

Heritage Trust Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Parker Annex Archaeology Center

2025 Barnwell Street

Columbia, SC 29202

Thursday, November 14th, 2024 - 10:00 a.m.

Members Present

Campbell Coxe, Chairman
Kevin Hunter
Rob Keck
Dr. Oswald H. King, III
Dr. Julia Krebs
Julien Springs (via Teams)
Brad Sauls (for Dr. Eric Emerson)
Tom Patton (for Scott Philips)
Ken Rentiers

Others Present

Allison Morris
Dr. Albert Goodyear
Dr. Ashley Morris
Austen Attaway
Barry Kesler
Elizabeth Miller
Emma Hawkins
Fran Varacalli
Joe Lemeris
Dr. Jonathan Leader
Julie Binz
Katie Gray
Keith Bradley
Ken Prosser
Lalon Swaney
Larry Lane
Lorianne Riggin
Luke Allen
Megan James
Reece Spradley
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 and confirmed the meeting had reached quorum.

Public Comment Period

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

Approval of Minutes from July 25th, 2024 Meeting

Mr. Rob Keck made a motion that the Heritage Trust Advisory Board approve the minutes from the July 25th, 2024 meeting as submitted. Dr. Oswald “Sonny” King seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes from September 3rd, 2024 Conference Call

Mr. Kevin Hunter made a motion that the Heritage Trust Advisory Board approve the minutes from the September 3rd, 2024 conference call as submitted. Mr. Rob Keck seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

Items for Board Information

A) State Endangered Species & Environmental Review: Lorianne Riggin, Director, Office of Environmental Programs, SCDNR

Lorianne Riggin, the Director of SCDNR’s Office of Environmental Programs, presented on the State Endangered Species Act and SCDNR’s role in environmental reviews. She explained that by getting involved in habitat protection and environmental reviews, SCDNR can provide science-based information about impacts to our state’s natural resources.

SCDNR works with the South Carolina Department of Environmental Services (DES), formally the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC), to examine the extent and impact of state processes on our unique natural areas, public lands, and state endangered species. DES issues permits based on these impacts, but it does not have the expertise in-house to make these determinations. This is where SCDNR comes in. Our biologists and partners collect data and share it with partners such as DES and the Army Corps of Engineers. This data informs our partners’ decisions.

Impacts can be avoided and minimized, but more is needed to ensure proper protection. In 2020, SCDNR proposed changes to the State Endangered Species Act and created the Habitat Protection Committee to further these protections and incorporate mitigation strategies into these processes. Draft legislation has been proposed.

B) Bunched Arrowhead: Dr. Ashley Morris, Professor and Curator of the Ives Herbarium, Department of Biology, Furman University

Dr. Ashley Morris, Professor and Curator of the Ives Herbarium in the Department of Biology at Furman University, presented on the genetics of the Bunched Arrowhead (*sagittaria fasciculata*) species. The Bunched Arrowhead species is special because it only occurs in Greenville County in South Carolina and Henderson County in North Carolina. It is found in slow seepage in deciduous forests where its plant roots are submerged. However, its habitats are dwindling and threatened by development. Dr. Morris studies the plant genetics of this species, which allows us to examine questions of reproduction, population structure, and population dynamics within various species in order to protect and preserve them. The Bunched Arrowhead species at South Carolina

sites in Traveler’s Rest, where the Heritage Trust has been acquiring property to add to the Bunched Arrowhead Heritage Preserve, may significantly aid in the recovery of the species from the endangered species list due to its high genetic diversity. Dr. Morris provided significant insights into this research and the recovery of this species during her presentation.

C) Saving the Topper Site: *Dr. Albert C. Goodyear, III, Research Affiliate, SC Institute for Archeology and Anthropology*

Dr. Albert Goodyear is a retired research affiliate at the South Carolina Institute for Archeology and Anthropology at the University of South Carolina. He led the Allendale Paleoindian Expedition, his career-long project at the Topper Site. This archaeological site sits on the eastern bank of the Savannah River in Allendale County, South Carolina. It is unique in its preservation of cultural material, where items have been found *in situ* on buried activity area floors, but it is most prominently regarded as one of the largest buried Clovis sites in North America. Dr. Goodyear detailed the importance of this site and his vision to have the site preserved for future generations.

Potential Conflict of Interest Statement

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

Motion to Enter Executive Session

Dr. Sonny King 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 A through D. Mr. Kevin Hunter seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Motion to Close Executive Session

Dr. Sonny King 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.

