

Minutes
Board of the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources
Rembert C. Dennis Building, RM 325
1000 Assembly Street
Columbia, SC
May 16, 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., May 16, 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 (by phone), 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, SCLEAP, 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 Ben Setzler, SC Association of Conservation Districts; Ann-Lamar Tuten, SC Association of Conservation Districts; Scott Whitaker, Coastal Conservation Association – SC; Ross Nelson, SC Mitigation Association and Mark Plowden, Governor's Office.

5. **Constituent Comments**

Mr. Setzler gave the Board a brief overview of the SC Association of Conservation Districts and the Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Mr. Setzler thanked the Board and the agency for their support.

Mr. Whitaker recognized the work of the Marine Resources Division staff. Mr. Whitaker reported that the CCA Board held their meeting at Fort Johnson. Mr. Whitaker informed the Board that CCA presented MRD with a \$60,000 check for another dump truck.

6. **Approval of Minutes**

Chairman Pulliam asked if there were any additions, deletions or corrections to the minutes of the March 22, 2024 Board meeting. *Mr. Oxner made a motion that the minutes of the March 22, 2024 Board meeting be approved as submitted. Mr. Hutchins seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*

7. **Agency Reports/Updates**

Presentations

The Board presented the Meritorious Service Award to Dr. Hope Mizzell.

Commendations

Director Boyles commended Brooke Myres of Land, Water and Conservation on her hard work in coordination of the 2024 SC Envirothon competition with 1st place overall winner Spartanburg Day School A Team. Chief of Staff Shannon Bobertz served as a Judge for this year's competition.

Director Boyles commended Jessie Egan and Jennifer Morris of Land, Water and Conservation on their efforts in leading Conservation Districts statewide in coordinating the celebration and outreach efforts for South Carolina Stewardship Week from April 28 - May 4, 2024. This statewide effort was a first for our Conservation Districts Section which included a Governor's Proclamation, assisting Conservation Districts with direct classroom visits, hosting a statewide conservation field day, and outreach videos bringing awareness to Stewardship Week. Also, recognize the Anderson Soil and Water Conservation District on their selection as the 2023 Outstanding District of the Year.

Director Boyles commended Tabatha Hayden of the Office of Business and Finance who was recognized in a text to the Director from a constituent who was appreciative of her efforts and said, "I had one of the best experiences I've had with a government agency at your boat titling office at Fort Johnson."

Director Boyles commended Valerie Shannon, Duncan Crotwell and Kevin Ryan of the Office of External Affairs who were commended in a letter from Senator Shane Martin who appreciated them for their assistance in "going the extra mile" to assist with constituent issues.

Director Boyles commended Law Enforcement Conservation Officer Edwina Wait who was recognized in an email to the Colonel from a constituent who expressed his gratitude for her assistance when she was driving behind him and witnessed his boat slide off the trailer. He said, "Without hesitation, she took command of the situation and had my boat back on the trailer within 15 minutes and I was absolutely astonished by her effort and grateful for the leadership."

Director Boyles commended Law Enforcement Region 4 staff who were commended in a note to the Director from Isle of Palms Chief of Police Kevin Cornett who appreciated their assistance as they prepared for a planned "Senior Skip Day."

Director Boyles commended Law Enforcement Officers LT Brady Branham, LT Raquel Salter and LT Amy Staton on their graduation from the S.C. Certified Public Manager (CPM) Program.

Director Boyles commended Assistant General Counsel Shari Driggers on her nomination for two Mothers Against Drunk Driving MADDY awards – Prosecutor of the Year and the Rick Moore Drug Recognition Expert of the Year.

Director Boyles commended Assistant Business Manager Brittany Whay of Marine Resources on her graduation from the LeadSC program. The LeadSC program provides emerging leaders in state government with the knowledge and skills to be successful while fostering a desire to create a career within state government.

Director Boyles commended Media and Communication Coordinator Erin Weeks and Director of Coastal Reserves and Outreach Julie Binz of Marine Resources for their extensive efforts in planning a beautiful and meaningful ceremony at Botany Bay Heritage Preserve/Wildlife Management Area dedicating a newly discovered cemetery in remembrance of the enslaved people buried there. Along with the Hutchinson Heritage Foundation, staff facilitated the descendant extended family and the community in honoring the enslaved ancestors and freed people who lived there.

