

# MINUTES

## SOUTH CAROLINA CONSERVATION BANK

Wednesday, June 17, 2026 – 10:00 AM  
Welcome Center at Unity Park, Greenville, SC

The South Carolina Conservation Bank Board (SCCB) held its quarterly meeting on Wednesday, June 17, 2026, at 10:00 AM at Prisma Health Welcome Center at Unity Park, Greenville, 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 Peter King presided at the meeting, and attendance was noted as follows:

| BOARD MEMBERS:                 | EX OFFICIO MEMBERS:                                            |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Chairman Peter King, PRESENT   | SC Office of Resilience: Eric Fosmire for Ben Duncan, PRESENT  |
| Wes Carter, PRESENT            | SC Forestry Commission: Scott Phillips and Eric Smith, PRESENT |
| West Cox, PRESENT              | SC DNR: Mark Hartley, PRESENT                                  |
| Rob Howell, PRESENT            | SC PRT: Joy Raintree for Duane Parrish, PRESENT                |
| Charles Lane, PRESENT          | SCDOT: Sean Connolly for Justin Powell, PRESENT                |
| Tommy Lavender, PRESENT        | SC COMMERCE: Sarah Johnson for Harry Lightsey, PRESENT         |
| Mike McShane, PRESENT          | SC AG COMMISSION: Michael Kule for Hugh Weathers, PRESENT      |
| Melanie Shull, PRESENT         |                                                                |
| Jared Thompson, ABSENT         |                                                                |
| Richmond Wilhoit, Jr., PRESENT |                                                                |

### 1) WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

Chairman King called the meeting to order, welcomed everyone, and thanked them for their attendance. He then invited Greenville County Council Chair Benton Blount to address the Board and offer a warm welcome to Greenville.

### 2) ROLL CALL

Chairman King called the roll, and a quorum was established with 9 Board members and 7 ex-officio members in attendance. Chairman King stated that proper public notice had been given for the meeting.

### 3) CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

Chairman King provided several updates and acknowledgments during his remarks. He informed Board members that two Technical Advisory Committees (TACs) would meet in the coming months to establish policies and procedures for a State Acquisition Program and Bat Pooled Fund Program. He also reminded Board members to complete the Recusal Form if they need to recuse themselves from any project discussions due to potential conflicts of interest.

### 4) PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chairman King opened the floor to individuals who had submitted requests to speak during the Public Comments portion of the meeting. Gary Spires of SC Farm Bureau gave an update on the national Farm Bureau community and how the work of SC Farm Bureau is having a positive impact not only in South Carolina, but nationwide. There being no other public comments, Chairman King proceeded to the next agenda item.

## 5) ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Chairman King noted that Board members had received a draft of the March 18, 2026, Quarterly and June 8 Special Purpose Board Meeting minutes in advance and that a copy was included in the meeting materials. He asked for any additions, deletions, or corrections. Hearing none, Mr. McShane moved to approve both sets of minutes, Mr. Lavender seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

## 6) NEW BUSINESS

### a) Project Updates

Director West distributed a list of current projects and provided a status update. As of June 12, 2026, a total of 88 projects—representing more than \$69 million in funding and protecting more than 32,000 acres—have closed to date during FY26. The Amazing Grace Roseland project was withdrawn due to unavoidable circumstances.

Director West informed the Board that the Carter Farms, Old Schoolhouse Farm, Bishop Branch Farm, Cold Hill, and McCoy Farm projects have reached the end of their respective grant periods. After receiving updates from the applicants, Grants Review Committee Chair Rob Howell reported that the Committee recommended extending the grant periods for these projects—originally approved on or before the June 2025 Board meeting—through the September 2026 Board meeting. The Board unanimously approved the Committee's recommendation. Director West added 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.

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

### b) Financial Report

A summary of the Bank's financial position was included in the Board members' meeting materials. Director West reported that as of 06/15/2026, the Bank holds more than \$29 million in program dollars available for grants: \$20.3 million in the Standard Grants fund, and \$6.7 million in the Working Ags fund, and \$2.4 million in the State Acquisition Fund, all of which are unobligated and available for new grants. In addition, Director West also reminded the Board that as reimbursable grants close, the Bank will, in turn, have those funds available for new grant applications.

