

Minutes  
Board of the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources  
Rembert C. Dennis Building RM 335  
1000 Assembly Street  
Columbia, SC  
March 24, 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., March 24, 2023, in room 335 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 (via telephone), Carlisle Oxner and 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. **Invocation**

Rev. Eric Skidmore, SC LEAP, offered the invocation.

3. **Pledge of Allegiance**

Mr. Hutchins led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. **Chairman's Comments**

Chairman Pulliam and Director Boyles gave the Board a brief budget status and other legislative meetings in which he, Board members and staff have participated.

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

Shannon Bobertz, Chief of Staff, introduced Scott Whitaker, Coastal Conservation Association; and Buford Mabry, former SCDNR Chief Counsel; and Lou Tocci, Two Ponds Hunt Club.

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

6. **Approval of Minutes**

Chairman Pulliam asked if there were any additions, deletions or corrections to the minutes of the February 16, 2023 Board meeting. *Mr. Hutchins made a motion that the Board approve the minutes of the February 16, 2023 Board meeting as presented. Mr. Oxner seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*

7. **Agency Reports/Updates**

DIRECTOR'S BRIEFING

- A. We are pleased to report that all Board members and employees required to file have filed their Statement of Economic Interests forms with the Ethics Commission.
- B. Director Boyles reminded Board members that they are invited to a retirement celebration for Angie Cassella on Tuesday, April 4<sup>th</sup> from 2:30 to 4:00 p.m. in the Board Room.

#### COMMENDATIONS:

- A. Commend Land, Water and Conservation Division staff Brooke Myres and former employee Deanne Myrick and all statewide Conservation District staff for their hard work on the 2021 SC Conservation Districts Annual Report which was chosen for recognition by the SC State Library for a Notable State Documents Award. Sheila Dorsey, the State Government Documents Librarian, said in an email to Director Boyles, “The Conservation Districts Report is so attractive, well-designed, and informative as to the purpose and accomplishments of the districts. It is very deserving of appreciation.”
- B. Commend Caroline Guerry of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries who was named Wildlife Technician of the Year. Caroline is a native of York County, a Clemson University graduate and has been Natural Resources Tech III at the Tom Yawkey Wildlife Center since 2018. Caroline was recognized for this award based on her always positive attitude, her efforts put forward as the Secretary/Treasurer of the Wildlife Technicians Association, and her willingness to put in time above and beyond the norm to get the job done at Yawkey Center and other Upper Coast DNR Projects.
- C. Commend Mark Litz and the Information Technology (IT) staff and Division Business Managers who assisted with the Mobile Device Management project enabling our agency to become compliant with the Governor’s directive regarding the suppression of Tik-Tok on agency devices. Through the audit process, IT enrolled 990 devices. IT mobilized the following team of 14 IT staff members who worked on the project.  

Peter Crawford, Aaron Sawin-Vaughn, Jazzmin Graham, Katherine Coynor, Corey Hilton, Matt Henderson, Shaylah Ali, Holly Stevens, Anthony Johnican, Mark Warren, Robert Brown, Patty Epley, Brian Johnson and Stephen Robinson.
- D. Commend Melissa Griffin, Assistant State Climatologist, of Land, Water and Conservation on her work in coordinating Governor Henry McMaster’s Proclamation declaring March 19-25, 2023, as South Carolina Citizen Weather Observer Week throughout the state and encouraging all South Carolinians to join the Governor in celebrating these volunteers for their efforts in contributing data that stands as the cornerstone of our state and nation’s weather history and recognizing the significance of their volunteer services.
- E. Commend Melissa Griffin, Assistant State Climatologist, of Land, Water and Conservation for her efforts which were recognized in a letter to the Director from Susan Coleman Fedor of the Richland County Master Gardeners who commended Melissa for her presentation to their group which exceeded their highest expectations. She said that Melissa spoke flawlessly with a smooth, confident delivery, and said that she was an outstanding resource for the state.
- F. Commend Maria Cox Lamm, Jessica Artz, Laura Whittle and Heather Brown of the SC Flood Mitigation Program of the Land, Water and Conservation Division on receiving the highest rating by FEMA. They received the Advanced Floodplain

Management Status which according to FEMA means they are the “Best in Class” performing above expectation in four categories. Only 8 states in the US received this rating and out of the 8 our very own SC Program is ranking 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Nation. This is a huge accomplishment and exemplifies the commitment of the Flood Mitigation staff to protecting lives and property of SC citizens.

- G. Commend the Licensing and Registration staff Ashley Ellis, Susan Dickson, Jennifer Smith and Sarah Fowler of the Aynor Office who were commended in a note to the Director from constituent John Sharkey of Little River who had visited the Aynor Office on two occasions and felt compelled to write and commend the women that staff that office. He said, “in a few words ... extremely helpful, friendly and patient, especially when it comes to helping with forms people don’t fill out every day.”
- H. Commend Law Enforcement Region 1 LCPL Shawn Lawter who was recognized in an email from a constituent to Lieutenant Governor Pamela Evette commending Corporal Lawter for his professional and courteous manner. The constituent relayed that he was new to hunting WMA land and met Corporal Lawter in the woods after finishing his morning hunt. The constituent said our officer was amazing, he checked his license, talked to him about his hunt and gave him some advice on having a better chance to see deer, realized he was in violation of not having his deer tags and educated him on the law and wrote him a warning. The constituent said he wished, “all encounters with law enforcement could be so easy and helpful...”

