

Minutes  
Board of the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources  
Rembert C. Dennis Building, RM 335  
1000 Assembly Street  
Columbia, SC  
December 8, 2022 10:00 AM

The regular meeting of the Board of the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources was held at 10:00 a.m., December 8, 2022, in room 335 of the Rembert C. Dennis Building, 1000 Assembly Street, Columbia, SC. Notice of the date, time and place of the meeting was posted and mailed to the news media. Chairman Norman Pulliam presided at the meeting. Board members present included Dr. Mark Hartley, Mike Hutchins, Jerry Lee, Carlisle Oxner, Jake Rasor, Jr. (via phone) and Duane Swygert. Director Boyles and staff members of the Department of Natural Resources were present at the meeting.

1. **Call to Order**

Chairman Norman Pulliam called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. **Invocation/Pledge of Allegiance**

Chaplain Eric Skidmore, SC Law Enforcement Assistance Program (SC LEAP), offered the invocation.

Mr. Hutchins led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. **Chairman's Comments**

Chairman Pulliam thanked Board members and staff for a great year for SCDNR. Chairman Pulliam, Vice Chairman Hutchins and Director Boyles attended the Governor's Budget Presentation on October 19, 2022.

4. **Introduction of Guests/Constituent Comments**

Shannon Bobertz, Chief of Staff, introduced Bill Walker, Keowee Key Deer Committee; Smith Ragsdale and Chip Sharpe.

Mrs. Bobertz informed the Board that Mr. Walker has requested to address the Board. Mr. Walker's comments were related to the Keowee Key Deer Depredation Request, which is on the agenda for possible action.

Mrs. Bobertz informed the Board that Mr. Ragsdale has requested to show a video to the Board. Mr. Ragsdale's video focused on waterfowl hunting in Category 1 areas, particularly Samworth WMA.

Mrs. Bobertz informed the Board the Mr. Sharpe has requested to address the Board. Mr. Sharpe's comments were related to the recently held Lowcountry Hunt for the Outdoor Dream Foundation. Mr. Sharpe thanked and praised all the officers for their work at this event.

5. **Approval of Minutes**

Chairman Pulliam asked if there were any additions, deletions or corrections to the minutes of the September 16, 2022 Board meeting and the October 20, 2022 Board workshop. *Dr. Hartley made a motion that the Board approve the minutes of the September 16, 2022 Board meeting and the October 20, 2022 Board workshop as presented. Mr. Swygert seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*

**6. Agency Reports/Updates**

**Presentations**

Director Boyles presented a Meritorious Service Award to Donna Maples upon her retirement as Director of Business and Finance.

**Commendations**

Director Boyles informed the Board that former retired Law Enforcement Director William “Bill” Chastain was inducted into the S.C. Law Enforcement Officers Hall of Fame for meritorious service. His recognition was posthumous since he passed away a few weeks after his Hall of Fame nomination. Director Chastain began his career as a game warden in Greenville County in 1969 and rose to the position of chief of law enforcement in 1984 and served until his retirement in 1996.

Director Boyles commended the 2022 Regional Law Enforcement Officers of the Year listed below as well as the 2022 Statewide Officer of the Year PFC JP Cooler from Region 4. The National Association of State Boating Law Administrators Boating Officer of the Year is PFC Brian Hoover of Region 3. These officers were recognized at the Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Banquet held following the September Board Meeting.

Region 1: LCPL Zach Tatum  
Region 2: LCPL Matthew Owen  
Region 3: PFC Brian Hoover  
Region 4: PFC JP Cooler  
Education: SSGT Philip Robertson

Director Boyles commended Angel Brown and Corey Hilton of the Marine Resources Division for their assistance in moving the Commercial Licensing Office from the Eltzroth Administration Building to the Licensing Office near the gate at Fort Johnson. Julie Jarrett, our Customer Service Manager, commended their invaluable help in this project which we believe will improve customer service for our commercial constituents.

Director Boyles commended Erin Weeks of the Marine Resources Division who was recognized by a constituent after his exceptional experience with Erin when he was trying to get his deer tags and she was able to assist him quickly and efficiently. He said that “she went above and beyond to satisfy a customer and in doing so made your organization look extremely efficient. Erin is a rock star and should be commended.”

Director Boyles commended Chris McDonough of the Marine Resources Division. At the annual meeting of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) in November, Chris was recognized for work accomplished from 2020 to 2022 as the CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, Economic Security Act) Program administrator for South Carolina. This program provided federal economic assistance to members of the fishing industry who were directly impacted from lost business and revenue because of the Covid-19 pandemic. South Carolina’s share was approximately \$4.5 million, and Chris served as the primary administrator for planning, development, coordination and communication with industry members, and distribution of these funds in accordance with the requirements established by Congress.