### c) Grants Review Committee Recommendations

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

#### **Humbert Woods Nature Preserve**

Due to a potential conflict of interest, Mr. Lane recused himself from discussion or voting on this project. Lowcountry Land Trust applied for a \$700,000 grant to acquire 97 acres in fee simple in Charleston County. Kate Schaefer of Lowcountry Land Trust spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #1 and a funding level of \$700,000, contingent on a good faith plan to connect to nearby Grayson Oaks to enhance public access and staff approval of the management plan. The Board unanimously approved the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

#### **Ryan - Wateree**

Open Space Institute Land Trust applied for a \$1,222,000 grant to acquire 471 acres in fee simple in Sumter County. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #2 and to defer funding without prejudice at this time. The Board unanimously approved the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

#### **Victoria Bluff - Derst**

Open Land Trust applied for a \$1,245,000 grant for a 406-acre conservation easement in Beaufort County. Caylor Romines of Open Land Trust spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #3 and a funding level of \$1,245,000, contingent on approval by the Joint Bond Review Committee. The Board unanimously approved the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

#### **Glassy Summit**

Naturaland Trust applied for a \$899,671 grant to acquire 183 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 #4 and to defer funding without prejudice at this time. The Board unanimously approved the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

#### **York Place**

Nation Ford Land Trust applied for a \$2,000,000 grant to acquire 120 acres in fee simple in York County. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #5 and to defer funding without prejudice at this time. The Board unanimously approved the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

#### **Boones Falls**

Naturaland Trust applied for a \$1,870,250 grant to acquire 151 acres in fee simple in Oconee County. Mac Stone of Naturaland Trust spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #6 and a funding level of \$1,870,250. The Board unanimously approved the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

#### **Little Mountain**

Upstate Forever applied for a \$120,000 grant for a 125-acre conservation easement in Greenville County. Scott Park of Upstate Forever spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #7 and a funding level of \$120,000. The Board unanimously approved the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

#### **Goodwill**

The Conservation Fund applied for a \$13,800,000 grant to acquire 736 acres in fee simple in Richland County. Lorianne Rigg of SCDNR spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #8 and a funding level of \$12,600,000, contingent on the following:

- a. Upon receipt of and with necessary budget authority, the Bank will administer an additional Six Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$600,000.00) from Richland County for the purpose of acquiring this Property.
- b. Prior to releasing Grant Funds, the Grantee must have entered into a written agreement with the proposed take-out agency to assume ownership of the property.
- c. In the event the take-out agency cannot acquire title, the applicant must confer with Bank Staff to restructure the proposal and resubmit for review by Bank Board.

The Board unanimously approved the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

#### **Bates House**

Upstate Preservation Trust applied for a \$400,000 grant to acquire 11 acres in fee simple in Greenville County. Ann Peden and Lindsay Strand of Upstate Preservation Trust and Carlton Owen of Greenville County Historic and Natural Resources Trust spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #9 and a funding level of \$400,000, contingent on staff approval of the long-term take-out agency and management plan prior to transfer of the property. The Board unanimously approved the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

#### **Lowcountry Creamery**

SC Farm Bureau Land Trust applied for a \$4,000,000 grant for a 1,015-acre conservation easement in Orangeburg County. Richard Carr of SC Farm Bureau Land Trust and the landowner spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #10 and a funding level of \$4,000,000, contingent on approval by the Joint Bond Review Committee. The Board unanimously approved the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

#### **Mill Branch Pond**

Due to a potential conflict of interest, Dr. Hartley recused himself from discussion or voting on this project. SC Farm Bureau Land Trust applied for a \$900,000 grant for a 1,036-acre conservation easement in Sumter County. Grace Judy of SC Farm Bureau Land Trust spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #11 and a funding level of \$900,000. The Board unanimously approved the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

#### **Jordan Farm**

Pee Dee Land Trust applied for a \$855,000 grant for a 633-acre conservation easement in Lee County. Lyles Cooper of Pee Dee Land Trust spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #12 and a funding level of \$855,000 with the condition that any reduction in acreage, due to the inability to resolve the right of first refusal on a portion of the property, will reduce the grant award proportionally to keep the award consistent with 50% of the Conservation Easement Value. The Board unanimously approved the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