Director Boyles informed the Board that Alpha Genesis holds the new lease on Morgan Island.

Director Boyles reported that the Agency will be receiving a \$191,600 check from the Hampton Wildlife Fund and a brief presentation on *South Carolina Wildlife* magazine at the lunch with the Hampton Wildlife Fund.

Director Boyles called on Kevin Ryan, Director of Government Affairs, to give the Board a brief legislative update. Mr. Ryan reported informed the Board that April 10 is crossover. Mr. Ryan reported on H. 3538 – Electronic Harvest Reporting for Deer and S. 399 DHEC Restructuring.

**8. Advisory Committee Report**

**Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries**

Mr. Hutchins reported that the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Advisory Committee met February 28, 2023, in Columbia. The Advisory Committee received an update on coyote harvest; overviews of black bass and the alligator program. The Advisory Committee approved the 2023-2024 Migratory Bird recommendations and received a legislative update.

**9. Items for Board Information**

**Climate Update**

Hope Mizzell, Land, Water and Conservation Division, reviewed the winter weather and reported that South Carolina’s drought free status was short lived noting that a small portion, in the northeast corner of the state, is considered abnormally dry. Dr. Mizzell

provided rainfall totals, precipitation percentiles, streamflow, lake levels, groundwater monitoring wells around the state, precipitation forecast and temperature forecast.

**10. Item(s) for Board Action**

A. 2023-2024 Migratory Bird Season Recommendations

Billy Dukes, Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division, briefly reviewed the 2023-2024 South Carolina migratory bird recommendations, as included in the meeting packet. *Mr. Hutchins made a motion that the DNR Board approve the 2023-24 South Carolina migratory bird seasons and bag limits as recommended by staff and approved by the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Advisory Committee. Mr. Swygert seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*

B. 2022 Governor's Cup Billfishing Series Annual Report

Blaik Keppler, Deputy Director for Marine Resources, offered to answer questions about the 2022 Governor's Cup Billfishing Series Annual Report. *Mr. Oxner made a motion that the SCDNR Board, upon recommendation of the GCBS Advisory Board, approve the 2022 Governor's Cup Billfishing Series Annual Report as provided in the meeting packet. Dr. Hartley seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*

**11. Executive Session**

*Dr. Hartley made a motion that the SCDNR Board go into executive session pursuant to SC Code Section 30-4-70(A)(1) to discuss personnel issues related to Item(s) for Board Action 10C – Governor's Cup Billfishing Series Chairman Appointment and 10D – Conservation District Commissioner Reappointments and SC Code Section 30-4-70(A)(2) to discuss contractual matters related to Item(s) for Board Action 10E – Potential Property Acquisition in Lancaster County and 10F – Potential Property Acquisition in Hampton County. Mr. Hutchins seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*

**12. Open Session**

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

**13. Item(s) for Board Action**

C. Governor's Cup Billfishing Series Chairman Appointment

*Mr. Oxner made a motion that the SCDNR Board, upon recommendation of the Governor's Cup Billfishing Series Advisory Board, appoint Mr. Stokely Holder Chairman of the GCBS Advisory Board. Dr. Hartley seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*

D. Conservation District Commissioner Reappointments

*Mr. Swygert made a motion that the SCDNR Board approve the following conservation district commissioner reappointments, as recommended by the Land, Water and Conservation Advisory Committee:*

*Dennis Terrell Smith, Hampton – Term - 4/29/23 - 4/29/27; William C Covington, Marlboro – Term - 1/31/23 -1/31/27; Phillip Kevin Yon, Saluda – Term- 2/27/22 -*

*2/27/26; James Shealy, Newberry – Term - 3/3/22 - 3/3/26; and Alan Gaddy, Dillon – Term - 8/15/22 - 8/15/26*

*Mr. Oxner seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*

E. Potential Property Acquisition in Lancaster County

*Mr. Razor 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 58 acres adjoining Forty Acre Rock Heritage Preserve in Lancaster County that would be dedicated as a Heritage Preserve and placed into the corpus of the SC Heritage Trust, 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. Potential Property Acquisition in Hampton County

*Mr. Razor made a motion that the SCDNR Board, upon the recommendation of SCDNR staff, grant preliminary approval to evaluate the potential purchase of approximately 1,672 acres known as Slater Phase II in Hampton County. Mr. Oxner seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*

**14. Time and Location of Next Board Meeting**

The Board's next scheduled meeting will be held Thursday, May 18, 2023 in Columbia.

**15. Adjournment**

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