Director Boyles commended LCPL Treye Byars of Law Enforcement Hunter Education who was commended by a constituent for his presentation to the Sumter County Farmer and Agribusiness Association. He said he was impressed “with his depth of knowledge about the current conditions and the options for farmers. Without a doubt this was one of the better adult farmer programs I have witnessed.”

Director Boyles commended the S.C. State Climate Office for their selection as the 2022 Weather-Ready Nation Ambassadors of Excellence by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and National Weather Service. They were selected for this honor because of the weather safety brochures Assistant State Climatologist Melissa Griffith created and for the outreach we provide on weather safety. Dr. Hope Mizzell, State Climatologist, said that Melissa worked with Mary-Anna Mayson, former TOMO Program Administrator and LT Dennetta Dawson in Law Enforcement to produce the brochures and that it was a DNR Team Effort.

Director Boyles commended Jamie Dozier of the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division for his selection as a recipient of the Clemson College of Agriculture, Forestry and Life Sciences (CAFLS) Professional Achievement Award. This award is presented to CAFLS alumni who have provided outstanding service and dedication in their professional responsibilities and accomplishments along with their service to Clemson and CAFLS.

Director Boyles commended Bill Post of the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division on his selection as the Fisheries Biologist of the Year by the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (SEAFWA). He was presented the award during the association’s annual conference in West Virginia in October. Bill has served as the Diadromous Fishes Coordinator for SCDNR, overseeing the agency’s studies of American eel, American shad, blueback herring and Atlantic and Shortnose sturgeon. He is recognized nationally as a leading expert on those sturgeon species.

Director Boyles commended Christy Hand of the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division on receiving the Wildlife Management Excellence Award for the Southeastern Section of The Wildlife Society. She is over the SCDNR’s black rail and wading bird projects and was recognized for her work leading research and conservation efforts for black rail in S.C.

Director Boyles commended April Atkinson of the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division on receiving the Professional Wildlife Management Award from the South Carolina Chapter of The Wildlife Society. April is the Unit Biologist for 4D that includes Hampton, Jasper and Beaufort counties and is the project leader for the Webb Wildlife Complex, multiple WMA properties that include some 26,000 acres.

Director Boyles commended Lance Corporal Brandon Henry and Officer Bradley Thompkins of Law Enforcement Region 1 who were commended by a constituent who encountered them while hunting deer in the Sumter National Forest when the officers were doing license and tag checks. He said that “they both were courteous and professional, and kept the interaction relaxed and brief,” and their work “was a credit to DNR’s work to support lawful recreation on public land.”

Director Boyles commended Anthony D'Elia, our Assistant General Counsel and Chief Information Security Officer, for his work along with Elise Nicholi of the Legal Office and Administration staff Brian Johnson, Julie Jarrett, Anthony Johnican and Mark Litz who worked together in ensuring DNR successfully and professionally completed and passed our Payment Card Industry (PCI) Data Security Standards Audit.

Director Boyles commended Joseph Lemeris, Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries, on being selected as an interviewee for the next issue of *ArcNews*. *ArcNews* features a GIS hero—a member of the GIS community who has drawn on geospatial technology to create innovative solutions to special challenges or specific needs.

Director Boyles commended the following officers who were part of the graduating class of 15 new DNR Law Enforcement Conservation Officers who graduated on November 18 and received the following special recognition. Director Boyles gave the keynote address at the graduation ceremony.

- CO William Sutton received the J.P. Strom Award
- CO Seth Childress received the Physical Fitness Award
- CO Edwina Mathis was a Distinguished Graduate
- CO Bradley Lester was Class Leader
- CO William Dickerson was Assistant Class Leader

Director Boyles commended Law Enforcement Region 1 Captain D.J. Riley on his selection by the Friends of the Keowee Society (FOLKS) to receive their 2022 Leadership Award and was recognized on November 17 at their annual dinner.

Susan Porter, General Counsel, introduced Shari Driggers. Ms. Driggers will be in the legal office and will be serving as an attorney for Law Enforcement.

Angie Cassella, Deputy Director for Administration, introduced Aimee Shumpert. Ms. Shumpert has been serving as the Assistant Director of Business and Finance and will be promoted to the Director of Business and Finance upon Ms. Maples retirement.

Mrs. Cassella introduced Jessica Shealy. Ms. Shealy has been serving as the Accounts Payable Supervisor and will be promoted to the Assistant Director of Business and Finance.

