

MINUTES

SOUTH CAROLINA CONSERVATION BANK

Wednesday, December 10, 2025 – 1:30 PM
Harbison State Forest, Columbia, SC

The South Carolina Conservation Bank Board (SCCB) held its quarterly meeting on Wednesday, December 10, 2025, at 1:30 PM at Harbison State Forest Environmental Education Center, 5600 Broad River Road, Columbia, SC. Notice of the date, time, and place of the meeting was posted and mailed in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act to the persons, organizations, and news media that have requested such notification. Chairman Michael McShane presided at the meeting and members present included Vice-Chairman Tommy Lavender, Wes Carter, West Cox, Rob Howell, Peter King, Charles Lane, Melanie Shull, Richmond Wilhoit, Jr.; and Ex Officio members Russell Hubright & Dr. Walt McPhail, SC Forestry Commission, Shannon Bobertz for Mark Hartley, SC Department of Natural Resources, Joy Raintree for Duane Parrish, SC Parks Recreation & Tourism, Chad Long for Secretary Justin Powell, SC Department of Transportation, Sarah Johnson for Harry Lightsey, SC Department of Commerce, and Cristina Key for Hugh Weathers, SC Department of Agriculture. Member absent was Jared Thompson.

1) WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

Chairman McShane called the meeting to order, welcomed, and thanked everyone for their attendance. He then recognized and expressed gratitude to SC Forestry Commission and Harbison State Forest for hosting the meeting. He then recognized state forester Scott Phillips and congratulated the SC Forestry Commission on the Pee Dee Basin Initiative and presented him with a framed Lanier painting.

2) ROLL CALL

Chairman McShane called the roll, and a quorum was established with 10 Board Members and 6 Ex-Officio members in attendance. He also welcomed Eric Fosmire of the SC Office of Resilience as a special guest of the meeting. Mr. McShane stated that proper public notice had been given for the meeting.

3) CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

Chairman McShane provided several updates and acknowledgments during his remarks. He reminded Board members to complete the Recusal Form if they need to recuse themselves from any project discussions due to potential conflicts of interest. He also announced that Agenda Item 8, Executive Session, would not be needed for this meeting.

Chairman McShane noted that today's meeting marks his final meeting as Chairman of the Bank. He reflected on his 23 years of service to the State of South Carolina and to land conservation through his work with SCDNR, the SC Maritime Commission, and the SC Conservation Bank. He concluded by stating that although new leadership will take office, he will continue to serve on the Board and remain committed to protecting South Carolina's most treasured natural areas.

4) PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chairman McShane opened the floor to individuals who had submitted requests to speak during the Public Comments portion of the meeting. Bob Perry offered remarks honoring Chairman McShane's service on the Board. Jennifer Howard of the South Carolina Land Trust Network expressed appreciation to Chairman McShane and the Board for his longstanding commitment to conservation in South Carolina. Dr. McPhail also spoke about Chairman McShane's leadership and presented him with a wood carving in recognition of his work and legacy.

There being no further public comments, Chairman McShane proceeded to the next agenda item.

5) ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Mr. McShane stated that the Board was sent a draft copy of the 09/17/2025 Quarterly Meeting minutes prior to the meeting for their review, and a copy was within the Board Member meeting materials. The Chairman asked for any additions, deletions, or corrections to the meeting minutes. There being none, Mr. Lane made a motion to approve the minutes. Dr. King seconded, and the motion unanimously passed.

6) NEW BUSINESS

a) Director's Updates

Director West began his updates by inviting Vice Chairman Tommy Lavender to join him in recognizing Chairman McShane. Following their remarks, several tokens of appreciation were presented to Chairman McShane to commemorate the occasion. These included an artistic presentation of a South Carolina map depicting Bank-protected projects since the Bank's inception, inscribed with the following dedication:

"In grateful recognition to Michael G. McShane for his enduring commitment and invaluable contributions to the preservation of South Carolina's natural resources through the South Carolina Conservation Bank. His vision and leadership have helped safeguard the landscapes, waterways, and wildlife that define our state for generations to come."

b) Project Updates

Director West distributed a list of current projects and provided an update on their status. As of December 5, 2025, a total of 42 projects—representing more than \$29 million in funding and protecting 11,738 acres—have closed during FY26. Two projects, Red Cabin and Bigbee (Coosawhatchie), were withdrawn due to unavoidable circumstances.

