

**Heritage Trust Advisory Board
Slater Tract, Jasper County, SC
Thursday, February 9, 2023 – 11:00 a.m.**

Members Present

Campbell Coxe
Clarke Thompson (for Eric Emerson)
Terry Hurley (for Duane Parrish)
Jonathan Leader
Julia Krebs
Julien Springs
Ken Rentiers
Kevin Hunter
Rob Keck
Russell Hubright (for Scott Philips)

Members Absent

Amy Bartow-Melia
Brad Sauls (for Eric Emerson)
Jake Rasor
Robert Boyles
Sonny King

Others Present

Andrew Grosse
Andy Fulghum
Austen Attaway
Billy Dukes
Caylor Romines
Dawn Beaver
Jake Zadik
Jessica Kinsella
Jordan Baker
Julie Binz
Keith Bradley
Kristin Williams
Lorianne Riggins
Megan James
Nate Berry
Patrick Moore
Roger Hux
Sean Taylor

Call to Order

Chairman Coxe called the meeting to order.

Welcome and Introduction

Chairman Coxe gave a quick welcome to the Board and everyone attending.

Roll Call of Attendance

Chairman Coxe asked everyone to introduce themselves for the roll call.

Introduction of New Board Member and Guests

Mr. Rentiers introduced Clarke Thompson to the Board. Mr. Thompson is the alternate for Harry Lightsey with the SC Department of Commerce. Mr. Rentiers also introduced a few of the guests who worked with the Slater Tract: Patrick Moore and Nate Berry with Open Space Institute (OSI), Kristin Williams and Caylor Romines with Open Land Trust (OLT), Jake Zadik, the Brays Island Naturalist, and Andy Fulghum the County Administrator for Jasper County.

Public Comment Period

Chairman Coxe asked if anyone wanted to speak during this time. No comments were made.

Approval of Minutes of November 10, 2022

Mr. Hunter made a motion that the Heritage Trust Advisory Board approve the minutes from November 10, 2022, meeting as submitted. Dr. Krebs seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

Items for Board Information

A) Brasstown HP Rare Species Management: *Austen Attaway, Heritage Preserve Coordinator, Wildlife & Freshwater Fisheries, SCDNR*

Austen Attaway presented to the Board an update on the Brasstown Heritage Preserve and rare species management on the property. The Brasstown Heritage Preserve is located on the border of Georgia and South Carolina. The first section came in 1995 and by 2020 Georgia Power had donated land to be added into the Heritage Preserve. The property is surrounded by public land and is also next to the Tallulah Gorge State Park. There are two lakes bordering the property: Lake Tugalo, which is extremely popular for white water rafting, and Lake Yonah, which is busy during the summer with a lot of lake houses. The Brasstown property is known for big elevation changes, 18 rare plants that have been documented, and a rare cove forest. One rare species, Persistent Trillium, is located on this property, and this is the only known location in South Carolina. Persistent Trillium is considered endangered; it is found in the gorges and the seeds are dispersed by ants that carry them when nesting in tree stumps. The Patch-Nosed Salamander is a mini species about 2 inches long and are found in leaf litter under rocks in the streams on this property. Little is known about this species, but they are currently doing research with Clemson University and Mississippi University. Table Mountain's pine ecosystem occurs at 1500-4500 elevation and is a big part of the ecosystem on the property. Some of the upcoming plans for the property are to reintroduce fire in 2023. They are also in the process of naming a new plant found on the property and hope to have that done soon. With the additions to the property they are looking forward to exploring and learning more about the Heritage Preserve.

B) St. Helena Sound Management Plan Update: *Julie Binz, Coastal Reserves and Outreach Director, Marine Resources, SCDNR*

Julie Binz presented an update on the St. Helena Sound Management Plan. St. Helena Sound has remarkably diverse and unique features on the property such as marshes, beachfronts, oyster reefs, maritime forest, 1000 shell midden, woodlands, wetlands, and pine uplands. The last management plan update was in 2010 so it is time to review and change the plan. They have had to consider climate change and the continued growing population in this new plan. The surrounding properties have also been taken into consideration for the plan update. They are working on allowing marsh migration, natural flood control, and biodiversity. Some of the challenges are the invasive species threats, increased erosion, salt intrusion, and periods of extreme rain and drought. One of the big pushes for change in the management plan was the increase of visitors to St. Helena. The area has such unique and fun outdoor activities which have encouraged more visitors. Some of the activities include hiking, bird watching, arch hunting, fishing, camping, kayaking, and increased the visits of photographers. They are managing some of the public use by having permits for camping in order to better track who is coming and going. They also have staff on the property to also look out for and keep track of all visitors. With the continuing growth of tourism on the property, they are hoping the new management plan will continue to preserve the property.