#### **Truesdale Farm**

Pee Dee Land Trust applied for a \$89,250 grant for a 102-acre conservation easement in Kershaw County. Lyles Cooper of Pee Dee Land Trust spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #13 and a funding level of \$89,250. The Board unanimously approved the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

#### **Scott Family Farm 2**

SC Farm Bureau Land Trust applied for a \$175,500 grant for a 121-acre conservation easement in Greenville County. Richard Carr of SC Farm Bureau Land Trust spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #14 and a funding level of \$175,500. The Board unanimously approved the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

#### **Scott Family Farm 1**

SC Farm Bureau Land Trust applied for a \$187,500 grant for a 131-acre conservation easement in Greenville County. Richard Carr of SC Farm Bureau Land Trust spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #15 and a funding level of \$187,500. The Board unanimously approved the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

#### **Redding-Stone Farmstead Tracts**

Upper Savannah Land Trust applied for a \$100,000 grant for a 78-acre conservation easement in Abbeville County. Wade Harrison of Upper Savannah Land Trust spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #16 and a funding level of \$100,000. The Board unanimously approved the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

#### **Truesdale Tract**

Katawba Valley Land Trust applied for a \$127,450 grant for an 186-acre conservation easement in Lancaster County. Lauren Kirby of Katawba Valley Land Trust spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #17 and a funding level of \$127,450. The Board unanimously approved the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

#### **Mountain Bridge East**

Naturaland Trust applied for a \$400,000 grant to acquire 38 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 #18 and a funding level of \$400,000,..... (conditions). The Board unanimously approved the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

#### **Edens Farm**

Pee Dee Land Trust applied for a \$706,000 grant for a 1,238-acre conservation easement in Marlboro County. Lyles Cooper of Pee Dee Land Trust spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #19 and a funding level of \$706,000. The Board unanimously approved the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

#### **Shealy Farms**

Aiken Land Conservancy applied for a \$60,000 grant for a 60-acre conservation easement in Aiken County. Mike Zang of Aiken Land Conservancy spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #20 and a funding level of \$60,000. The Board unanimously approved the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

#### **Green Pond Heritage Haven**

Upstate Forever applied for a \$331,500 grant for an 86-acre conservation easement in Spartanburg County. Scott Park of Upstate Forever spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #21 and a funding level of \$331,500. The Board unanimously approved the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

#### **Mountain View Cattle Farm**

SC Farm Bureau Land Trust applied for a \$944,000 grant for a 381-acre conservation easement in Cherokee County. Richard Carr of SC Farm Bureau Land Trust and the landowner spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #22 and a funding level of \$944,000. The Board unanimously approved the Grants Review Committee's recommendation with a courtesy notice of funding to the Joint Bond Review Committee.

#### **J-Ray Farms 3**

Due to a potential conflict of interest, Dr. Hartley recused himself from discussion or voting on this project. SC Farm Bureau Land Trust applied for a \$112,000 grant for a 115-acre conservation easement in Sumter County. Grace Judy of SC Farm Bureau Land Trust spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #23 and a funding level of \$112,000. The Board unanimously approved the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

#### **J-Ray Farms 2**

Due to a potential conflict of interest, Dr. Hartley recused himself from discussion or voting on this project. SC Farm Bureau Land Trust applied for a \$210,000 grant for a 252-acre conservation easement in Lee / Sumter County. Grace Judy of SC Farm Bureau Land Trust spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #24 and a funding level of \$210,000. The Board unanimously approved the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

#### **Lowery Farms**

SC Farm Bureau Land Trust applied for a \$370,000 grant for a 176-acre conservation easement in Oconee County. Richard Carr of SC Farm Bureau Land Trust spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #25 and a funding level of \$370,000. The Board unanimously approved the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

#### **Hollifield Farm**

SC Farm Bureau Land Trust applied for a \$400,000 grant for a 177-acre conservation easement in Cherokee County. Richard Carr of SC Farm Bureau Land Trust spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review