Director West informed the Board that all remaining active projects are expected to close in a timely manner and are awaiting federal grant awards, partner funding, or other reasonable extenuating factors. He noted that five projects—Back Swamp, Big Garvin Creek Farm, Tokeena Angus, Utsey Tract, and Oscar's Place—have reached the end of their grant periods. After receiving updates from the respective applicants, Chairman McShane reported that the Grants Review Committee recommended extending the grant periods for these projects, originally approved on or before the December 2024 Board meeting, through the March 2026 Board meeting. The Board unanimously approved the Committee's recommendation.

Director West also provided an update on outstanding reimbursements. Bank staff will continue to monitor these pending items and will report back to the Board at the next quarterly meeting.

c) Financial Report

A summary of the Bank's financial position was included in the Board members' handouts. Director West reported that as of 12/05/2025, the Bank holds \$17,418,982 million in its Standard Grants Program, \$4,000,000 in the Working Ag Lands Fund, and \$4,480,000 in SHEP Funds, all of which are unobligated and available for new grants. In addition, SCOR has committed \$16 million to certain projects that advance its mission. Mr. West also reminded the Board that as reimbursable grants close, the Bank will, in turn, have those funds available for new grant applications. Applicants with outstanding reimbursements were asked to provide an update on their reimbursement timeline to Bank staff.

d) Grants Review Committee Recommendations

Before beginning the project application review, Chairman McShane presented an update to the Bank's internal Policies and Procedures regarding the extension of the grant period defined in the Grant Agreement. The proposed policy was included in the Board materials and is attached to these minutes. Chairman McShane noted that the Grants Review Committee recommended adopting the policy to formalize the Bank's standard practice of extending grant terms when necessary. After brief discussion, the Board unanimously approved the policy update, effective as of the date of this Board meeting.

Next, Chairman McShane asked Director West to begin the review of pending applications and the Grants Review Committee's funding recommendations for the current cycle. Chairman McShane reminded Board members to complete the Recusal Form if they need to recuse themselves from any project discussions due to potential conflicts of interest.

Chelsea

Open Land Trust applied for a \$1,500,000 grant for a 2,682-acre conservation easement in Jasper County. Kate Schaefer of Open Land Trust spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #1 and to defer funding without prejudice at this time. The Board unanimously approved the Grant Review Committee's recommendation.

Keadle Bridge Addition

Aiken Land Conservancy applied for a \$1,312,000 grant to acquire 412 acres in fee simple in Aiken County. Peter Kleinhenz of Aiken Land Conservancy spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #2 and to defer funding without prejudice at this time. The Board unanimously approved the Grant Review Committee's recommendation.

Altamont Pass

Naturaland Trust applied for a \$900,000 grant to acquire 84 acres in fee simple in Greenville County. Mac Stone of Naturaland Trust spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #3 and to defer funding without prejudice at this time. The Board unanimously approved the Grant Review Committee's recommendation.

Lost Creek

Congaree Land Trust applied for a \$1,358,000 grant to acquire 72 acres in fee simple in Richland County. Stuart White of Congaree Land Trust spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #4 and to defer funding without prejudice at this time. The Board unanimously approved the Grant Review Committee's recommendation.

Amazing Grace Roseland

Open Land Trust applied for a \$305,000 grant for a 457-acre conservation easement in Jasper County. Kate Schaefer of Open Land Trust spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #5 and a funding level of \$305,000. The Board unanimously approved the Grant Review Committee's recommendation.

Utsey Tract (AMENDMENT - previously approved \$300,000)

Lowcountry Land Trust applied for a \$200,000 grant for a 298-acre conservation easement in Dorchester County as an amendment to the previously approved \$300,000 grant awarded at the December 2024 Board meeting, for a total grant award of \$500,000. Matt Williams of Lowcountry Land Trust spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #6 and an additional \$200,000 in funding for a total award of \$500,000. The Board unanimously approved the Grant Review Committee's recommendation.

Long Branch Conservation

The City of Greenville applied for a \$100,000 grant to acquire 17 acres in fee simple in Greenville County. Paul Dow of the City of Greenville spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #7 and a funding level of \$100,000. The Board unanimously approved the Grant Review Committee's recommendation.

