

SOUTH CAROLINA CONSERVATION BANK
Grants Review Committee
Meeting Minutes

Wednesday March 4, 2026 - 10:00 am
2711 Middleburg Dr., Columbia, SC 29204

1) WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Grants Review Committee (GRC) was called to order by Committee Chairman Rob Howell at 10:00 am on March 4, 2026. Chairman Howell stated that a notice of the date, time and place of the meeting was posted in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

2) ROLL CALL

Committee members present included GRC Chairman Rob Howell, Peter King, West Cox, Charles Lane, Shannon Bobertz, Rachel Snuggs for Joy Raintree, Eric Fosmire. Member absent was Mike McShane.

3) PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Howell opened the floor to anyone interested in making public comments. There being no one, the Committee moved to the next agenda item.

4) ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Mr. Howell stated that the GRC was given a draft copy of the 12/03/2025 GRC meeting minutes to review. The Chairman asked for any additions, deletions, or corrections to the minutes. There being none, Mr. Howell asked for a motion to adopt the minutes of the meeting as distributed. Mr. Lane made the motion, Ms. Bobertz seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

5) PROJECT UPDATES

Mr. Howell distributed a list of closed and outstanding projects for FY26, as of 02/28/2026. Director Raleigh West stated that 59 projects totaling \$50.5 million and protecting over 23,500 acres have closed year to date. Since the last meeting, the Deer Hill Farm project has withdrawn. The Tokeena Angus and Table Rock State Park projects have exceeded the grant period, and their closing dates need to be extended to the next Board meeting. Mr. Cox made the motion, Mr. Lane seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. Director West stated that the majority of the 32 outstanding projects are on track to close without issue. Bank staff will provide a full update of outstanding projects at the next Board meeting. Then, Director West asked GIS Analyst Jonas Hattman to provide a brief overview of the Conservation Priority Map to the Committee. Finally, Director West updated the Committee on outstanding reimbursements, highlighting Naturaland Trust projects that still carry conditions of expected reimbursement. Following the discussion, Mr. Lane made a motion to amend the grant agreements for Pipsissiwa I and Pipsissiwa II to remove the reimbursable portion in exchange for Naturaland Trust deeding the properties to SC State Parks. Mr. Howell seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. Regarding Cesar's Headwaters, the FEMA grant was withdrawn, and Naturaland Trust has requested forgiveness of the \$500,000 reimbursement portion of the grant award. Mr. Lane made the motion, Mr. Howell seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

6) FINANCIAL REPORT

Director West distributed the financial update and noted that the Bank has nearly \$55 million in program dollars available for grants: \$26.2 million in the Standard Grants fund and \$8.6 million in the

Working Ags fund, and \$20 million in the State Acquisition Fund.

7) EXECUTIVE SESSION (*PROPOSED CONTRACTUAL MATTERS*)

Mr. Howell called for a motion to enter Executive Session for the purpose of discussing proposed contractual matters in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act *Section 30-4-70 (a) (2)* and to invite guests of the committee to stay for Executive Session. Mr. Lane made the motion, Ms. Bobertz seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. Mr. Howell noted that action may thereafter be taken on items discussed during Executive Session and requested that committee members recuse themselves as appropriate.

At the conclusion of Executive Session, Ms. Bobertz made the motion to return to regular session. Mr. Cox seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. Once in open session, Mr. Howell stated that no action was taken during Executive Session. Mr. Lane made a motion to approve the recommendations of Bank staff and subject to the availability of funding by the Board with the following exceptions:

Item 3: Blue Heron LLC- Liberty Hill WMA Addition. Due to a potential conflict of interest, Ms. Bobertz recused herself from discussion or voting on this project. Update Total Financial Score to 12.5 and Total Score to 64.6.

Item 5: River Oaks. Due to a potential conflict of interest, Ms. Bobertz recused herself from discussion or voting on this project.

Item 6: Keadle Bridge. Due to a potential conflict of interest, Ms. Bobertz recused herself from discussion or voting on this project. Update reimbursement amount to \$1,378,752. Update Total Financial Score to 23.4 and Total Score to 73.3.

Item 8: Lost Creek. Update the requested amount and recommended amount to \$1,345,500. Update reimbursement amount to \$672,750. Update Total Financial Score to 15.9 and Total Score to 64.3

Item 10: Altamont Pass. Due to a potential conflict of interest, Mr. Howell and Ms. Snuggs recused themselves from discussion or voting on this project.

Item 16: Buncomb Property. Director West informed the committee that the applicant withdrew this project from consideration.

Item 21: Forest View. Due to a potential conflict of interest, Ms. Snuggs recused herself from discussion or voting on this project.

Mr. Howell seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously. Mr. Howell stated that the Grants Review Committee will make these recommendations to the full Board at the next scheduled Board meeting.

8) ADJOURN

Mr. Howell called for a motion to adjourn. Ms. Bobertz made the motion, Dr. King seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.