

Minutes
Board of the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources
Rembert C. Dennis Building, RM 325
1000 Assembly Street
Columbia, SC
June 27, 2024 10:00 am

The regular meeting of the Board of the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources was held at 10:00 a.m., June 27, 2024 in room 325 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. 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**

Rev. Eric Skidmore, SC Law Enforcement Assistance Program, offered the invocation.

3. **Pledge of Allegiance**

Vice Chairman Hutchins led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. **Introduction of Guests**

Shannon Bobertz, Chief of Staff, introduced Jake Barrett, Statistical Analysis Software; and BeBe Dalton Harrison, SC Wildlife Federation.

5. **Constituent Comments**

Mrs. Bobertz stated there were no requests for constituent comments.

6. **Approval of Minutes**

Chairman Pulliam asked if there were any additions, deletions or corrections to the minutes of the May 16, 2024 Board meeting. *Mr. Hutchins made a motion that the minutes of the May 16, 2024 Board meeting be approved as submitted. Mr. Swygert seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*

7. **Agency Reports/Updates**

Director Boyles commended the 2023 DNR Employee of the Year, Robert Morrow IV, as well as the Division Employees of the Year, for their hard work and dedication: Robert Morrow IV – Overall and Land, Water and Conservation Employee of the Year; Cindy Thompson – Executive Office Employee of the Year; Pamela Brown – Law Enforcement Employee of the Year; Michael Hodges – Marine Employee of the Year; and Ellen Waldrop – Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Employee of the Year.

Director Boyles commended Brittany Caldwell, Dawn Beaver, Amy Jordan, Rachel Milan, and Sarah-Emily Carter (Employee Appreciation Planning Committee) along with all the other agency volunteers for their support and hard work on the Employee Appreciation events held in the four regions across the state that were well attended and enjoyed with games, a delicious meal and fellowship together in appreciation for the work of staff across the agency.

Director Boyles commended Christy Hand of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries who was recognized by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service with a 2023 Recovery Champion Award for her work with the Eastern black rail. Each year, the Service recognizes employees and partners for outstanding efforts to conserve and protect endangered and threatened species of fish, wildlife, and plants.

Director Boyles commended Law Enforcement Region 3 staff who were recognized in a letter from Chief Darren Amick of the Batesburg-Leesville Police Department for their assistance provided during the 2024 S.C. Poultry Festival. Chief Amick said, “Partnerships such as these are irreplaceable in the society that we now live. The combined efforts between our agencies should be a model for other agencies to follow.”

Director Boyles commended Audits Manager James Vant for completion of the FY24 SCDNR Agreed Upon Procedures Audit by the Office of State Auditor with no repeat findings for the year. Our FY24 procedures had no issues and our FY23 Procedures only had one finding that has already been reconciled. This was James’ first Agreed Upon Procedures Audit with a great result. Also, Director Boyles commended following staff who James advises were essential in the completion of the audit: Aimee Shumpert, Michelle Hallmon, Capt. Lee Ellis, Eva Smith, Maureen Lane, Victoria Heyward, Lindsay Fallaw, Denise Froehle, Jessica Clements, and Mona Rhoden.

Director Boyles commended Valerie Shannon of External Affairs who was recognized in an email from the branch manager of the Donalds and Due West branches of The Commercial Bank who commended her “professionalism and attention to detail.” He said he had “called on her on many occasions and not one time has she ever disappointed me with her way of conducting business.”

Director Boyles commended and thanked Scott Harder, Alexis Modzelesky, Charles Pellett, Brooke Czwartacki, Andrew Wachob, Joshua Williams, Julie Holling, Erin Tucker, James Tenney, Ashley Graham, and Joe Gellici (Retiree), Hydrology and Aquatic Nuisance staff, who will be moving to the new Department of Environmental Services (DES) on July 1. They are stalwart conservationists, and devoted team players, and they will truly be missed.

Director Boyles asked David Tarrant, Chief Operations Officer, to give the Board an update on the new headquarters.

Director Boyles asked James Vant, Audits Manager, to give the Board an update on the recent Agreed Upon Procedures audit.

Director Boyles asked Scott Speares to give the Board a FY 2025 budget review, as passed by the General Assembly.

Mr. Speares also reviewed the FY 2026 budget request.

Director Boyles asked Duncan Crotwell, Director of Government Affairs, to give the Board an update on legislation considered during conference committee meetings.