Browntown

Florence County applied for a \$205,000 grant to acquire 104 acres in fee simple in Florence County. Seth Cook spoke on behalf of Florence County in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a

rank of #8 and a funding level of \$205,000. The Board unanimously approved the Grant Review Committee's recommendation.

Betsy Kerrison Nature Trail Phase V

Kiawah Island Conservancy applied for a \$600,000 grant to acquire 11 acres in fee simple in Charleston County. Colie Farah of Kiawah Island Conservancy spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #9 and a funding level of \$600,000. The Board unanimously approved the Grant Review Committee's recommendation.

Blue Lake Farm

SC Farm Bureau Land Trust applied for a \$888,000 grant for an 887-acre conservation easement in Chester County. Richard Carr of SC Farm Bureau Land Trust spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #10 and a funding level of \$888,000. The Board unanimously approved the Grant Review Committee's recommendation.

Montgomery Tract

Lowcountry Land Trust applied for a \$302,000 grant for a 311-acre conservation easement in Charleston County. Matt Williams of Lowcountry Land Trust spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #11 and to defer funding without prejudice at this time. The Board unanimously approved the Grant Review Committee's recommendation.

AC II

Lowcountry Land Trust applied for a \$610,000 grant for a 1,129-acre conservation easement in Charleston County. Matt Williams of Lowcountry Land Trust spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #12 and to defer funding without prejudice at this time. The Board unanimously approved the Grant Review Committee's recommendation.

Sky Ranche

Naturaland Trust applied for a \$1,050,000 grant to acquire 126 acres in fee simple in Greenville County. Mac Stone of Naturaland Trust spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #13 and deferred funding without prejudice at this time. The Board unanimously approved the Grant Review Committee's recommendation.

Little Rock Mountain

Naturaland Trust applied for a \$256,400 grant to acquire 53 acres in fee simple in Pickens County. Mac Stone of Naturaland Trust spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #14 and a funding level of \$256,400. The Board unanimously approved the Grant Review Committee's recommendation.

Piedmont River Park

Naturaland Trust applied for a \$33,000 to acquire 6 acres in fee simple in Greenville County. Mac Stone of Naturaland Trust spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #15 and a funding level of \$33,000, conditioned on Bank staff review and approval of evidence of the long-term steward's legal ability to take title and the expertise and resources to manage the site. Bank staff shall also review and approve the proposed management plan with sufficient public access. The Board unanimously approved the Grant Review Committee's recommendation.

580 Loop Road Phase II - Campobello

Conserving Carolina applied for a \$39,000 grant for a 30-acre conservation easement in Spartanburg County. Spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #16 and a funding level of \$39,000. The Board unanimously approved the Grant Review Committee's recommendation.

Kidd Family Farm

Katawba Land Trust applied for a \$264,100 grant for a 295-acre conservation easement in Chester County. Spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #17 and a funding level of \$264,100. The Board unanimously approved the Grant Review Committee's recommendation.

King Family Lynches Tract Kershaw

Pee Dee Land Trust applied for a \$305,000 grant for a 550-acre conservation easement in Kershaw County. Seth Cook of Pee Dee Land Trust spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #18 and to defer funding without prejudice at this time. The Board unanimously approved the Grant Review Committee's recommendation.

Winbush Family Farm

Upstate Forever applied for a \$100,000 grant for a 32-acre conservation easement in Anderson County. Chris Starker of Upstate Forever and the landowner spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #19 and a funding level of \$100,000. The Board unanimously approved the Grant Review Committee's recommendation.

Terry Creek Confluence

Naturaland Trust applied for a \$30,000 grant to acquire 4 acres in fee simple in Greenville County. Mac Stone of Naturaland Trust spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #20 and a funding level of \$30,000. The Board unanimously approved the Grant Review Committee's recommendation.

Mary Burns Tract

Congaree Land Trust applied for a \$124,000 grant for a 339-acre conservation easement in Kershaw County. Stuart White of Congaree Land Trust spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #21 and a funding level of \$124,000. The Board unanimously approved the Grant Review Committee's recommendation.

Union of Brothers

Upstate Forever applied for a \$115,200 grant for a 302-acre conservation easement in Union County. Steely Parrot of Upstate Forever spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #22 and a funding level of \$115,200. The Board unanimously approved the Grant Review Committee's recommendation.

