

Land, Water & Conservation Division: Advisory Committee Minutes
SCDNR Geology Building, 5 Geology Road, Columbia, SC 29201
Wednesday, March 2, 2022

Present: Bill Simpson Patricia Hartung
Webb Smathers James McLeod
Marvin Davant Larry Nates
Tom Garrison William Glenn
Dean Moss Diane Edwins (called-in)

DNR Exec & Staff: Robert Boyles, Ken Rentiers, Tyler Brown, Deanne Myrick, Brooke Myers, Robert Morrow

Guests: Marc Cribb, SC Association of Conservation Districts and Suzanne Simpson.

Call to Order/Welcome: The **March 2, 2022** meeting was called to order by Chairman Simpson at 10:05 am. In compliance with provisions of Section 30-4-80(e) (Freedom of Information Act), notification of this meeting was posted in public places. **Chairman Simpson** welcomed and thanked all for attending.

- Following the invocation,
- **Chairman** introduced guests

Chairman: Thank you and moving to item #4 on agenda, please refer to the copy of the typed minutes from the November 1, 2021 meeting for consideration. Any comments or questions/further/additional discussion? Hearing none, motion was made by Mr. McLeod to approve the November 1, 2021 minutes as typed and seconded by Mr. Glenn. With all in favor and none opposed, motion passed.

Deputy Director's Report; Ken Rentiers: highlights for all LWC sections are shared in our divisional monthly report; few other things include:

DNR Budget requests & priorities – LWC specifics - hopeful that the Senate will be willing to consider and approve our needs; House considering approx. \$68 million (yet to be determined) but hopeful for several large acquisitions in Heritage Trust; Recruitment and retention – got about half of what we requested. Discussion among members with questions to help understanding of huge discrepancies of state agency budgets and why it appears to be out of balance regarding what DNR receives relative to other agencies. Discussions continued among members focusing back to LWC within DNR's overall request. Mr. Rentiers' comments on conservation districts pointing out important talking point of leveraging \$5.00 for every \$1.00 they receive. It's a great story/example of effectiveness and we are getting better at telling the story. Mr. Moss asked specifically how the story is being told and Mr. Cribb pointed out the

SCACD Legislative Committee taking it directly to the members of the legislative body (& will elaborate on this during his turn to speak to the committee later on today's agenda).

Director Boyles – added that he is scheduled to meet with members of legislature on DNR's request and relayed how SC's budget is balanced and how DNR fits into that big picture; also, that DNR had an ambitious overall budget request and good news is the sizeable increase in recurring funds (pending approval). Also wanted to note that #1 is agency staff recruitment and retention. Offering thank you to this committee because we have inherited a great heritage and we are charged with important responsibilities. Conversation among members continued in response to the Chairman's compliments to SC Wildlife Magazine and its positive impact. Director Boyles added that the magazine staff does exceptional work to help illustrate the importance of taking care of that which we do not own as we strive to promote our legacy and the appreciation of our job as stewards of natural resources.

(Mr. McLeod added that he appreciates the magazine editors choosing to cover the highlights and importance of conservation districts specifically.)

Director will have the outline/ 2-page document with more specifics of budget information delivered to each committee member following the meeting today.

Director highlighted the many needs for investments and referred to Conservation enhancement act also pointed to vital that we take care of what we've got in SC lands/properties. Also discussed acquisition of property adjacent to the MRD in Charleston due to our strong legislative leadership backing coupled with the Governor's leadership in these endeavors. Then opening the floor to other interests/concerns for this committee.

Conversation / comments from McLeod with questions about the implications/likelihood/etc. of Senate bill 2 and what the main concern is from this group's perspective ... concerns brought up included discussion of water resources being shifted into DHEC/ health/ environmental.

Comments on LWC Division (is not a commission) ... water is elemental and our interest in water and our advocacy for responsible use as a non-regulatory community is of utmost importance. Question was asked on how pro-active DHEC is/has been and will be because the main need is for DNR/LWC to lead the educating of our citizens to bring back water issues which have future implications such as flooding, drought... DHEC issues permits and regulates withdrawals. Future demands and accounting and who best to bring the sound science moving forward – needs to be DNR/LWC. The comment was made that the original version of S.2 very different from what is appears to be moving towards currently. Comments also made with respect to the fact that DHEC is not a resource management agency, but more group of engineers. Because water is elemental to the land, best for all to be pro-active in looking to the future and best way to assign responsibilities of water is all working together with DNR's leadership on providing the science.

Director Boyles commenting the big picture balancing act of water resources is one of great interest. And in the position of Director, somewhat limited in how I speak on this, but want to hear thoughts and the conversation from the members of this committee. The opportunity to tell the story to the big tent picture is all part of the challenge and responsibility to not only tell our

part but also to listen and hear all concerns. Also commented to thank each of you for the support you provide to LWC because it is so important, and your role is so important.

Glenn commenting that we need a clear message to deliver. Smathers' ideas included the concept of DNR/ Land, Water, Conservation "is a system" and resources are studied and managed as such; when you break out pieces of a system the results are at risk of being damaged. Other concern/ question was posed about who may be pushing the legislation. Members agreed together to become stronger advocates collectively.