Mrs. Cassella introduced Travis Guess. Mr. Guess has been hired as the Procurement Director.

Director Boyles congratulated Chairman Pulliam on his receipt of the Honorary Colonel Award from the Law Enforcement Advisory Committee and his receipt of the Carroll A. Campbell Award from the Governor's Cup Billfishing Series.

Ken Prosser, Assistant Deputy Director for Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries, gave the Board a brief update on the Patriots Point Conservation Easement. SCDNR received additional information on November 30, 2022 and will be reviewing in order to make a recommendation to the Board in January 2023.

Director Boyles mentioned to the Board that funds for the new headquarters was not included in the 2023 budget request, as approved by the Board, because it isn't

anticipated to be ready until 2025. Director Boyles informed the Board that staff would like to add \$2.2 million into the budget request for upfront costs as an amendment to the previously approved budget request. The Board agreed to include the amendment in the budget request.

Kevin Ryan, Director of Government Affairs, distributed a listing of new committee assignments for the General Assembly.

Emily Cope, Deputy Director for Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries, gave a briefing on the Upstate Mobility Impaired Hunts.

Mrs. Cassella gave the Board a report on call wait times for the month of November 2022. A total of 4,600 calls were received – 7 minutes 26 seconds was the average call wait time – four minutes 12 seconds was the average call time.

**7. Advisory Committee Report**

**A. Marine**

Mr. Swygert reported that the Marine Advisory Committee met October 7, 2022 in Charleston. The Advisory Committee received the following reports: A View of the Marine Resources Division Through Its Vessels and Progress on Proviso 47.19: Blue Crab Fishery.

**B. Saltwater Recreational Fisheries**

Mr. Lee reported that the Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Advisory Committee met October 11, 2022 in Charleston. The Advisory Committee received the following reports: Highlights from FY 2022 Programs, Saltwater License Revenue Update and Discussion of Shore based Fishing Access.

**C. Governor's Cup Billfishing Series**

Blaik Keppler, Deputy Director for Marine Resources, reported that the Governor's Cup Billfishing Series Advisory Board met November 14, 2022 in Charleston. The Advisory Board received an update on the SC Memorial Reef Program. The Advisory Board nominated and approved chairman vacancy, vice chairman vacancy, member reappointments and a new member appointment, which will be considered by the Board later in the meeting. Mrs. Keppler reported that the Advisory Board also formed a Sponsorship Sub Committee.

**D. Law Enforcement**

LTC Jamie Landrum reported that the Law Enforcement Advisory Committee met October 3-4, 2022 at the Shaw-Sumter Farm. The Advisory Committee received reports on the Training Council updates, the Power DMS System and the budget.

**E. Land, Water and Conservation**

Ken Rentiers, Deputy Director for Land, Water and Conservation, reported that the Land, Water and Conservation Advisory Committee met October 11, 2022 in Columbia. The Advisory Committee received division program updates and approved conservation district commissioner appointments/reappointments which will be considered by the Board later in the meeting.

F. Waterfowl

Billy Dukes, Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division, reported that the Waterfowl Advisory Committee met on November 8, 2022 in Columbia. The Advisory Committee received a review of Act 147, the Waterfowl Bill. The Advisory Committee received information on the Category 1 Waterfowl Area Peer Review Process and an overview of the status, progress, and challenges of management of the tidal impoundments at Samworth WMA. The Advisory Committee elected Bob Perry to serve as Chairman.

Mr. Dukes reported that the Waterfowl Advisory Committee met December 6, 2022 in Clemson. The Committee received a report on Category 1 waterfowl harvest during the first segment of the season and the 2022-2023 Duck Stamp budget.

G. Heritage Trust

Mr. Rentiers reported that the Heritage Trust Advisory Board met November 10, 2022 in Columbia. The Advisory Board received a report on Petroglyphs in the upstate by Mr. Gene Johnston and have determined that the report was inconclusive and further study is necessary. The Advisory Board approved several property acquisitions which will be considered by the Board later in the meeting.

8. Items for Board Information

Climate Update

Hope Mizzell, Land, Water and Conservation Division, provided statistics on December weather and reported on drought conditions in the state. Dr. Mizzell provided rainfall totals, precipitation percentiles, streamflow, lake levels, groundwater monitoring wells around the state, precipitation forecast and temperature forecast.