Director Boyles commended Zadok Moss, Assistant Wildlife Regional Coordinator from Region IV of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries, for completing Clemson's Palmetto LEAF program. This is a 2-year leadership and professional growth program for those associated with agriculture and natural resources industries.

Director Boyles commended agency staff and volunteers who assisted with the 2024 Legislative Reception on April 17th at the National Guard Armory. It was a wonderful opportunity for General Assembly Members, their staff and other special guests to learn more about the agency. We had 7 members of the Senate, including President Thomas Alexander and Senate Finance Chairman Harvey Peeler, 24 members of the House of Representatives including Chairman Cal Forrest of the Wildlife Subcommittee and Majority Leader Davey Hiott, 65 special guests including staff members from the Governor's Office, and many of our partner organizations in the private sector.

Duncan Crotwell, Director, Government Affairs, reported on the success of this legislative session and the items that will be taken up in conference committee.

James Vant, Audits Manager, gave the Board a brief update on ongoing and upcoming audits.

David Tarrant, Chief Operations Officer, gave the Board an update on the new headquarters building.

Scott Speares, Chief Budget and Finance Officer, gave the Board an update on the 2025 Budget.

Ross Self, Chief of Fisheries, informed the Board of the dam breach at Lake Paul Wallace.

8. Advisory Committee Reports

A. Land, Water and Conservation

Ken Rentiers, Deputy Director for Land, Water and Conservation, reported that the Land, Water and Conservation Advisory Committee met April 3, 2024. The Advisory Committee received the annual FOIA training and reports on division activities. The Advisory Committee approved conservation district commissioner appointments and reappointments that the Board will consider later in the meeting.

B. Marine

Mr. Swygert reported that the Marine Advisory Committee met April 26, 2024. The Advisory Committee received reports on the State Endangered Species Act and the South Carolina Estuarine and Coastal Assessment Program.

C. Heritage Trust

Mr. Rentiers reported that the Heritage Trust Advisory Board met May 9, 2024. The Advisory Board approved several property acquisitions that the Board will consider later in the meeting.

D. Waterfowl

Billy Dukes, Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries, reported that the Waterfowl Advisory Committee met May 14, 2024. The Advisory Committee received an update on WMA Repairs and Habitat Management. The Advisory Committee received reports on mallard, black duck and mottled duck genetics and the conceptual development of sanctuaries. The Advisory Committee reviewed and approved the 2024-2025 duck stamp budget.

E. Saltwater Recreational Fisheries

Blaik Keppler, Deputy Director for Marine Resources, reported that the Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Advisory Committee met May 14, 2024. The Advisory Committee approved the budget proposals for FY 2025.

F. Law Enforcement

COL Chisolm Frampton, Deputy Director for Law Enforcement, reported that the Law Enforcement Advisory Committee met May 13-14, 2024. The Advisory Committee toured Fort Johnson and *R/V Palmetto*. The Advisory Committee received reports from the Saltwater Team and Training staff.

9. Items for Board Information

Climate Update

Hope Mizzell, Land, Water and Conservation Division, on the 2023 hurricane season and the 2024 hurricane outlook. Dr. Mizzell reported on the December 17, 2023 coastal storm and noted that the state is drought free. Dr. Mizzell provided rainfall totals, precipitation percentiles, streamflow, lake levels, groundwater monitoring wells around the state, precipitation forecast and temperature forecast.

