

Meeting Minutes
Board of the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources
SCDNR Headquarters
260 D Epting Lane
West Columbia, SC
June 4, 2026, 10:00 am

The regular meeting of the Board of the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources was held at 10:00 a.m., June 4, 2026, at the SCDNR Headquarters, 260 D Epting Lane, West Columbia, SC. Notice of the date, time, and place of the meeting was posted and mailed to the news media. Chairman Dr. Mark Hartley presided at the meeting. Board members present included Vice Chairman Duane Swygert, Mike Hutchins, Hope Blackley, Davy Hite, Carlisle Oxner, and Jerry Lee. Director Mullikin and staff members of the Department of Natural Resources were present at the meeting.

1. **Call to Order**

Chairman Mark Hartley called the meeting to order and welcomed all attendees.

2. **Invocation**

Chaplain Colonel Kevin Thompson offered the invocation.

3. **Pledge of Allegiance**

Vice Chairman Duane Swygert led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. **Chairman's Comments**

Dr. Hartley stated that he understands there is significant interest from citizens regarding Item for Board Information 9B, the History of Dog-Deer Hunting Challenges in South Carolina. He provided background on how this topic came before the Board. SCDNR staff from the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division were asked by a member of the Board and a member of the House to discuss issues related to deer hunting with running dogs. As a result, internal discussions began, and a Board member requested that the matter be reviewed through the advisory committee process in January. The topics have since been discussed by the Law Enforcement Advisory Committee and the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Advisory Committee.

Dr. Hartley explained that the Board would hear from constituents who wished to share their perspectives, as well as from Jay Cantrell, Assistant Chief of Wildlife. However, no action would be taken at the meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to help the Board begin learning more about the topic from subject matter experts and members of the public. The next step in the process will be to gather input from stakeholders and continue discussions in a thoughtful and constructive manner throughout the state.

Each constituent speaker would have five minutes to address the Board. Dr. Hartley expressed appreciation for everyone's willingness to participate and share their views. To help ensure everyone had an opportunity to be heard and to allow the Board to complete its agenda, he asked that, if a previous speaker had already expressed a similar point of view, subsequent speakers briefly note their agreement and focus the remainder of their time on any additional perspectives they would like the Board to consider. He noted that it would be a long day but expressed hope that the Board would learn a great deal and leave the meeting with a plan to travel around the state and seek additional public input.

Dr. Hartley stated that he went out with the Rink2Reef Oyster Restoration group. He

explained that the program was started by a professor in Florida at a small college. The professor approached a minor league hockey team and asked for all of its broken polycarbonate sticks. The team told him he could have all of them, which led to the idea of making oyster banks out of the sticks.

Dr. Hartley noted that SCDNR staff in the oyster recycling program have been working all over the state. The New Jersey Devils and the Washington Capitals were the first two major league hockey teams to begin donating these sticks. SCDNR now also has participation from the South Carolina Stingrays and the team in Columbia.

Dr. Hartley stated that he was shown a picture of a house in Florida from the last hurricane season. The house had been blown off its foundation, but at the end of the dock, one of the Rink2Reef oyster banks remained hanging on the dock after the hurricane. A crane had to be used to move it because approximately 500 pounds of oysters were attached to it. He explained that some type of sealant is applied to the structure that attracts oysters.

Dr. Hartley announced that this is a program in which SCDNR is going to be heavily involved. SCDNR constructed a reef using polycarbonate sticks and bamboo from the Lowcountry at a location near the Holiday Inn Express and Suites in Charleston by Brittlebank Park. Volunteers from Ducks Unlimited and SCDNR staff went into the pluff mud, up to their chests, to construct the reef. Fortunately, they were pulled back out.

Dr. Hartley stated that SCDNR will wait until February, for the Wildlife Expo, to see whether the reef has done its job. He noted that these structures are easy to build and that there is not much to the process. He suggested this might be something SCDNR will be able to offer to the public.

5. Introduction of Guests/Constituent Comments

Shannon Bobertz, Chief of Staff, introduced the constituent speakers, including Chip Sharpe, Outdoor Dream Foundation; Paul Caskey, South Carolina Sporting Dog Association; Chad Nuttall, Property Protection Alliance of South Carolina; Rick Baturin, Property Protection Alliance of South Carolina; Jerry Dire, South Carolina State Resident; Jodi Howard, Property Protection Alliance of South Carolina; Terry DeMaria, South Carolina State Resident; and Chad Fuller, South Carolina State Resident.

Chip Sharpe, Outdoor Dream Foundation:

Mr. Sharpe stated that the reason he was present was to thank SCDNR's Executive Director. He explained what the Executive Director had done for the children with whom Mr. Sharpe works on a daily basis.

Mr. Sharpe stated that he is a volunteer with the Outdoor Dream Foundation, an organization that takes children, who are either terminally ill or have life-threatening illnesses, on their dream hunts or dream fishing trips, wherever those may be.

Mr. Sharpe explained that SCDNR's Executive Director, his friend Dr. Mullikin, has very generously given his time. He clarified that he was not referring to Dr. Mullikin's SCDNR time, but to his personal time, including weekends, holidays, and nights. Dr. Mullikin has come and helped the children understand South Carolina's great outdoors.

Mr. Sharpe also noted that Dr. Mullikin is a minister and has sat down and prayed with

these children. He stated that this meant everything not only to the children, but also to their families and to everyone who was there with the children.

Mr. Sharpe stated that his purpose in attending was to thank Dr. Mullikin very much for everything he has done for the Outdoor Dream children, some of whom have passed away since Dr. Mullikin last saw them. Mr. Sharpe thanked Dr. Mullikin for his time and support of the organization.

Paul Caskey, South Carolina Sporting Dog Association:

Mr. Caskey stated that he serves as President of the South Carolina Sporting Dog Association, representing members across the state who participate in all types of sporting dog activities. He stated that the purpose of his remarks was to discuss deer-dog hunting.

Mr. Caskey explained that deer-dog hunting is a long-standing South Carolina tradition that brings together families, friends, and multiple generations of hunters. He stated that the association's members are deeply committed to conservation, responsible hunting, and the future of South Carolina's wildlife resources. He also emphasized that the tradition is a powerful force for youth development.

Mr. Caskey stated that each year, hundreds of young people participate in deer-dog hunting through family clubs, youth days, and weekend hunts. At a time when many children spend their days behind screens, he explained that the sport keeps them outdoors, active, and engaged. Through deer-dog hunting, young people learn how to care for animals, understand wildlife, respect landowners, and work as a team. Mr. Caskey stated that these lessons build responsibility and character and keep young people connected to something positive.

Mr. Caskey acknowledged that challenges have existed throughout the history of deer-dog hunting and stated that the association supports fair enforcement when laws are broken. He stated that those who violate the law should be held accountable.

However, Mr. Caskey emphasized that it is important that the actions of a few bad actors not define an entire hunting tradition or shape policy in ways that overlook the overwhelming majority of responsible hunters who follow the law and contribute positively to the state's outdoor heritage.

Mr. Caskey explained that, for generations, deer-dog hunters have contributed significant time, resources, and stewardship to wildlife management and rural communities throughout South Carolina. He detailed that the association's members invest in land, dogs, equipment, conservation efforts, and local economies while helping preserve an important part of the state's outdoor heritage.

