2026 Wetlands of the Carolinas Summit

Thursday, November 12, 2026 | RTI International, RTP, NC

9:00 AM – 9:30 AM	**Check - in & Meet & Greet**	
9:30 AM – 9:40 AM	**Welcome**	Kim Matthews (RTI / CarWA)

State of the Wetlands and Wetlands Protection

9:40 AM – 10:00 AM	Update of Wetland Protection Policy	Julie Youngman (SELC)
10:00 AM – 10:15 AM	NC Salt Marsh Action Plan & Roadmap to Implementation	Claire Rapp (NCCF)
10:15 AM – 10:30 AM	Protecting Wetlands on NC Game Lands	Crystal Cockman (NCDEQ)
10:30 AM – 10:45 AM	Wetland Health Impacts on Flood Mitigation	Thom Byrne (NCSU)
10:45 AM – 11:00 AM	SC Communities Step Up for Wetlands	Becky Ryon (SCCCL)

11:00 AM – 11:15 AM	**Break**	

State of Volunteer Wetlands Monitoring Program

11:15 AM – 11:35 AM	VWMP Overview	Aaron Ellis (CarWA)
11:35 AM – 11:55 AM	What Drives Public Engagement in Wetland Conservation	Seana Finn (NCSU)
11:55 AM – 12:15 PM	What's Next for the VWMP?	Dr. Michael Burchell (NCSU)

12:15 PM – 1:15 PM	**Lunch** *(Purchase from RTI cafeteria or Bring your own)*	

Wetland Programs in NC and SC

1:15 PM – 1:35 PM	Carolina Bays Collaborative Strategic Plan	Lydie Costes (TNC)
1:35 PM – 1:55 PM	NC Wetland Program Plan	Steve Anderson (NCDEQ)
1:55 PM – 2:15 PM	Wetland Program Activities Update: 2026 and Beyond	Kristie Gianopulos (NCDEQ)
2:15 PM – 2:35 PM	From Waterfowl to Wetland Ecosystems: Research for Conservation	Jim Anderson (Clemson Univ.)
2:35 PM – 2:55 PM	Tribal Voices in the Environment	Kullen Bell (Coharie) & Mike Jacobs (Waccamaw Siouan)

3:00 PM – 3:15 PM	**Break**	

Effective Science Communication

3:15 PM – 4:15 PM	Communication That Counts Group Activity	Karen Peterman (Catalyst Consulting)
4:15 PM – 4:30 PM	Q&A / Feedback	

4:30 PM	**Adjourn**	