Potential Conflict of Interest Statement

Chairman Coxe read the "Potential Conflict of Interest Statement" before going into Executive Session. No statements were made.

Motion to Enter Executive Session

Dr. Krebs made a motion that the Board go into Executive Session pursuant to S.C Code Section 30-4-

70(A)(2) to discuss a property acquisition related to Action Items A, B, C, and D. Mr. Hunter seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Motion to Close Executive Session and Return to Public Session

Mr. Keck made a motion that the Board return to open session, and let the record reflect that no action was taken in Executive Session. Mr. Springs seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Items for Board Action

A) Property Acquisition in Lancaster County – Acceptance of Donation: Approval to acquire 183.60 acres in Lancaster County, Haile Gold Mine Mitigation Tract 1:

Dr. Krebs made a motion that the Heritage Trust Advisory Board recommend that the SCDNR Board approve the acquisition, by donation from Haile Gold Mine, of the 183.60-acre Haile Gold Mine Mitigation Tract 1 properties in Lancaster County to be dedicated as a Heritage Preserve and placed into the Corpus of the Heritage Trust Program as a part of the Forty Acre Rock Heritage Preserve, conditional upon the successful completion of all due diligence, and authorize expenditure of up to \$20,000 in Heritage Trust Funds to conduct due diligence if needed. Mr. Hunter seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

B) Property Acquisition in Lancaster County – Acceptance of Donation: Approval to acquire 2,074.45 acres in Lancaster County, Haile Gold Mine Mitigation Tract 3:

Ms. Hurley made a motion that the Heritage Trust Advisory Board recommend that the SCDNR Board approve the acquisition, by donation from Haile Gold Mine, of the 2,074.45-acre Haile Gold Mine Mitigation Tract 3 properties, in Lancaster County to be dedicated as a Heritage Preserve and placed into the Corpus of the Heritage Trust Program as a part of the Forty Acre Rock Heritage Preserve, conditional upon the successful completion of all due diligence, and authorize expenditure of up to \$20,000 in Heritage Trust Funds to conduct due diligence. Mr. Springs seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

C) Property Acquisition in Lancaster County – Acceptance of Donation: Approval to acquire 379.44 acres in Lancaster County, Haile Gold Mine Mitigation Tract 4:

Mr. Keck made a motion that the Heritage Trust Advisory Board recommend that the SCNDR Board approve the acquisition, by donation from Haile Gold Mine, of the 379.44-acre Haile Gold Mine Mitigation Tract 4 property, in Lancaster County to be dedicated as a Heritage Preserve and place into the Corpus of the Heritage Trust Program as a part of the Forty Acre Rock Heritage Preserve, conditional upon the successful completion of all due diligence, and authorize expenditure of up to \$20,000 in Heritage Trust Funds to conduct due diligence if needed. Mr. Clarke seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

D) Property Acquisition in Jasper County: Final approval to acquire 3,705 acres in Jasper County:

Mr. Keck made a motion that the Heritage Trust Advisory Board, upon recommendation of SCDNR staff and subject to standard due diligence, recommend that the SCDNR Board grant final approval to purchase approximately 3,507 acres in Jasper County that will be dedicated as a heritage preserve and placed into the corpus of the SC Heritage Trust, and the expenditure of \$6,073,000 in Heritage Trust funds. Mr. Clarke seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Updates and Comments

Mr. Rentiers took the time to thank his staff for their hard work and for putting together this meeting. He also thanked the staff at OSI, OLT and other guests who work on the Slater Tract for assisting and setting up the meeting location. Mr. Rentiers mentioned that the Slater Tract has been growing every year.

Time and Place of the Next Board Meeting

The next meeting of the Heritage Trust Advisory Board will be on Thursday, May 11, 2023. The location of the meeting will be determined at a later date.

Adjournment

Having no further business to discuss, Chairman Coxe made a motion that the Heritage Trust Advisory Board be adjourned. Mr. Keck seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

*Respectfully Submitted,
Jordan Baker
Administrative Assistant
SC Department of Natural Resources
Land, Water, and Conservation Division*