

**Land, Water & Conservation Division: Advisory Committee Minutes**  
**Dennis Building, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor DNR Board Room, Columbia, SC**  
**Monday, November 1, 2021**

**Present:** Bill Simpson  
Webb Smathers                                James McLeod  
Marvin Davant                                Larry Nates  
Tom Garrison

**Staff:** Ken Rentiers Shannon Bobertz; Brooke Myres; Deanne Myrick; Tyler Brown  
**Guests:** Dr. Kirby Player, Clemson University, Director of Palmetto Leadership:  
Environmental, Agriculture and Forestry (PLEAF)

**Call to Order/Welcome:** The **November 1, 2021** meeting was called to order by Chairman Simpson at 10:06 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, speakers and members and Dr. Player discussed the longstanding generational relationships and connections of many in attendance.

**Chairman:** *Thank you and moving to item #4 on agenda, please refer to the copy of the typed minutes from the August 17, 2021 meeting for consideration. Any comments or questions/further/additional discussion? Hearing none, motion was made by Mr. McLeod to approve the August 17, 2021 minutes as typed and seconded by Mr. Garrison. 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:

**PPAC – Water Planning** – continues work establishing guiding principles for River Basin Councils (RBC's); this committee's Dean Moss serves and brings a wealth of experience to the table for PPAC... RBC's info: Edisto River Basin Council continues with meetings; established mission/vision/goals; DNR's Hydrology staff is to be commended for their leadership and diligence & working with DCM Smith. Public meetings have begun. \$3million for Broad River & Pee Dee, concurrently. Tom Walker w/ Clemson - outstanding work for PPAC keeping up with information & organization. Plans & updates include new gages for monitoring of surface & groundwater & also used for real time flooding information. Scott Harder working on groundwater monitoring network to include instant delivery via cell phones, which will be great. Science with ARPA funds – federal & state funds for SC helpful; should take approximately \$10 million to get it complete with maps/groundwater data viewer. 3-5 years likely timeline to get it

done. We encourage support and have presented to the Governor, who is very engaged and supportive.

Discussion my Dr. Smathers on ecology of SC and effects on natural resources all impacted and all connected & DNR's science and involvement vital; Garrison pointed to GA & SC upstate impacts/effects and Rentiers commenting on sustainability/Savannah River; Smathers and others recognizing how important it is to work right now while we are not in drought scenario. Discussion continued - development and water supply and sustainability, pointing to a comprehensive water plan of great importance for the future of our state and its people and natural resources.

On strained resources in coastal area growth, Chairman Simpson noted the positive news of DNR acquiring land bordering DNR's Fort Johnson in Charleston and Rentiers lauded the leadership of an exceptional coalition of legislators in support of DNR's stewardship of that land. Result of this land held and managed by DNR is best case for natural resources conservation/stewardship in that prime coastal region.

Rentiers noted an archaeology dig led by our group going on now and in the coming weeks which is important as it must be done when weather is right for it and time is running out because of uncertainty of water covering the site soon. Offered to any/all which may be interested in touring the property during a dig, please let us know and we will help set that up for this dig or for one in the future. Wrapping up, any questions/discussions? Hearing none,  
*Mr. Chairman: Thank you & on to "Reports" agenda items / Legal Update, Shannon Bobertz*

**Shannon - DNR Legal Office Director – presentation highlights include:**

**Public Trust Doctrine** – one of the interesting aspects of things we hear about on a regular basis is that relating to this doctrine. Discussion/questions relative to the high-water mark / distance to international waters/ where the property piece is the ocean vs. rivers... differing related to bed of freshwater stream, etc. and public vs private docks, water structures; all gets very interesting because the water belongs not to the property owner in many cases where the public utilizes the water depending on specific circumstances. One important thing I point out is that as part of the public trust doctrine, DHEC regulates: clean water is a right. Handout pointing to some of the topics covered here is in your folder.

***Chairman: Thank you next is Dr. Kirby Player, PLEAF Program Director –***

Before jumping into the PLEAF presentation, Dr. Player expressed his preference for being called "Kirby" and his thanks to LWC AC Members for their commitment to Conservation, as Kirby also serves as a newly elected Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioner in Pickens County. Longstanding relationship with Conservation Districts, as his father served, and his brother currently serves in this capacity in Lee County.

