

Minutes
Board of the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources
Land, Water and Conservation Division
5 Geology Road
Columbia, SC
November 21, 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., November 21, 2024 at the Land Water and Conservation Division Office, 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

Dave Tafaoa, 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 Rick Counts, SC Hunters for the Hungry; Bob McAlister; Tom Mullikin; Virginia Ann Mullikin; and Sammy Fretwell, *The State*.

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 September 12, 2024 meeting, September 18, 2024 special meeting, October 17, 2024 workshop or November 7, 2024 special meeting. *Mr. Lee made a motion that the minutes of the September 12, 2024 meeting, September 18, 2024 special meeting, October 17, 2024 workshop and November 7, 2024 special meeting be approved as submitted. Mr. Oxner seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*

7. Executive Session

Dr. Hartley 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 to Item(s) for Board Action A – Appointment of Agency Head. Mr. Hutchins seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

8. Open Session

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

9. Item(s) for Board Action

A. Appointment of Agency Head

Mr. Lee made a motion that the SCDNR Board appoint Dr. Tom Mullikin as agency Director and to submit this appointment to the Senate for advice and consent. Mr. Hutchins seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

10. Agency Reports/Updates

Presentation:

Director Boyles presented the Meritorious Service Award to Scott Speares.

Commendations:

Director Boyles commended Board Member Dr. Mark Hartley for his work with the Ducks Unlimited South Carolina-East Cooper Chapter. Their Annual Oyster Roast and Lowcountry Cookout at the Southeastern Wildlife Exposition was recognized as one of DU's Top Ten Events of 2023. Dr. Hartley was the Area Chair for the event which was very successful.

Director Boyles commended the 2024 Regional Officers of the Year listed below and the 2024 Statewide Officer of the Year PFC Bradley Thompkins of Region 4 and the NASBLA Boating Officer of the Year for S.C. PFC Andrew Alexander of Region 4.

- Region 1: Region Officer of the Year PFC Nick Santangelo
NASBLA Region Boating Officer of the Year PFC Joseph Dickerson
 - Region 2: Region Officer of the Year PFC Austin Spell
NASBLA Boating Region Officer of the Year L/CPL Matthew Owen
 - Region 3: Region Officer of the Year PFC Matthew Mays
NASBLA Boating Officer of the Year CO Cameron Smith
 - Region 4: Region Officer of the Year PFC Bradley Thompkins
NASBLA Boating Region Officer of the Year PFC Andrew Alexander
- Investigations: Investigator Wilson Norris

Director Boyles commended the 17 Graduates of Basic Law Enforcement Class 819 and the recognitions received as follows:

- Class Leader: Jason Wallace
- Assistant Class Leader: Kasey Widmyer
- Distinguished Graduate: William Moss (96.33 avg.)
- Director's Physical Fitness Award: Evan Sida
- Clifford A. Moyer Marksmanship Award: Jason Wallace

Director Boyles commended Region 4 Law Enforcement Staff Sergeant William "Willy" Ladue who received the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award.

Director Boyles commended Law Enforcement Officers who assisted the Town of Batesburg-Leesville Police Department as they laid to rest Chief Chad Satcher of Circle Fire Department. We received a letter from Chief Darren Amick thanking us for our help in conducting Chief Satcher's Caisson through their town.

Director Boyles commended Alix Pedraza of the Office of External Affairs for her efforts leading to SCDNR-Cultural Charitable Trust Program's selection as a GOLD recipient recognition by the SEAFWA Conservation Access, Relevancy, and Engagement (C.A.R.E.) Committee for our outreach efforts. The committee judges stated they "believed that the initiatives demonstrating your commitment to the inclusion of underrepresented populations in South Carolina are outstanding."

Director Boyles commended *South Carolina Wildlife* magazine staff for their recognitions at the SC Outdoor Press (SCOPE) Conference: Editor Cindy Thompson won in the category for best features story with her story, "The Dance." Executive Editor Joey Frazier took second place in photography with his cover shot – the "Tackle Box, as well

as won Best Hunting Story with “Mr. Jim.” Cindy was elected to the SCOPe Board and Joey was elected President-elect and will be president in 2026.

Director Boyles commended Mark Carroll of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries for his hard work on the Upstate Mobility Impaired Deer Hunt. Mark’s efforts were recognized in a note from a constituent who wrote on behalf of her husband who was able to participate and had a great time and was so appreciative of this wonderful program.

Director Boyles commended Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries staff and staff across the agency who assisted in the post hurricane efforts of Hurricane Helene and demonstrated such professionalism and dedication.

Director Boyles commended Anna Smith of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries as SCDNR’s Forest Legacy Program Coordinator and lead grant writer for her work in helping secure approval of a historic \$50 million grant for largest conservation easement in SC history.

Emily Cope, Deputy Director for Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries, reported on the damages from Tropical Cyclone Helene.

David Tarrant, Chief Operations Officer, gave the Board a brief update on the new headquarters.

11. Items for Board Information

Climate Update

Hope Mizzell, Land, Water and Conservation Division, gave the Board a brief report on the impacts of Tropical Cyclone Helene. Dr. Mizzell provided drought status, rainfall totals, precipitation percentiles, streamflow, lake levels, groundwater monitoring wells around the state, precipitation forecast and temperature forecast.

