

Meeting Minutes
Board of the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources
SCDNR Headquarters
260 D Epting Lane
West Columbia, SC
August 6, 2026, 10:00 a.m.

The regular meeting of the Board of the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources was held at 10:00 a.m., August 6, 2026, 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 Dr. Mark Hartley presided at the meeting. Board members present included Vice Chairman Mr. Duane Swygert, Mr. Mike Hutchins, Ms. Hope Blackley, Mr. Davy Hite, Mr. Carlisle Oxner, and Mr. Jerry Lee. Director Dr. Tom Mullikin and staff members of the Department of Natural Resources were present at the meeting.

1. **Call to Order**

Chairman Dr. Mark Hartley called the meeting to order and welcomed all attendees.

2. **Invocation**

Reverend Dr. Eric Skidmore offered the invocation.

3. **Pledge of Allegiance**

Vice Chairman Mr. Duane Swygert led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. **Chairman's Comments**

Chairman Hartley thanked and commended Director Mullikin and everyone who participated in the SC7 expedition. He noted that the partnership generated nearly 900 million media impressions.

Chairman Hartley also commended the members of SCDNR's advisory boards for volunteering their time and expertise. He thanked SCDNR staff for their continued work and stated that the agency's employees make SCDNR one of the best natural resources agencies in the state and nation.

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

Mr. Kevin Ryan, Assistant Chief of Staff, introduced Ms. Laura Voyles, South Carolina Sporting Dog Association; Ms. BeBe Dalton Harrison, Hampton Wildlife Fund; and special guest Ms. Sandy Rucker, former Executive Secretary to the Board. None of the guests requested to address the Board.

6. **Approval of Minutes**

Chairman Hartley asked if there were any additions, deletions, or corrections to the minutes for the June 4, 2026, Board Meeting. *Mr. Jerry Lee made a motion that the minutes of the June 4, 2026, meeting be approved as submitted. Mr. Mike Hutchins seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*

7. **Agency Reports/Updates**

Director's Update:

Director Mullikin thanked the SCDNR personnel who demonstrated exceptional courage and professionalism in connection with recent incidents in Aiken County and recovery operations on Lake Murray.

Outreach and Public Information Updates:

Ms. Cheyenne Twilley provided an update on the SCDNR-SC7 partnership. Ms. Twilley reported that the partnership generated nearly 900 million media impressions. The total was compiled and cross-verified using Newz Group and SocialPilot, SCDNR's in-house media monitoring platforms.

Ms. Twilley explained that, based on the communications benchmark of \$5 per 1,000 impressions, the partnership generated approximately \$4.5 million in earned media value. Achieving comparable exposure through paid advertising would have cost approximately the same amount. SCDNR received the exposure without making any direct advertising expenditures.

Commendations:

Commend the Communications Center for their willingness to assist the U.S. Forest Service in a special operation within the Francis Marion National Forest. Their cooperation and professionalism contributed to the success of several significant enforcement actions, all while continuing to perform their normal day-to-day duties.

Commend Mr. Gary Sundin, Mr. Andy Hollis, Mr. Ben Dyar, Ms. Lauren Faulk, Ms. Raleigh Hawk, Ms. Jordan Costello, and Mr. Stevie Czwartacki of MRD for their support to the NOAA Mussel Watch Program during the 2026 field sampling season. Through successful coordination and collection of oyster samples from sixteen coastal sites, the team made a significant contribution to long-term coastal pollution monitoring.

Commend LE Officer Mr. George Rioux for speaking at the Beaufort Sportfishing Club meeting and delivering an engaging and informative presentation that effectively balanced important conservation and regulatory information. His discussion and updates on upcoming redfish and red snapper regulations provided valuable guidance to attendees and reinforced SCDNR's commitment to public education.

Commend LE Officer Mr. George Rioux and Officer Mr. Jay Leary for responding to an incident on Lady's Island. Their prompt actions, compassionate support for the affected family, and continued assistance throughout the judicial process exemplify the highest standards of SCDNR law enforcement.

Commend Ms. Csilla Czako of LWC on her acceptance to the LeadSC Immerse program. This recognition reflects her outstanding work ethic, commitment to excellence, and dedication to continuous personal and professional growth.

Commend Mr. James Vant of the Executive Office on being accepted as a candidate for the Certified Public Manager (CPM) Program, class of 2028. His selection reflects his leadership and commitment to professional growth.

