

Minutes
Board of the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources
Rembert C. Dennis Building RM 325
1000 Assembly Street
Columbia, SC
May 18, 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., May 18, 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. **Invocation**

Chaplain Dave Tafaoa, SC LEAP, offered the invocation.

3. **Pledge of Allegiance**

Vice Chairman Hutchins led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. **Chairman's Comments**

Chairman Pulliam informed the Board of meetings he attended on behalf of the agency.

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

Shannon Bobertz, Chief of Staff, introduced Mike Waddell, Trout Unlimited.

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 March 24, 2023 Board meeting. *Dr. Hartley made a motion that the Board approve the minutes of the March 24, 2023 Board meeting as presented. Mr. Hutchins seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*

7. **Agency Reports/Updates**

Presentations

Director Boyles presented the Meritorious Service Award to Ken Prosser.

Mike Waddell presented the Palmetto Trout Award to Ross Self.

Commendations

A. Commend the following 2022 Division Employees of the Year and the overall 2022 Department Employee of the Year Lorianne Riggan of the Executive Office who were recognized at Division Employee of the Year celebrations. Executive Office and overall: Lorianne Riggan; Administration: Joey Frazier; Land, Water and Conservation: Keith Bradley; Law Enforcement: Paula Mills; Marine: Kattie McMillan; and Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries: Kayla Brantley.

- B. Commend Human Resources Benefits Coordinator Brittany Caldwell and the following staff members who assisted her with the Employee Appreciation Luncheons held across the State: Chelsea McClain, LeKeisha Williams, Maureen Lane, Dawn Beaver, Amy Jordan, Heather Brock, Rachel Milan, Bonnie Greenwood, Ken Forrester, Capt. DJ Riley, Courtney Wigfall, Corey Hilton, and Danielle Kent.
- C. Commend Brooke Myres of Land, Water and Conservation for her efforts in coordination of the 2023 SC Envirothon Competition as well as the event sponsors, volunteers and coaches who make this program possible. Sponsors include Hampton Wildlife Fund, SCDNR-Conservation Districts, SC Conservation Districts Foundation, and SC Association of Conservation Districts. Winners include: 1st place overall: Spartanburg Day School – A Team who will represent SC at the NCF-Envirothon this summer in New Brunswick, Canada; 2nd Place overall: Spartanburg High School; and 3rd Place overall: JL Mann High School of Greenville.
- D. Commend Brooke Myres and Tyler Brown of Land, Water and Conservation Division for their work in coordinating Governor Henry McMaster’s Proclamation of April 30-May 7, 2023 as Soil and Water Stewardship Week. This is a well-deserved recognition of our Soil and Water Conservation Districts and their mission of conservation by the Governor.
- E. Commend Keith Bradley of Land, Water and Conservation Division on his graduation from the LeadSC program which provides emerging leaders in state government with the knowledge and skills to be successful while fostering a desire to create a career within state government.
- F. Commend staff Lorianne Riggin (Executive), Felicia Sanders (WFF), and Amy Tegeler (WFF) for their efforts in helping identify critical habitat for the Red Knot, which served as the basis for a consent order in Defenders of Wildlife lawsuit.
- G. Commend Marine and Law Enforcement staff who were commended by Tony D’Elia, Assistant General Counsel and Chief Information Security Officer, for their assistance in hosting the Charleston Session of the SC Bar Leadership Academy at the Marine Center. Tony D’Elia shared comments he received from Magistrate Judge Margaret Williams of Richland County, a fellow academy member, who presides over many SCDNR criminal cases and expressed that she is constantly impressed by the professionalism, knowledge, preparedness and competence of our officers.
- H. Commend Lorianne Riggin, Office of Environmental Programs Director, who was commended by Eddie Duncan, General Manager of Regional Services for Regulated Renewables at Duke Energy, for her highlighting the expiration of the fisheries habitat permit for Duke’s Wateree project. He commented that her “...attention to detail could have possibly prevented us having a permit violation and I am thankful that you brought that to everyone’s attention.”
- I. Commend the SCDNR Law Enforcement Graduates of the BLE 782 class and the following graduates who were recognized for their achievements: JP Strom Award: CO Jarrett Gibbons; Distinguished Graduates: CO Jarrett Gibbons, CO Laura

“Carolina” Lara, CO Parker Calvert; Class Leader: CO Brittany Thorson; Assistant Class Leader: CO Jarrett Gibbons; Challenge Run award: CO Jarrett Gibbons, CO Thomas Griffin, CO Houston Ford, CO Parker Calvert, CO Bryson Smith, CO Nolan Starnes, CO Bryson Fain, CO Cole Haile, CO William Medlin and CO Christopher Anderson.

