

Minutes
Board of the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources
SCDNR Headquarters
260 D Epting Lane
West Columbia, SC
January 16, 2025 10:00 am

The regular meeting of the Board of the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources was held at 10:00 a.m., January 16, 2025 at the SCDNR Headquarters, 260 D Epting Lane, West 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**

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 Scott Shirley, City of Tega Cay; Mike Ruhe, Duke Energy; and Scott Whitaker, Coastal Conservation Association.

5. **Constituent Comments**

Mrs. Bobertz stated that Mr. Shirley has requested to make comments. Mr. Shirley updated the Board on the success of the deer depredation permit the City of Tega Cay was granted and noted that they are requesting a permit for an additional 80 deer.

6. **Approval of Minutes**

Chairman Pulliam asked if there were any additions, deletions or corrections to the minutes of the November 21, 2024 meeting. *Mr. Hutchins made a motion that the minutes of the November 21, 2024 meeting be approved as submitted. Dr. Hartley seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*

7. **Agency Reports/Updates**

Director Boyles welcomed everyone to the first meeting at the new SCDNR Headquarters.

Presentation:

Chairman Pulliam presented the Meritorious Service Award to Vice Chairman Mike Hutchins.

Commendations:

Director Boyles commended Law Enforcement CPT Steve Simpson and LT Philip Robertson and Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Billy Dukes for their work and recognition by Paul Wilkes, Southeast Regional Manager, Office of Conservation

Investment of US Fish and Wildlife Service for their hospitality and coordination of logistics for USFWS staff during their December visit to meet staff and monitor projects funded by the Wildlife Restoration program (Wildlife Restoration, Hunter Education, Public Target Ranges). Mr. Wilkes commended project leaders, range officers, and other staff for their “enthusiasm, professionalism, and positivity.”

Director Boyles commended Kevin Swain of the Marine Resources Division for assisting State Parks with their Hurricane Helene recovery efforts. After a request from SCPRT for assistance with a particularly hard-hit state park, Kevin eagerly volunteered and spent a week at Hamilton Branch State Park in McCormick County operating skid steer and chainsaws.

Director Boyles commended Chief of Staff Shannon Bobertz on her appointment by the South Carolina Supreme Court to serve on the Board of Magistrate and Municipal Judge Certification for a three-year term and on her election to serve as President Elect of the Executive Committee of the Richland County Bar Association.

Director Boyles commended Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries staff, Emily Kearse and Tanner Adair for their hard work during duck season and their recognition in emails from constituents who were drawn to attend Bear Island duck hunts and were appreciative of staff's efforts. Tanner was recognized in particular as “very well organized, professional and attentive to hunter’s questions.”

Director Boyles commended General Counsel Susan Porter on her election to serve on the Executive Committee of the Richland County Bar Association.

Director Boyles commended Tyler Brown of Land, Water and Conservation as he completed his term as President of the National Association of Conservation Districts.

Director Boyles commended Angel Brown of the Executive Office of Operations for her efforts that were recognized in an email from a constituent who had gone to the Fort Johnson office for some titling work and commented that the “experience was exceptional...the staff was friendly, helpful, and it looked like they all worked well together.” He recognized that Angel manages the staff and said she “should be commended for creating such a positive experience for the public.”

Director Boyles commended Law Enforcement CPT Henry Stackhouse and SSGT Andre Thompson on their graduation on January 7th from the Public Safety Chaplaincy Training Program.

Director Boyles commended Law Enforcement CO Caleb Owens, LCPL Dustin Sherbert and CO Austin Page who were commended in an email from a constituent who wanted to show his gratitude to these officers for a job well done. He said they responded to a trespasser/poacher issue on his property during turkey season. He said, “They were extremely polite, knowledgeable, and kept me and my neighbors up to date with the progress of their investigation...”

Scott Speares, Chief Budget and Finance Officer, reviewed the FY 2025-2026 budget requests, including the Governor’s recommendations.

Blaik Keppler, Deputy Director for Marine Resources, gave the Board an update on Federal Fisheries and Marine Resource Policies. Mrs. Keppler informed the Board that there has been a withdrawal of the Right Whale ruling and a Secretarial Amendment to Red Snapper.

8. Items for Board Information

A. Climate Update

Hope Mizzell, Land, Water and Conservation Division, gave the Board a report on 2024 weather events and associated statistics. Dr. Mizzell provided drought status, rainfall totals, precipitation percentiles, streamflow, lake levels, groundwater monitoring wells around the state, precipitation forecast and temperature forecast.

B. Alligator Management and Lottery Hunts

Morgan Hart, Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division, gave the Board a brief presentation on the Alligator Management and Lottery Hunts. Ms. Hart reviewed the history of the program, the methods of removal in South Carolina, the 2008-2023 harvest report and public hunt statistics. Ms. Hart also reviewed the possibility of adding slot tags for 4-8 foot alligator.

C. SC Quail Council Update

Michael Hook, Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division, gave the Board a brief update on the South Carolina Quail Council. Mr. Hook noted that the South Carolina Bobwhite Initiative is a result of the Quail Council and it is the 10th Anniversary of the program. Mr. Hook reviewed the history, the objectives, the focal areas and successes of the program. Mr. Hook also outlined regulation changes, and the work on private lands.

9. Item(s) for Board Action

A. Urban/Suburban Deer Management Program Request for the City of Tega Cay

Charles Ruth, Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division, reviewed the request from the City of Tega Cay to remove additional deer through the Urban/Suburban Deer Management Program. *Dr. Hartley made a motion that the SCDNR Board, upon the recommendation of the Director and SCDNR Staff, approve the City of Tega Cay's request to remove up to 80 additional deer through the Urban/Suburban Deer Management Program. Mr. Lee seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*

10. Executive Session

Mr. Lee 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 B, Governor's Cup Advisory Board Appointments.

11. Open Session

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

12. Item(s) for Board Action

B. Governor's Cup Advisory Board Appointments

Mr. Lee made a motion that the SCDNR Board, upon the recommendation of the South Carolina Governor's Cup Advisory Board, appoint Mr. Frederick Bergen, Mr.

Michael Glaesner, and Mr. Harold Turner to the Governor's Cup Advisory Board to each serve three-year terms beginning 1/1/2025 through 12/31/2027. Mr. Oxner seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

13. Comments

On behalf of the Board, Chairman Pulliam presented Director Boyles with a Browning Citori 725 shotgun in honor of his years of service to SCDNR.

At this time each Board member expressed their appreciation to Director Boyles for his service and wished him well with his upcoming retirement.

14. Time and Location of Next Board Meeting

The Board will hold its next meeting on February 20, 2025.

15. Adjournment

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