Committee recommended a rank of #26 and a funding level of \$400,000. The Board unanimously approved the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

#### **J-Ray Farms 1**

Due to a potential conflict of interest, Dr. Hartley recused himself from discussion or voting on this project. SC Farm Bureau Land Trust applied for a \$505,000 grant for a 457-acre conservation easement in Lee County. Grace Judy of SC Farm Bureau Land Trust spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #27 and a funding level of \$505,000. The Board unanimously approved the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

#### **Hy-Hope Farms 2**

SC Farm Bureau Land Trust applied for a \$365,000 grant for a 251-acre conservation easement in Newberry County. Richard Carr of SC Farm Bureau Land Trust spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #28 and a funding level of \$365,000. The Board unanimously approved the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

#### **Wentzky**

SC Farm Bureau Land Trust applied for a \$146,000 grant for a 52-acre conservation easement in Anderson County. Richard Carr of SC Farm Bureau Land Trust and the landowners spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #29 and a funding level of \$146,000. The Board unanimously approved the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

#### **Hy-Hope Farms 3**

SC Farm Bureau Land Trust applied for a \$97,500 grant for a 74-acre conservation easement in Newberry County. Richard Carr of SC Farm Bureau Land Trust spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #30 and a funding level of \$97,500. The Board unanimously approved the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

#### **Hy-Hope Farms 4**

SC Farm Bureau Land Trust applied for a \$205,000 grant for a 117-acre conservation easement in Newberry County. Richard Carr of SC Farm Bureau Land Trust spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #31 and a funding level of \$205,000. The Board unanimously approved the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

#### **Heritage Fields Farm**

SC Farm Bureau Land Trust applied for a \$145,000 grant for a 72-acre conservation easement in Newberry County. Richard Carr of SC Farm Bureau Land Trust spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #32 and a funding level of \$145,000. The Board unanimously approved the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

#### **J-Ray Farms 4**

Due to a potential conflict of interest, Dr. Hartley recused himself from discussion or voting on this project. SC Farm Bureau Land Trust applied for a \$135,000 grant for a 97-acre conservation easement in Sumter / Lee County. Grace Judy of SC Farm Bureau Land Trust spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #33 and a funding level of \$135,000. The Board unanimously approved the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

#### **Peach Shed Grains**

Upstate Forever applied for a \$178,500 grant for a 43-acre conservation easement in Spartanburg County. Scott Park of Upstate Forever spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #34 and a funding level of \$178,500. The Board unanimously approved the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

At the conclusion of the application review, Mr. McShane made a motion that the discussion of Glassy Summit be reopened, Mr. Wilhoit seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. Mr. McShane noted that today's recommendations, amended motions, and Board approvals leave a little over \$814,000 available funds in the Standard Grants program. Following discussion, Mr. McShane made a motion that the Board approve the Glassy Summit project at a funding level of \$814,000 to be fully reimbursed upon the eventual transfer to SCDNR. The motion was seconded by Mr. Lane, and the Board unanimously approved.

## **7) OPEN DISCUSSION**

Chairman King invited the land trust partners who'd requested time to speak. Bob Perry, representatives from the SC Land Trust Network, Carlton Owen & Mac Stone, and the members of the Bank Board all took turns expressing gratitude to outgoing Director Raleigh West, extolling his time at the Bank and wishing him well in his future endeavors. Following these presentations, Mr. West made a brief speech to thank everyone who'd supported him along the way and remark on how proud he was of the Bank's growth during his tenure. Following these remarks there was a hearty round of applause and a lengthy standing ovation.

## **8) TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETINGS**

The Chairman stated dates for future Board meetings:

- FY27 Cycle 1: 09/23/2026, Board Meeting, Columbia, SC (GRC 09/09/2026)
- FY27 Cycle 2: 12/09/2026, Board Meeting, Columbia, SC (GRC 12/02/2026)
- FY27 Cycle 3: 03/24/2027, Board Meeting, Columbia, SC (GRC 03/10/2027)
- FY27 Cycle 4: 06/23/2027, Board Meeting, Columbia, SC (GRC 06/09/2027)

## **9) ADJOURN**

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