

SCDNR Land, Water and Conservation Advisory Committee Minutes

SCDNR Charleston Office & Zoom
217 Fort Johnson Road
Charleston, SC 29412

Tuesday, August 26, 2025, 10:00 AM

Present:

Bill Simpson	James McLeod	Tom Garrison
Dean Moss	Larry Nates	Webb Smathers
Hope Blackley	Patricia Hartung	Will Glenn

DNR Exec & Staff:

Brooke Myres	Jordan Baker	Tyler Brown
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Call to Order/Welcome: The August 26, 2025, meeting was called to order by Mr. Simpson, who welcomed and thanked all for attending.

Approval of the minutes from July 22, 2024. Motion made by Ms. Hartung, 2nd by Dr. Smathers; – no further discussion – all in favor and none opposed. Motion passed.

Following the invocation and approval of minutes, Tyler Brown introduced Hope Blackley to the committee. She just joined the SCDNR Board and is looking forward to working with the LWC Advisory Committee.

Deputy Director's Report; Tyler Brown:

Mr. Brown gave the Deputy Director's report on behalf of Deputy Director Ken Rentiers. Mr. Brown informed the committee about SCDNR's new Director, Dr. Thomas Mullikin was confirmed in February. Director Mullikin is very passionate about the outdoors and the agency's mission, offering a fresh perspective to our agency and providing us with new ideas. This year, Director Mullikin led the SC7; this event encouraged the exploration of the "7 wonders" our state has to offer. The grand opening of the new SCDNR HQ building in the State Farmers Market was August 21, 2025. Most of the LWC division has moved to the new building; the Geological Survey program and Conservation Districts program will remain at our Geology Rd office, and our Heritage Trust and Archaeology program remains at Parker Annex. The Heritage Trust and Archaeology program is still looking to move and hopes to find a building better suited to their needs soon. The Flood Mitigation program is assisting with the flooding going on in the low country. They are working with SCEMD, which relies on our maps to assist them during flooding. The Botany program and Heritage Trust program are covering a lot of ground by examining different properties to be added into the Heritage Trust. This year, during our budget request, we are receiving retention money, and we are able help our Flood Mitigation team out with funding to finish flood mapping. We also received operating money for all the different programs as well an FTE position for Conservation Districts. This is a Program Development Coordinator position, it will primarily be focused on education outreach, including taking over as coordinator for Envirothon. We currently have eight team members which include four area

coordinators and one watershed coordinator. We are excited to grow our team by one more. We are primarily located in Columbia at our 5 Geology Road office, but we also have a team member in the Clemson office and one in the Florence office as well. For our upcoming budget, we pushing for a bigger request than last year. With this push we are hoping to obtain more money for buying land for preservation for Heritage Trust. We are also asking more for the Scenic Rivers Program for Bill Marshall, who is currently leading the program, but is in desperate need of more staff. Flood Mitigation is requesting additional funding to continue its flood mapping project. Climatology is asking for assistance in trying to get a weather station in every county and getting more flood gauges. Getting these weather stations and flood gauges will help provide better data for the Drought Committee. Conservation Districts is asking for funding in hopes of providing technical assistance to farmers. Mr. Brown asked if the committee had any questions.

Patricia Hartung: Have we approached the American Flood Coalition?

Tyler Brown: Yes, conversations have been had with them and we are trying to partner with them.

Webb Smathers: There is a goal of 30% preserved land in our state. What percentage of land do you think we are at now?

Tyler Brown: Estimated around 18%, including State and Federal land.

Dean Moss: We should add conservation easements to the list of preserved land.

Webb Smathers: Would like to see a list of the total preserved properties. What do you see is our biggest need for the future?

Tyler Brown: From a division perspective, the weather stations are desperately needed. Having this data will help with conservation planning, emergency planning, and many other needs within our state.

Executive Session:

Motion was made for the LWC Advisory Committee to enter Executive Session by Dr. Smathers, 2nd by Ms. Hartung; – no further discussion – all in favor and none opposed. Motion passed.

Motion was made for the LWC Advisory Committee to return to regular session by Dr. Smathers, 2nd motion by Ms. Hartung; – no further discussion – all in favor and none opposed. Motion passed. No actions were taken during executive session.

With a quorum present, the LWC Advisory Committee proceeded with commissioner appointments. The appointment list was distributed.

Conservation District Commissioner Appointments:

Approval of New Appointments. Motion was made by Mr. McLeod, 2nd by Mr. Garrison; no further discussion – all in favor and none opposed. Motion passed.

Approval of Reappointments. Motion was made by Mr. McLeod, 2nd by Mr. Garrison; – no further

discussion – all in favor and none opposed. Motion passed.

Approval of Commissioner Emeritus. Motion was made by Mr. McLeod, 2nd by Mr. Garrison; – no further discussion – all in favor and none opposed. Motion passed.

Comments:

During the closing comments, Mr. Simpson announced his resignation to the committee. Mr. Simpson thanked the committee for their time and dedication over the years. He has enjoyed working with the committee, which shows a strong passion for conservation efforts to improve our state, and looks forward to seeing what the committee will accomplish in the future.

A poll will be sent to the committee to select the next meeting date.

This meeting was adjourned. *Motion was made by Mr. Simpson, 2nd by Mr. Moss; - no further discussion – all in favor and none opposed. Motion passed.*