



GSWCC BOARD MEETING MINUTES
August 18, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.
Jekyll Island Club Resort & Via Zoom

TIME AND PLACE OF THE MEETING:

The Board Meeting for the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission was held on Monday, August 18, 2025 at the Jekyll Island Club Resort in conjunction with the GACD Annual Meeting and via Zoom.

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION:

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Bob Martin at 10:00 a.m. Deputy Director Robert Amos gave the invocation.

The following board members were in attendance: Chairman Bob Martin, Vice Chairman Vikki Consiglio, and Jim Waters. The following board members were in attendance via zoom: Edwin Nix and Jason Winters. A quorum was established.

Supervisors in attendance: George Kelecheck and Jacob Bailey, Rockdale County Supervisors and Ellis Lamme, Gwinnett County Supervisor.

Partners in attendance: Jake Ford and Brian Ponder GACD, Tansel Hudson, NRCS and Dennis Brown, GA RC&D,

Members of the Public in attendance: No one attended.

Members of the Commission attending: Mitch Attaway, Executive Director, Robert Amos, Deputy Director, Josh Jackwood, Region I Representative, Jennifer Standridge, Region II Representative, Lindsey Smith, Region II Resource Assistant, NancyAnne Conner, Region III Representative, Michelle Conner, Region IV Representative, and Leslie Peterson Region IV Resource Specialist. Attending members of the Commission in attendance via zoom: Ben Ruzowicz, Urban Program, Ben Hyer, Rural Project Manager, Greg Walker, Rural Project Manager, Marla Whittington, Financial Analyst, and Jacqueline Holt, Administrative Assistant.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Chairman Martin asked for approval of the minutes of the 2nd submission as corrected for the June 10, 2025 meeting. A motion by Vikki Consiglio to approve the corrected minutes, seconded by Jason Winters, passed, without opposition.

Vikki Consiglio stated she would like to add The Plans of Work to the agenda. Chairman Martin called for a motion to add The Plans of Work to the agenda. Vikki Consiglio made a motion to approve the agenda with the addition of the Plans of Work, seconded by Edwin Nix, passed, with no opposition.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT BY MITCH ATTAWAY:

OLD BUSINESS:

None.

HUMAN RESOURCES:

Mitch stated there is one outgoing employee, Lindy Bates, a plan reviewer on Ben Ruzowicz's team. He said Ben is seeking a replacement.

FINANCIAL REPORT:

Mitch stated that the staff developed a new financial format to help the Board. He presented a color coded slide presentation and said the first category reflected payroll, benefits, per diem, and travel and should be self-explanatory.

He said the yellow section was the GSWC Regular Operations for utilities, rent, etc. He continued stating the orange section was for Ben Ruzowicz's program and the green section was for Conservation with the last section for Watershed Dams. He mentioned the Board packets included a chart referring to the financial report.

Mitch presented a calendar with key dates regarding payments. He stated the previous system required requisitions be sent to headquarters by email then have the requisition paid. He said the new folder system allows everyone access to the requisition folder and requisitions can be placed in the folder at any time. He said with this new process staff can have their requisitions in by 5:00 p.m. on Monday and Marla can process them on Tuesday with payment on Thursday. He stated this process should have all payments made within 10 days. He stated that after processing the payments, Marla will then give him everything she has processed so that he can be compare to what has been paid.

Mitch stated the monthly P-Card statement should be presented by the 15th of the month and Marla will request that Robert Amos and Andy Pope present their P-Card statements to her for payment.

Mitch stated the quarterly per diem has always been paid on a quarterly basis but payments may not have been consistent. He stated the per diem payments should be processed the second week following the end of the quarter,

Mitch discussed the yearly close out and stated that this should happen by the end of March, 2026. He said he has asked Department Managers to have their budget projections submitted by the end of March, 2026 and all requisitions will need to be presented for payment by the first of May, 2026. He said the Agency will be switching from PeopleSoft to Next Gen on by April 1, 2026, and will be closing the budget out in a new system

Vikki Consiglio stated that she appreciated all the updates and information submitted will be very helpful when Board members get phone calls and questions from district supervisors regarding such.

Mitch indicated this was implemented to make the procedures clear.