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 E, F and G and SC Code Section 30-4-70(A)(2) to discuss contractual matters related to Item(s) for Board Action H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R and S. Mr. Swygert seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

11. Open Session

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

12. Items for Board Action

A. Approval of Comprehensive Permanent Improvement Plan

Dr. Hartley made a motion that the SCDNR Board support the 2024 Comprehensive Permanent Improvement Plan, subject to technical changes, changes in priority and minor project cost corrections, as presented by SCDNR staff and the Director. Mr. Oxner seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

- B. Approval of Expenditure from the St. Stephen's Fish Lift Mitigation Account
Dr. Hartley made a motion that the Department of Natural Resources Board, acting as the Board of Trustees for the Mitigation Trust Fund, pursuant to S.C. Code Section 50-1-310, authorize the use of \$840,295 from the St. Stephen Mitigation Trust Fund Diversion Monitoring sub-fund, as requested by SCDNR Staff, for the purpose(s) of continued monitoring and research of American shad, blueback herring, and American eel in the Rediversion Canal. Mr. Hutchins seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.
- C. Glassy Mountain Heritage Preserve - Radio Tower Lease - Pickens County Emergency Management
Mr. Razor made a motion that the SCDNR Board accept the recommendation of SCDNR staff and Director, and grant approval of a one-year lease agreement with an option to renew for up to four, one-year terms, to Pickens County to use the radio communication tower located at Glassy Mountain Heritage Preserve, which will provide critical public safety communications for first responders to support search and rescue efforts in the area. Mr. Lee seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously
- D. Use of Wildlife Endowment for FY 2025
Mr. Razor made a motion that the Board of Trustees for the Wildlife Endowment Fund does hereby authorize the expenditure of income derived from the fund to further the conservation of wildlife resources and the efficient operation of the department in accomplishing the purposes of the department as set forth in Title 50. Mr. Hutchins seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.
- E. Marine Advisory Committee Reappointments
Mr. Swygert made a motion that the DNR Board reappoint Charles Woods and Paula Keener to serve a second four-year term beginning 7/1/2024 to 6/30/2028 on the Marine Advisory Committee. Mr. Razor seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.
- F. Conservation District Commissioner Appointments/Reappointments
Mr. Hutchins made a motion that the DNR Board approve the following conservation district commissioner reappointments, as recommended by the Land, Water and Conservation Advisory Committee: Sabie D. Cathcart, Jr., Fairfield - 5/16/24 - 7/1/26; English Warren Dixon, Horry - 8/21/24 - 8/20/28; Jefferson B. Laney, Richland – 5/16/24 – 3/27/28 and James Kenneth Mullis, Jr., Richland – 5/16/24 – 3/27/28. Mr. Oxner seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.
- Mr. Hutchins made a motion that the DNR Board approve the following conservation district commissioner appointment, as recommended by the Land, Water and Conservation Advisory Committee: Fred Gantt, III, Calhoun - 5/16/24 - 3/3/25. Mr. Oxner seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*
- Mr. Hutchins made a motion that the DNR Board approve the following conservation district commissioner emeritus appointment, as recommended by the Land, Water and Conservation Advisory Committee: Charles Coleman, III, Fairfield. Mr. Razor seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*

- G. Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Advisory Committee Reappointments
Mr. Hutchins made a motion that upon staff recommendation, the DNR Board reappoint Mr. Jonathan Rabon of Galivants Ferry, SC; Mr. Titus Duren of Eastover, SC; and Mr. William Shirley of Spartanburg, SC to the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Advisory Board with terms expiring May 31, 2028. Mr. Lee seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.
- H. Property Acquisition in Jasper County
Mr. Swygert made a motion that the SCDNR Board accept the recommendation by the Heritage Trust Advisory Board, subject to standard due diligence, and grant final approval to acquire approximately 396 acres west of Coosawhatchie Heritage Preserve/WMA in Jasper County, in which an appropriate portion will be dedicated as a Heritage Preserve and placed into the corpus of the SC Heritage Trust, and the expenditure of \$1,435,000 in Heritage Trust funds. Mr. Hutchins seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.
- I. Property Acquisition in Jasper County
Mr. Swygert made a motion that the SCDNR Board accept the recommendation by the Heritage Trust Advisory Board, subject to standard due diligence, and grant final approval to acquire approximately 1,263 acres adjoining Coosawhatchie Heritage Preserve/WMA in Jasper County, in which an appropriate portion will be dedicated as a Heritage Preserve and placed into the corpus of the SC Heritage Trust, and the expenditure of \$805,000 in Heritage Trust funds. Mr. Oxner seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.
- J. Property Donation in Horry County
Mr. Lee made a motion that the SCDNR Board accept the recommendation of the Heritage Trust Advisory Board, SCDNR staff and the Director, subject to standard due diligence, and grant preliminary and final approval to accept the donation of approximately 260 acres in Horry County and authorize the expenditure of up to \$20,000 in Heritage Trust Funds for due diligence costs. This property will be dedicated as a Heritage Preserve and placed into the corpus of the Heritage Trust as a new Heritage Trust Preserve. Mr. Hutchins seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.
- K. Property Donation in Lancaster County
Mr. Raser made a motion that the SCDNR Board accept the recommendation of the Heritage Trust Advisory Board, SCDNR staff and the Director, subject to due diligence, and grant final approval to accept the donation of approximately 97 acres in Lancaster County. This property will be dedicated as a Heritage Preserve and placed into the corpus of the Heritage Trust as a part of the Forty Acre Rock Heritage Preserve (HP)/Wildlife Management Area (WMA), conditional upon the successful completion of all Department of Administration approvals. Mr. Lee seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.
- L. Property Donation in Charleston County
Dr. Hartley made a motion that the SCDNR Board accept the recommendation by the SCDNR Heritage Trust Advisory Board, SCDNR staff and the Director, subject to due diligence, and grant preliminary and final approval to accept the donation of

