

MINUTES

SOUTH CAROLINA CONSERVATION BANK

Wednesday, June 21 2023 – 11:00 am
Madren Conference Center
Clemson University
Clemson, SC 29634

The South Carolina Conservation Bank Board (SCCB) held its quarterly meeting on Wednesday, June 21, at 11:00 am at Clemson University's Madren Conference Center. Notice of the date, time and place of the meeting was posted and mailed to the news media in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act. Chairman Michael McShane presided at the meeting and members present included Keith Williamson, Vice-Chairman, Elliott Close, Charles Lane, Thomas Lavender, Pamela S. Porter, Curtis Spencer, Richmond Wilhoit, Jr.; and Ex-Officio members Russell Hubright for Dr. Walt McPhail, SC Forestry Commission Chairman, Norman F. Pulliam, Chairman SCDNR, and Justin Hancock for Duane Parrish, Chairman SCPRT. Board Members absent were Geordy Johnson, Dr. Brent McLaurin, and Larry Yonce.

1) WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

Chairman McShane began the day's proceedings by informing the Board that long-time member Larry Yonce is undergoing palliative care for cancer. Board members present remarked on Mr. Yonce's outstanding commitment to conservation through his work with the SCDNR Board and the SC Conservation Bank Board. With consent of the Board, Chairman McShane dedicated the meeting to Mr. Yonce as an expression of honor and gratitude for his years of faithful service to the state of South Carolina.

2) ROLL CALL

Chairman McShane called roll and a quorum was established with 8 Board Members and 3 Ex-Officio members in attendance. Chairman McShane stated that proper public notice had been given for the meeting.

3) CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

Chairman McShane recognized Dr. Bob Jones, Provost of Clemson University. Dr. Jones welcomed, gave a brief history of the University, and described Clemson's "Core Strategic Pillars" which are integral to Clemson's strategic plan and mission. The third pillar is centers on transforming lives and communities and includes stewardship of natural resources. Partnerships with state government, such as collaboration with the SC Conservation Bank are crucial to extending and fulfilling this part of the University's mission.

Next, Senator Thomas Alexander welcomed the Board on behalf of Senate District 1 and commended the Board for having meetings around the state. Senator Alexander stated that he is a great supporter of Conservation Bank because the work of the Bank is so important towards preserving the past and prepare for the future. The Senator stated that he continues to serve and work with the Bank. Chairman McShane expressed appreciation for Senator Alexander's support and presented a book to Senator Alexander entitled Rice & Ducks, written by Virginia Beach.

4) PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. McShane opened the floor to anyone who would like to address to the Board. There being none, Chairman McShane called for the next agenda item.

5) ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Mr. McShane stated the Board was sent a draft copy of the 03/29/2022 Quarterly Meeting minutes prior to the meeting for their review and that copies were within the Board Member meeting materials. The Chairman asked for any additions, deletions, or corrections to the meeting minutes. There being none, Mr. Williamson made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Lavender seconded, and the motion unanimously passed.

6) NEW BUSINESS

a) Director's Updates

Director West updated the Board on the progress of the Bank's new website which is in the design and draft process. Next, Director West reminded the Board that the new quarterly application cycle begins with the fiscal year beginning 07/01/2023, with the next application deadline of 07/31/2023. Director West then asked Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Chair Charles Lane to provide an update. Mr. Lane reviewed the TAC's updated scoring methodology and presented a new scorecard template. The TAC recommended that the Board adopt the new mapping methodology and the new scorecard. The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Lane reminded the Board that the map, updated annually, is an invaluable tool in driving conservation dollars to the highest priority properties in the state, ensuring the best value for state fiscal resources entrusted to the Bank.

b) Financial Report

Director West presented the Financial Report, a copy of which was provided in the Board meeting handouts. Chairman McShane updated the Board on the General Appropriations Bill and status of the FY24 budget. The Bank currently has approximately \$9 million dollars (including reimbursements), and expects to receive approximately \$7.5 million recurring, and \$25 million non-recurring dollars for grant awards. There is also \$5 million in SHEP funds for projects in Savannah Harbor watershed. The Bank will be in its strongest historical financial position for FY24 project funding. Bank staff will monitor and evaluate the efficacy of the new quarterly application deadlines to ensure that project funding is spread over the fiscal year. Chairman McShane informed the Board about a new Proviso to mandate collaboration between all the resource agencies to facilitate land acquisition for protection. Next, Director West informed the Board that the annual financial audit will begin in July. Audit results will be presented to the Board at a future Board meeting.

c) Project Updates

Director West updated the Board on outstanding projects and closing date expectations. There are several grants outstanding from FY22: Slater Tract, the Stillwell Complex, and Ravenswood. Director West has communicated with the applicants, all of whom expect to close these projects in the next few months. Chairman McShane asked David Ray to provide an update on Ravenswood to the Board at the September Board meeting. Director West then informed the Board that mitigation plans on the North Island project have been withdrawn, so the entire property is free and clear of any other encumbrances. Next, Chairman McShane informed the Board of a point of clarification regarding the Ingleside Park project, approved by the Board at the 09/27/2022 Board meeting. The project applicant should be reflected as City of North Charleston, and the Grant Agreement has been updated to reflect this clarification. Finally, Director West stated that the Bank has received a formal request from Naturaland Trust to forgive the reimbursable portion of the Gilstrap Mountain grant award due to an unsuccessful federal grant application. Director West reminded the Board that the reimbursable portion of this grant was conditioned on a favorable federal grant award. The Board authorized Director to move forward with this grant award and forgive the reimbursement condition.

7) CITY OF CLEMSON PRESENTATION ON CONSERVATION WORK

City of Clemson Mayor Robert Halfacre and Urban Land Development Director Tony Tidwell delivered a presentation on conservation efforts in the City of Clemson through its Urban & Park Land Management Program. A copy of the presentation will be shared with Board members via email.

8) BOARD MEMBER OPEN DISCUSSION

Chairman McShane recognized and thanked Elliott Close as this is his final meeting as a Board member. Mr. Close has served faithfully on the Board since the inception of the Bank. Mr. Close expressed his pride in being a part of

the Bank's growth and how the legislature realizes the importance of the Bank's mission. Chairman McShane presented Mr. Close with a book entitled Rice & Ducks, written by Virginia Beach. All members thanked the Board and Staff for a great meeting and applauded the legislature for its support of the Bank's efforts. All members additionally expressed much appreciation of Clemson University for hosting the meeting and providing a tour of the Clemson Experimental Forest.

9) TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chairman stated that the next Board meeting will be on Wednesday, September 27, 2023, at SC Forestry Headquarters in Columbia, SC.

Other upcoming meetings are as follows:

GRC: September 15, 2023

GRC November: November 29, 2023, time and location tbd

Board: December 13, 2023, time and location tbd

10) ADJOURN

The Chairman called for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Lavender made the motion, Mr. Lane seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.