DRAFT

Minutes

ECOLOGY COMMISSION MONTHLY MEETING

Cordry Sweetwater Conservancy District

July 2, 2026

The June meeting of the CSCD Ecology Commission was called to order by Randy Brumfield at 6:04 P.M.

Members Present: Randy Brumfield, Matt Rotelli, Harold Crooks, Tom Golias.

Members Absent: Shawn Rexroth.

Freeholders in Attendance: Ken and Dot Reinstrom, 6550 Cougar

Guests: Rusty Fields, Steve Johnson

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REVIEW AND REVISION OF DRAFT AGENDA: The **draft agenda was reviewed and approved** with a change to move the Deer Hunt discussion to the first topic covered. Motion by Tom, seconded by Matt. All were in favor.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The June meeting minutes were reviewed, Harold had a correction which was made, minutes approved unanimously after a motion by Tom, seconded by Harold.

FREEHOLDER COMMENTS: Ken and Dot Reinstrom reported ongoing issues with canal filling at their property at 6550 Cougar (lots 453 and 454) over the past 6-7 years, noting that approximately 50 yards of the cove has filled in and water levels have decreased from five feet to three feet at her dock. Ken explained that a damaged retaining wall and debris, including a fallen tree, are contributing to the problem, and questioned whether there are rules about removing trees that fall into lake boundaries. Randy indicated he would research property ownership/history, review the dam situation, and follow up with recommendations for both the conservancy and property owner actions.

OLD BUSINESS:

Deer Hunt: Tom introduced Rusty Fields and Steve Johnson from Rusty's Animal Control to follow up on the discussion from the May meeting as well as to review the draft proposal he drafted and make a recommendation for expanding the controlled fall archery hunt to the hiking trails. Rusty is the Deer Hunt Coordinator for the CSCD designated deer reduction zone and has overseen the controlled hunt since it's inception. The commission discussed allowing hunters to access trails during deer hunting season while minimizing disruption with hikers. There was general agreement that continued management and control of the deer herd through the archery hunt was important and benefited the CSCD property. Rusty explained that archery hunting

would be limited to selected, proficient hunters hunting from designated tree stands at least 30 yards from trails, though one commission member expressed concerns about safety. To address these concerns and ensure program success, the commission explored options including closing specific trails for limited periods, staggering hunting times, and making hunters more visible through orange clothing and marked tree stands. The group agreed to start with a pilot approach using selected hunters wearing an item of fluorescent orange clothing, hunting from designated tree stands marked with orange flagging, and with daily check in/out and harvest reporting. The hiking trail hunt will start the first two weeks in November (to avoid any conflict with the Haunted Trails event) and also the first week of January. The proposed hunt will be three days per week, from sunrise to 10:00 AM in the morning and the last two hours before sunset in the evening, with clear, professional signs posted at all relevant parking areas and primary trail access points on active hunt days, stating that hunters are present in the area and advising caution/exercise appropriate awareness. Hunters will adhere to strict conduct, parking, and access rules to ensure minimal disruption. The commission will evaluate the hunt results and potentially adjust the approach based on feedback and harvest success. This controlled schedule provides predictability for trail users while allowing effective management pressure.

Tom agreed to draft a proposal for the board and forward it to the commission for review and for Randy to submit to the board for approval.

Rusty also noted challenges with property ownership changes over time and proposed sending out property access cards to inform residents about hunting permissions on their land. This was last done at least three years ago, and Tom agreed to contact Brittany to get the cards mailed out again before the fall.

CSCD water/grounds superintendent report: No report this month.

Pollinator Habitat: Randy discussed the pollinator habitat situation, noting that despite mowing and bush hogging by Nick and Jeff, the area looks poor due to hot, dry weather. He proposed doing a glyphosate treatment on the new trails before mulching to prevent regrowth, suggesting two applications - one now and another towards the end of summer. Regarding the America the Beautiful grant, Randy reported meeting with Austin Denhart from Midwest Spray Team to discuss clearing identified sections in a 5-year cycle, with $10,000 available this year. The team discussed various treatment methods including foliar applications and selective herbicides, with Austin expected to provide a proposal for the work.

Weed Wrangle: Harold noted the July Weed Wrangle will be cancelled due to July 4th.

Dredging Discussion: Randy discussed a dredging project, noting that there are structures in the area that may be CSCD property and requiring investigation to determine ownership and potential rebuilding needs. He mentioned that Mike, who previously worked for CSCD, now has a "Sludge Judge" tool that can measure

sediment depths. The commission tentatively scheduled the silt measurement work for July 25th at 8:00 AM, starting at the Cordy Lake Marina, with plans to use a pontoon boat rather than a bass boat for the measurements.

In addition, Randy discussed plans to address silt build-up issues on the northern end of Sweetwater by proposing the construction of two silt retention ponds on private property, which would require obtaining easements from property owners Rodney Gunner and Avery Gamble. He suggested redirecting funds from a planned trail project to fund the easements and pond construction, which would help mitigate ongoing dredging needs. All agreed to investigate the legal costs of obtaining easements before proceeding with the pond construction, with the hope that the property owners would not be paid for the easements but would receive appreciation for their cooperation.

Fish Population Management: Randy noted that a freezer is being sought for public donations of < 13 inch largemouth bass. The Angler's Club has removed approximately 600 bass from the lakes so far at $1/fish vs. the $10/fish estimate from Aquatic Control. Discussion was held about various ways to accelerate fish removal, with commission members to continue to investigate other options.

NEW BUSINESS:

Dredging Applications: None

Budget Process: Randy stated that we are in the budget planning process, and multiple topics were reviewed and discussed. He noted that the Ecology budget had a set 13 items that were part of every budget. In addition, the commission discussed budgeting for dredging/silt management, fish management, septic system replacement at the Sweetwater Beach facility, beach and Center Lake playground equipment replacement or removal, and invasive species control.

The commission discussed budget priorities and frustrations about having to fund non-ecology items like playground equipment and septic systems. They ranked 7 additional priorities and proposed budget amounts after the initial 13, as follows: lake dredging ($100,000), septic system replacement ($100,000), retention ponds on north end of Sweetwater, ($100,000), fish/largemouth bass management ($20,000), Sweetwater spillway project (already underway), invasive species removal ($50,000), and one playground replacement ($70,000) or removal ($10,000). These will be presented to the board for the next budget year.

Commission Member Concerns: None

Freeholder Afterthoughts: None

Adjournment: The meeting concluded following completion of all agenda items at 8:49 PM with a motion by Randy, seconded by Matt, with all in favor.

Submitted by Tom Golias, Secretary