Commend Ms. Shannon Bobertz, Chief of Staff, for being accepted into the 2026-2027 South Carolina Executive Institute. Her continued pursuit of professional development reflects her commitment to strengthening both herself and the agency.

Commend LE Officer Mr. Earl Pope on an outstanding finish at the Ironman Jacksonville. Completing an Ironman requires months of disciplined training, mental toughness, perseverance, and an unwavering commitment to excellence - qualities that Mr. Pope demonstrates both in competition and in his service to the citizens of South Carolina.

Commend LE Officer Mr. Will Sutton for his outstanding performance during the 250-pound lift assessment and ground defense training, demonstrating exceptional strength, determination, and commitment to maintaining the physical readiness required to accomplish the mission.

Commend Dr. Hope Mizzell, Ms. Melissa Griffin, Ms. Jennifer Simmons, and Mr. Frank Strait of the State Climatology Office for receiving the 2026 National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) Notable Document Award for the 2025 South Carolina Year in Review in the Environmental Issues category. The publication was recognized for its innovative approach to providing substantive information on contemporary environmental issues of interest to legislatures.

Commend the Law Enforcement Division for their outstanding presence and professionalism during the Floatchella event at Fat Frogs Marina. Officers helped restore order to heavy boat traffic, significantly improving safety for boaters and waterfront residents while minimizing property damage.

Commend Ms. Chase Berley and Ms. Allison DeVore of EOI for receiving the 2026 Association for Conservation Information National Award in recognition of their outstanding videography and exceptional work on SCDNR Field Notes. Their creativity and dedication have brought national recognition to the agency and enhanced public awareness of its mission.

Special Recognition:

Director Mullikin proudly recognized Mr. Greg Cribb, Natural Resource Technician at the Tom Yawkey Wildlife Center, for his exceptional composure, courage, and responsible actions during a dangerous situation.

Mr. Cribb is a lifelong resident of Georgetown County and worked for nearly 20 years as an equipment operator with International Paper Company's Georgetown Mill before joining SCDNR in January. Since joining SCDNR, he has demonstrated professionalism, sound judgment, and an unwavering commitment to serving the citizens and natural resources of South Carolina.

Mr. Cribb was recognized for his extraordinary actions during a residential burglary. After learning of suspicious activity near his property, Mr. Cribb responded to investigate and systematically cleared his residence. Upon discovering an intruder inside, he remained calm under extreme pressure, maintained control of the situation, and safely directed the offender outside to await the arrival of law enforcement. His composed demeanor, sound judgment, and courage contributed directly to the safe apprehension of the suspect without further incident.

Mr. Cribb's actions reflect the highest standards of personal integrity, responsibility, and public service. His ability to remain calm and exercise sound decision-making in a dangerous situation exemplifies the qualities expected of those who serve the people of South Carolina. Mr. Cribb's courageous actions were also recognized by the Georgetown County Sheriff's Office with its Citizen's Award.

SCDNR is honored to recognize Mr. Greg Cribb for his exemplary courage and professionalism and congratulates him on this well-deserved recognition.

8. Advisory Committee Reports

A. Law Enforcement Advisory Committee

Vice Chairman Swygert reported that the Law Enforcement Advisory Committee met on June 9, 2026, in Ridgeland. Deputy Director Colonel Frampton provided an update on Law Enforcement activities during Memorial Day weekend in Myrtle Beach.

Captain Dawson and four first sergeants provided a regional overview and presented case highlights from throughout the region. The next meeting of the Law Enforcement Advisory Committee will be held in Walterboro, with the date and time to be determined.

B. Land, Water and Conservation Advisory Committee

Ms. Hope Blackley reported that the Land, Water and Conservation Advisory Committee met on Tuesday, July 7, 2026, at the SCDNR Geology Office.

The Committee received the 2025 South Carolina Conservation District Annual Report and presentations from State Geologist Mr. Scott Howard and Botanist Mr. Keith Bradley.

It also approved recommendations for Land, Water and Conservation Advisory Committee reappointments, Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioner appointments and reappointments, and a Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioner Emeritus designation for consideration by the SCDNR Board. The next meeting of the Land, Water and Conservation Advisory Committee will be held in September of 2026 at Poinsett Bridge.

C. Heritage Trust Advisory Board

Chairman Hartley reported that the Heritage Trust Advisory Board met in person on Thursday, July 16, 2026, at the Parker Annex Archaeology Center.

Mr. Tyler Brown, Deputy Director of the Land, Water and Conservation Division, provided a comprehensive orientation concerning the Heritage Trust Fund budget process and the statute governing the Heritage Trust Advisory Board.

