

Amended Minutes
Board of the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources
Rembert C. Dennis Building, RM 325
1000 Assembly Street
Columbia, SC
August 17, 2023 10:00 am

The regular meeting of the Board of the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources was held at 10:00 a.m., August 17, 2023 in room 325 of the Rembert C. Dennis Building, 1000 Assembly Street, Columbia, SC. Notice of the date, time and place of the meeting was posted and mailed to the news media. Chairman Norman Pulliam presided at the meeting. Board members present included Dr. Mark Hartley, Mike Hutchins, Jerry Lee, Carlisle Oxner, Jake Rasor, Jr. and Duane Swygert. Director Boyles and staff members of the Department of Natural Resources were present at the meeting.

1. **Call to Order**

Chairman Norman Pulliam called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. **Chairman's Comments**

Chairman Pulliam commented on the various meetings he, Board members and staff have attended since the last meeting. Chairman Pulliam acknowledged the passing of Director Boyles' stepfather and expressed condolences. Chairman Pulliam also commented on the passing of Senator John Scott.

3. **Approval of Minutes**

Chairman Pulliam asked if there were any additions, deletions or corrections to the minutes of the June 15, 2023 Board meeting or the July 19, 2023 Board workshop. *Mr. Hutchins made a motion that the Board approve the minutes of the June 15, 2023 Board meeting and July 19, 2023 Board workshop as presented. Mr. Oxner seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*

4. **Introduction of Guests/Constituent Comments**

Shannon Bobertz, Chief of Staff, introduced Guy Boyle, Spartanburg Water; Jon Morgan, Spartanburg Water; and Megan Roy, Spartanburg Water.

Mrs. Bobertz reported that there were no requests for constituent comment.

5. **Agency Reports/Updates**

Commendations

Director Boyles commended Ronald Hutcherson of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries who works at the Cheraw Fish Hatchery and was commended in an email received from a constituent from Florida who visited the fish hatchery with his wife and three grandchildren and was welcomed by Ron who gave them a tour of the facility. He said, "This visit was definitely one of our favorites in South Carolina, and all because Ron took time out of his day to educate some strangers."

Director Boyles commended Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division Chief of Fisheries Ross Self and the Freshwater Fisheries staff for their hard work and efforts that led to following recognition by Bassmaster Magazine best bass lakes issue – Lake Murray No. 4 in the nation, No. 1 in the Southeast: Murray, Santee Lakes and Lake Hartwell in top 25 in the Southeast. For the eighth time in nine years, Lake Hartwell

named a Top 100 Bass Lake in America, and named the 19th Best Lake Among the Southeastern United States.

Director Boyles commended Charles Ruth and Jay Cantrell of the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division for successfully conducting five public meetings to discuss research and population concerns for the Eastern wild turkey. Charles and Jay's in-depth knowledge of the subject matter, delivery, and response to questions were incredibly professional and portrayed the SCDNR in a very positive manner. They will utilize public input from these meetings as well as an upcoming survey to provide feedback and recommendations to the Board and the General Assembly on potential changes to turkey seasons, bag limits, and regulations.

Director Boyles commended LCPL Gilmore Stevens of Law Enforcement Education for his work with the Nathan M. Wolfe Law Enforcement Cadet Academy who was commended in a letter of appreciation from Michael D. Strauss, Department Adjutant, The American Legion, for their long-term partnership with SCDNR and said that "he sets a high standard and reflects positivity upon your organization."

Director Boyles commended Gerard Givens, Range Program Manager for Law Enforcement, and the Twin Ponds Shooting Range that was commended in a letter from constituents who use the facility at least once a week and wanted to thank us and staff for an outstanding facility. They said the range is always immaculate and exceptionally well maintained, and the professionalism with which it is managed is top notch.

Director Boyles commended Law Enforcement SSGT Philip Robertson, CPT Steve Simpson and LT Dennetta Dawson for coordination of the National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP) Coordinators Conference held in Rock Hill and co-hosted by us and NC Wildlife Commission.

