

Southern Conservation District

Committee Meeting Minutes

November 25, 2025

10:00 AM

The Southern Conservation District Board of Supervisors met on Thursday, November 25, 2025, at 10:00 AM in the conference room of the District Office located @ **463 Ragland Rd, Beckley, WV 25801.**

Those in Attendance:

Supervisors:

Randall Patton, Chairman (Teleconference)

Bill Harris, Vice-Chair

Edgar Hendrick, Secretary

Randy Prince (Teleconference)

Rachel Prince (Teleconference)

Curtis Murphy

Ron Testerman

Others:

Jesus Nandi Roman, WVCA

Brain Fry, WVCA

Morgan Dial, WVCA

Open & Welcome

Bill Harris, Vice-Chairman

Southern Conservation District Committee Chair Updates

Cancellation Update:

Brian Fry, WVCA

The committee began by reviewing current AgEP activity. The items listed at the top of the report were previously approved by Curtis under delegated authority, and those approvals are already in place. The primary update concerned participant Shane Huffman, who informed Brian Fry via phone that he intends to cancel his application. As a result, no approvals related to his request can be made at this meeting, but the matter will appear on the agenda for the next board meeting. By that time, Fry expects to have an updated list of completed practices, remaining work, and available funds to inform decisions regarding a potential second signup period. At present, the committee will continue as though a second signup will occur, pending confirmation at the next board meeting.

The deadline for the first signup is December 12, 2025, when all required paperwork must be submitted. This falls the day after the next board meeting. The District will need to schedule a special meeting in December to finalize details related to practice completion and spring signup planning. Spring signup is tentatively scheduled for the first two weeks of January. Nutrient management practices remain under consideration. Current requirements include a valid soil test with a pH of at least 5.8. The soil test must be in hand at the time of signup; a test that has been submitted but not yet returned does not meet the requirement. Frost seeding does not require a soil test, but nutrient management does. The Board discussed the practical challenges of obtaining updated soil samples at this time of year and clarified that if a producer's pH is below 5.8, lime must be applied and a new soil test completed after it has taken effect. Because the December 12 deadline falls after the December 11 board meeting, the committee anticipates the possible need for a special meeting to review completed practice totals and remaining funds before finalizing the spring signup approach.

Equipment:

Randall Patton, SCD

There were no equipment updates to report; Dave Parkulo indicated that everything is running smoothly, although he is off this week for hunting. Randall noted that none of the project sponsors have submitted their annual contributions, and he, Dave, and Ed coordinated during

check signing to prepare follow-up emails requesting payment from all sponsors except the State. These unpaid contributions are for the FY 2025–2026 cycle, and delinquent entities include the Mercer County Commission, Raleigh County Commission, the City of Beckley, and the Beckley Sanitary Board. The committee also discussed the easement violation at Site 12; Dave has been communicating with the District’s attorney, John Wooten, who is expected to pursue legal action to compel removal of the encroachment. An agenda item will be added for the next meeting to provide an update on both the easement issue and the travel per diem matter. Ed Hendrick then presented information on a potential purchase of certified portable livestock scales for the District’s equipment rental program.

The committee discussed possible costs—estimated up to \$45,000—potential rental rates, expected usage by farmers and 4-H families, and whether a staff operator would be required. The vendor has offered a possible discount and could provide a presentation; further analysis on pricing, anticipated demand, warranty, and operational logistics will be compiled for discussion at the next meeting. The committee also reviewed outstanding sponsorship payments. Raleigh County and the Sanitary Board have not contributed this year; previous paperwork was misplaced, and updated documents were resent by email last week. The Sanitary Board did previously pay \$10,000 each for Cranberry Creek, and the City of Beckley paid \$5,000 for one project, but no FY 2025–2026 contributions have been received from other entities. Mercer County’s status is partially confirmed; they paid one recent invoice, but the Brush Creek sponsorship request for \$35,000 was re-sent and remains outstanding. The committee will gather a complete sponsorship update for the next board meeting and determine any needed follow-up with county and city agencies, including potential re-issuance of O&M agreements or hand-delivered packets, recognizing that misplacement of mailed documents has been a recurring issue.

Building:

Bill Harris, SCD

The committee next discussed building matters. Jesus Nandi Roman reported that the heating system on the lower left side of the building (NRCS/area office side) is not working properly; Childers has provided an estimate of approximately \$4,500 to complete the repairs. Because the cost is under \$5,000, Dave Parkulo has authority to proceed, and the work is already in motion; this report was provided for committee awareness, and a status update will be given at the

December board meeting. The committee then revisited earlier discussions about minor building upgrades, including painting and updating lighting in the foyer and hallway between the main lobby and the downstairs meeting room/elevator area. Dave Parkulo will obtain cost estimates for paint and modern lighting (e.g., updated fixtures) for consideration at the December board meeting.. The committee also briefly reviewed the federal lease extension for the USDA agencies in the building, noting that the parties have agreed in principle to a \$2.00 per square foot increase and that required security upgrades will be paid for by the federal government; however, the District is still waiting for the formal lease extension paperwork, which will carry the existing lease beyond its current 2026 expiration date. Parking issues were also discussed: employees of the neighboring Childers facility have been routinely using a significant portion of the District's parking lot, including multiple vehicles along the street-facing side, leaving limited spaces for building tenants. Additional concerns include a recurring problem with one vehicle regularly occupying two parking spaces and ongoing delays by the Sanitary Board in repairing and resurfacing the lot, despite prior commitments and design discussions. The committee agreed that "Parking lot repair and outside use of the parking lot (including multiple-space parking)" should be placed on the agenda for further board discussion, including options for controlling or potentially charging for outside parking, balanced against liability concerns related to flooding and lot condition.