The Heritage Trust Advisory Board considered and approved an amended FY2027 Heritage Trust budget, an FY2028 Heritage Trust budget request, and numerous preliminary and final property acquisitions for consideration by the SCDNR Board.

Mr. Mike Hutchins requested that Board members receive an updated report at each meeting showing the Heritage Trust Fund balance and expenditures. Mr. Brown stated that the Heritage Trust Advisory Board had made the same request and that staff would provide the SCDNR Board with a balance sheet at each meeting showing recorded revenue and expenditures.

The next Heritage Trust Advisory Board meeting is scheduled for October 15, 2026, at Poinsett Bridge.

9. Item(s) for Board Information

A. Climate Update

Dr. Hope Mizzell, Land, Water and Conservation Division, provided an update on the long-term drought affecting South Carolina.

Dr. Mizzell presented photographs documenting drought impacts around the state, including dry artesian wells in Sumter County and a pond in Lee County that was approximately four feet below its normal level. She noted that portions of Allendale and Hampton counties and the Pee Dee region were among the areas most severely affected. Agricultural impacts included declining irrigation-pond levels and significant impacts to corn and other crops.

The Drought Response Committee met on July 8, 2026. At that meeting, 36 counties were designated as being in severe drought and 10 counties were designated as being in moderate drought. The Committee is scheduled to meet again at 1:30 p.m. on August 6. Dr. Mizzell stated that recent localized rainfall could allow some counties to be downgraded, although beneficial rainfall had not been widespread.

Statewide rainfall from January through June ranked as the fourth driest such period in 131 years. The November-through-June and September-through-June periods each ranked as the second driest in 131 years. Dr. Mizzell explained that the duration of the drought was causing significant impacts to groundwater, wells, streams, and, to a lesser degree, lakes.

Rainfall during July varied significantly across the state. Charleston remained the second driest on record for the year to date, Columbia ranked fourth driest, and the Greenville-Spartanburg area ranked 12th driest. 30-day rainfall conditions had improved in some areas, but 60- and 90-day totals continued to show substantial deficits, particularly across the Lower Savannah region, Coastal Plain, and Pee Dee.

Streamflow had improved in portions of the Upstate but remained low across the Coastal Plain and Pee Dee. Some rivers were near the lowest 5% of recorded flows. Groundwater levels also remained below normal across much of the state.

Lake Murray was approximately 1.4 feet below full pool. Lake Marion had reached the first stage of its drought contingency plan, while Lake Blalock, Lake Greenwood, and Lake Wateree were near normal levels. Reservoirs in the Savannah River Basin were lower. Lake Hartwell remained at Level 2 under the United States Army Corps of Engineers' drought contingency plan, although projected levels were expected to remain above the Level 3 threshold.

16 water systems are requesting mandatory water restrictions, while 50 systems are requesting voluntary restrictions. Due to the severity of the drought, the State Climatology Office continues to provide weekly drought briefings to the Governor's Office.

No tropical cyclone activity was expected during the following seven days. Dr. Mizzell explained that scattered thunderstorms would not be sufficient to end the

drought and that recovery would require months of normal rainfall or a beneficial tropical rainfall event. Without tropical rainfall, significant recovery might not occur until October, November, or December.

The seven-day forecast indicated expected rainfall totals of approximately 0.7 to 1.5 inches in portions of the Upstate and Coastal Plain, with less than one-half inch expected elsewhere. Dr. Mizzell noted that approximately one inch of rainfall per week was needed to offset evaporation. Above-normal temperatures were likely from August 10 through August 14, with the possibility of normal to above-normal precipitation in the Upstate. Developing El Niño conditions could become a greater factor during the fall and winter.

Dr. Mizzell encouraged Board members and the public to submit photographs documenting drought impacts to drought@dnr.sc.gov.

B. Legal Update

The Legal Update was presented and discussed during executive session.

C. Agency Head Mid-Year Evaluation

The Agency Head Mid-Year Evaluation was presented and discussed during executive session.