Mr. Caskey also emphasized that when concerns are brought directly to the association, many of them have been resolved quickly and respectfully. He stated that open communication works and encouraged anyone experiencing a legitimate issue to reach out so the association can help address it before it escalates.

Mr. Caskey stated that the association remains committed to working with the department, landowners, and fellow hunters to address concerns, promote responsible hunting practices, and find practical solutions where challenges exist. He also extended

an open invitation to the Board and to members of the public to join the association on a given Saturday to see firsthand what deer-dog hunting truly looks like, families working together, children learning responsibility, and hunters practicing a tradition rooted in respect for the land and wildlife.

As the discussion moves forward, Mr. Caskey asked that deer-dog hunting be viewed in its entirety, not only through the lens of past challenges, but also through the positive contributions it continues to make to South Carolina's hunting heritage, conservation efforts, youth development, and outdoor traditions. He thanked the Board for its time and consideration.

Chad Nuttall, Property Protection Alliance of South Carolina:

Mr. Nuttall stated that he is a property owner and strongly supports property rights. He explained that he does not want to see deer-dog hunting banned and that he knows many good people who hunt with hounds. However, he stated that it becomes frustrating to go out every Saturday and catch dogs. He explained that this occurs every Saturday that it is not raining between September 15 and January 1. He stated that it would be one thing if it happened only once in a while, but that is not the case. If he has to work on a Saturday, he ends up having to check his deer cameras and watch dogs running through them.

Mr. Nuttall explained that he does not have a single piece of property adjoining his property that allows dog hunting. However, within a mile of his property, there are three different hunting clubs, in addition to individuals who have their own dogs and are associated with hunting clubs. He explained that he can catch one group of dogs in the morning and another group that same afternoon. Because the hunters are not aware of what the others are doing, they do not understand the total frustration of spending all morning catching and helping round up dogs.

At the same time, Mr. Nuttall stated that he would rather hunters come to his door and tell him if they shot a deer or lost a dog, because the last thing he wants is for a dog to be running around on his property for weeks. He stated that he wants the hunters to be able to recover their property.

Mr. Nuttall believes hunters should have the right to run dogs with the leashes they have and on the property they own. He said he would be a hypocrite if he valued only his own property rights, but he does not; he values everyone's property rights. However, he stated that self-regulation obviously does not work.

Mr. Nuttall explained that when SCDNR is called, officers come out and do the best they can to defuse the situation. He stated that the officers explain they do not have the resources, because they do not, and that the laws are not enforceable. He referenced the Renegade Hunter law and stated that he is not aware of anyone ever being prosecuted under it. He said that while the law appears to have teeth when read, it does not work when applied.

Mr. Nuttall stated that he views hunting more as a privilege than a right. He noted that he hates to say hunting is not a right, because in some sense it is, but compared it to a driver's license, describing it as more of a privilege. He stated that anything requiring the purchase of a license is no longer truly a right, but a privilege, and that some regulation is necessary.

Mr. Nuttall explained that the problem is that no one wants to be accountable for regulation, whether local jurisdictions or others. He said there are people who want to fight against any regulation whatsoever, which he described as a bad attitude that protects the bad apples rather than solving problems. He reiterated that he does not want to see deer-dog hunting banned, but he believes it does need to be regulated. He thanked the Board for its time.

Rick Baturin, Property Protection Alliance of South Carolina:

Mr. Baturin stated that he owns approximately 190 acres in Colleton County where he still hunts. He explained that the land is his private property. On a typical Saturday during deer season, his property is overrun with deer-dogs, which prevents him from hunting or using his property as he deems appropriate.

Mr. Baturin explained that he knows not all dog hunters are bad actors and that he believes the majority of them follow the rules. However, he stated that the hunters near his property do not follow the rules.

Mr. Baturin said that he has called SCDNR for 20 years and that, during that time, only one ticket has been written involving those hunters. When he has spoken with law enforcement officers about the issue, they have explained that the problem is that there is very little they can actually enforce. He also noted that officers are already spread thin. Nevertheless, he stated that his property rights are trampled every Saturday and on holidays during deer season.

Mr. Baturin explained that he has two young children and that they cannot be on the property because, at any given time, there may be a dozen unknown dogs coming through the property. As a result, he stated that he cannot take the risk of having his family out there. He explained that he does not get to use his property as he would like on Saturdays and holidays during deer season.

Mr. Baturin asked where his rights are as a private landowner to ask others to keep their dogs off his property. He stated that he believes this is what the Property Protection Alliance of South Carolina is trying to do, protect property rights.

Mr. Baturin stated that, over the years, whenever he has called SCDNR, he has been retaliated against. He explained that he has reached the point where he has stopped calling SCDNR because it is no longer beneficial to him and only results in retaliation. He stated that boxes of screws have been thrown in his driveway, trash has been dumped on his property, he has been shot at, and he has been trespassed upon. He has experienced everything imaginable.

At some point, if SCDNR, local law enforcement, and Colleton County are not going to help him, he has to back off and protect his family somehow. He stated that landowners need help from SCDNR and need reasonable ways for rules to be enforced so that unwanted animals can be kept off their property.

Mr. Baturin explained that he is not allowed to go to someone else's home uninvited and that all he and others are asking for is the same respect. He thanked the Board for its time.

Jerry Dire, South Carolina State Resident:

Mr. Dire stated that he is from Sumter, South Carolina, and has had the opportunity to hunt across the state for more than 50 years. He explained that he has hunted from the Upstate to the coast, as well as in the Midlands and nearly everywhere in between. He also stated that he has hunted in almost every imaginable way that is legal in South Carolina.

Before offering his concerns, Mr. Dire stated that he believes whenever there is an opportunity to discuss or debate an issue, it should be done with an open mind and with as little emotion as possible. He explained that he did not consider himself an eloquent speaker and had chosen to read prepared remarks to ensure that he spoke pointedly and quickly while staying on track.

Mr. Dire detailed that he is an avid hunter who truly enjoys seeing anyone in the outdoors be successful, regardless of what they consider a trophy or the legal means by which they choose to participate in hunting in South Carolina. He explained that, during more than 50 years of hunting, one problematic activity has consistently arisen in almost every place he has hunted, running deer with dogs.

However, Mr. Dire stated that he refuses to be drawn into debating perceived issues of dog hunting based on stereotypes or personal preference, because doing so would stir emotions, would not be fair to either point of view, and would only result in unresolved disagreements.

Instead, Mr. Dire stated that he wished to speak about what he has personally seen and experienced, as well as how he understands the rules. In the counties where he has hunted that allow dog hunting, he stated that a consistent and longstanding problem stems from dog hunters' inability to prevent their dogs from spilling over onto neighboring properties where they do not have permission to hunt, thereby interfering with still hunters and their hunts.

Mr. Dire explained that he was not speaking in hopes of ending dog hunting, nor was he implying that dog hunters should be held to a higher standard than other hunters. Rather, he hoped the Board would understand that still hunters feel they have nothing to assist them in defending their chosen method of hunting or preventing others from interfering with them while they hunt.