Finance:

Curtis Murphy, SCD

Under finance, Curtis reported no immediate upcoming financial actions until June or July, when the District's certificates of deposit will mature. The Board noted that by that time they should have a clearer picture of sponsor contributions for the current fiscal year, which will guide decisions on whether to renew CDs or convert a portion into available funds for operational needs. At present, the restricted O&M checking account holds approximately \$14,000, with three CDs containing the remainder of restricted funds. Once the checking balance is depleted, the District would either need to cash a CD early—incurring a penalty—or rely on timely sponsor contributions until the CDs mature, at which point funds can be redistributed according to projected O&M needs for the next year.

Members emphasized that restricted O&M funds may only be used for O&M purposes and cannot support equipment purchases or unrelated District activities. The Board expressed

concern that if sponsors do not remit their commitments, O&M work could stall; however, they also noted that accumulated balances can create difficulties when dealing with the State, as unused restricted funds can lead to the perception that the District does not need support. Going into next year, the Board will need to address the low O&M checking balance and determine how best to manage CDs and sponsor contributions to meet upcoming workload demands.

Ag Enhancement:

Curtis Murphy, SCD

The committee then returned to AgEP business. It was noted that Curtis Murphy can handle contract cancellations under delegated authority, and the Board briefly reviewed whether he or the full committee should review cancellation documents; Curtis will proceed, and members may review them as needed. The next AgEP State Committee meeting is scheduled for December 15, and the Board of Supervisors will need to include the AgEP 2026–2027 program on the upcoming board agenda to determine how the District’s representative should vote on proposed practice amendments, revised ranking criteria, and the State Committee’s recommended revised allocation formula. The proposed formula would shift funding toward districts with a higher number of unfunded applications and reduce allocations for districts that do not use all of their AgEP funds. The State Committee noted that some districts continue to return approximately \$100,000 in unused funds each year. However, several districts—including the Southern Conservation District—express concern that the new formula may penalize districts that fund many of their own applications with District dollars and therefore show fewer “unfunded” applications. The District has not received any data showing how the proposed formula would actually affect individual district allocations, despite repeated requests.

The Board directed that the District obtain this information before the December board meeting so the Supervisors can give formal voting instructions. Brain Fry will contact Cindy Shreves, the State’s AgEP program lead, to request: (1) an analysis showing how the proposed allocation formula would impact each district’s funding; and (2) the most recent versions of all proposed practice amendments, ranking criteria, and allocation formula documents. Curtis Murphy, Ron Testerman, and Randall Patton are to be copied on the correspondence. Once the information is received, the Board will review it at the December meeting and determine how its representative should vote at the December 15, 2025 State AgEP Committee meeting. The committee noted that

further discussion on the spring signup may be required after the board meeting, including the possibility of a special meeting.

Education & Marketing:

Ron Testerman, SCD

Under Education and Marketing, Ron Testerman reported that he met with the Superintendent of Summers County Schools, who presented cash awards to student winners of the photo contest. Homeschool students also participated and expressed enthusiasm about future involvement. Ron Testerman also met with Davin White to review and document the District's feed pad project completed by Dave Parkulo and his crew; Devin prepared a report and photos that may be used to present the project as a demonstration model elsewhere in the state. The committee briefly discussed the feed pad's performance, manure handling, and its impact on water quality by providing a clean feeding area during wet periods.

The Board next received an update on the technical assistance grant application being prepared in coordination with Katie McBride, Heather Duncan, and the WV Association. Heather is assembling the packet, including projected practice numbers and estimated resource benefits. The application is due the same day as the next board meeting. The Board has already authorized moving forward with the grant and designated authority for required signatures. If awarded, the grant—funded at 80% by NRCS with a required 20% District match—could total around \$100,000 and support hiring a technical assistance position, with in-kind contributions such as workspace, mileage, and computing resources. One potential applicant is already interested pending recertification. The Board will receive a full update at the December 11 meeting. Regarding the District Christmas gathering, arrangements are being finalized with Twin Falls Resort State Park for Tuesday, December 16, pending confirmation of availability. The event is planned as an evening meal with a simple program. Morgan also provided an update that several AgEP participants have formally canceled their contracts—Robert Huffman, Carl Plumley, Loblolly Farm, Shane Huffman and Mark Lafferty—with one additional participant still unconfirmed. These cancellations total approximately \$9,840.00, mostly due to health or financial issues. Curtis Murphy will sign the cancellation letters, and the updated list will be filed with the minutes.

Meeting Adjournment:


As no official business was conducted, no motion to adjourn was required. The meeting concluded at 12:33 p.m. EST.

Dates To Remember:

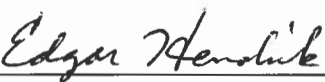
SCD Regular Board Meeting: December 11, 2025 at 10:00 AM @ 463 Ragland Rd WV, 25801.

Respectfully Submitted: Jesus Nandi Roman, West Virginia Conservation Agency,
Administrative Specialist.

F. William Harris, SCD Vice-Chairman

X 

Edgar Hendrick, SCD Secretary

X 

BH/EH/JNR