11:20am – Stand up and stretch to come back at 11:30am for Robby's presentation on geology.

11:30am – **Chair calls to order** and Tom Garrison commented as the only full-time farmer on the committee, and a member of the SC Farm Bureau committee, we all must recognize the point of Ag being the backbone of SC and the fact that farmers must have water to produce our food; it is all intertwined, connected and tied together, as should we all be in our attempts to make the best decisions in our land and water resources planning and implementation.

Rentiers thanked Garrison for his statement and elaborated on the water planning process with stakeholders included throughout the planning process. And how this inclusion of all interested parties/planners has been a priority and will continue to be for the greater good and in the best interest of our state and its water users.

Rentiers also referred to the updated version and how impactful the progress on water planning is – Edisto River Basin outreach for final plan scheduled to come together this summer. And this is the beginning of the planning process which will include/cover the entire state through river basins and regional/local stakeholders and interested citizens.

Rentiers introduced **Robby Morrow, DNR Geologist/Piedmont, of the SCDNR Geological Survey** for his presentation on recent earthquake activity in SC and other related information. (Morrow's presentation attached following the minutes).

At Morrow's conclusion, **Chairman** thanked him and dismissed members for lunch break.

Following lunch, **Chairman called meeting back to order at 12:55pm.**

Chairman: Thank you & on to "Reports" agenda items, Brooke, Tyler, Marc:

Brooke Myres (SCDNR/Conservation Districts) –

- SC Envirothon: coaches training was well attended/ training trunks project completed/ in-person competition scheduled for April 29 in Columbia
- Local Work Groups: committee appointed by SCACD has been meeting to address items such as *how funding is prioritized from NRCS to local districts/landowners/producers *local concerns be heard *improved and increased consistency in methods of reporting

from NRCS as well as from local districts *advocacy on local lever *increased stakeholders list of reaching all to be included in district local work group meetings
Comments from members included the following groups to add / include as stakeholders in the local work group process as well as outreach and inclusion of all in local districts: Heirs Properties, Wildlife organizations, Wildlife Federation, Upstate Forever, National Land Trust, Local land trusts, and the like.

Tyler Brown (SCDNR/Conservation Districts) –

- 2021 SC Soil and Water Conservation Districts Annual Report is complete. Publication and distribution of Annual Report has been instrumental in helping effectively tell our story on the local/state level.
- Highlights the fact that for every \$1 of state appropriated funds to districts, \$5 leveraged to implement conservation programs in SC
- Strategic Planning is set, and we are working towards the vision as the plan is being implemented and ongoing
- 80th Partnership Conference updates
- Chairman Simpson's 45-year service pin (with congrats from all and comments by Mr. Simpson on his start as the original tea grower/maker/ Wadmalaw Island, SC and his original business' applications/patents on how to make instant tea)
- Finally, encouraging advocacy among local districts at the county level should lead to better education and support of the goals of the districts

Marc Cribb (SCACD) –

- Advocacy Day for Conservation Districts in Columbia at the State House organized by SCACD scheduled for March 23 from 8-10am and urging your participation and encouragement to your local districts and your local community about the positive and important impact of districts as local voice of conservation
- Invitation and information and on who and how to reach out on districts' behalf will be sent to each member following today's meeting.
- SCACD has set up a legislative committee to track and follow up on legislation relevant to the districts. Example – feral hog transport bill which passed/ was supported by SCACD and the committee; additionally, SCACD policy to support water planning on state level
- NACD updates and their input and information on policies/policy positions at national level

Comments from members, McLeod stated that he recommends to SCACD a structure in place to communicate effectively on what SCACD supports and why SCACD supports items facing state legislature because policy statements of support/opposition are fine but if they are not communicated, what are they worth?

Chairman: Thank you for reports and next agenda item is special presentation by Ken/Tyler –

Ken and Tyler presented committee member and Anderson SWCD Commissioner Tom Garrison with his 40-year service pin and thanks him for the lasting positive impact he has had and continues to have on conservation. Many congratulatory and thankful comments from all members.

Chairman: Thank you. Action items up next – comments?

Moss made motion to go into executive session to discuss commissioner appointments; motion seconded by McLeod and with all in favor, motion passed.

Executive session begins @ 1:40pm and Chair called meeting back to regular session at 1:45pm.

Chairman: Thank you – comments/concerns?

Davant made motion to approve the slate of new commissioner appointments as listed on the spreadsheet; motion seconded by McLeod and with all in favor, motion passed.

McLeod made motion to approve the slate of commissioner reappointments as listed on the spreadsheet; motion seconded by Moss and with all in favor, motion passed.

At passing of the motion, McLeod added a request that the slate of approved reappointments as well as the slate of approved new appointments be forwarded to the full SCDNR Board for consideration at the next scheduled meeting. Chairman asked DNR staff to be sure this is done.

Discussion of next regularly scheduled quarterly meeting to take place on April 12th in Columbia, SC because of central location and all agreed.

Chairman: This concludes the meeting unless anyone has additional comments or discussion? Are there any other comments or concerns for discussion?

Hearing none, the Chairman thanked all for being at the meeting and adjourned the meeting at 1:50pm