9. Item(s) for Board Action

A. Keowee Key Deer Depredation Request

Charles Ruth, Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division, briefly reviewed the request from the community of Keowee Key in Oconee County to receive an Urban/Suburban Deer Management Permit to remove 100 deer. After a brief discussion *Mr. Hutchins made a motion that the DNR Board recommends that the community of Keowee Key in Oconee County receive an Urban/Suburban Deer Management Permit to remove 80 deer. In the event the contractor removes 80 deer in the 6 days allocated for that purpose, staff with Board approval, may provide additional tags upon community request. The Board specifically requests that no branch antlered deer be killed. Mr. Swygert seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*

B. Blue Crab Report

Mrs. Keppler asked the Board if they had questions or concerns about the Blue Crab Report that was included in the meeting packet. *Mr. Swygert made a motion that the DNR Board, upon the recommendation of the Marine Advisory Committee, approve the recommendations contained within the Blue Crab Report. Dr. Hartley seconded the motion and the motioned carried unanimously.*

C. HR Policies Update

Eva Smith, Director of Human Resources, briefly reviewed DNR Policy 702.04, Paid Parental Leave. *Mr. Hutchins made a motion that the DNR Board approve, upon*

*the recommendation of DNR staff, DNR Policy 702.04, Paid Parental Leave, as presented. Mr. Oxner seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*

D. Savannah Harbor Mitigation Trust Fund Authorization

Ross Self, Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division, reviewed the Savannah Harbor Mitigation Trust Fund Authorization, as included in the meeting packet. *Mr. Hutchins made a motion that the DNR Board, acting as the Board of Trustees for the Mitigation Trust Fund, pursuant to SC Code Section 50-1-310, authorize the use of \$201,870 from the SHEP Mitigation Trust Fund Savannah River Sturgeon Monitoring sub-fund, as requested by DNR staff, for the purpose(s) of continued monitoring and research of Shortnose and Atlantic Sturgeon and their habitat in the estuaries of the Savannah River. Mr. Swygert seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*

E. Broad River Mitigation Trust Fund Authorization

Elizabeth Miller, Office of Environmental Programs, reviewed the Broad River Mitigation Trust Fund Authorization, as included in the meeting packet. *Mr. Lee made a motion that the DNR Board, acting as the Board of Trustees for the Mitigation Trust Fund, pursuant to SC Code Section 50-1-310, authorize the use of \$178,824 from the Broad River Fisheries Mitigation Trust Fund sub-fund, as requested by DNR staff, for the purpose of funding a project to assess aquatic habitat fragmentation at road-stream crossings within the Broad River Basin, SC. Mr. Hutchins seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*

F. Broad River Mitigation Trust Fund Authorization

Ms. Miller reviewed the Broad River Mitigation Trust Fund Authorization, as included in the meeting packet. *Mr. Lee made a motion that the DNR Board, acting as the Board of Trustees for the Mitigation Trust Fund, pursuant to SC Code Section 50-1-310, authorize the use of \$100,000 from the Broad River Fisheries Mitigation Trust Fund sub-fund, as requested by DNR staff, for the purpose of purchasing 33 acres of the headwaters of the Enoree River called Woodcock Woods. Mr. Swygert seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*

G. Approval of DNR Property Use Regulations 123.203

Mr. Dukes briefly reviewed the proposed changes to DNR Property Use Regulations 123.203, as included in the meeting packet. *Mr. Hutchins made a motion that the DNR Board approve the staff recommendation to amend Regulation 123-203 to allow the use of Class 1 e-bikes on Wildlife Management Area lands. Dr. Hartley seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*

H. Approval of Amended WMA Regulations 123.40

Mr. Dukes briefly reviewed the proposed changes to DNR Property Use Regulations 123.40, as included in the meeting packet. *Dr. Hartley made a motion that the DNR Board approve the staff recommendation to amend Regulation 123-40 to require rabbit hunter check-in at the Indian Creek Quail Focal Area, to establish Mill Shoals WMA in in Game Zone 1, and to expand the ability for the Department to establish Public Bird Dog Training Areas on WMAs. Mr. Hutchins seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*

**10. Executive Session**

*Dr. Hartley made a motion that the DNR Board go into executive session pursuant to SC Code Section 30-4-70(A)(1) to discuss contractual matters and legal advice related to Item(s) for Board Action I, J, K, and L and pursuant to SC Code Section 30-4-70(A)(2) to discuss personnel issues related to Item(s) for appointments related to Item(s) for Board Action M, N and O. Mr. Hutchins seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*

**11. Open Session**

*Dr. Hartley made a motion that the DNR Board return to open session, noting that no action was taken during executive session. Mr. Hutchins seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*