Director Boyles commended Joey Frazier, Cindy Thompson and Kathy Diaz, staff of the *South Carolina Wildlife* magazine, which was commended in an email to the Director from a constituent about how much they enjoyed the magazine and the content over the last several years.

Director Boyles commended Meg Gaillard, Larry Lane and Nick Linville of Land, Water and Conservation for their work on the August 2023 issue of *Archaeology News* which was commended as extremely well done by Chairman Pulliam who asked the Director to send his thanks to staff that helped put it together.

Director Boyles commended Melissa Griffin, Assistant State Climatologist of Land, Water and Conservation, for coordination of the publication, "*Keystone Riverine Flooding Events in South Carolina*", which was the State Library's May 2023 featured state publication.

Director Boyles commended Bryan Frazier of Marine Resources for his work on sharks which was featured in a Today Show Segment.

Director Boyles commended staff of the Oyster Shell Recycling Program Holly Sommers, Stephen Czwartacki, Cody Potvin, Austin Thompson and Bryan Luce of the Marine Resources Division who were commended in a letter to Chairman Pulliam from

Congresswoman Nancy Mace for their remarkable achievements including reaching an unprecedented 38,000 bushels this year – the highest amount to date.

Director Boyles called on Kevin Ryan, Chief External Affairs Officer, for an introduction. Mr. Ryan introduced Duncan Crotwell to the Board noting that he has been hired as the Director of Government Affairs.

Director Boyles called on Lorianne Riggin, Director, Office of Environmental Programs, for a brief report. Mrs. Riggin gave the Board an update on Project Connect, also known as Scout Project and reviewed the possible impacts of the project.

Director Boyles called on Emily Cope, Deputy Director for Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries for a brief report. Mrs. Cope reported on the Lake Bowen Fish Kill Report, that was included in the Board meeting packet.

6. Advisory Committee Reports

A. Marine

Mr. Swygert reported that the Marine Advisory Committee met July 21, 2023. The Advisory Committee received an overview of the SC Artificial Reef Program and a report on the Evaluation of Craft Brewery Spent Grains as Potential Feed Ingredient for Red Drum.

B. Land, Water and Conservation

Ken Rentiers, Deputy Director for Land, Water and Conservation reported that the Land, Water and Conservation Advisory Committee met August 1, 2023. The Advisory Committee received an update on division activities and approved Conservation District Commissioner Appointments/Reappointments that the Board will consider later in the meeting.

C. Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries

Mr. Hutchins reported that the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Advisory Committee met August 3, 2023. The Advisory Committee received presentations on the Confirmation of Native Shortnose Sturgeon Population in the Edisto River, SC and Shorebird Research: From Charleston, South Carolina to Churchill, Manitoba. The Advisory Committee received an update and summary of the Wild Turkey Status Public Meetings.

D. Waterfowl

Mr. Lee reported that the Waterfowl Advisory Committee met August 8, 2023. The Advisory Committee received reports on Category 1 lottery hunt prospects and plans for the 2023-24 duck season and the June 21 Samworth and Ramsey Grove visit. The Advisory Committee received an overview of Wateree River Heritage Preserve and Love Farm.

E. Heritage Trust

Mr. Rentiers reported that the Heritage Trust Advisory Board met August 10, 2023. The Advisory Board approved the FY 2024-2025 Heritage Trust Budget, as presented by staff and approved two potential property acquisitions.

7. Item for Board Information

Climate Update

Hope Mizzell, Land, Water and Conservation Division, reported on the recent high temperatures and the 2023 hurricane season. Dr. Mizzell provided rainfall totals, precipitation percentiles, streamflow, lake levels, groundwater monitoring wells around the state, precipitation forecast and temperature forecast.