**PLEAF Program** (Palmetto Leadership in the Environment, Agriculture and Forestry) administered by Clemson University's **CAFLS** (College of Agriculture, Forestry and Life Sciences) – **highlights include:**

Key idea for his involvement in PLEAF is “enthusiasm” – honored to serve; honored to share the vision for PLEAF: To be a premiere Agricultural Leadership Initiative in the United States of America. Focus is on aging; branding; networking; advocacy and civic involvement. Flyer / brochure on PLEAF is included in your folder and we urge each of you to nominate someone to participate in the program; this network of future leaders will be successful with your help in-kind and financially; scholarships available; program links related programs by partnering with key collaborators from experts in the fields of Ag, Forestry, Environment. Recruiting has been challenging due to adjustment of plans due to travel & in-person engagement but the first cohort will soon wrap up and the next class will begin in Jan. 2022.

*Chairman: next on agenda is Strategic Planning and Conservation Districts update*

**Brooke Myres, Conservation Districts** gave her report to include:

Making progress on the Conservation Districts section with our Strategic Planning. Mr. Nates commented that he was part of the planning session/ information sharing meeting last week and thought it was a great session, which included Commissioners, staff, partners, and other interested parties. Results of surveys which were sent in 2019 and 2020 pointed to a partner input session, which was the initial step of developing our plan. It will be a 3-year plan and will be finalized to share with all at the Partnership Conference in February 2022. Also noted we have scheduled the date for an in-person SC Envirothon Competition on April 29, 2022.

**Tyler Brown, Conservation Districts** gave report to include:

Thanking Ken and Director Boyles for their support of our efforts, we have accomplished many items of interest including SCACD mid-year business session meeting; Presented at the Conservation Districts Employees meeting in Beaufort; Launched Conservation Districts Annual Reporting templates, when completed, we will publish and distribute at the Partnership Conference; Draft Agenda has been prepared and registration information has been shared with all for the Conference in Feb. in Charleston at the Marriott. SC Wildlife articles have been great providing CD's exposure and will continue into next year. In the legislative session, we have asked and been placed on priority within the agency for an increase from \$15,000.00 - \$25,000.00 to each District in State Allocation annually. Hopeful this will be included this year because our districts need it, and we need to make some changes / provide more in the way of staff to serve Conservation Districts more effectively as well. Hoping to get 2 field support staff added to our section. We have made positive changes to recognizing Commissioners Emeritus by presenting them with a nicely framed certificate.

McLeod and Smathers added they enjoy the increased visibility of Conservation Districts in general and commend the efforts and energy, including the articles in SC Wildlife Magazine and

all the initiatives Tyler's highlighted. All these efforts are critical for growth, especially the Strategic Planning and the additional staff to increase awareness, efficiency, and education throughout the state.

Chairman Simpson added the changes Charleston District and other Districts have seen with respect to farming/farmers and economic development in places like Greenville District as well; Simpson encouraged all to be adaptable to the ways we can keep Conservation local and as a priority. Partnerships and diversification and adaptability have been and continue to be so important.

***Chairman: moving to business of Conservation District Commissioner Appointments: Any questions/further/additional discussion before we move to business on the agenda?***

***Any further discussion by anyone before we consider the slate of applicants on the chart in the folders?***

***Hearing none, please review the list provided of Commissioner appointments and re-appointments before we consider them; Chairman called on staff and members for any comments; hearing none, asked for a motion regarding new appointees and the re-appointments.***

***Motion made by Nates to approve new appointees and re-appointments as listed and seconded by Smathers with all voting in favor and none opposed; thereby approved.***

Chairman read aloud the names of each new appointee & re-appointee.

Chairman asked staff to forward the approved list to the DNR Board for their consideration at the next meeting.

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

***McLeod, Simpson, Smathers all agreed and commended SC Wildlife Magazine and some discussion among all on preference of holding meetings in Columbia because it's centrally located; with possibility of occasionally meeting elsewhere, such as in Feb. at Partnership Conference in Charleston; or at Parker Annex; McLeod expressed his preference to meet in person.***

***If there are no other comments, (hearing none) the Chairman thanked all for being at the meeting and adjourned the meeting at 12:06pm***