

Heritage Trust Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

**Parker Annex Archaeology Center
2025 Barnwell Street
Columbia, SC 29202**

Thursday, July 25, 2024 - 10:00 a.m.

Members Present

Campbell Coxe, Chairman
Rob Keck
Dr. Oswald H. King, III (via phone)
Dr. Julia Krebs
Dr. Adam King
Brad Sauls (for Dr. Eric Emerson)
Tom Patton (for Scott Philips)
Ken Rentiers
Daniel Gambrell (for Duane Parrish)
Emily Cope (for Robert Boyles)
Jake Rasor

Others Present

Allison Morris
Barry Kesler
Bill Marshall
Billy Dukes
Catherine Hart
Courtney Lewis
Csilla Czako
Dawn Beaver
Fran Varacalli
Jessica Kinsella
Joe Lemeris
Julie Binz
Katie Gray
Keith Bradley
Ken Prosser
Lalon Swaney
Lorianne Riggin
Megan James
Samantha Spires
Sean Taylor
Susan Porter

Call to Order

Chairman Campbell Coxe called the meeting to order and provided the Freedom of Information Statement.

Welcome and Introduction

Chairman Coxe gave a welcome to the Board and everyone attending.

Procedural Update

Susan Porter, General Counsel for the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR), provided a reminder about adhering to Robert's Rules of Order during the meetings and noted that she is passing the responsibility of the Heritage Trust Advisory Board to Catherine Hart, SCDNR's property transactions attorney. Catherine Hart reviewed Robert's Rules of Order with those in attendance.

Ms. Hart confirmed that the Roll Call of Attendance was not necessary and only confirmation of quorum was needed. She also noted that if someone had a question during the meeting, it would

be out of order to ask during the meeting. The individual should email their question(s) and set a meeting with the Board. Except for the Public Comment period, individuals outside the Board are not able to speak. Additionally, the Executive Session is covered by the Freedom of Information Act and Robert's Rules of Order.

Roll Call of Attendance

Chairman Coxe confirmed the meeting had reached quorum and confirmed that the attending Board members would be noted in the minutes.

Public Comment Period

Chairman Coxe asked if anyone wanted to speak during this time. No comment was made.

Approval of Minutes from May 9, 2024

Mr. Rob Keck made a motion that the Heritage Trust Advisory Board approve the minutes from the May 9, 2024 meeting as submitted. Mr. Tom Patton seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes from June 18, 2024 Conference Call

Mr. Brad Sauls made a motion that the Heritage Trust Advisory Board approve the minutes from the June 18, 2024 conference call as submitted. Mr. Rob Keck seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

Items for Board Information

- A) ***Book Project: "A Guide to Saving South Carolina Wildflowers": Dr. Richard Porcher, Jr., Author and Botanist***

Chairman Coxe introduced Dr. Richard Porcher and his book, "A Guide to Saving South Carolina Wildflowers." Dr. Porcher is editing this book with SCDNR Heritage Trust Botanist Keith Bradley. SCDNR Heritage Trust Upstate Botanist Dr. Samantha Tessel and SCDNR Heritage Trust Lowcountry Botanist Eric Ungberg are also contributing researchers.

Dr. Porcher espoused the importance of and need for fieldwork to document and conserve the wildflowers of South Carolina. The book reviews wildflowers that were historically extirpated. There are many species that have not been sighted in the State for an extended period of time and may no longer be present in the State. All sites where these species have previously been seen need to be checked.

Species of note include Walter's Milkweed, which was last seen in Jasper County near Highway 62 in approximately 1962. Godfrey's Forestiera may be imperiled; Daws Island Heritage Preserve needs to be checked. If it is not there, it is present at only two sites left in the state. The Fringeless Yellow Orchid was the species that was really the catalyst for this book. It used to be abundant but has been sparse in recent years.

B) Budget Amendment for FY 2025: *Sean Taylor, Senior Archaeologist, Land, Water & Conservation, SCDNR*

Sean Taylor thanked Chairman Coxe and the Heritage Trust Advisory Board Members for having him. He informed the Board that money would once again be moved from Cultural's operating budget to the personal budget to pay for salary increases for those who make over \$50,000 and to increase the fringe and temporary hourly percentage amount.

Chairman Coxe thanked Mr. Taylor. This concluded with the Items for Board Information.

Potential Conflict of Interest Statement

Chairman Coxe read the "Potential Conflict of Interest Statement". No Statement was made.

Items for Board Action

A) Habitat Protection-Conservation Property FY2026 Budget: *Lorianne Riggin, Director, Office of Environmental Programs, SCNDR*

Lorianne Riggin presented the Habitat Protection-Conservation Property FY2026 Budget to the Board. She noted the budget was exactly the same as FY2025 with no fiscal changes. The program is adding a new position to assist Fran Varacalli, the Conservation Property Coordinator. This position was already factored in and approved in last year's budget.