**12. Item(s) for Board Action**

**I. Property Acquisition in Horry County**

*Mr. Hutchins made a motion that the DNR Board accept the recommendation from the Heritage Trust Advisory Board, subject to standard due diligence, and grant final approval to acquire approximately 350 acres adjoining the Waccamaw River Heritage Preserve/WMA in Horry County that will be dedicated as a heritage preserve and placed into the corpus of the SC Heritage Trust, and the expenditure of \$610,000 of Heritage Trust funds for the purchase. Mr. Swygert seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*

**J. Potential Property Acquisition in Charleston County**

*Dr. Hartley made a motion that the DNR Board accept the recommendation from the Heritage Trust Advisory Board and grant preliminary approval to evaluate the potential purchase of approximately 176 acres adjoining Botany Bay Heritage Preserve/WMA in Charleston County that would be dedicated as a heritage preserve and placed into the corpus of the SC Heritage Trust, and the expenditure of up to \$20,000 of state appropriated funds to conduct due diligence activities. Mr. Hutchins seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*

**K. Potential Property Acquisition in Jasper/Hampton Counties**

*Mr. Swygert made a motion that the DNR Board, upon the recommendation of DNR staff, grant preliminary approval to evaluate the potential purchase of approximately 3,662 acres comprising the northern portion of Buckfield Plantation located in Hampton and Jasper Counties, and the expenditure of up to \$20,000 of state appropriated funds to conduct due diligence activities. Mr. Lee seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*

**L. Potential Property Acquisition in Jasper/Hampton Counties**

*Mr. Swygert made a motion that the DNR Board, upon the recommendation of DNR staff, grant preliminary approval to evaluate the potential purchase of approximately 3,654 acres comprising the southern portion of Buckfield Plantation located in Hampton and Jasper Counties, and the expenditure of up to \$20,000 of state appropriated funds to conduct due diligence activities. Dr. Hartley seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*



**M. Conservation District Commissioner Appointments/Reappointments**

*Dr. Hartley made a motion that the DNR Board approve the following conservation district commissioner reappointments, as recommended by the Land, Water and Conservation Advisory Committee.*

*Fred Raines, Abbeville – 10/28/22 – 10/28/26, Yvonne Kling, Aiken – 7/2/22 – 7/2/26, William Griggs, Chesterfield – 9/13/22 – 9/13/26, Douglas Reeves, Dorchester – 9/18/22 – 9/18/26, James Lynch, Sr., Florence – 2/11/21 – 2/11/25, F. Michael Seymour, Laurens – 11/1/22 – 11/1/26, Thomas Ware, McCormick – 11/23/21 – 11/23/25, Jack Turner, Spartanburg – 4/7/22 – 4/7/26, Henry Sprouse, Union – 2/28/22 – 2/28/26, and Brian McClam, Williamsburg – 9/18/22 – 9/18/26.*

*Mr. Hutchins seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*

**N. Governor's Cup Advisory Board Appointments**

**1. Reappointment of Governor's Cup Billfishing Series Advisory Board Members**

*Mr. Oxner made a motion that the DNR Board, upon the recommendation of the SCGCAB, reappoint Mrs. Holly McAlhany, Mr. Tim Gredick and Mr. William Gressette to serve a second three-year term beginning 1/1/23-12/31/25 on the SCGCAB. Mr. Lee seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*

**2. Appointment of Governor's Cup Billfishing Series Advisory Board Member**

*Mr. Oxner made a motion that the DNR Board, upon the recommendation of the SCGCAB, appoint Mr. Robert Rodelsperger to SCGCAB to serve a three-year term beginning 1/1/23 through 12/31/25. Dr. Hartley seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*

**3. Appoint Governor's Cup Billfishing Series Advisory Board Chairman**

*Mr. Oxner made a motion that the DNR Board, upon recommendation of the SCGCAB, appoint Mr. Fred Bergen Chairman of the SCGCAB. Mr. Hutchins seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*

**4. Appoint Governor's Cup Billfishing Series Advisory Board Vice Chairman**

*Mr. Oxner made a motion that that the DNR Board, upon recommendation of the SCGCAB, appoint Mr. John Hill Vice Chairman of the SCGCAB. Dr. Hartley seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*

**O. Marine Advisory Committee Appointments**

*Mr. Swygert made a motion that the DNR Board, upon the recommendation of DNR staff, appoint Mr. Jason R. McCroskey to the Marine Advisory Committee for a four-year term beginning on January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2026. Mr. Lee seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*

**13. Time and Location of Next Board Meeting**

*The Board's next scheduled meeting will be held Thursday, January 19, 2023 in Columbia.*

**14. Adjournment**

*Mr. Rasor made a motion that the meeting be adjourned. Mr. Hutchins seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*