

Land, Water, & Conservation Division: Advisory Committee Minutes
Zoom
Wednesday
January 3, 2024, 10:00 AM

Present:

Dean Moss	Thomas Garrison	William Simpson
Diane Edwins	Webb Smathers	
James McLeod	William Glenn	

DNR Exec & Staff:

Brooke Myres	Ken Rentiers
Jordan Baker	Tyler Brown

Call to Order/Welcome: The January 3, 2024, meeting was called to order by ***Mr. Simpson***, who welcomed and thanked all for attending.

Approval of the minutes from August 1, 2023. Motion made by Mr. Moss, 2nd by Mr. Garrison; - no further discussion – all in favor and none opposed. Motion passed.

Following the invocation and approval of minutes, Ken Rentiers provided a Deputy Director’s report.

Deputy Director’s Report – Ken Rentiers:

Mr. Rentiers informed the committee that the pay plan has gone into effect for LWC employees. This will help provide staff with raises every two years. They are also working on improving salaries based on different salary studies they have done. Mr. Rentiers also updated the committee on the recent earthquakes we are still having in Elgin, SC; Geology is still examining them. For the Heritage Trust Program, the 50th Anniversary is coming up on February 28, 2024; Governor Henry McMaster will be there to read a Proclamation in honor of the anniversary. The Heritage Trust Program has grown, acquiring many property acquisitions. Mr. Rentiers also briefly updated the Department of Health and Environment Control split and our Hydrology program. They are still moving forward and working with the Department of Administration on the planning process; the anticipated split will be July 1, 2024. DHEC is trying to make this a smooth transition. In the meantime, the Hydrology program is still actively working on River Basin Committees to complete their work before the split.

Reports:

Conservation Districts – Tyler Brown:

Mr. Brown introduced the committee to Jordan Baker, the new Conservation District's Administrative Assistant. Though she is no stranger to the Land, Water, and Conservation

Division, Mr. Brown is excited to have her on their team. Another new hire is John Hayes, the new Watershed Districts Coordinator; he will be at the next meeting to meet the committee. The Conservation Districts team is gearing up for their partnership conference at the end of the month; they are expecting a huge turnout and are excited that they have record attendance numbers. Some other important dates are March 5th, our Conservation Districts Day at the State House, and March 22nd – 24th, the Palmetto Sportsman Classic. NASCA has also nominated Mr. Brown to be their president for 2024. This is a huge accomplishment, and he is looking forward to bringing a louder voice to DC and representing us in this new chapter.

Field Operations – Brooke Myres:

Mrs. Myres mentioned all the hard work Jennifer Morris and Jessie Egan have been doing as Conservation District Coordinators; things have been running much more smoothly with their help with other districts, collecting annual and monthly reports, and working with Local Work Groups. Some upcoming important dates are Coaches Training for Envirothon on February 3rd and Envirothon Competition on April 26th. Stewardship Week is a new event from April 29th – May 3rd. During this week, there will be an event every day, that will have many educational benefits for kids and adults. The theme for this week is “May the Forest Be with You Always.” Each year, the theme and topics will change.

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

Conservation District Commissioner Appointments:

Mr. Rentiers: There are four total, two new appointments, John Smoak in Charleston County, and Sam Durant in Clarendon County. Two reappointments: Rebecca Davis in Barnwell County and Jason Price in Saluda County.

Chair: Any questions about appointments? No comment was made.

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

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

There is no executive session.

Comments:

Tyler Brown: Anderson Soil and Water Conservation District is the Conservation District of the year.

Thomas Garrison: He thanked his staff for their hard work in receiving this title and is very happy for all of them.

Meeting dates were presented to the committee, and we were informed that FOIA Training will be held in person soon.

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