8. Item(s) for Board Action

A. Approval of FY 2024-2025 Heritage Trust Budget

Mr. Rentiers reviewed the proposed FY 2024-2025 Heritage Trust Budget, as included in the meeting packet. *Mr. Rasor made a motion that the SCDNR Board, acting as the Board of Trustees for the Heritage Land Trust, approve the FY 2025 Heritage Trust budget, as requested by the Heritage Trust Advisory Board. Mr. Lee seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*

B. Approval of FY 2024-2025 Budget Request

Director Boyles reviewed the proposed FY 2024-2025 SCDNR Budget Request, as included in the meeting packet. *Mr. Swygert made a motion that the SCDNR Board affirm the priority order as appropriate, and approve the FY 2024-2025 SCDNR State Budget Request as presented and recommended by staff, and authorize staff to make adjustments and technical corrections to calculations where necessary. Mr. Lee seconded the motion. After a brief discussion, Mr. Hutchins offered the following amendment that the amount for Priority 16 – Habitat and Land Conservation/Protection be changed from ~~\$30,000.00~~ \$30,000,000.00 to ~~\$40,000.00~~ \$40,000,000.00. Mr. Rasor seconded the motion and the motion carried. Mr. Swygert amended the motion as follows, that the SCDNR Board affirm the priority order as appropriate, and approve the FY 2024-2025 SCDNR State Budget Request as presented and recommended by staff, with the amendment for the increase from ~~\$30,000.00~~ \$30,000,000.00 to ~~\$40,000.00~~ \$40,000,000.00 for Priority 16 – Habitat and Land Conservation/Protection and authorize staff to make adjustments and technical corrections to calculations where necessary. Mr. Lee seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*

9. Executive Session

Mr. Rasor made a motion that the SCDNR Board go into executive session pursuant to SC Code Section 30-4-70(A)(1) to discuss personnel matters related Item(s) for Board Action 9F – Conservation District Commissioner Appointments and Reappointments and pursuant to SC Code Section 30-4-70(A)(2) to discuss contractual matters related to Item(s) for Board Action 9C – Potential Property Acquisition in Pickens County, 9D – Potential Property Acquisition in Jasper County and 9E – Potential Property Acquisition in Oconee County. Dr. Hartley seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

10. Open Session

Mr. Rasor made a motion that that the SCDNR Board return to open session, noting that no action was taken during executive session. Mr. Oxner seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

11. Item(s) for Board Action

C. Potential Property Acquisition in Pickens County

Mr. Oxner made a motion that the SCDNR Board, upon the recommendation of SCDNR staff, grant preliminary approval to evaluate the potential purchase of approximately 1,072 acres located in Pickens County, and the expenditure of up to \$20,000 of state appropriated funds to conduct due diligence activities. Mr. Swygert seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

D. Potential Property Acquisition in Jasper County

Mr. Swygert made a motion that the SCDNR Board accept the recommendation as approved by the Heritage Trust Advisory Board and grant preliminary approval to evaluate the potential purchase of approximately 273 acres adjoining Coosawhatchie Heritage Preserve/WMA in Jasper County, and the expenditure of up to \$20,000 in Heritage Trust funds to conduct due diligence activities. Mr. Oxner seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

E. Potential Property Acquisition in Oconee County

Mr. Hutchins made a motion that the SCDNR Board accept the recommendation as approved by the Heritage Trust Advisory Board and grant preliminary approval to evaluate the potential purchase of approximately 18 acres adjoining Stumphouse Mountain Heritage Preserve/WMA in Oconee County, and the expenditure of up to \$20,000 in Heritage Trust funds to conduct due diligence activities. Mr. Swygert seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

F. Conservation District Commissioner Appointments/Reappointments

Mr. Lee made a motion that the SCDNR Board approve the following conservation district commissioner appointment and reappointments, as recommended by the Land, Water and Conservation Advisory Committee. Appointment: Amy Wilson, Pickens – 8/17/23 – 8/26/25; reappointments: Barry Jurs, Berkeley – 4/29/21 – 4/29/25, Troy Diel, Berkeley – 4/29/23 – 4/29/27 and I. M. Benton, Colleton – 4/23/23 – 4/23/27. Mr. Oxner seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

12. Time and Location of Next Board Meeting

The Board will hold a meeting on Friday, September 15, 2023 in West Columbia.

13. Adjournment

Mr. Hutchins made a motion that the meeting be adjourned. Mr. Oxner seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.