approximately 16 acres in Charleston County as an addition to the Botany Bay Heritage Preserve (HP)/Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and authorize the expenditure of up to \$20,000 in Heritage Trust Funds for due diligence costs. Mr. Swygert seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

M. Property Acquisition in Greenville County

Mr. Razor made a motion that the SCDNR Board accept the recommendation of the Heritage Trust Advisory Board, SCDNR staff and the Director, subject to standard due diligence, and grant final approval to purchase approximately 29 acres in Greenville County, upon the successful completion of all Department of Administration approvals. This property will be dedicated as a Heritage Preserve and placed into the corpus of the Heritage Trust as a part of the Bunched Arrowhead Heritage Preserve. Mr. Oxner seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

N. Property Acquisition in Greenville County

Mr. Razor made a motion that the SCDNR Board accept the recommendation of the Heritage Trust Advisory Board, SCDNR staff and the Director, subject to due diligence, and grant final approval to purchase approximately 16 acres in Greenville County, conditional upon the successful completion of all Department of Administration approvals. This property will be dedicated as a Heritage Preserve and placed into the corpus of the Heritage Trust as a part of the Chestnut Ridge Heritage Preserve. Mr. Swygert seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

O. Property Acquisition in Horry County

Mr. Lee made a motion that the SCDNR Board accept the recommendation of the Heritage Trust Advisory Board, SCDNR staff, and the Director, subject to due diligence, and grant preliminary approval to investigate the potential acquisition of approximately 353 acres in Horry County, and authority to expend up to \$20,000 in due diligence costs. Mr. Swygert seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

P. Property Acquisition in Pickens County

Mr. Oxner made a motion that the SCDNR Board accept the recommendation by SCDNR staff and the Director, subject to standard due diligence, and grant final approval to acquire approximately 103 acres in Pickens County, as part of Jocassee Gorges WMA. Mr. Hutchins seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Q. Property Acquisition in Pickens County

Mr. Oxner made a motion that the SCDNR Board accept the recommendation of SCDNR staff and the Director, subject to standard due diligence, to grant final approval to acquire approximately 160 acres in Pickens County, as part of Jocassee Gorges WMA. Mr. Swygert seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

R. Property Acquisition in Pickens County

Mr. Oxner made a motion that the SCDNR Board accept the recommendation by SCDNR staff and the Director, subject to standard due diligence, and grant final

approval to acquire approximately 64 acres in Pickens County, as part of Jocassee Gorges WMA. Mr. Lee seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

S. Property Acquisition in Pickens County

Mr. Oxner made a motion that the SCDNR Board, accept the recommendation of SCDNR staff and the Director, and grant preliminary approval to investigate approximately 10 acres on Porter Road in Pickens County for acquisition and authorize the expenditure of up to \$20,000 in due diligence costs. Mr. Lee seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

13. Time and Location of Next Board Meeting

The Board will hold a meeting on June 27, 2024.

14. Adjournment

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