

Minutes  
Board of the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources  
Teleconference Meeting  
April 16, 2020 10:00 AM

The regular meeting of the Board of the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources was held by teleconference at 10:00 am, April 16, 2020. 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 Mark Hartley, Keith Hinson, Mike Hutchins, Carlisle Oxner, Jake Rasor, Jr. and Duane Swygert. Director Boyles and staff members of the Department of Natural Resources were present at the meeting.

**I. Call to Order**

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

**II. Chairman's Comments**

Chairman Pulliam called for a moment of silence and asked that everyone be thoughtful of the current situation of the country during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**III. Approval of Minutes**

Chairman Pulliam asked if there were any additions, deletions or corrections to the March 27, 2020 meeting minutes. *Mr. Hutchins made a motion that the Board approve the minutes of the March 27, 2020 meeting as presented. Mr. Swygert seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*

**IV. Director's Briefings**

Director Boyles informed the Board that the agency is doing everything possible to comply with the Governor's Executive Orders regarding the pandemic, while continuing to carry on the agency's mission. Director Boyles shared the latest statewide statistics of COVID-19 positive diagnosis, deaths and those seeking unemployment insurance. Director Boyles reported that approximately 2/3 of agency staff are telecommuting and Law Enforcement is continuing to work with other law enforcement agencies. Director Boyles reported that since the last meeting the Department has closed Botany Bay beach, Sassafras Mountain Heritage Preserve and Bald Rock. Director Boyles also noted that Governor McMaster has closed public access to boat ramps and landings.

**V. Legislative Report**

Kevin Ryan, Director, Government Affairs, reported that the General Assembly came back on April 8 to pass a continuing resolution and a sine die resolution. Neither House or Senate passed either resolution, so they will return at a later date.

Mr. Ryan reported that the Board of Economic Advisors met April 9 to revise surplus estimates for FY19-20 from \$567.5M to \$40.1M. The BEA revised the FY20-21 revenue estimates from \$886M to \$244M (reduction of \$643.5M). The BEA is scheduled to meet again on May 14.

**VI. Deputy Directors' Reports**

**A. Marine Resources**

Phil Maier, Deputy Director for Marine Resources, reported that 90% of division staff are working remotely. They are planning for the return of approximately 25% staff,

keeping in mind isolation and social distancing. Mr. Maier and staff are planning for the Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Advisory Committee meeting in May and the Marine Advisory Committee meeting in June. Mr. Maier noted that staff have converted in person events to virtual platforms. Mr. Maier reported that the Governor's Cup Billfishing Series has decided to extend the tournament schedule to September 17. The Bohicket tournament has been rescheduled to August 1 and Georgetown will be rescheduled to August 12-15, if needed.

**B. Support Services**

Angie Cassella, Deputy Director for Support Services, reported that 75% of division staff are working remotely. Customer Service staff have been split into two teams and are alternating weekly to process licenses and boat registrations. Mrs. Cassella reported phone calls, mail and license sales have all increased over this time last year. Mrs. Cassella reported that finance and grant employees are working remotely, as well.

**C. Land, Water and Conservation**

Ken Rentiers, Deputy Director for Land, Water and Conservation, reported on the tornado event of April 13. Mr. Rentiers noted that preliminary reports are 14 confirmed tornadoes, with more being investigated. The strongest tornado was an EF3 in Hampton County, that resulted in nine fatalities. Mr. Rentiers reported that the majority of division staff are working remotely.

**D. Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries**

Emily Cope, Deputy Director for Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries, reported that many division staff are able to work remotely. There are approximately 20 staff working at the hatcheries. Mrs. Cope shared with the Board that Webb Center staff worked to help clear the way for emergency vehicles to reach areas affected by the tornado in Hampton County.

**E. Law Enforcement**

COL Chisolm Frampton, Deputy Director for Law Enforcement, stated that 19 division staff are working remotely. COL Frampton reported that officers have been working in the 13 areas that were hardest hit by tornadoes. COL Frampton stated that uncertified officers, in the current class, are able to continue training at home. COL Frampton noted that the second round of PPE gear has been distributed. COL Frampton reported that law enforcement is on both Governor and county daily calls. COL Frampton informed the Board of boating patrol and aviation unit activities.

**VII. Item(s) for Board Information**

**Potential Property Acquisition via Donation in Jasper County**

This item is being deferred until a later date.

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

**A. 2020-2021 Migratory Bird Seasons**

Billy Dukes, Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division, gave the Board a brief overview of the recommended 2020-2021 Migratory Bird Seasons. *Mr. Hutchins made a motion that the Board approve the 2020-2021 Migratory Bird Seasons, as*

*approved by the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Advisory Committee. Mr. Oxner seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*

**IX. Executive Session**

*Mr. Rasor made a motion that the SC DNR Board go into executive session pursuant to SC Code Section 30-4-70(A)(1) to discuss contractual matters related to Items for Board Action (C, D, E and F). Mr. Swygert seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*

**X. Open Session**

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

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

**B. Potential Property Acquisition in Lexington County**

*Mr. Hutchins made a motion that the Board accept the recommendation as approved by the Heritage Trust Advisory Board to grant preliminary approval to investigate a potential property acquisition of approximately 100 acres adjoining SCDNR's Congaree Creek Heritage Preserve in Lexington County to be dedicated as a heritage preserve and placed into the corpus of the SC Heritage Trust. Additionally, this action authorizes the expenditure of up to \$20,000 of Heritage Trust funds to conduct due diligence activities. Mr. Oxner seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*

**C. Potential Property Acquisition via Donation in Chester County**

*Mr. Oxner made a motion that the DNR Board approve the donation of the 109.48-acre portion of the Landsford Tract in Chester County from Open Space Institute to be incorporated into the Landsford Canal Forest Legacy Wildlife Management Area, conditional upon the successful completion of all due diligence and satisfactory completion of the mitigation work required by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Mr. Hutchins seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*

**D. Potential Property Acquisition in Chester County**

*Mr. Oxner made a motion that the DNR Board grant preliminary approval to evaluate a potential property acquisition of the 385.36-acre portion of the Landsford Tract in Chester County from Open Space Institute to be incorporated into the Landsford Canal Forest Legacy Wildlife Management Area. Mr. Rasor seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*

**E. Potential Property Acquisition via Donation in Georgetown County**

*Mr. Hinson made a motion that the DNR Board approve the acquisition, by donation from the Open Space Institute, of the Samworth Farm Tracts, consisting of 33.14 acres in Georgetown County to be incorporated into the adjacent Samworth Wildlife Management Area, conditional upon the successful completion of all due diligence. Mr. Swygert seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*

F. Potential Property Acquisition in Laurens County

*Mr. Rasor made a motion that the DNR Board grant preliminary approval to evaluate a potential property acquisition of the 121.58-acre portion of the White Plains Tract in Laurens County from Open Space Institute to be incorporated into the Belfast Wildlife Management Area. Mr. Hinson seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*

XII. Time and Location of Next Board Meeting

The time and location of the next meeting is to be determined.

XIII. Adjournment

*Dr. Hartley made a motion that the meeting be adjourned. Mr. Hinson seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.*