Chairman Coxe thanked Ms. Riggin. Dr. Julia Krebs said she was confused about the categories of the budgets being presented. Emily Cope and Chairman Coxe clarified that the budget names differ based on the staff and programs.

B) Habitat Protection-Botany FY2026 Budget: *Keith Bradley, Botanist, Land, Water and Conservation Division, SCDNR*

Keith Bradley presented the Habitat Protection-Botany FY2026 Budget to the Board. He proposed shifting the budget from full-time staff to part-time staff to employ more data technicians. He noted that since the total amount of personal services was flat and the operating budget was flat, the program is shifting things around to different categories to account for hiring outside expert researchers instead of purchasing material items.

Mr. Jake Rasor noted that he noticed for the second year in a row that the budget category "Personal" should be spelled "Personnel". Chairman Coxe thanked him and Keith Bradley.

C) Cultural Preserve Management FY2026 Budget: *Sean Taylor, Senior Archaeologist, Land, Water and Conservation Division, SCDNR*

Sean Taylor presented the Cultural Preserve Management FY2026 Budget to the Board. He proposed that in FY2026 the program plans to move money from the operating budget to cover a projected 3% increase and pay plan increases. He reiterated that the current FY2025 and upcoming FY2026 budgets are flat, which is negatively impacting operations and may result in some projects and initiatives not being able to be completed.

Chairman Coxe asked Mr. Taylor about the timeline for the end of Parker Annex Archaeology Center's lease and its future move. Mr. Taylor confirmed the process for a new building is in progress with the Department of Administration and it will be two to three years in the future before a new building or location materializes. Chairman Coxe noted this would have to be accounted for in this program's budget. Mr. Taylor said it would be a separate item, and the program may ask for state appointed money in addition to Heritage Trust money to complete this.

Emily Cope asked Mr. Taylor how many staff he had. Mr. Taylor responded that there were about 20 hourly and full-time staff, but the number varies and increases based on the interns the program has throughout the year.

D) Heritage Preserve Management FY2026 Budget: *Billy Dukes, Chief of Wildlife, Wildlife & Freshwater Fisheries, SCDNR*

Billy Dukes thanked Chairman Coxe and presented the Heritage Preserve Management FY2026 Budget to the Board. He said the Region 4 Heritage Preserve Coordinator position is now vacant and has been posted for job applicants. He noted that the Heritage Preserve Management FY2026 budget is the same as the FY2025 budget, and it could cover minor adjustments to operating and personal categories even though the budgets are flat. He also noted, however, that there are lots of planned acquisitions in the near future.

Chairman Coxe noted that every time we purchase properties, we have to be able to fund their maintenance in addition to their purchase price.

E) Coastal Preserves Management FY2026 Budget: *Julie Binz, Director for Coastal Reserves and Outreach, Marine Resources Division, SCDNR*

Julie Binz presented the Coastal Preserves Management FY2026 Budget to the Board. The program requested \$191,988 for both FY2025 and FY2026. This will be allocated to staff increases, pay plan costs, and cost-of-living increases. It also partially supports 8 salary staff members and 2 seasonal sea turtle technicians every summer. Ms. Binz noted that staff do many things, which is why it is partial support for staff. The program had to cut out approximately \$9,000 in funds for coyote trapping to make up funding for staff.

Motion to Enter Executive Session

Mr. Rob Keck made a motion that the Board go into Executive Session pursuant to S.C. Code Section 30-4-70(A)(2) to discuss property acquisitions related to Action Items F through I. Mr. Tom Patton seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Motion to Close Executive Session

Mr. Rob Keck made a motion that the Board return to open session, and that the record reflect that no action was taken in Executive Session. Dr. Julia Krebs seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

A) Habitat Protection-Conservation Property FY2026 Budget:

Mr. Rob Keck moved that the Heritage Trust Advisory Board approve the Habitat Protection-Conservation Property FY2026 Budget as presented. Mr. Daniel Gambrell seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

B) Habitat Protection-Botany FY2026 Budget:

Mr. Tom Patton moved that the Heritage Trust Advisory Board approve the Habitat Protection-Botany FY2026 Budget as presented. Mr. Rob Keck seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

C) Cultural Preserve Management FY2026 Budget:

Mr. Brad Sauls moved that the Heritage Trust Advisory Board approve the Cultural Preserve Management FY2026 Budget as presented. Dr. Julia Krebs seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

D) Heritage Preserve Management FY2026 Budget:

Mr. Tom Patton moved that the Heritage Trust Advisory Board approve the Heritage Preserve Management FY2026 Budget as presented. Dr. Adam King seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