Mr. Dire stated that there are many layers to the issue, but he would focus on a few points: first, the inability to hold dog hunters accountable for interfering with or impeding a hunt; second, the control of dogs; and third, the required land size.

Regarding his first point, Mr. Dire said that the rules and regulations appear to repeatedly emphasize what still hunters, landowners, and land lessees cannot do to either the hunters or the dogs if dogs enter their property or impede their attempt to hunt. However, he stated that he has difficulty finding any course of action or way to hold dog hunters accountable when dogs spill over onto adjoining properties and interfere with other hunters. He explained that this appears to tip the balance of fairness in favor of dog hunters, leaving still hunters to simply accept that someone else's preferred hunting method can be prioritized over their own.

Regarding his second point, Mr. Dire stated that the guidance regarding control of dogs

appears to be open to interpretation. For example, he noted that Title 50 provides that the member in control of the dogs must be in the vicinity of the dogs or actively engaged in retrieving the dogs. He separated that issue into two parts.

First, regarding the term "vicinity," Mr. Dire questioned whether that means 100 yards or 100 miles, stating that the law does not specify. He stated that he hunted a property along Highway 261 and Mine Hill Road in Sumter and repeatedly encountered dogs from a club whose entrance was more than three miles from the property he hunted, measured in a straight line. Those dogs ended up in his stand area many times, sometimes remaining for well over an hour. However, he never saw or heard anyone in the vicinity attempting to control or retrieve those dogs.

Second, regarding active retrieval of dogs, Mr. Dire stated that on many occasions, several hunters on the property he currently hunts have experienced dogs showing up during Saturday hunts and then finding those same dogs still on the property the next day and even several days later. On four occasions, they were able to capture the dogs and return them to their owners. According to Mr. Dire, many of the owners admitted that the dogs had been loose since the prior Saturday's hunt but that they were at home when contacted rather than actively attempting to collect the dogs.

Mr. Dire stated that he hoped this explained why still hunters view the guidance as having no teeth when it comes to holding dog hunters accountable. In the interest of time, he declined to speak about the required land size.

Mr. Dire thanked the Board for its time and stated that he hoped some of his remarks provided an understanding that governing laws and rules should be revamped or amended in an effort to create a more balanced approach for still hunters, rather than expecting them to simply be understanding of others.

Finally, Mr. Dire stated that, although everyone has different views on how to hunt, what constitutes a trophy, and many other aspects of hunting, none of those views should allow anyone to interfere with another person's desire or right to hunt legally and without harassment. He wished both dog hunters and still hunters good luck during the coming season and stated that, although they may not share the same methods, they all share a love for hunting. He stated that hunters need to work collectively as a group to find balance so they can spend more time hunting and less time talking to SCDNR officers or arguing among themselves. He thanked the Board.

Jodi Howard, Property Protection Alliance of South Carolina:

Mr. Howard stated that he is the president of the Property Protection Alliance of South Carolina. He noted that he owns property and leases property, and that the problem he is experiencing involves dog hunters.

Mr. Howard explained that, on any given Saturday, dogs are on his property throughout the day. He stated that trucks run up and down the road, dog hunters shoot on the property, and the property includes land on both sides. He stated that dog hunters turn dogs out on his property and that there aren't any properties they can hunt within approximately a mile in any direction.

Mr. Howard stated that numerous tickets have been written, but nothing has been done. He explained that the individuals request jury trials, the matters go to court, and nothing

happens because the cases are repeatedly postponed until they are eventually dismissed. He stated that he and others have been threatened by these dog hunters, and that gates and stands have been destroyed. He asked where it stops. He noted that dog hunters say the dogs cannot be stopped and that dogs cannot read. Mr. Howard agreed that dogs cannot read.

Mr. Howard detailed that he grew up dog hunting and had 47 dogs when he stepped away from dog hunting in 2009. He stated that he loves dog hunting, but that he participated in it responsibly. He explained that, with today's technology, dog hunters can stop dogs before they ever cross a property line. They can turn the dogs around so the dogs never have to leave the property, but some hunters do not want to do so because of the thrill of the chase. Mr. Howard stated that the chase impedes his rights as a landowner and land lessee.

Mr. Howard stated that several members of the Property Protection Alliance feel the same way. He said he does not want his children to be on the property, in the yard, or at the club and be struck by a stray piece of buckshot because a dog hunter gets excited about a deer. He acknowledged that all hunters get excited about hunting and deer but stated that something has to be done.

Mr. Howard proposed that guidelines could be created to stipulate that dogs cannot be turned loose on any property smaller than 500 or 1,500 acres. He stated that, down the road, dogs are turned loose on 22 acres, which he said is not enough land for 20 packs of dogs with only eight to ten walkers in each pack. He explained that seven or eight packs are turned loose on 22 acres of land, and then the dogs are chased for miles. These hunters do not account for the money that landowners put into their property, just as dog hunters invest money in feed, collars, and gas.

Mr. Howard stated that landowners feed their deer, take care of their properties, build their stands, install their gates, and do things the right way, but still get trampled on. He stated that their rights are trampled on every weekend.

Mr. Howard clarified that he was not referring to all dog hunters. He described the problem as involving a group of misfits, who are going to do things their way regardless. He stated that they have been spoken to and ticketed by SCDNR, but that they laugh and ask if the officers are done with them because they are going to turn 12 more dogs out.

Mr. Howard asked where the safety aspect comes in and where landowners are able to draw the line to defend their property and their rights on their property. He stated that, if you ask a dog hunter, the response is that dog hunting is a tradition and that dogs cannot read. He acknowledged that point but asked where landowners have the right to tell dog hunters that it is their property and that the hunters and their dogs do not belong there.

Mr. Howard stated that there are ways dog hunters can stop this, but they do not. He explained that this is why the Property Protection Alliance was started, so that its members could come before the Board and sit down with dog hunters. He stated that attempts have been made in the past, and that he and others have talked with a few dog hunters here and there. However, something has to be done at a higher level, beginning with SCDNR.

Mr. Howard explained that there has to be some type of criteria that dog hunters must meet. He said some of it could be started immediately, while some of it would take time. He clarified that he was not asking for the matter to be resolved that day, that month, or that season, but stated that it has to be addressed. If it is not addressed, he warned that someone is going to get hurt or killed.

Mr. Howard stated that there are landowners who are now ready to kill over their property. He stated that he has been threatened by dog hunters and that his uncle has been threatened over catching a dog. He stated that dog hunters will say they will kill someone if that person hurts their dog. Mr. Howard asked whether a dog is worth someone's life and stated that he does not believe so.

Mr. Howard reiterated that he was not saying this applies to all dog hunters but he believes it applies to the majority. He stated that, at some point, someone is going to stand before the Board and say that they warned this would happen.

Mr. Howard thanked the Board for its effort and time. He expressed hope that everyone can work together to make South Carolina a better place for residents to dog hunt, still hunt, own property, lease property, and exercise whatever rights they have.

Terry DeMaria, South Carolina State Resident:

Mr. DeMaria referred the Board to the outline he provided, noting that it included his name, the issue, and the reasoning. He explained that he would be covering a significant amount of information in five minutes and that the outline might be helpful to follow. He asked the Board, as he began, to consider one question: what happens when there is a toilet paper shortage, and how does such a shortage affect human behavior? He asked the Board to keep that question in mind as his remarks progressed.