10. Item(s) for Board Action

A. Approval of Expenditure from St. Stephen Mitigation Trust Fund

Mr. Ross Self, Chief of Freshwater Fisheries within the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division, requested the release of \$352,944 from the St. Stephen Mitigation Trust Fund Rediversion Monitoring Sub-fund. The funds will support the continued operation and monitoring of the St. Stephen Fish Lift. Mr. Self reported that the balance of the sub-fund was approximately \$1,782,918. *Mr. Jerry Lee made a motion that the SCDNR Board, acting as the Board of Trustees for the Mitigation Trust Fund, upon the recommendation of SCDNR staff and the Director, pursuant to S.C. Code Section 50-1-310, authorize the use of \$352,944 from the St. Stephen Mitigation Trust Fund Rediversion Monitoring sub-fund for the purpose of continued monitoring and research of American shad, blueback herring, and American eel at the St. Stephen's Fish Lift and throughout the Cooper River Rediversion Project. Ms. Hope Blackley seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.*

B. Amendment of Policy 704.09 SCDNR Grooming Policy

Colonel Jamie Landrum of the Law Enforcement Division reviewed proposed amendments to SCDNR Policy 704.09, Grooming Policy. He explained that the amendments remove the detailed grooming requirements for male Law Enforcement Officers from the Board policy and place responsibility for establishing and maintaining those standards in the applicable Law Enforcement directive. He clarified that the proposed amendments do not eliminate grooming standards. *Mr. Davy Hite made a motion that the SCDNR Board, upon the recommendation of SCDNR staff and the Director, approve the proposed amendments to SCDNR Policy 704.09 Grooming Policy. Mr. Mike Hutchins seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.*

D. Approval of FY2027 Heritage Trust Amended Budget

Mr. Tyler Brown, Deputy Director of the Land, Water and Conservation Division, presented the FY2027 amended budget request for the Heritage Trust programs. Mr. Brown explained that the amended request reflected the 2% general increase, additional staff and operational funding needs, and anticipated ratification of the State Appropriations Act. *Ms. Hope Blackley made a motion that the SCDNR Board, acting as the Board of Trustees for the Heritage Land Trust, upon the recommendation of the SC Heritage Trust Advisory Board, SCDNR staff, and the Director, approve the FY2027 Heritage Trust amended budget. Mr. Carlisle Oxner seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.*

E. Approval of FY2028 Heritage Trust Budget

Mr. Tyler Brown, Deputy Director of the Land, Water and Conservation Division, presented the FY2028 Heritage Trust budget request. The proposed budget included no change for the conservation property program, a 16% increase for the botany program, a 7% increase for cultural management, a 1% increase for Heritage Trust management, and no change for coastal preserves. The overall proposed increase was 5% and reflected pay plan and operational needs. *Mr. Carlisle Oxner made a motion that the SCDNR Board, acting as the Board of Trustees for the Heritage Land Trust, upon the recommendation of the SC Heritage Trust Advisory Board, SCDNR staff, and the Director, approve the FY2028 Heritage Trust budget. Mr. Jerry Lee seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.*

11. Executive Session

Mr. Mike Hutchins made a motion that the SCDNR Board go into executive session pursuant to S.C. Code Section 30-4-70(A)(2) to discuss contractual matters related to Items for Board Information B and C and Items for Board Action C and F through Q and pursuant to S.C. Code Section 30-4-70(A)(1) to discuss personnel matters related to Items for Board Action R through U. Ms. Hope Blackley seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

12. Open Session

Vice Chairman Swygert made a motion that the SCDNR Board return to open session, noting that no action was taken during executive session. Ms. Hope Blackley seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

13. Item(s) for Board Action

C. Approval of Memorandums of Agreement w/ the USFWS, FWC, and FBI

Colonel Jamie Landrum of the Law Enforcement Division stated that the proposed agreements would strengthen SCDNR Law Enforcement's operational footprint and partnerships with federal and state law enforcement agencies. *Vice Chairman Swygert made a motion that the SCDNR Board, upon the recommendation of SCDNR staff and the Director, pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 23-20-40(B), approve the Memorandum of Agreement with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the Memorandum of Agreement with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) Law Enforcement, and the Memorandum of Agreement with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Columbia Violent Gang Task Force. Mr. Jerry Lee seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.*

F. Final Approval of Property Acquisition in Aiken County (GT)

Mr. Mike Hutchins made a motion that the SCDNR Board, upon the recommendation of the Heritage Trust Advisory Board, SCDNR staff, and the Director, grant final approval and the expenditure of up to \$1,400,000 for the acquisition of approximately 410 acres adjacent to the Aiken Gopher Tortoise HP-WMA in Aiken County to be dedicated as a Heritage Preserve and placed into the corpus of the Heritage Trust. Ms. Hope Blackley seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