- J. Commend FSGT Jeremy Cooper who was recognized by the Georgetown County Sheriff’s Office for his assistance with firearms training and assisting them in the decision to transition to an Aimpoint optic.
- K. Commend LT Raquel Salter on her selection as Joint Officer of the Year CY22 by the Joint Transportation Unit US Coast Guard. Cheryn L. Fasano, Major General, USAR, Commanding, commented that “This nomination is well deserved, thank you for setting the highest example for your peers.”
- L. Commend Marine Division Open House committee members: Maia Ingle, Julie Binz, Kaitlyn Hackathorn, Erin Weeks, Tanya Darden, Peter Kingsley-Smith, Joey Ballenger, Rustin Gasperson, Tim Snoots, Kattie McMillan, Bill Baker, Paulette Mikell, and Christian Sergent, as well as countless other staff from MRD and every other Division for their assistance and participation in the SCDNR Open House, a 50th anniversary celebration of coastal waters, wildlife and the people who study them. It was well attended by approximately 1,900 from the Charleston community and beyond.
- M. Commend Dan DuPre of the Office of Media and Outreach for his work on the 2023 Palmetto Sportsmen’s Classic. Constituent Joseph Huggins emailed Director Boyles his appreciation and to convey what an awesome event the Palmetto Sportsmen’s Classic is and commending Dan DuPre who he said is “absolutely phenomenal”. A wonderful host, great organizer and a great representative of SCDNR.”
- N. Commend LCPL Matthew Lambert, CO Riley Godwin and LCPL Kevin Collins who were recognized in an email to the Director from an Orangeburg/Calhoun County constituent who commended them for their assistance after his call about trespassers on his neighbor’s land. He said, “I know you have a bunch of great officers, but those three are as nice, helpful, respectful, knowledgeable, and responsive as I’ve had the pleasure of dealing with.”
- O. Commend CO Luis Pinto for his quick response at Lighthouse Marina where he was notified of an unresponsive woman, responded to the scene, and began giving CPR to the woman until EMS was able to arrive on scene. CO Pinto was able to get her breathing again on her own, and his quick response provided needed medical attention until EMS arrived.
- P. Commend the following staff who assisted with the USFWS Civil Rights Audit including site visits and gathering information: Caleb Cohoon, Kattie McMillian, Achi Treptow, Andy Wicker, MAJ Billy Downer, Tim Snoots, Rustin Gasperson, John Repik, Alvin Dingle, Michelle Harrison, LaThornia Perry, Mike Ecle, Clayton Strobel, Tony Singleton, Evan Tanner, Tom Salisbury, Jessica Kinsella, Chris Horacek, Jeff Boyer, Gerard Givens, CPT Steve Simpson, Joey Lindler, Leo Rose, Ken Prosser,

CPT Lee Ellis, Julie Binz, Alix Pedraza, Amanda Stroud, Hope Mizzell, and Maureen Lane.

Director Boyles introduced the following: David Tarrant, Chief Operations Officer and Fran Varacalli, Property Coordinator. Director Boyles also informed the Board that Kevin Ryan is now the Chief External Affairs Officer and Scott Speares is now the Chief Budget and Finance Officer.

Director Boyles called on Caleb-Scott Cohoon, Auditor for an audit update. Mr. Cohoon reported on the USFWS Civil Rights Audit, the FEMA Grant Monitoring Visit and the Procurement Audit.

Director Boyles called on Kevin Ryan for a legislative update. Mr. Ryan reported that S. 101 – Disability Licenses for Legally Blind Persons has been signed by the Governor; S. 399 – DHEC Restructuring has been ratified and is awaiting Governor signature; S. 449 – Swine – Repeal of Sunset Clause has been signed by the Governor; S. 648 – Resolution: Naming the “George E. Campsen, Jr. Capers Island Heritage Preserve” has been adopted; H. 3269 – Oversight: Repeal Requirement to File Description of Uniforms and Emblems for LE has been signed by the Governor; H. 3433 – Oversight: Suspension Notification Cleanup – has been ratified and is awaiting Governor signature; H. 3538 – Electronic Harvest Reporting for Deer – has been ratified and is awaiting Governor signature; H. 3689 – Airboat Use on the Broad River (Richland) and Stevens Creek (Edgefield) – has been signed by the Governor; H. 3868 – Women in Hunting and Fishing Awareness Day – has been signed by the Governor.

Director Boyles called on Blaik Keppler, Deputy Director for Marine Resources, to give the Board a brief update. Mrs. Keppler reported on possible time for opening shrimp season; blue crab recommendations and the SC Governor’s Cup Bohicket Tournament.