NEW BUSINESS:

Mitch updated the Board of potential updates to the Athens Office and noted the upgrades the Landlord will be making with the \$200 month increase in Rent:

- a. Replace the carpet in the hall
- b. Fix the erosion issues from a neighboring property
- c. Clean the gutters
- d. Fix the damage to the wood soffits and under pinning

Jake Ford (GACD) stated that GACD owns property in Oconee County and their long-term goal is to build a facility. He mentioned there would be a good opportunity to rent the facility to the GSWCC. He said the GACD would like input from the GSWCC regarding in the design of the facility.

Mitch stated that GSWCC will be at the GA National Fair and the Sunbelt with GACD and other partners and said any Board member that would like to attend either event were welcome.

Vikki Consiglio asked if the booth would be shared. Mitch stated at the National Fair GSWC would share with GACD. He said at the Sunbelt the USDA will have a big tent so GSWCC will have their own booth under the USDA tent.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR'S REPORT BY ROBERT AMOS:

APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS:

Robert Amos stated Limestone Valley has one additional appointment - John Lewis Tatum, Donna Jean Hughes, and Phil Anthony Mullinax is the chosen appointment.

Robert stated there were 3 resignations which include Jerry Holcomb, Coastal, Jerry Edwards, Limestone Valley, and Bill Barrett, Ohoopie River. He stated with the resignation of Jerry Holcomb, Coastal SWCD resigning he hopes Mr. Holcomb will continue to give his support and guidance.

Robert stated a list of the appointments and resignations were in the Board packet.

Chairman Martin asked for a motion to approve the appointments and resignations. A motion by Jason Winders to approve the appointments and resignations, seconded by Edwin Nix, passed with no opposition.

UPDATES:

Robert gave a report for each Regional Representative:

Josh Jackwood, Region I Representative, worked to obtain his CPESC certification. Robert stated this was a challenging undertaking as he had done it himself and he knew it was a hard goal to accomplish and he wanted to recognize Josh' hard work on obtaining this certification.

Jennifer Standridge, Region II Representative will be co-hosting 2 Envirothon competitions this year with the state finals being at the Okefenokee Swamp.

NancyAnne Conner, Region III Representative will be hosting a Small Farm Conference with the Chestatee RC&D;

Ben Roberts, Region V Representative and Jim Friese, Region V Resource Assistant have received their Level II plan reviewer certification and will begin to review plans in their area.

Michelle Conner, Region IV Representative hosted NRCW.

Robert said he and Michelle went to the NRCW awards ceremony last year and met the attendees and this year he stayed the entire week as an Advisor.

Robert then showed a video of the NRCW talent show. Michelle Conner stated there was a great group of diverse attendees at the event this year.

Robert stated that he started a group text of NRCW students and they have indicated how much they enjoyed what they learned from the experience.

Robert stated that for the first time he has submitted all 40 Plans for Work to the Board for review.

Chairman Martin asked for a motion to approve the Plans of Work. A motion by Vikki Consiglio to approve the Plans of Work, seconded by Jim Waters, passed, with no opposition.

URBAN REPORT BY BEN RUZOWICZ:

Updates:

Ben Ruzowicz stated there have been 772 plans reviewed from June 10, 2025 through August 18, 2025. He stated there have been 208 courses with a total of 1,605 attendees and of that total 931 were re-certifications and 674 were new certifications. He said of the new certifications there were 12 Awareness, 508 Level 1A, 63 Level 1B, and 91 Level II courses held.

BMP Approval:

Ben stated he has been collecting information for BMPs and putting that together for the Board and the Overview Counsel to review. He said BMPs submitted for today for approval are Gator Guard: Standard & Extreme Wattles Sd1 -S, Gator Guard: Weighted & Drain Wattles Sd2Alt, and Concrete Canvas: SS and Ch1, and Ch2. Chairman Martin called for a motion to approve all 3 BMPs. A motion presented by Edwin Nix to approve the 3 BMPS, seconded by Jim Waters, passed, with no opposition.

MOA

No information.

Ben stated that Pierce County has gotten certified and called right away to become an LIA. He is helping them get setup before they have an overview.

Edwin Nix questioned when someone red lines a set of plans and send to a developer does it go back to the same reviewer?

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Edwin Nix questioned when someone red lines a set of plans and send to a developer does it go back to the same reviewer?