Director Boyles asked COL Chisolm Frampton, Deputy Director for Law Enforcement, to give the Board an update on the National Archery in the Schools Program.

8. Items for Board Information

A. Climate Update

Hope Mizzell, Land, Water and Conservation Division, on the recent record-breaking temperatures, drought conditions and the 2024 hurricane outlook. Dr. Mizzell provided rainfall totals, precipitation percentiles, streamflow, lake levels, groundwater monitoring wells around the state, precipitation forecast and temperature forecast.

B. Annual FOIA – Board Governance Training

Susan Porter, General Counsel, provided the Board with the annual FOIA – Board Governance Training.

9. Items for Board Action

A. Contribution to Ducks Unlimited Canada

Emily Cope, Deputy Director for Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries, reviewed the recommendation for the contribution to Ducks Unlimited Canada, as included in the meeting packet. *Dr. Hartley made a motion that the SCDNR Board accept the recommendation of SCDNR staff and the Director, and approve the contribution of \$61,251.00 from the Waterfowl Permit Revenue Funds as permitted by S.C. Code Ann. §50-9-920(B)(14)(a) for Fiscal Year 2024 to Ducks Unlimited Canada to support the AFWA Fall Flights Program. Mr. Hutchins seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*

B. Approval of FY 2025 Duck Stamp Budget

Billy Dukes, Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division, reviewed the proposed FY 2025 Duck Stamp Budget, as included in the meeting packet. *Mr. Lee made a motion that the SCDNR Board accept the recommendation of the Waterfowl Advisory Committee, SCDNR staff and the Director, and approve the expenditure of \$859,350 from the Migratory Waterfowl Permit Fund as permitted by S.C. Code Ann. §50-9-920(B)(14) for Fiscal Year 2025. Mr. Hutchins seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*

10. Executive Session

Mr. Hutchins made a motion that the SCDNR Board go into executive session pursuant to SC Code Section 30-4-70(A)(1) to discuss personnel matters related Item(s) for Board Action C and SC Code Section 30-4-70(A)(2) to discuss contractual matters related to Item(s) for Board Action D. Mr. Rasor seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

11. Open Session

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

12. Item(s) for Board Action

C. Conservation District Commissioner Appointments/Reappointments

Mr. Hutchins made a motion that the SCDNR Board accept the recommendation of SCDNR staff, the Director and the Land, Water and Conservation Advisory Committee and approve the following conservation district commissioner appointments: Joshua Johnson, Calhoun – 6/27/24 – 1/31/27 and Elizabeth Bernat,

Charleston – 6/27/24 – 1/31/25. Dr. Hartley seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Hutchins made a motion that the SCDNR Board accept the recommendation of SCDNR staff, the Director and the Land, Water and Conservation Advisory Committee and re-appoint the following conservation district commissioners: Landis Hiers, Bamberg – 9/2/24 – 9/1/28; Alton Jeffords, Darlington – 8/21/24 – 8/20/28; and John Rivers, Sumter – 1/5/22 – 1/4/26. Mr. Rasor seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

- D. Amendment of Final Approval, Pickens County Land Donation
Action on this item will be deferred until the August meeting.

13. Item(s) for Board Information

C. Endangered Species Conservation

This presentation will be postponed until the August meeting.

D. WMA Trapping Considerations

Jay Butfiloski, Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division, gave the Board a presentation on the Considerations, Concerns and Options of Trapping on Wildlife Management Areas.

14. Advisory Committee Reports

A. Land, Water and Conservation

Ken Rentiers, Deputy Director for Land, Water and Conservation reported that the Land, Water and Conservation met June 4, 2024 to act on the Conservation District Commissioner Appointments/Reappointments that the Board considered earlier.

B. Heritage Trust

Mr. Rentiers reported that the Heritage Trust Advisory Board held a public hearing May 29, 2024 regarding the proposal by SC Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism to acquire property in Spartanburg County known as Tyger Oaks and place a Conservation Easement on the property in cooperation with the Spartanburg Area Conservancy (SPACE).

C. Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries

Mr. Hutchins reported that the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Advisory Committee met June 25, 2024. The Advisory Committee received presentations on the State Endangered Species Act, the History of the SC *Wildlife* Magazine and How Australia Manages Crocodiles – What We Can Learn. The Advisory Committee also received a legislative update.

15. Time and Location of Next Board Meeting

The Board will hold a meeting on August 8, 2024.

16. Adjournment

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