Mr. DeMaria stated that he is 75 years old and lives in Simpsonville. He explained that he and his wife retired to South Carolina in 2015, and that their children and grandchildren are here. He stated that he considers himself fortunate, that South Carolina is a beautiful state, and that he and his wife love it.

Mr. DeMaria noted that he has been a bird-dog owner and bird hunter all his life. In Pennsylvania, he hunted ruffed grouse and pheasants. After coming to South Carolina, he was able to learn quail hunting, which he described as something he greatly enjoys. He noted that the day of the meeting would have been a wonderful day to be outside under a clear sky listening for birds. This is the time of year when that occurs and whistle counts are currently taking place in June. He explained that whistle counts are one way SCDNR gauges the quail population.

Mr. DeMaria stated that his issue concerns his home near Whitmire, where the Indian Creek focal area is located. He described the area as approximately 2,500 to 3,000 acres, including Judy B. Road, Larry Cope Road, Long Lane Road, and McCullough Road. He stated that it is not a large area.

Mr. DeMaria explained that, in 2022, SCDNR, with good intent, drastically reduced the season. Previously, hunters could hunt from Thanksgiving through February. The season was reduced to ten days, consisting of Wednesdays and Saturdays spread throughout that period.

Mr. DeMaria then returned to his earlier toilet paper shortage analogy and asked what happens when the number of hunting days is shortened. He stated that everyone ends up in the same area at the same time, making it an unpleasant place to hunt. He does not even go there anymore. He recalled going to Larry Cope Road on a Wednesday at the end of the season and seeing eight trucks there.

Mr. DeMaria stated that the intent of the season reduction was to reduce pressure on the birds, based on the belief that too many hunters were shooting too many birds. However, he stated that the reality is different. He explained that anyone who has hunted quail knows they are a family unit of ten to twelve birds. A hunter goes out in the morning, puts the dogs down, the dogs find a covey, the hunter gets a shot at the rise, decides whether to follow up, and then leaves the birds alone for two weeks. The hunter can then return to hunt that covey again because the birds will likely be in the same general area.

Mr. DeMaria contrasted that with another scenario in which a hunter puts dogs down and then, while attempting to follow up, finds that someone else is already shooting at the birds. He stated that this is not how quail hunting is supposed to work. Although there are fewer hunting days, Mr. DeMaria stated that he believes the resulting intense hunting pressure is worse than allowing hunters to have autonomy and allowing the hunting season to operate as it should.

Mr. DeMaria asked what solutions could be tried that would still reduce hunting pressure while giving hunters autonomy. He stated that bird-dog hunters are there for the experience. They want to see a canine athlete go out and do its work. They follow along on a forest road or fire break while the dogs search. He described the experience as amazing to watch and enjoy.

Mr. DeMaria suggested reducing the daily bag limit to three or four birds. He stated that bird-dog hunters are not concerned with counting birds or earning a badge for how many limits they get. He stated that it is not about that. Instead of a six-bird daily limit, he suggested making the limit three or four birds and stated that everyone would be happy.

Mr. DeMaria offered another potential solution, decoupling rabbit hunting and quail hunting in that area. He explained that rabbit hunters put many hounds down and are not subject to the shortened quail season, meaning they can hunt at any time. He stated that he is sure those dogs are placing some pressure on the birds.

Mr. DeMaria also suggested that the season could be shortened in a different way. He referenced the biological concept of compensatory versus additive mortality, explaining that if more birds remain going into the spring, there is a better chance for offspring. He suggested possibly closing the season at the end of January and simply opening it to any day from the end of November through the end of January.

Finally, Mr. DeMaria suggested that an elective license or bird stamp could potentially work. He thanked the Board.

Chad Fuller, South Carolina State Resident:

Mr. Fuller stated that he is an attorney and lifelong resident of South Carolina. He explained that his primary area of practice is helping disenfranchised people and that he serves as the attorney for the Property Protection Alliance of South Carolina. He has

been practicing law in the state for approximately 20 years. Unfortunately, he has had to sue the state on numerous occasions, including suing Myrtle Beach over what he described as misguided motorcycle ordinances over the years. This issue is near and dear to his heart because he has always loved hunting.

Mr. Fuller stated that hunting has been a lifelong tradition in South Carolina and in his own life. As soon as both of his daughters were born, he purchased lifetime hunting licenses for them with all of the add-ons, and he did the same for his nieces and nephews. He stated that hunting is very important to him. He also noted that he has a very stressful job and that hunting is one of the ways he enjoys taking time off and relaxing. He stated that he leases and owns 1,000 contiguous acres in Colleton County.

However, Mr. Fuller explained that every Saturday, when he chooses to bow hunt, he is overrun with dogs. He drives two hours to get there, gets set up for the hunt, waits for the proper wind, and then the dogs arrive just as the light is becoming suitable. He stated that all of the effort he has put into fertilizer, the tractor, diesel, and everything else goes out the window because he is no longer able to use the hunting property, into which he has poured time and effort during the off-season and throughout the season, in the way and by the method he wants to hunt. Additionally, he stated that he does not feel safe having his daughters out there at that time. He emphasized that this is not an isolated incident.

Mr. Fuller noted that there is no dog hunting club near him, especially when he is in the middle of the 1,000-acre tract, and questioned why the dogs are still reaching him. He reiterated that these are not isolated incidents. He said that the situation occurs every day of the week and twice on Sunday, including mornings and afternoons on Sundays.

Mr. Fuller stated that he works with SCDNR officers and that, for a time, they were gaining some traction. He explained that they were pursuing a dogs-at-large ticket situation, which had begun to curtail some of the problems occurring in Colleton County. However, he stated that SCDNR relied on an advisory opinion from the Attorney General that he believes has no substantive value in a legal proceeding and this prevented officers from issuing those tickets. He stated that there are cases that can now be prosecuted if SCDNR would remove the proverbial handcuffs from the officers and allow some of the current cases to be prosecuted.

Mr. Fuller explained that he did not want to keep covering the same issue because he grew up dog hunting, and his first hunting experience was dog hunting. He stated that he wants to see dog hunting continue, but he wants to see it done responsibly. He has dog hunted for mountain lions and bears in New Mexico and has seen the proper way it is done. He has also dog hunted for deer and pigs in South Carolina and has seen it done properly. Mr. Fuller stated that there are absolutely responsible dog owners who can make this work. However, the bad actors need to be curtailed and law enforcement needs to consider being more hands-on with them.

Mr. Fuller also addressed what he described as a public policy issue that has not been addressed. He stated that, on two different occasions, one in Georgetown County and one in Horry County, he has had clients on motorcycles life-flighted after dogs ran into the road in front of them and caused them to crash. These dogs were being run on public highways and caused significant, life-altering injuries, including limb-loss cases and traumatic brain injuries. He explained that the issue goes beyond property owners

arguing or venting about frustration and being disenfranchised in the way they want to hunt. He stated that there is a public policy standpoint to consider, beyond the issue of shooting on roads.

