

SCDNR Land, Water and Conservation Districts Advisory Committee Minutes

SCDNR
5 Geology Road
Columbia, SC 29212

Tuesday, July 7, 2026

Present:

Hope Blackley
James McLeod

Larry Nates
Tom Garrison

Webb Smathers
Will Glenn

DNR Exec & Staff:

Alden Zerkle
Amanda DiFalco
Bill Marshall
Brooke Myres
Csilla Czako
Elaine Konarski

Eric Umberg
Hannah Rainey
Hien Dinh
Hope Mizzell
Jennifer Konarski
Johanna West

Jordan Baker
Keith Bradley
Robert Clark
Samantha Tessel
Scott Howard
Tyler Brown

Call to Order/Welcome The July 7, 2026, meeting was called to order by Chairman Will Glenn, who welcomed and thanked all for attending.

Following the call to order, the invocation was given, and guests were introduced to the committee. Tyler Brown asked everyone to introduce themselves to the committee.

Approval of Minutes

Motion was made to approve the March 10, 2026 Minutes by Mr. McLeod, 2nd by Mr. Nates – no further discussion – all in favor and none opposed. Motion passed.

Deputy Director Report

Mr. Brown discussed how his time has been since taking on the role of Deputy Director. He and Jennifer Konarski, the LWC Business Manager, have taken the time to go around to each program within LWC to learn more about what they do, what their goals are, and how we can all come together better. Mr. Brown has started monthly meetings with each program manager, during these meetings they discuss how we can better operate together and help each other.

Mr. Brown announced to the committee that Andrew Wykel from Geological Survey is the LWC Employee of the Year. Mr. Brown also announced that LWC is getting a new Administrative Assistant. This admin will be assisting the Deputy Director, Business Office, Flood Mitigation, Climatology, and Geology.

Mr. Brown discussed the budget request with the committee. The House and Senate are still in debate but we should have answers soon. In the budget request, they are asking for an increase in state operating and retention money to keep up with competitive salaries, funding for flood mitigation to continue their state mapping, as well as funding for the Conservation Districts

Technical Assistance Program (CDTAP).

LWC Section Updates

Mr. Brown asked each program manager from Conservation Districts, Archeology, Scenic Rivers, Climatology, and Flood Mitigation to give a brief update to the committee.

Conservation Districts

Brooke Myres, Conservation Districts Program Manager, spoke about the recent changes in their team. Mrs. Myres has taken over Mr. Brown's role as program manager. Her previous position has been posted, and they will conduct interviews soon. They had another successful year with the Envirothon Competition. Spartanburg High School Team A won and will be competing at the international competition in July. They had a successful Stewardship Week, this was their 3rd year putting it together. Local Workgroup meetings are being conducted throughout the state. Lastly, they are continuing to have articles in the South Carolina Wildlife Magazine in the "Conservation Corner" to continue to support and promote Conservation Districts.

Archaeology

Sean Taylor, Archaeology Program Manager, spoke on the work they are doing on a site in Beaufort. They have also finished the work that needs to be done on Poinsett Bridge and hope the committee will be able to visit soon.

Scenic Rivers

Bill Marshall, Scenic Rivers Program Manager, gave the committee a brief summary of the program. The program works all over the state, helping preserve and protect scenic rivers. Though the staff for Scenic Rivers is a one-man show, they work with different partners and volunteers.

Climatology

Hope Mizzell, State Climatologist and Program Manager for Climatology, informed the committee about her staff and what each person does. Climatology serves the state in many ways; they assist with emergency weather preparation, serve as state meteorologists, and assist with drought updates as well.

Flood Mitigation

Hope Mizzell gave the update for Flood Mitigation on Maria Cox-Lamm's behalf. The Flood Mitigation program is the state liaison for FEMA. Recently FEMA scored each state's program and we are happy to announce that our state received a perfect score. In this program they also work on flood mapping throughout the state. This type of mapping is crucial to our state.

Program Overview

Geological Survey

Scott Harder, Geological Survey Program Manager spoke to the committee about their program. Recently they celebrated their 200th anniversary. Geological Survey works on geo mapping, mineral resources, tectonostratigraphic, shoreline change, GIS drilling, surface mapping, and natural hazards. The program also works with different partners on different projects throughout

the state. Some of these partners are BOEM, USGS, SCEMD, and FEMA, STATEMAP. Some current projects include state mapping and focusing heavily on coastal plain mapping, Earth MRI: this is taking inventory of our critical resources in the state, studying shoreline erosion, surface elevation tables (SETs) that measure the height of the marshes and look for trends in elevation, outreach, and education. The program uses this data from their projects to help out other projects in the state. One example is the work that is being done on I-95. The data also helps keep track of the rising sea level and erosion; this information can help us predict where the coastline is eroding. They are also working on dating sediments with their drill team; they are able to tell when sediment last saw sunlight. The Geological Survey program does a lot for our state by working on many projects with different partners coming together. The work they do is truly amazing and beneficial to all South Carolinians.

Botany

Keith Bradley, Botany Program Manager spoke to the committee about the history of the program and everything they are doing. Since the 1700s there has been documentation on our states botany, this helps tell our states story. Since Keith has joined the SCDNR-Botany team in 2020 he has helped it flourish and grow. A program that once had a very small team has now grown to a team of nine. On this team, there is a botanist located in the upper region of the state and a botanist located in the lower region of the state, while Keith is the state botanist, All together, they help manage, document, and maintain the plants in our state and also share that information with the public. There are roughly 7,600 native plants in the southeast and about 2,600 are located in South Carolina. But that list continues to grow as their team continues to go out and explore. They collect this data through rare plant surveys, vegetation mapping, and using drones to search hard-to-reach areas. The program also helps train technicians on Heritage Trust Properties to not only look out for rare plants but also how to help manage the plants found on the different properties. A huge asset to their program has been utilizing a drone. The drone has helped them document areas they could not get to before. This allows the team to remain safe while also making new and exciting discoveries. The program has truly grown in the last six years and is looking forward to what the future will bring.

Executive Session

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

Conservation District Commissioner Appointments

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

Approval of Reappointments. Motion was made by Mr. Nates, 2nd by Dr. Smathers; please note that Mr. Garrison was removed from voting. No further discussion – all in favor and none opposed. Motion passed.

Land, Water and Conservation Advisory Committee Reappointments

Approval of Reappointment for Mr. Glenn on the Land, Water and Conservation Advisory Committee. Motion was made by Dr. Smathers, 2nd by Mr. McMcleod; please note that Mr. Glenn was removed from voting. No further discussion – all in favor and none opposed. Motion passed.

Approval of Reappointment for Mr. McLeod on the Land, Water and Conservation Advisory Committee. Motion was made by Dr. Smathers 2nd by Mr. Nates; please note that Mr. McLeod was removed from voting. No further discussion – all in favor and none opposed. Motion passed.

Approval of Reappointment for Mr. Garrison on the Land, Water and Conservation Advisory Committee. Motion was made by Dr. Smathers, 2nd by Mr. McMcleod; please note that Mr. Garrison was removed from voting. No further discussion – all in favor and none opposed. Motion passed.

2026 Meeting Schedule

The committee plans to meet in person on Tuesday, September 29, 2026, at Poinsett Bridge, but the date is subject to change.

There is a tentative date to meet on Tuesday, December 1, 2026, if needed.

Comments

Mr. McLeod made a comment on his appreciation that all programs within the division came today and hopes that they keep up the good work.

Motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Mr. McLeod, 2nd, by Mr. Nates – no further discussion – all in favor and none opposed. Motion passed.

This meeting was adjourned.