G. Final Approval of Property Acquisition in Aiken/Edgefield County (G)

Mr. Mike Hutchins made a motion that the SCDNR Board, upon the recommendation of the Heritage Trust Advisory Board, SCDNR staff, and the Director, grant final approval and the expenditure of up to \$4,327,000 for the acquisition of approximately 262 acres in Aiken and Edgefield Counties to be dedicated as a Heritage Preserve and placed into the corpus of the Heritage Trust. Mr. Davy Hite seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

H. Final Approval of Property Acquisition in Greenville County (BA)

Ms. Hope Blackley made a motion that the SCDNR Board, upon the recommendation of the Heritage Trust Advisory Board, SCDNR staff, and the Director, grant final approval and the expenditure of up to \$100,000 for the acquisition of approximately 24.4 acres west of Bunched Arrowhead Heritage Preserve in Greenville County to be dedicated as a Heritage Preserve and placed into the corpus of the Heritage Trust. Mr. Jerry Lee seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

I. Final Approval of Property Acquisition in Horry County (DT)

Mr. Jerry Lee made a motion that the SCDNR Board, upon the recommendation of the Heritage Trust Advisory Board, SCDNR staff, and the Director, grant final approval and the expenditure of up to \$2,050,000 for the acquisition of approximately 698 acres adjacent to the Waccamaw River HP-WMA in Horry County to be dedicated as a Heritage Preserve and placed into the corpus of the Heritage Trust. Mr. Carlisle Oxner seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

J. Final Approval of Property Acquisition in Horry County (EE)

Mr. Jerry Lee made a motion that the SCDNR Board, upon the recommendation of the Heritage Trust Advisory Board, SCDNR staff, and the Director, grant final approval and the expenditure of up to \$1,825,000 for the acquisition of approximately 524 acres adjacent to the Waccamaw River HP-WMA in Horry County to be dedicated as a Heritage Preserve and placed into the corpus of the Heritage Trust. Mr. Mike Hutchins seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

K. Final Approval of Property Acquisition in Horry County (M)

Mr. Jerry Lee made a motion that the SCDNR Board, upon the recommendation of the Heritage Trust Advisory Board, SCDNR staff, and the Director, grant final approval and the expenditure of up to \$9,950,000 for the acquisition of approximately 2,330 acres adjacent to the Waccamaw River HP-WMA in Horry County to be dedicated as a Heritage Preserve and placed into the corpus of the Heritage Trust. Vice Chairman Swygert seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

L. Final Approval of Property Acquisition in Horry County (RO)

Mr. Jerry Lee made a motion that the SCDNR Board, upon the recommendation of the Heritage Trust Advisory Board, SCDNR staff, and the Director, grant final approval and the expenditure of up to \$950,000 for the acquisition of approximately 410 acres adjacent to the Waccamaw River HP-WMA in Horry County to be dedicated as a Heritage Preserve and placed into the corpus of the Heritage Trust. Vice Chairman Swygert seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

M. Final Approval of Property Acquisition in Horry County (WE)

Mr. Jerry Lee made a motion that the SCDNR Board, upon the recommendation of the Heritage Trust Advisory Board, SCDNR staff, and the Director, grant final approval and the expenditure of up to \$4,925,000 for the acquisition of approximately 1,766 acres adjacent to the Waccamaw River HP-WMA in Horry County to be dedicated as a Heritage Preserve and placed into the corpus of the Heritage Trust. Vice Chairman Swygert seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

N. Preliminary Approval of Property Acquisition in Barnwell County (BRF)

Mr. Mike Hutchins made a motion that the SCDNR Board, upon the recommendation of SCDNR staff and the Director, grant preliminary approval and the expenditure of up to \$40,000 to investigate the potential acquisition of approximately 511 acres in Barnwell County that will be added as a new Wildlife Management Area. Vice Chairman Swygert seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

O. Preliminary Approval of Property Acquisition in Pickens County (GM)

Ms. Hope Blackley made a motion that the SCDNR Board, upon the recommendation of the Heritage Trust Advisory Board, SCDNR staff, and the Director, grant preliminary approval and the expenditure of up to \$50,000 to investigate the potential acquisition of approximately 182 acres in Pickens County that may be dedicated as a Heritage Preserve and placed into the corpus of the Heritage Trust. Vice Chairman Swygert seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

P. Request for Use in Charleston County (LI)

Mr. Davy Hite made a motion that the SCDNR Board, upon the recommendation of the Heritage Trust Advisory Board, SCDNR staff, and the Director, grant approval to the City of Folly Beach for a license to support the rehabilitation of rock groin #3 on the Lighthouse Inlet Heritage Preserve in Charleston County. Vice Chairman Swygert seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Q. Preliminary Approval of Property Exchange in McCormick County (JLM)

