

Southern Conservation District

Committee Meeting Minutes

May 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:

Randall Patton, Chair

Edgar Hendrick, Secretary

Randy Prince (Teleconference)

Rachel Prince (Teleconference)

John Farell (Teleconference))

Steven Johnston

Curtis Murphy

Ron Testerman

Others:

Jesus Nandi Roman, WVCA

Dave Parkulo, SCD

Brian Fry, WVCA

Open & Welcome:

SCD Chair, Randall Patton

Committee Meeting Items of Business:

Equipment:

Randall Patton

The Board held an extensive discussion regarding the West Virginia Conservation Agency's response to the District's inquiry about performing district-related maintenance work. Dave Parkulo reported that the agency's position restricts the District crew to working within its own boundaries, but he challenged this interpretation by citing WV State Code §5-22-1, which permits state agencies to enter into direct agreements with political subdivisions. Board members noted that this statutory provision should technically allow the District to participate in competitive state bidding processes for contracts in neighboring areas, such as the Potomac Valley and Western Districts, as no conflict of interest or insider knowledge exists. The Board expressed frustration with the state agency's reluctance to utilize the District's specialized slope-mowing equipment and experienced personnel, noting that transitioning all out-of-district work to private contractors via the state procurement process would be less cost-effective for taxpayers and could result in local layoffs. Concerns were also raised regarding the State Conservation Committee's handling of the fund and easement transfers under House Bill 5364. Supervisors noted that, because the legislation does not take effect until June 12, the state cannot legally mandate the release of funds or begin easement modifications before that date. The Board expressed dissatisfaction with the WVACD for a lack of guidance and leadership during the transition, emphasizing that several million dollars across the state's 14 districts are being consolidated without clear tracking safeguards for local county and municipal sponsors. The Board reiterated that local sponsor funds, such as those from Mercer County, must be strictly accounted for and protected from co-mingling in a generalized state account. Financially, the Board reviewed outstanding reimbursements owed by the state agency, totaling \$167,830 for projects to be completed. This slow payment of invoices, compounded by the temporary absence of the state's work-order personnel, has reduced the District's primary operating balance to approximately \$50,000, straining upcoming payroll and fuel expenses. The Board discussed withholding the mandated transfer of local O&M funds as leverage until the state fully settles its outstanding invoices, or alternatively, utilizing its dual-signature authority to write checks directly from the project account to reimburse the District for completed work. To stabilize the immediate cash flow before the next meeting on June 12. Dave Parkulo was instructed to schedule a meeting with legal counsel, John Wooten, to clarify bidding eligibility under the state code before the next session.

Building:

Bill Harris

Dave Parkulo reported on an emergency building maintenance issue involving the FSA air conditioning system, noting that the outside unit had failed completely. Due to the urgent nature of the situation and its impact on the tenants, Parkulo authorized the immediate replacement of the system at a cost of \$6,347.00 without prior Board approval, as the unit was older and had already incurred significant repair costs.

AgEP:

Brian Fry/Curtis Murphy

Brian Fry presented the cost-share report for May 26, 2026, noting that there were no new payment approvals or cancellations for board action. Under delegated authority, Curtis Murphy approved nutrient management payments on May 22, 2026, for Robert Welch, Greg Lilly, and Julee Farlee, and it was reported that all current nutrient management and frost seeding contracts are now complete. To date, the district has received 25 of 28 required nutrient management landowner agreements. Total expenditures reached \$26,432.88, which includes \$24,693.81 in nutrient management funds and \$1,739.07 for forest stewardship. As of May 22, there were 26 total sign-ups for FY27, and two drought program applications for Kenneth Meador Jr. and Billy E. Johnson were approved under delegated authority for a maximum cost-share of \$750.00 each. Additionally, the draft for the FY28 New Farmer Program was reviewed, establishing a 75% cost-share rate not to exceed \$10,000.00 for perimeter fencing and water systems. Program criteria mandate that participants must have a registered farm through the FSA within the Southern Conservation District, that livestock be present, and that all practices be completed within one year by the Southern District crew to ensure correct implementation. A copy of Fry's report is attached below.

Education & Marketing:

Ron Testerman

Ron Testerman informed the Board about recent educational and outreach activities within the District, noting strong turnout for the land-judging and homesite-evaluation contests, with approximately 25 students from five local schools participating. Despite the good turnout, engagement on the SCD photo contest was low, with only three students submitting photographs. Additionally, the Farm Bureau mobile agriculture education science lab visited Mapscott Elementary and Daniels Elementary schools, and the visit was highly successful and well-received by school administrators, who expressed appreciation for the District's financial support. Staff noted that securing dates for the mobile lab requires a significant lead time, often necessitating school sign-ups one to two years in advance. Following the outreach updates, the Board initiated a discussion on the state association's annual membership dues to gauge the supervisors' perspective on the expenditure; however, the conversation was tabled until the following Board meeting.

Meeting Adjournment:

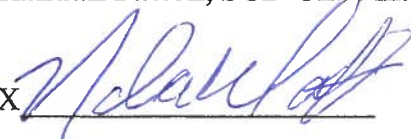
There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by the Chair.

Dates To Remember:

SCD Board Meeting: June 11, 2026, 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

May 26, 2026, CS Report

1. Payment Approvals (M)

- None

2. Cancelations for Approval (M)

- None

3. Payment Approvals Made by Curtis Murphy with delegated Authority

- NM – Robert Welch, Cost Share amount \$1,034.00 – Approval date 5/22/26
- NM – Greg Lilly, Cost Share Amount \$353.25 - Approval date 5/22/26
- NM – Julee Farlee, Cost Share Amount \$267.49 – Approval date 5/22/26

4. All the Nutrient Management and Frost Seeding contracts are completed.

5. Landowner Agreements

- To date, 25 of 28 Landowner Agreements for Nutrient Management have been received.

6. Funds spent to date – NM \$24,693.81 State Funds that needed spent - \$21,392.14

FS \$ 1,739.07

Total spent - \$ 26,432.88.

7. Total sign-ups for FY-27 as of Friday 5/22/26.

26

8. I have had two drought sign-ups, with a max cost share of \$750.00 and Curtis with delegated authority approved these two on 5/22/26

Kenneth Meador Jr.

Billy E. Johnson

New Farmer Program FY 28 Draft

1. Practice cost-share

- 75%
- NTE - \$10,000.00

2. Practices offered

- Perimeter fencing, (No boundary fencing allowed)
- Water System may include spring development, pump from pond, pond cleanout, public water hook-up, pipeline, fittings and one water trough with HUAP.

3. Practice Deadline and procedures

- All practices must be completed within one year of SCD approval.
- All practices will be completed and approved by the district crew.

4. Program requirements

- Must be a registered farm through FSA
- The farm must be located in a county within the Southern Conservation District.
- There must be livestock present on the farm to receive the cost-share.
- All work shall be done by the Southern District crew to ensure correct practice implementation.