Ben stated that if the reviewer was available then the plan will go back to that reviewer; however, if that person was sick and the deadline was coming up then it would go to another person. He said if the reviewer is having a hard time with the plan, they will sometimes ask him to review but sometimes same problems still exist. He stated 90% of plans are approved on the second submittal.

Chairman Martin thanked Ben for all of his hard work and stated that UGA appreciated him also.

RURAL REPORT BY BEN HYER AND GREG WALKER:

See attached report.

PARTNER UPDATES:

GACD: No report Given

NRCS: Tansel Hudson gave report.

PUBLIC COMMENT: George Kelecheck stated he would like assistance with landscaping outside of the Rockdale office. He said Rockdale County sent 16 students out of 100 to NRCV.

Chairman Martin stated next meeting will be held virtual on October 14, 2025. Chairman Martin adjourned the meeting at 11:08 a.m.

Respectively Submitted:


11/12/25
GSWCC Vice Chairman Date


8/18/25
GSWCC Executive Director Date

Watershed Dam Update

1. **Noon Day 17-** Construction drawings have been approved and a construction permit has been issued by EPD. There is one easement agreement remaining that needs to be executed. We have accepted the counteroffer from the landowner, and waiting for our attorney to execute the contract. The compensation payment has been wired to our attorney's escrow account.
2. **Little River 25-** FNI has begun the detail design phase for this rehabilitation. The design may be altered from the original preferred option in the authorized SWP due to unexpected geotechnical findings. Negotiating with landowner on the left auxiliary spillway for easements needed for the updated design.
3. **Little Sandy Trail 2** –FNI is under contract and a condition report with state storm permitting standards is under their internal review.
4. **Trion-Chattooga River Dike System-** - FNI has submitted the final SWP to NRCS in Athens for review. Final authorization has been slightly delayed due to authorization of the identified borrow site. Detail design will be funded by NRCS once the SWP has been authorized.
5. **Mill Canton 7** – NRCS funding has been released for this rehabilitation project. Tetratex is now under contract for design of this project. Preliminary surveying and geotechnical investigation is now underway.
6. **Settingdown 54** - NRCS funding has been released for this rehabilitation project. FNI is now under contract for design of this project. Preliminary surveying and geotechnical investigation is now underway.
7. **Settingdown 56** - NRCS funding has been released for this rehabilitation project. Schnabel is now under contract for design of this project. Preliminary surveying and geotechnical investigation is now underway.
8. **Maintenance Funds-** Currently replacing dilapidated metal work and clearing clogged structures at multiple sites. Various mowing contracts are underway across the state to maintain dams that have been cleared of large trees in previous years. A significant maintenance project is being planned in coordination with the permitting of Settingdown 4 Watershed Structure. Also, planning a maintenance project for Little River 26.
9. **Bull Creek 3-** This project has reached material completion. Currently working on reimbursement from NRCS.
10. **Assessments-** We are working with EPD to complete Emergency Action Plans that are incomplete for remaining CAT 1, classified structures.
11. **Permitting-** Currently in the process of contracting multiple engineering firms to submit permit applications to GA Safe Dams for watershed structures that can possibly be permitted "as is" or with only minor repairs. Permit applications are currently underway for Sharp Mountain 14 and Settingdown 4 & 27 Watershed Structures. Settingdown 6 has been permitted.

12. Sandy Creek 8- Currently in the process of quit claiming this watershed structure to the landowner. The Oconee River District has signed the instrument, working with the landowner to finalize the release.

Grants Update

1. Working with EPD to discuss new Grant project opportunities, federal funding uncertainty exists for funding streams from EPA.
2. Researching a statewide "Master Farmer" pilot program based off of environmentally sound on-farm practices that will associate education, incentives, and the promotion of Georgia Farmers and the products that they produce.
3. An agreement with NRCS to continue conservation workshops and engage conservation districts in local funded projects was awarded funding. This new agreement will be implemented statewide, and new workshops and conservation projects commencing in 2024. \$400,000 in funding available for BMP implementation projects across all of Georgia's Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Each conservation district has been allocated a \$10,000 budget for a project/s.

8 projects have already been contracted, and include raised beds, pollinator habitat, and high tunnel structure instillation, and a hydroponic vegetable garden lab. New project proposals are being drafted by districts, and some closeout visits for completed projects have begun.