Mr. Davy Hite made a motion that the SCDNR Board, upon the recommendation of SCDNR staff and the Director, grant preliminary approval to evaluate a potential land exchange at the James L. Mason WMA in McCormick County. Vice Chairman Swygert seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

R. Land, Water and Conservation Advisory Committee Reappointments

Mr. Carlisle Oxner made a motion that the SCDNR Board, upon the recommendation of the Land, Water and Conservation Advisory Committee, SCDNR staff, and the Director, approve the following Land, Water and Conservation Advisory Committee reappointments: Mr. Thomas Garrison, III (8/6/2026 - 8/5/2030), Mr. James McLeod (8/6/2026 - 8/5/2028), and Mr. William Glenn (8/6/2026 - 8/5/2030). Mr. Mike Hutchins seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

S. Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioner Appointments

Mr. Carlisle Oxner made a motion that the SCDNR Board, upon the recommendation of the Land, Water and Conservation Advisory Committee, SCDNR staff, and the Director, approve the following Conservation District Commissioner appointments: Mr. Charles Glover (8/6/2026 - 1/31/2027), Mr. Christopher LeMaster, Sr. (8/6/2026 - 4/07/2030), Ms. Sarah Allen (8/6/2026 - 1/31/2027), Ms. Kerry Matthews (8/6/2026 - 7/01/2029), Mr. Austin Cathcart (8/6/2026 - 1/31/2029), Mr. Sterling Sadler (8/6/2026 - 2/11/2029), and Mr. James Rhodes (8/6/2026 - 3/27/2028). Mr. Jerry Lee seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

T. Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioner Emeritus

Mr. Carlisle Oxner made a motion that the SCDNR Board, upon the recommendation of the Land, Water and Conservation Advisory Committee, SCDNR staff, and the Director, approve the designation of Mr. James Lynch, Sr., as Conservation District Commissioner Emeritus. Ms. Hope Blackley seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

U. Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioner Reappointments

Ms. Hope Blackley made a motion that the SCDNR Board, upon the recommendation of the Land, Water and Conservation Advisory Committee, SCDNR staff, and the Director, approve the following Conservation District Commissioner reappointments: Mr. Thomas Garrison, III (8/27/2025 - 8/26/2029), Mr. Steven Chassereau (3/26/2026 - 3/25/2030), Mr. Douglas Reeves (9/19/2026 - 9/18/2030), Mr. Doug Heydt (3/04/2026 - 3/03/2030), Mr. Ben Setzler, III (3/04/2025 - 3/03/2029), and Mr. Phillip Yon (2/28/2026 - 2/27/2030). Mr. Jerry Lee seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

14. Comments

Chairman Hartley requested the remaining balance for the Heritage Trust Fund. SCDNR Conservation Property Coordinator, Ms. Fran Varacalli, reported that the Heritage Trust Fund balance was approximately \$47,547,000 as of July 11, 2026. The requests considered during the meeting totaled slightly more than \$25 million, leaving an estimated balance of approximately \$22 million.

Mr. Mike Hutchins requested that future meeting materials include an updated summary of the acreage owned and managed by SCDNR. Ms. Varacalli reported that SCDNR owns approximately 323,000 acres and manages approximately 817,000 additional acres through the Wildlife Management Area program, for a total of approximately 1.15 million acres owned or managed by the agency. Approximately 16.2% of South Carolina is protected through ownership or conservation easements, with SCDNR holdings representing approximately 1.8% of that. Staff agreed to provide an updated report to the Board.

Vice Chairman Swygert reminded attendees that the South Carolina Hunters for the Hungry Annual Benefit Dinner would be held on Saturday, August 8, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. in Pauline, South Carolina. He noted that Hunters for the Hungry is an SCDNR partner.

Mr. Jerry Lee noted that Youth Deer Hunt Day is also on Saturday, August 8, 2026, and encouraged experienced hunters to introduce a young person to hunting. He stated that taking a child hunting could help develop a lifelong interest in the outdoors and South Carolina's hunting heritage.

Mr. Davy Hite thanked the Chairman and Board members for addressing a lengthy agenda quickly and efficiently.

15. Time and Location of Next Board Meeting

The Board's next meeting will be held Friday, September 11, 2026, in conjunction with the SCDNR Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Luncheon.

16. Adjournment

Mr. Jerry Lee made a motion that the meeting be adjourned. Mr. Mike Hutchins seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.