McGovern Tract CE

Aiken Land Conservancy applied for a \$31,200 grant for a 21-acre conservation easement in Aiken County. Peter Kleinhenz of Aiken Land Conservancy and the landowner spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #23 and a funding level of \$31,200. The Board unanimously approved the Grant Review Committee's recommendation.

Shelton Wood

Congaree Land Trust applied for a \$94,500 grant for a 219-acre conservation easement in Fairfield County. Stuart White of Congaree Land Trust spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #24 and a funding level of \$94,500. The Board unanimously approved the Grant Review Committee's recommendation.

Bradley Property

Katawba Valley Land Trust applied for a \$91,200 grant for a 43-acre conservation easement in Lancaster County. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #25 and a funding level of \$91,200. The Board unanimously approved the Grant Review Committee's recommendation.

Newground

Due to a potential conflict of interest, Mr. Carter recused himself from discussion or voting on this project. Lowcountry Land Trust applied for a \$180,000 grant for a 58-acre conservation easement in Charleston County. Matt Williams of Lowcountry Land Trust spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #26 and a funding level of \$180,000. The Board unanimously approved the Grant Review Committee's recommendation.

Winkles Farm

SC Farm Bureau Land Trust applied for a \$340,000 grant for a 338-acre conservation easement in Sumter County. Richard Carr of SC Farm Bureau Land Trust spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #27 and to defer funding without prejudice at this time. Director West pointed out that due to the withdrawal of another application, funding was available after all. Following discussion, Mr. Howell made a motion to approve funding this project at \$340,000, Mr. Lavendar seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Tindal Farm - Home Place Clarendon

Lord Berkeley Conservation Trust applied for a \$510,000 grant for a 412-acre conservation easement in Clarendon County. Spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #28 and to defer funding without prejudice at this time. The Board unanimously approved the Grant Review Committee's recommendation.

Tindal Farm - Hodges Corner

Lord Berkeley Conservation Trust applied for a \$200,000 grant for a 156-acre conservation easement in Sumter County. Spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #29 and to defer funding without prejudice at this time. The Board unanimously approved the Grant Review Committee's recommendation.

7) BOARD MEMBER OPEN DISCUSSION

During the open discussion period, Board members expressed their appreciation to the Board leadership, SC Conservation Bank staff, grant applicants, and participating landowners for their collective contributions to advancing conservation efforts.

Grants Review Committee Announcement

Chairman McShane announced the members of the 2026 Grants Review Committee: Rob Howell (Chairman), Charles Lane, West Cox, Joy Raintree (SCPRT), Shannon Bobertz (SCDNR), Mike McShane, and Peter King.

Election of Officers (2026–2028 Term)

Chairman McShane requested that Vice Chairman Lavender preside over the election of officers for the 2026–2028 term. Peter King was nominated for Chairman, and Rob Howell was nominated for Vice Chairman. Both were elected unanimously.

8) TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETINGS

The Chairman stated dates for future Board meetings:

FY26 Cycle 3: 03/18/2026, Board Meeting, Harbison State Forest, Columbia, SC (GRC 03/04/2026)

FY26 Cycle 4: 06/17/2026, Board Meeting, Location TBD (GRC 06/03/2026)

FY27 Cycle 1: 09/23/2026, Board Meeting, Location TBD (GRC 09/09/2026)

FY27 Cycle 2: 12/09/2026, Board Meeting, Location TBD (GRC 12/02/2026)

9) ADJOURN

Chairman McShane called for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Lane made the motion, Dr. King seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

ATTACHMENT 1:

Grant Period Extension Policy Manual Addition:

2.3.10 Grant Period Extensions (To be inserted after Section 2.3.9 Verification of Grant Compliance)

The standard term of any grant award shall expire 12 months after the Board authorizes it, which shall be further memorialized in the Grant Agreement. The applicant may request an extension when circumstances prevent the project from closing within the term. Any such request must be approved by the Board.

Failure to secure an extension prior to expiration of the Grant Period will result in automatic expiration of the grant award and cancellation of the Bank's funding commitment.

Grant Agreement reference sentence (inserted in section XIX. Limit of Commitment):

Extensions to the Grant Period may only be granted at the discretion of the Board pursuant to the Bank's Grant Period Extension Policy.