Mr. Fuller stated that there is a need to look at curtailing dogs from leaving the tracts of property where they are allowed. He said that the technology exists today to prevent that from happening and that saying it cannot be done is absolutely asinine. He noted that hunters are required to use shotguns during turkey season and non-toxic shot during duck season. He questioned why GPS tracking collars should not be required on dogs to keep them on the property where they are supposed to be. He thanked the Board for its time.

Board Response by Mike Hutchins:

As a cabinet agency, SCDNR is working on a process to present a report after conducting statewide stakeholder meetings with surveys. This is being done by the book. But don't give the agency too much credit because SCDNR doesn't make the final decision. It's not in the agency's hands in the end. It's the General Assembly's decision. SCDNR doesn't make the final decision. SCDNR can make recommendations, but the General Assembly makes the decisions.

6. Approval of Minutes

Chairman Mark Hartley asked if there were any additions, deletions, or corrections to the minutes for the March 27, 2026, Board Meeting. *Mr. Mike Hutchins made a motion that the minutes of the March 27, 2026, meeting be approved as submitted. Mr. Jerry Lee seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*

7. Agency Reports/Updates

Director's Update:

The Director noted that the Law Enforcement Promotion Ceremony would be held at 4:00 p.m. at the University of South Carolina School of Law, located at 1525 Senate Street, Columbia, South Carolina 29208. The Director also reported that the Budget Conference Committee met on June 2, 2026.

Staff Introductions:

Mr. Will Dillman stated that he was excited to introduce two new staff members in the Big Game Program.

Mr. Dillman introduced Mr. Lee Kennamer, who has joined SCDNR as the Big Game Program Coordinator. He explained that Mr. Kennamer will lead statewide research, survey, and management efforts for all of SCDNR's big game species, including deer, turkey, and bear.

Mr. Dillman stated that Mr. Kennamer is a third-generation wildlife biologist with more than 27 years of professional experience. Mr. Kennamer received both his Bachelor of Science and Master of Science degrees in wildlife science from Auburn University. He began his career with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources as a private lands biologist and later served as a regional biologist.

While with Georgia DNR, Mr. Kennamer served on the wild turkey and black bear committees and administered the wild turkey brood survey program. He was responsible

for management plans for multiple Wildlife Management Areas, provided landowner assistance, and addressed a variety of nuisance wildlife issues.

Mr. Dillman noted that Mr. Kennamer also worked in the private sector as a wildlife biologist, district manager, and commercial sales manager before opening his own wildlife removal company, which he operated before joining SCDNR. Mr. Kennamer has lived in Lexington for 22 years and has two daughters, one attending Clemson University and the other attending the University of South Carolina. He and his wife, Kim, also have two sons, ages seven and eight.

Mr. Dillman also welcomed Dr. David J. Moscicki, who has joined SCDNR as the Turkey Project Leader. He explained that Dr. Moscicki will oversee research, survey, and management efforts for wild turkeys across the state.

Mr. Dillman stated that Dr. Moscicki grew up in New York and spent his summers camping throughout upstate New York. After high school, Dr. Moscicki spent several years traveling and photographing the United States before later returning to school to pursue his interest in wildlife ecology.

At California State University, Long Beach, Dr. Moscicki gained hands-on experience and developed a passion for research. In 2012, he transferred to the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, where he worked on several research projects as an undergraduate. After completing his degree, Dr. Moscicki joined the Nebraska Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, working on ring-necked pheasants in western Nebraska.

Mr. Dillman explained that Dr. Moscicki's interest in upland game bird research led him to pursue a master's degree at Louisiana State University, where he focused on wild turkeys. In 2019, Dr. Moscicki began a Ph.D. program at North Carolina State University, continuing his research on wild turkeys. He completed his doctoral degree in July 2024 and spent the next two years as the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission's Turkey Program Coordinator.

Mr. Dillman stated that SCDNR is excited to have both Mr. Kennamer and Dr. Moscicki join the agency and looks forward to working closely with them. He asked everyone to join in welcoming them to the SCDNR team.

Outreach and Public Information Updates:

Ms. Cheyenne Twilley presented the SCDNR 2025 Volunteer Program Hours. She stated that, in 2025, SCDNR had 12,294 volunteers agency-wide. Those volunteers completed 99,091 hours of service. At an estimated value of \$31.16 per volunteer hour, the total contribution value was \$3,087,695.81.

Ms. Twilley explained that the volunteer hourly value is calculated by Independent Sector, which updates state values annually based on state-specific hourly earnings in South Carolina. Based on these numbers, the top three volunteer programs by hours were the Marine Turtle Conservation Program, Law Enforcement Programs, and the South Carolina Oyster Recycling and Enhancement Program, also known as SCORE.

Ms. Twilley also provided public information statistics for the first quarter of 2026. For the period of January 1 through March 31, she stated that SCDNR's impressions reached 1.5 billion people, with an advertising value equivalent of \$33.8 million. She explained

that this is an estimate of what it would have cost to purchase the same amount of exposure through paid advertising rather than receiving it through media coverage.

Ms. Twilley stated that these statistics are measured and provided by News Group and Social Pilot, which are in-house media monitoring and media intelligence platforms. She also noted that SCDNR is now the most-followed South Carolina state agency on social media, particularly on Facebook.

Finally, Ms. Twilley extended an invitation for everyone to join the SC7 expedition during the month of July. She stated that, last year, SCDNR achieved approximately 403 million estimated impressions and generated \$400,000 worth of earned media through SC7. She stated that SCDNR expects to exceed those numbers this year.

Commendations:

Commend Major Michael Paul Thomas and Law Enforcement Officers for providing exceptional support during the recent multi-agency operation in Jasper, Colleton, and Hampton counties. Their manpower, drones, K-9 assets, and field operation assistance were instrumental to the success of the mission. Major Thomas demonstrated outstanding leadership, professionalism, and a willingness to work alongside SLED officers on the ground throughout the operation. SCDNR's continued partnership and dedication to protecting and serving the citizens of South Carolina are greatly appreciated and reflect the highest standards of Law Enforcement excellence.

Commend Assistant General Counsel Luke Allen for his outstanding support and professionalism throughout the settlement and conservation easement process. The Attorney General's Office commended Luke for his consistent availability, responsiveness, and willingness to provide valuable guidance and information whenever needed.

Commend Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries' Brian Boyleston, Ross Self, and Leo Rose for their outstanding engagement and educational outreach with Cub Scout Pack 308 during their visit to the SCDNR fish hatchery. Through their enthusiasm, patience, and knowledge, they created a memorable experience for both the scouts and their families while highlighting the important conservation work of SCDNR.

Commend our Human Resources Office for receiving special recognition from the South Carolina Human Affairs Commission during the 2026 EEO Officers Forum as one of the top 10 state agencies with the highest goal rankings among 98 agencies statewide. This achievement reflects the department's outstanding commitment to equal employment opportunity, workplace excellence, and fostering a culture of fairness, inclusion, and professionalism across the agency.

Commend Dan Peebles from the Small Game Program for his professionalism, expertise, and outstanding representation of SCDNR during a recent property evaluation in Aiken County. Through his knowledgeable guidance on wildlife habitat enhancement and conservation planning, he provided an exceptional experience and demonstrated a strong commitment to environmental stewardship and customer service.