E) Coastal Preserves Management FY2026 Budget:

Mr. Daniel Gambrell moved that the Heritage Trust Advisory Board approve the Coastal Preserves Management FY2026 Budget as presented. Dr. Julia Krebs seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

F) Property Acquisition Project: Preliminary approval to investigate the potential acquisition of approximately 11.8 acres in Colleton County:

Mr. Rob Keck moved that the Heritage Trust Advisory Board, upon the recommendation from SCDNR staff and the Director, recommend that the SCDNR Board grant preliminary approval to investigate the potential acquisition of approximately 11.8 acres in Colleton County that would be dedicated as a Heritage Preserve and placed into the Corpus of the Heritage Trust program. Dr. Julia Krebs seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

G) Property Acquisition Project: Final approval to acquire approximately 353 acres in Horry County:

Mr. Brad Sauls moved that the Heritage Trust Advisory Board, upon the recommendation from SCDNR staff and the Director, recommend that the SCDNR Board grant final approval to acquire approximately 353 acres in Horry County that would be dedicated as part of the Lewis Ocean Bay Heritage Preserve/Wildlife Management Area and placed

into the Corpus of the Heritage Trust program. Dr. Julia Krebs seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

H) Property Acquisition Project: Preliminary approval to investigate the potential acquisition of approximately 4,969 acres in Florence County:

Dr. Julia Krebs moved that the Heritage Trust Advisory Board, upon the recommendation from SCDNR staff and the Director, recommend that the SCDNR Board grant preliminary approval to investigate the potential acquisition of approximately 4,969 acres in Florence County that would be dedicated as a Heritage Preserve and placed into the Corpus of the Heritage Trust program, and the expenditure of up to \$20,000 in Heritage Trust funds to conduct due diligence activities. Mr. Rob Keck seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

I) Property Acquisition Project: Preliminary approval to investigate the potential acquisition of approximately 2,584 acres in Florence County:

Dr. Julia Krebs moved that the Heritage Trust Advisory Board, upon the recommendation from SCDNR staff and the Director, recommend that the SCDNR Board grant preliminary approval to investigate the potential acquisition of approximately 2,584 acres in Florence County that would be dedicated as a Heritage Preserve and placed into the Corpus of the Heritage Trust program, and the expenditure of up to \$20,000 in Heritage Trust funds to conduct due diligence activities. Mr. Rob Keck seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

Other Items

A) Updates and Comments: Ken Rentiers, Deputy Director, Land, Water and Conservation Division, SCDNR

Ken Rentiers confirmed the Heritage Trust Fund looks to be in good shape, but we want to ensure it stays that way. He noted there are a lot of good properties upcoming that need management. Unlike a lot of states in the country, South Carolina's real estate market looks good, but we do want to plan for a rainy day. Mr. Rentiers is happy to answer questions about the revenue.

Mr. Rentiers presented the next SC Wildlife Magazine and commended them once again on an excellent job. Copies were available for attendees to take.

Mr. Rentiers then recognized the Heritage Trust Advisory Board's long-term administrative assistant, Dawn Beaver, as a loyal and dedicated staff member who has served the Board so well for many years and is now passing the torch. Ms. Beaver said it had been a pleasure to work for the Board over the past 6 years, and that she has the utmost respect for each and every member of the Heritage Trust Advisory Board. She thanked Ken for entrusting her with this responsibility and his faith in her, and she thanked the Board for the honor to serve in this capacity. Attendees held a round of applause.

Chairman Coxe noted this was positive meeting, and while the agenda seems daunting, the meeting runs like a well-oiled machine, with good ideas and a good group of people.

Time and Place of the Next Board Meeting

The next meeting of the Heritage Trust Advisory Board was noted as November 7th, 2024. The location of the next meeting will be determined at a later date.

Mr. Jake Rasor asked what the time frame was for the department to move to the new building at the South Carolina State Farmer's Market, and noted this location would take staff away from the legislature. Chairman Coxe and Ken Rentiers confirmed the building move was on schedule for November or December 2024, and that while it was a move away from the legislature, some offices would be retained in the Brown building.

Mr. Rob Keck discussed whether the use of volunteers and citizen conservationists was beneficial in the Botany program's conservation efforts. Keith Bradley confirmed, but also said the long-term plan includes trying to build the program as budgets improve and to build a strike team to train agency staff and volunteers in conservation initiatives.

Adjournment

Having no further business to discuss, Chairman Campbell Coxe made a motion that the Heritage Trust Advisory Board be adjourned. Mr. Rob Keck seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

*Respectfully Submitted,
Allison Morris
Heritage Trust Advisory Board Administrative Assistant
Land, Water and Conservation Division
SC Department of Natural Resources*