8. Item(s) for Board Action

A. Approval of Comprehensive Permanent Improvement Plan

Mr. Speares briefly reviewed the Comprehensive Permanent Improvement Plan and answered questions of Board members. *Mr. Lee made a motion that the SCDNR Board accept the 2023 Comprehensive Permanent Improvement Plan as presented by staff and, on behalf of the Board, authorize the Chairman to affix his signature to the planning document. Technical changes and corrections by staff are allowed. Mr. Swygert seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*

9. Advisory Committee Reports

A. Marine

Mr. Swygert reported that the Marine Advisory Committee met April 28, 2023 in Charleston. The Advisory Committee received a report on The Marine Resources Division: a leader in protecting and studying our salt marsh habitats in South Carolina.

B. Law Enforcement

COL Chisolm Frampton, Deputy Director for Law Enforcement, reported that the Law Enforcement Advisory Committee met May 2, 2023 in Georgetown. The Advisory Committee received reports from Region 4 and the Saltwater Team. The Advisory Committee received updates on budget and personnel.

C. Saltwater Recreational Fisheries

Mrs. Keppler reported that the Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Advisory Committee held a virtual meeting on May 16, 2023. The Advisory Committee reviewed the project proposals and budget for FY 24. The Advisory Committee received an update on shore based angling.

D. Waterfowl

Billy Dukes, Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division, reported that the Waterfowl Advisory Committee met May 3, 2023 at Santee Coastal Reserve. The Advisory Committee approved the proposed 2023-24 Duck Stamp Budget and discussed the proposed changes to the Wood Duck Box Program. The Advisory Committee received reports of Bear Island West and the Rehabilitation of Santee-Delta WMA. The Advisory Committee then held a site visit of Santee-Delta WMA.

E. Heritage Trust

Ken Rentiers, Deputy Director for Land, Water and Conservation, reported that the Heritage Trust Advisory Board met May 11, 2023 at Pleasant Ridge Park. The Advisory Board received reports on several Conservation Easement Projects and the Poinsett Bridge Rehabilitation Project. The Advisory Board approved several property acquisition projects and several potential property acquisition projects.

F. Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries

Mr. Hutchins reported that the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Advisory Committee met May 17, 2023 in West Columbia. The Advisory Committee received updates on Gopher Frog, potential changes to turkey lottery hunts, waterfowl season survey and legislation. The Advisory Committee received a presentation on the Overview of Fishery Management Activities.

10. Items for Board Information

A. Climate Update

Hope Mizzell, Land, Water and Conservation Division, reviewed the 2022 Hurricane Season and the forecast for 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.

B. 2024 Budget Update

Mr. Ryan distributed and reviewed the FY 2023-2024 Budget Request and the Conference Committee Options.

11. Item(s) for Board Action

B. Approval of Use of Force Policy (301.01)

COL Frampton briefly reviewed the changes to Use of Force Policy (301.01), as included in the meeting packet. *Dr. Hartley made a motion that the SCDNR Board accept and approve the changes to the SCDNR Use of Force Policy (301.01) as recommended to ensure compliance with SC Criminal Justice Academy recommendations and Law Enforcement Training Council requirements. Mr. Swygert seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*

C. Approval of Stumphouse Heritage Preserve – City of Walhalla Access License Request

Ken Prosser, Assistant Deputy Director for Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries, reviewed the proposed Stumphouse Heritage Preserve – City of Walhalla Access License Request, as included in the meeting packet. *Mr. Razor made a motion that the SCDNR Board accept the recommendation, as approved by the Heritage Trust Advisory Board, to grant approval of the short-term license agreement as presented to allow the City of Walhalla to access an existing road that borders Stumphouse Mountain Heritage Preserve and to deliver equipment and construction materials to the City of Walhalla property. Dr. Hartley seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*

12. Executive Session

Mr. Razor made a motion that the SCDNR Board go into executive session pursuant to SC Code Section 30-4-70(A)(2) to discuss contractual matters related to Item(s) for Board Action 10D – Potential Property Acquisition in Greenville County and 10E – Potential Property Acquisition in Greenville County. Dr. Hartley seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

13. Open Session

Mr. Oxner 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.

14. Item(s) for Board Action

D. Potential Property Acquisition in Greenville County

Mr. Oxner 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 206 acres in Greenville 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. Dr. Hartley seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

E. Potential Property Acquisition in Greenville County

Mr. Razor made a motion that the SCDNR Board, upon the recommendation and approval of the Heritage Trust Advisory Board, approve the expenditure of an additional \$40,000.00 of Heritage Trust funds, thus a total of \$60,000.00, for due diligence activities for the potential property acquisition of 286 acres in Greenville County. Mr. Oxner seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

15. Time and Location of Next Board Meeting

The Board's next scheduled meeting will be held virtually on Thursday, June 15, 2023.

16. Adjournment

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