Commend LE Conservation Officer John Sanders for earning the JP Strom Award for Law Enforcement Basic Class 855 by achieving the highest GPA in the class with an outstanding overall average of 97. This achievement reflects his dedication, hard work,

and commitment to excellence. Director Mullikin had the honor of delivering the graduation address and presenting the award to Officer Sanders in recognition of this exceptional accomplishment.

Commend Director of Business and Finance Aimee Shumpert and Assistant Budget Director Caleb Cohoon for successfully passing the South Carolina Government Finance Officer Certification exam through the University of South Carolina. Demonstrating exceptional dedication and academic excellence, they completed the five core courses and certification exams in just eight months, significantly ahead of the typical 24-month completion timeline.

Commend Jessica Shealy and Preston Bowers of the Office of Business and Finance for successfully completing the Associate Public Manager certification through the South Carolina Department of Administration Division of Human Resources. Their accomplishment reflects their dedication to professional development and leadership growth.

Commend Jessica Egan of the Land, Water and Conservation Division on her hard work in coordination of the 2026 S.C. Envirothon competition with 1st place overall winner Spartanburg High School Team A who will represent S.C. at the National Conservation Foundation-Envirothon this summer in Starkville, MS. Chief of Staff Shannon Bobertz served as a Judge for this year's competition.

Commend Melissa Griffin, Assistant State Climatologist, of the Land, Water and Conservation Division on her work in coordinating Governor Henry McMaster's Proclamation declaring April 5 - 11, 2026, 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 national weather history.

Commend Brooke Myres, Cameron Sabin, John Hayes, Jessica Egan, Jennifer Morris, Mary Bracey, Jordan Baker and Katherine Hanna of the Land, Water and Conservation Division on their efforts in leading the weeklong celebration of Stewardship Week from April 27 - May 2, 2026. This statewide effort included a Governor's Proclamation, assisting Conservation Districts with direct classroom visits, hosting a statewide conservation field day, and outreach videos bringing awareness to Stewardship Week

Commend Csilla Czako of the Land, Water and Conservation Division for conducting a presentation at the national Symbiota Workshop where she was highlighted in leading national botany data stands, coding, and strategic planning for biodiversity.

Commend Alexis Carter of the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division and the Dennis Wildlife Center Hatchery staff for their dedication and commitment during the striped bass production season. The team worked extended hours to ensure a successful production season, demonstrating exceptional professionalism and teamwork.

Commend Scott Poore of the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division for diligently working through numerous issues to get the water line repaired at the Walhalla Hatchery. His dedication and problem-solving efforts were instrumental in restoring operations effectively.

Commend Molly Kneece, Alicia Farrell, and Billy Dukes of the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division for successfully hosting, planning, and facilitating the “Duck Summit,” a meeting designed to bring waterfowl habitat managers together to share ideas, build relationships, and improve habitat and the duck hunting experience in South Carolina. Also, commend Molly Kneece on her inclusion in the Ducks Unlimited website, video, and upcoming magazine.

Commend all staff who have worked in any capacity on our Category 1 waterfowl areas. Their perseverance, dedication and hard work was noted at the recently held “Duck Summit,” where Category 1 waterfowl areas received only positive comments from those in attendance.

Commend Brittany Caldwell, Rachel Milan, Elise Wells, Sarah Emily Carter, Chelsea McClain, Maureen Lane, Stephanie Welch, LeKeisha Williams, Kattie McMillan, Brittany Whay, Courtney Wigfall, and Maia Ingle for successfully planning, coordinating, and facilitating this year’s Regional Employee Appreciation Event. Through their hard work and attention to detail, the event was successfully executed and provided an enjoyable and meaningful opportunity to recognize and celebrate the contributions of staff across the region.

Commend Maria Cox, Jessica Venable, Matt Puckhaber, Amber Jackson, and Laura Whittle of the SCDNR Flood Mitigation Program for maintaining the Advanced Floodplain Management State designation and achieving a perfect score during this evaluation cycle. Obtaining and maintaining the Advanced State designation is a significant honor for both the program and the State of South Carolina, only three other programs in the country received a perfect score.

Commend Andrew Grosse of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries for being named the 2025 SCDNR Employee of the Year. Also, commend our 2025 division winners, Caroline Pinckney of the Executive Office, Miranda Tiller of Law Enforcement, Andrew Wykel of Land, Water and Conservation, and Tracey Smart of Marine Resources. Their hard work, dedication, and passion are truly appreciated and are making a difference. Establishing excellence is our standard.

8. Advisory Committee Reports

A. Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Advisory Committee

Mr. Mike Hutchins reported that the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Advisory Committee met in the SCDNR Boardroom on April 30, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. Ross Self, Freshwater Fisheries Chief, presented the results of the 2026 SCDNR Youth Bass Fishing Championships. Jay Cantrell, Assistant Chief of Wildlife, provided the history of deer hunting with dogs and the challenges that persist in South Carolina. Major Michael Paul Thomas delivered a review and discussion of deer hunting with dogs and recommendations from the Law Enforcement Advisory Committee.

The SCDNR Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Advisory Committee recommended that the SCDNR Board ask staff to initiate public stakeholder meetings in game zone three and four only, related to deer hunting with dogs to assist the Board in developing a new policy. The reason zones three and four were chosen is that the upstate does not have hunting with dogs.

Mr. Will Dillman, Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Deputy Director, reported the legislative updates, including legislative priorities and the status of new and current bills pending. The date of the next meeting of the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Advisory Committee is September 3, 2026, in the SCDNR Boardroom.

B. Marine Resources Advisory Committee

Mr. Jerry Lee reported that the Marine Resources Advisory Committee met on Friday, May 8, 2026. Dr. Aaron Watson provided a report on the Southern Flounder Stocking Program. Highlights included the program's 10-year implementation plan and the 2026 release totals of more than 1.1 million larvae, 48,000 pre-metamorphic fish, and over 100,000 post-metamorphic fish.

Biologist Holly Sommers provided a report on the South Carolina Oyster Recycling and Enhancement Program. The SCORE program partners with more than 700 organizations, recycling more than 600,000 bushels of shell and constructing 34 miles of living shoreline. Partnership outreach initiatives and future expansion efforts were also discussed.

SCDNR is leading the effort to keep oysters alive in South Carolina. The next Marine Resources Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for September 18, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.

C. Waterfowl Advisory Committee

Mr. Billy Dukes, Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division, reported that the Waterfowl Advisory Committee met on May 12, 2026, at Santee Coastal Reserve. The Committee and staff discussed the statewide Duck Summit which was held on April 27 at the South Carolina Waterfowl Association's Education Center in Rimini. Comments on the summit were positive, and additional opportunities for outreach, including technical workshops and targeted social media engagement, were discussed.

There was extensive debate on the scientific and management implications of captive-reared mallard release and the potential genetic impact on wild populations. Data gaps were identified, and the Committee made a recommendation to invite Dr. Phil Lavretsky and Dr. Jim Anderson to a future meeting to further discuss implications and data gaps.