12. Advisory Committee Reports

A. Marine

Mr. Swygert reported that the Marine Advisory Committee met November 1, 2024. The Advisory Committee received a status update on red drum.

B. Governor’s Cup Billfishing Series

Blaik Keppler, Deputy Director for Marine Resources, reported that the Governor’s Cup Billfishing Series Advisory Board met November 7, 2024. The Advisory Board approved the appointment of three new members. These will be brought to the SCDNR Board at the January 16, 2025 meeting. The Advisory Board received reports on the 2024 revenue and expenditures. The Advisory Board received updates from The Buckskin Billfish and Make Way Media.

C. Saltwater Recreational Fisheries

Mrs. Keppler reported that the Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Advisory Committee met November 12, 2024. The Advisory Committee received a status update on red drum.

D. Waterfowl

Billy Dukes, Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division, reported that the Waterfowl Advisory Committee met November 12, 2024. The Advisory Committee received updates on infrastructure and status of Category I WMAs, Category I Lottery Hunts, Mallard genetics and Mallard Release Programs and Plantersville Solar Farm. The

Advisory Committee reviewed the 2023-2024 duck stamp expenditures. The Advisory Committee received a status report on the 2023-2024 Waterfowl Management Program.

E. Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries

Mr. Hutchins reported that the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Advisory Committee met November 14, 2024. The Advisory Committee received updates on black bass and Santee Cooper blue catfish. The Advisory Committee received a report on the impacts of Tropical Cyclone Helene.

F. Heritage Trust

Ken Rentiers, Deputy Director for Land, Water and Conservation, reported that the Heritage Trust Advisory Board met November 14, 2024. The Advisory Board received presentations on the State Endangered Species and Environmental Review, Bunched Arrowhead and Saving the Topper Site. The Advisory Board approved four property acquisitions.

G. Law Enforcement

COL Chisolm Frampton reported that Law Enforcement Advisory Committee met October 23, 2024. The Advisory Committee received updates on the new class of officers, Law Enforcement Use of Force incident and body cameras.

13. Item(s) for Board Action

B. Approval of Expenditures from the Broad River Mitigation Trust Fund Account

Elizabeth Miller, Office of Environmental Program reviewed the request for expenditures from the Broad River Mitigation Trust Fund Account, as included in the meeting packet. *Mr. Lee made a motion that the SCDNR Board, acting as Trustees for the Mitigation Trust Fund, accept the recommendation of the SCDNR staff and the Director, and authorize the use of \$100,000 from the Broad River Fisheries Mitigation Trust Fund sub-fund, as requested by SCDNR staff on behalf of the Broad River Mitigation Trust Fund stakeholders, for the purpose of purchasing 24 acres of land along the Enoree River called the Travelers Rest Bunched Arrowhead Tract. Dr. Hartley seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*

14. Executive Session

Dr. Hartley made a motion that the SCDNR Board go into executive session pursuant to SC Code Section 30-4-70(A)(2) to discuss contractual matters related to Item(s) for Board Action C, D, E, F, G and H. Mr. Oxner seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

15. Open Session

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

16. Item(s) for Board Action

C. Preliminary Property Purchase Approval in Charleston County

Dr. Harley 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 accept the donation of approximately 3 acres in Charleston County. This property will be dedicated as a Heritage Preserve and placed into the corpus of the Heritage Trust as a part of the Botany Bay Heritage Preserve (HP)/Wildlife Management Area (WMA), conditional upon the

successful completion of all Department of Administration approvals. Mr. Oxner seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

D. Preliminary Property Purchase Approval in Greenville County

Mr. Oxner made a motion that the SCDNR Board accept the recommendation of the Heritage Trust Advisory Board, SCDNR staff and the Director, and grant preliminary approval and the expenditure of \$20,000 in Heritage Trust Funds to investigate the potential purchase of approximately 24 acres in Greenville County that would be dedicated as a Heritage Preserve and placed into the Corpus of the Heritage Trust program. Mr. Lee seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

E. Preliminary Property Purchase Approval in Pickens County

Mr. Razor made a motion that the SCDNR Board accept the recommendation of the Heritage Trust Advisory Board, SCDNR staff and the Director, and grant preliminary approval to evaluate the potential purchase using \$20,000 in Heritage Trust Funds of approximately 106 acres in Pickens County to be dedicated as a Heritage Preserve and placed into the Corpus of the Heritage Trust. Dr. Hartley seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

F. Final Property Purchase Approval in Pickens County

Mr. Razor made a motion that the SCDNR Board accept the recommendation of SCDNR staff and the Director, subject to standard due diligence, and grant final approval for the purchase of Winchester property for a total acquisition of 234 acres in Pickens County, as part of Jocassee Gorges WMA. Mr. Oxner seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

G. Final Property Purchase Approval in Jasper County

Mr. Swygert 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 acquire approximately 332 acres adjoining Coosawhatchie Heritage Preserve/WMA in Jasper County, that will be dedicated as a Heritage Preserve and placed into the corpus of the SC Heritage Trust, and the expenditure of \$670,000 in Heritage Trust funds. Mr. Oxner seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

17. Time and Location of Next Board Meeting

The Board will hold its next meeting on January 16, 2025.

18. Adjournment

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