includes installing a spiral staircase and deck to increase accessibility and usability. Mr. Harris reminded Mr. Parkulo that, if materials are under \$5,000, he could proceed with the project without full board approval. If a full estimate becomes available, it could be added to a future board meeting for formal consideration.

Additional discussion included plans to install the staircase after summer, exiting straight to the sidewalk to avoid underground lines. Dawn, a certified welder, may fabricate an exterior railing if needed.

Updates on USDA Lease Extension:

Bill Harris informed the group that communication regarding the USDA lease extension had been limited and that prior correspondence from lease contracting officer Antonio Rodriguez had been directed to Dave Parkulo. With a \$2 per square foot increase already approved, the committee agreed that Randall Patton would follow up with the USDA on behalf of SCD to verify lease terms and contact status. The lease extension will provide USDA with time to develop a new lease and assess any building-related needs, including required improvements or renovations under Homeland Security or federal building compliance.

Excavator and Equipment Update

The District's excavator was declared a total loss by insurance. Mr. Parkulo stated that the district is awaiting a final valuation from the insurance carrier, which will be based on comparable equipment specifications and usage hours. A replacement machine is estimated to cost \$75,000 to \$80,000. In the meantime, a rental unit may be necessary at a cost of \$5,000 per month.

Discussion also touched on potential sponsor funding timelines and future purchases. Mr. Patton addressed the need for pre-approval of large equipment expenditures, while Mr. Parkulo shared that a rental unit would help maintain operations while the insurance process is underway.

Building Committee Update – Chair: Bill Harris

Dave Parkulo reported that the downstairs restrooms continued to experience recurring sewage issues. The primary concern appeared to be weak flushing and pipe blockages, potentially caused by the flushing of wipes. The committee discussed the possibility of replacing the existing toilets with commercial-grade models to improve flush strength. Alternate solutions, such as grinder toilets or pipe rerouting, were also considered.

Mr. Harris recommended starting with toilet replacements before pursuing more invasive or costly measures. Additional conversation occurred regarding cast iron deterioration and long-term solutions.

- Mr. Harris provided additional context on the sewage issue (additional information included in sub note) and noted possible long-term pipe deterioration from aged cast iron. He and Mr. Parkulo reviewed options for rerouting sewer lines through less congested utility corridors in the building. The committee also discussed exterior stormwater runoff affecting district property. Water from the Sanitary Board system continues to drain through district property into a mine shaft. Attorney John Wooton will meet with the Sanitary Board to address these concerns and explore whether cost-sharing or mitigation measures can be pursued. The DEP may be contacted if necessary, although committee members agreed that doing so prematurely could trigger regulatory restrictions.

Finance/AGeP Committee Update – Chair: Curtis Murphy

Mr. Murphy reminded the group that invoices for the next fiscal year need to be sent to Mercer County and the County Commission. The Sanitary Board has already submitted \$20,000 for the current year. A request to the City is planned for \$15,000 each for Little Whitestick and Cranberry, totaling \$30,000. Mr. Murphy also addressed concerns about payment processing delays and the possibility of creating a separate account to manage sponsor contributions. Legal review will be conducted by Attorney Wooten prior to implementation.

- Mr. Murphy reported on recent funding policy changes. It was clarified that state dollars are no longer matched and must be spent differently than in prior years. He emphasized the importance of spending down sponsor dollars to avoid future reductions in funding allocation.

Education & Marketing/319 Water Quality Update – Chair: Ron Testerman

The committee discussed opportunities for future educational events. A fall field day was proposed, potentially to be held during the Mercer County Farm event on August 1–2. Mr. Testerman suggested that a \$3,000 GLCI grant could support such outreach. West Virginia State Conservation Camp, held at Camp Caesar, was also mentioned. The board expressed interest in sponsoring students from each county, with tuition set at \$275 per camper. Other ideas included chainsaw safety workshops and community education booths.

- Mr. Testerman provided a brief update regarding the ongoing photo contest and Bicentennial Farm recognition program. He noted that contestants are still in the process of submitting their photographs for review. Additionally, the district is preparing to forward signage and related materials for the recognized farms in

anticipation of the upcoming State Fair. Mr. Testerman proposed coordinating with staff to schedule a quarterly meeting to finalize logistics and ensure that all necessary items are submitted to the state in a timely manner.

Committee Meeting Adjournment:

The committee meeting concluded informally without motions, as no formal board action was required.

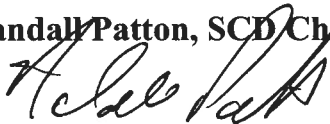
Dates to Remember:

SCD Regular Board Meeting – May 8, 2025 @ 10:00 AM

Respectfully submitted:


Randall Patton, SCD Chairman

X



Ed Hendrick, SCD Secretary

X



RH/EH/as

Recorded by: Jesus Nandi Roman, Administrative Specialist