The Committee received updates on the status of Category I Waterfowl Areas which indicated that management is on schedule at all areas. Some coastal waterfowl areas have benefitted from dry conditions, allowing extensive manipulation of field beds to control invasive species and promote beneficial vegetation.

The Committee also received annual training on conduct of boards and committees from Assistant Chief Counsel Van Whitehead. The next meeting of the Waterfowl Advisory Committee is scheduled for August 13, 2026, at the Donnelley WMA Lodge.

D. Heritage Trust Advisory Board

Dr. Mark Hartley reported that the Heritage Trust Advisory Board met in person on

Thursday, May 14, 2026, in the SCDNR Boardroom. SCDNR Botanist Keith Bradley provided updates on the botany and plant programs. The Heritage Trust Advisory Board also considered the approval of numerous preliminary and final property acquisitions. The next Heritage Trust Advisory Board meeting is scheduled for Thursday, July 16, 2026.

E. Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Advisory Committee

Mr. Davy Hite reported that the Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Advisory Committee met virtually on May 19, 2026. Deputy Director Blaik Keppler provided updates on the state budget and legislative activities, as well as the flounder stocking program. SCDNR staff presented a work and budget plan for FY27 saltwater license revenue. The committee discussed and recommended approval of that plan. The next scheduled meeting for the Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Advisory Committee is Tuesday, October 13, 2026.

9. Item(s) for Board Information

A. Climate Update

Dr. Hope Mizzell, Land, Water and Conservation Division, gave the Board a climate update focused on current drought conditions and the upcoming hurricane season. Dr. Mizzell reported that recent steady rainfall over the prior two weeks had improved stream flows, lake levels, and some drought impacts, particularly in interior portions of the state, but emphasized that South Carolina remains in a long-term drought caused by historic rainfall deficits. The current drought is ranked the highest of the past 131 years. She noted that coastal areas continued to miss out on the heavier rainfall, groundwater levels remained below normal in many areas, and continued rainfall would be needed to sustain improvements.

Dr. Mizzell provided lake level, groundwater, streamflow, precipitation, and temperature outlooks. She concluded with a hurricane season outlook, reviewing South Carolina hurricane landfall history, recent seasonal activity, 2026 forecast ranges from Colorado State and NOAA, the potential influence of developing El Niño conditions and wind shear, typical storm formation areas by month, and the importance of preparedness.

The Drought Response Committee met on May 21, 2026. During the meeting, all South Carolina counties were maintained in severe drought. The next meeting of the Drought Response Committee is scheduled for June 11, 2026.

On Saturday, June 6, 2026, SCDNR, along with local Boy Scout troops, sheriff's departments, and the South Carolina National Guard, will host a Hurricane Hike in Camden. Participants will carry 25 pounds of canned goods and hike to hear a short presentation from Dr. Mizzell.

B. History of Dog-Deer Hunting Challenges in South Carolina

Mr. Jay Cantrell, Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division, stated that the issue of dog-deer hunting has gained significant attention in recent months and years. He explained that his purpose was not to offer solutions, but to provide historical context and background. As the Board moves forward to discuss the issue and make recommendations for SCDNR staff, he stated that it would be beneficial to review where the agency has been on this issue over the past several decades. He

noted that the issue has been addressed over time by the agency, stakeholders, and the legislature.

Mr. Cantrell stated that, in reviewing the archives, the earliest notation he found showing that this issue came before the Board, or the Commission at the time, was 41 years ago, in September 1985. At that time, Dr. Timmerman was head of the agency and Senator Dennis was serving in the legislature. The South Carolina Wildlife and Marine Resources Commission advised the public living in traditional dog hunting areas of the state that no action had been adopted and no policy existed to prohibit dog hunting. Mr. Cantrell stated that this showed the issue was already beginning to create challenges and conflict more than 40 years ago.

Approximately a decade later, in March 1994, the Commission issued a statement that it continued to support the tradition of deer hunting with dogs when conducted in a legal and ethical manner. Deer hunters who used dogs for hunting were encouraged to work with the Commission, the Department, the General Assembly, other hunters, and private landowners to establish a code of ethics designed to minimize conflicts among the various special interest groups.

By November 2008, the issue had risen to the level where the General Assembly asked SCDNR to conduct stakeholder meetings and provide a formal report to the legislature with recommendations based on the findings of those meetings. A professionally facilitated stakeholder process was conducted, including seven different meetings around the Lowcountry. Afterward, a final report was prepared by the facilitator, and recommendations were provided to the legislature.

Mr. Cantrell stated that, as a result of that process, the Renegade Hunter Act was passed in 2010. He explained that this was the first time the legislature took action on the issue of dog hunting. The law was put in place to address some of the road hunting issues, issues involving dogs leaving properties, and the action, activity, and progress of the hunt at that point.

A few years later, in March 2016, after it became apparent that the Renegade Hunter Act did not address everything, a second stakeholder group was convened. This process involved only two meetings, rather than the seven meetings held during the first stakeholder process. Mr. Cantrell stated that the group used much of what had been learned from the first stakeholder engagement and reconvened through another facilitated process, which resulted in a full report to the General Assembly.

The Law Enforcement Advisory Committee took up the issue again five years later, in 2021. The committee addressed the issue by noting that, over time, the Department had been charged by the legislature to evaluate the matter and had conducted stakeholder meetings to better understand concerns over hunting deer with dogs, while also seeking to preserve the hunting tradition for those who dog hunt legally and ethically.

Mr. Cantrell explained that the issue has been taken up numerous times by the General Assembly. Multiple bills have been proposed, but none gained traction or ultimately passed. He stated that recommendations from the stakeholder engagements included permits or licenses for dogs or properties, minimum acreage

requirements, and enhanced penalties, in addition to maintaining protections for dogs from being killed, harmed, or having their tracking collars removed. The last bill to receive some attention was very similar to the law in Georgia, but nothing has made it through the entire legislative process.

Mr. Cantrell stated that the Renegade Hunter Act has been the only legislative action taken on the issue. Over the last 20 years, SCDNR has provided the legislature with two facilitated stakeholder groups, full recommendations, and findings from the meetings. However, based on the current challenges, issues, and interest, he noted that it may be time to revisit the process and examine the matter again.

The bottom line is that, although the challenges and issues have not changed much over the years, South Carolina has changed significantly. The state has experienced tremendous population growth, increased development, decreased land tract sizes, and more competing and conflicting land uses. Therefore, although the practice of dog hunting has not changed, the issue has risen back to the forefront because of changes within the state itself.

Mr. Cantrell explained that this is an issue the agency has dealt with and discussed for more than four decades, including in-depth review over the last 20 years. However, he noted that it has been approximately 10 years since SCDNR took a deep dive into the matter. Based on the Board's guidance, SCDNR will begin the process of determining a schedule for stakeholder engagement, both electronic and in person, and will aim to have the schedule finalized by Monday, June 8, 2026. He stated that SCDNR will have something prepared for the legislature before the legislative session begins in January 2027.

SCDNR staff will assist in collecting information, identifying geographic locations for meetings, facilitating discussions with stakeholder groups, compiling collective recommendations, and creating a report for the Board and the legislature. With advances in technology, the process will include electronic surveys in addition to in-person forums and stakeholder groups.