Items for Board Action

A) Property Acquisition Project: Final approval to acquire approximately 332 acres in Jasper County:

Dr. Julia Krebs moved that the Heritage Trust Advisory Board, upon the recommendation of SCDNR staff and subject to standard due diligence, recommend that the SCDNR Board grant final approval of the acquisition of 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. Rob Keck seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

B) Property Acquisition Project: Preliminary approval to accept a land donation of approximately 3 acres, Charleston County:

Dr. Sonny King 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 donation of approximately 3 acres in Charleston 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.

C) Property Acquisition Project: Preliminary approval to purchase approximately 24 acres, Greenville 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 and \$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. Kevin Hunter seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

D) Property Acquisition Project: Preliminary approval to purchase approximately 106 acres, Pickens County:

Mr. Kevin Hunter moved that the Heritage Trust Advisory Board, upon the recommendation from SCDNR staff and the Director, recommend that the SCDNR Board grant preliminary approval and \$20,000 in Heritage Trust Funds to investigate the potential purchase of approximately 106 acres in Pickens County that would be dedicated as a Heritage Preserve and placed into the Corpus of the Heritage Trust program. Dr. Sonny King seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

Other Items

Ken Rentiers lauded the outstanding development of the protection of Snow's Island via its dedication into the Heritage Trust. Chairman Coxe encouraged people to attend the dedication on December 16th, 2024 at the site in Florence County.

Mr. Rentiers also commended the SCDNR staff on its team of outstanding people and the work they accomplish. New members of SCDNR staff were introduced. Emma Hawkins joins the Office of Environmental Programs as the Asset Property Manager, with a bachelor's and master's degree from UNC Charlotte in biology, six years in the Air Force Reserves, and a passion for conservation. Luke Allen is a new attorney with the legal department, focusing on property transactions.

The new SCDNR Director is expected to be named at the November 21st, 2024 SCDNR Board meeting.

The Heritage Trust is also looking to replace the Parker Annex Archaeology facility in the next few years. As we have just celebrated the first 50 years of the Heritage Trust Program, we look towards the future with a goal of refitting or building a facility to take the program into the next 50 years or more. Mr. Rentiers recognized the positive impact the Heritage Trust Advisory Board

has had on the state and noted its work is important to counter overdevelopment of the state in the future.

Dr. Jonathan Leader of the South Carolina Institute of Archeology and Anthropology at the University of South Carolina was recognized for the great impacts he has had and positive results he has achieved on the Heritage Trust Advisory Board and throughout his career. He was given an engraved archaeology screen by the Heritage Trust Advisory Board for his retirement.

Mr. Rentiers confirmed SCDNR was still assessing the damage from Hurricane Helene, and noted some assets were damaged due to downed power lines at one SCDNR property in Columbia, SC. No major damage was noted to the Cultural Heritage Preserves, but there is lots of cleaning up to complete.

Julien Springs inquired about a Forest Legacy grant that SCDNR was awarded related to the Open Space Institute's conservation efforts in South Carolina. Fran Varacalli, SCDNR's Conservation Property Coordinator in the Office of Environmental Programs, explained that as part of the Forest Legacy Program, SCDNR worked on a grant with the South Carolina Forestry Commission and were awarded \$50 million dollars in funds to purchase approximately 58,000 acres of an easement. This is one of the biggest Forest Legacy Program grants ever awarded and was part of the Reduction Inflation Act. Chairman Coxe and Ken Rentiers commended the great progress of this work. Chairman Coxe, Ken Rentiers, Julien Springs, and the Director of SCDNR's Office of Environmental Programs, Lorianne Riggan, discussed the management practices of timber and the effects of this agreement on bottomland hardwood forests, particularly considering the removal of these forests and the increase in flooding in coastal areas with more recent tropical storms in the past two or three years. Mr. Springs expressed his concern about this flooding and whether timber harvesting or upstream development is having an impact. Mr. Rentiers noted that in addition to that being a possibility, more may be coming downstream due to the Duke Energy and hydroelectric facilities not being fully functional at this time.

Time and Place of the Next Board Meeting

The next meeting of the Heritage Trust Advisory Board was noted as February 13th, 2025. The location of the next meeting will be determined at a later date. Several people discussed having the meeting at SCDNR properties on the South Carolina coast.

Adjournment

Having no further business to discuss, Dr. Sonny King moved that this meeting of the Heritage Trust Advisory Board be adjourned. Mr. Julien Springs 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*