Mr. Cantrell stated that the ultimate decision will be made by the General Assembly. However, SCDNR will be asked for recommendations, input, data, and availability to answer questions. The matter is an SCDNR issue, but both sides must be considered. He explained that SCDNR aims to facilitate a process that allows all involved constituents to be heard and provides sound information for the legislature to make informed decisions on the issue.

10. Item(s) for Board Action

M. Use of Wildlife Endowment Fund for FY 2026 - 2027

Scott Speares, Chief Officer of Budget and Finance, provided a brief overview of the annual request for up to \$200,000 for the conservation of wildlife resources and operation of the department. *Mr. Jerry Lee made a motion that the Board of Trustees for the Wildlife Endowment Fund hereby authorize the expenditure of income derived from the fund to further the conservation of wildlife resources and the efficient operation of the department in accomplishing the purposes of the department as set forth in the S.C. Code of Laws Section 50-3-740(3). Mr. Carlisle Oxner seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.*

N. Distribution of State Migratory Waterfowl Permit Revenue

Billy Dukes, Wildlife Chief, provided a brief overview of the distribution of state migratory waterfowl permit revenue. *Mr. Mike Hutchins made a motion that the SCDNR Board approve the distribution of Waterfowl Permit Revenue in the amount of \$126,327.00 be distributed to Ducks Unlimited Canada in support of the AFWA Fall Flights Program as specified in the S.C. Code of Laws Section 50-9-920(B)(14)(a)(iii). Ms. Hope Blackley seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.*

11. Executive Session

Mr. Jerry Lee 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 Items for Board Action A through L. Mr. Davy Hite seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

12. Open Session

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

13. Item(s) for Board Action

A. Approval of Temporary Access to Bonneau Ferry WMA

Ms. Hope Blackley made a motion that the SCDNR Board, upon the recommendation of SCDNR staff, grant approval to Berkeley County for a license to support the construction and grading of drainage along Comminglee Road within the Bonneau Ferry WMA. Mr. Duane Swygert seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

B. Preliminary Approval of Property Acquisition in Richland County

Mr. Mike Hutchins made a motion that the SCDNR Board, upon the recommendation of the Heritage Trust Advisory Board, SCDNR staff, and the Director, grant preliminary approval and the expenditure of up to \$100,000 to investigate the potential acquisition of approximately 736 acres in Richland County that may be dedicated as a Heritage Preserve and placed into the corpus of the Heritage Trust. Mr. Jerry Lee seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

C. Preliminary Approval of Property Acquisition in Pickens County

Mr. Davy Hite made a motion that the SCDNR Board, upon the recommendation of the Heritage Trust Advisory Board, SCDNR staff, and the Director, grant preliminary approval and the expenditure of up to \$50,000 to investigate the potential purchase of approximately 52 acres in Pickens County that may be dedicated as a Heritage Preserve and placed into the corpus of the Heritage Trust. Mr. Mike Hutchins seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

D. Preliminary Approval of Property Acquisition in Horry County

Mr. Jerry Lee made a motion that the SCDNR Board, upon the recommendation of the Heritage Trust Advisory Board, SCDNR staff, and the Director, grant preliminary approval and the expenditure of up to \$20,000 to investigate the potential purchase of approximately 316 acres in Horry County that may be dedicated as a Heritage

Preserve and placed into the corpus of the Heritage Trust. Mr. Duane Swygert seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

E. Preliminary Approval of Property Acquisition in Hampton County

Mr. Duane Swygert made a motion that the SCDNR Board, upon the recommendation of the Heritage Trust Advisory Board, SCDNR staff, and the Director, grant preliminary approval and the expenditure of up to \$50,000 to investigate the potential purchase of approximately 748 acres in Hampton County that may be dedicated as a Heritage Preserve and placed into the corpus of the Heritage Trust. Mr. Jerry Lee seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

F. Preliminary Approval of Property Acquisition in Georgetown County

Mr. Jerry Lee made a motion that the SCDNR Board, upon the recommendation of the Heritage Trust Advisory Board, SCDNR staff, and the Director, grant preliminary approval and the expenditure of up to \$50,000 to investigate the potential purchase of approximately 3,512 acres in Georgetown County that may be dedicated as a Heritage Preserve and placed into the corpus of the Heritage Trust. Mr. Duane Swygert seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

G. Preliminary Approval of Property Acceptance in Jasper County

Mr. Duane Swygert made a motion that the SCDNR Board, upon the recommendation of the Heritage Trust Advisory Board, SCDNR staff, and the Director, grant preliminary approval and the expenditure of up to \$20,000 to investigate the potential acceptance of approximately 2,592 acres in Jasper County that may be dedicated as a Heritage Preserve and placed into the corpus of the Heritage Trust. Mr. Jerry Lee seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

H. Final Approval of Property Acquisition in Pickens County

Mr. Davy Hite made a motion that the SCDNR Board, upon the recommendation of the Heritage Trust Advisory Board, SCDNR staff, and the Director, grant final approval and the expenditure of up to \$475,000 for the purchase of approximately 106.8 acres adjoining Jocassee Gorges WMA in Pickens County to be dedicated as a Heritage Preserve and placed into the corpus of the Heritage Trust. Mr. Mike Hutchins seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

I. Final Approval of Property Acquisition in Jasper County

Mr. Duane Swygert made a motion that the SCDNR Board, upon the recommendation of the Heritage Trust Advisory Board, SCDNR staff, and the Director, grant final approval to purchase approximately 635 acres in Jasper County to be dedicated as a Heritage Preserve and placed into the corpus of the Heritage Trust. Mr. Davy Hite seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

J. Final Approval of Property Acceptance in Horry County

Mr. Jerry Lee made a motion that the SCDNR Board, upon the recommendation of the Heritage Trust Advisory Board, SCDNR staff, and the Director, grant final approval to accept the donation of approximately 4,006 acres in Horry County to be dedicated as a Heritage Preserve and placed into the corpus of the Heritage Trust. Mr. Duane Swygert seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

K. Final Approval of Property Acceptance in Horry County

Mr. Carlisle Oxner made a motion that the SCDNR Board, upon the recommendation of the Heritage Trust Advisory Board, SCDNR staff, and the Director, grant final approval to accept the donation of approximately 595 acres in Horry County to be dedicated as a Heritage Preserve and placed into the corpus of the Heritage Trust. Mr. Jerry Lee seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

L. Final Approval of Property Acceptance in Greenville County

Ms. Hope Blackley made a motion that the SCDNR Board, upon the recommendation of SCDNR staff and the Director, grant final approval to accept the donation of approximately 32 acres in Greenville County. Mr. Davy Hite seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

14. Comments

Former Board Chairman, Mr. Norman Pulliam, current Board Chairman, Dr. Mark Hartley, and current Board Members, Mr. Davy Hite and Ms. Hope Blackley, thanked the SCDNR staff for continuing to do great work and their spectacular service to the state of South Carolina.

15. Time and Location of Next Board Meeting

The Board's next meeting will be held Thursday, August 6, 2026.

16. Adjournment

Mr. Jerry Lee made a motion that the meeting be adjourned. Mr. Mike Hutchins seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.