

MINUTES

SOUTH CAROLINA CONSERVATION BANK

Wednesday, September 21, 2022 - 10:00 am
2711 Middleburg Drive, Suite 113
Columbia, SC 29204

The South Carolina Conservation Bank Board (SCCB) held its quarterly meeting on Wednesday, September 21, 2022, at 10:00 am at 2711 Middleburg Drive, Suite 113, Columbia, SC 29204. 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, 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, SCPRT. Board Members absent were Thomas Lavender, Geordy Johnson, Dr. Brent McLaurin, and Larry Yonce.

1) WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

Chairman McShane called the meeting to order, welcomed everyone and thanked everyone for their attendance.

2) ROLL CALL

Chairman McShane called roll and a quorum was established with 7 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 invited Director West to make his comments at this point in the meeting. Director West shared some general observations regarding application submissions, reviews, and due diligence documentation and stressed the importance of completeness and professionalism from the initial application through due diligence and closing.

4) PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. McShane opened the floor to anyone who would like to address to the Board. There being no public comments, Mr. McShane called for the next agenda item.

5) ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Mr. McShane stated the Board was sent a draft copy of the 06/08/2022 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. Lane made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Spencer seconded, and the motion unanimously passed.

6) NEW BUSINESS

a) Financial Report

The Bank received largest appropriation in Bank history with a total budget of \$37.5 million dollars. Of that amount, \$32.5 million is available for programming. The FY24 budget request will request the same amount in operating and recurring dollars and \$25 million in non-recurring dollars. The Bank is also requesting a provision to allow for the carryforward of operating dollars.

Director West gave an update of prior approved projects: three projects have closed since last Board meeting and fifteen projects are outstanding. All outstanding projects are scheduled to close within the next six months. Applicants with outstanding projects are asked to give Bank staff an update of their closing date estimates.

b) Grants Review Committee Recommendations

Chairman McShane yielded the floor to the Chairman of the Grants Review Committee Chairman, Keith Williamson, for a review of pending applications. Mr. Williamson then began the review of applications for the current cycle:

Congaree Creek Heritage Preserve Addition

Open Space Institute applied for a \$7,000,000 grant, which includes the previously approved \$1,234,000 from Phase 1A and 1B, to acquire 575.81 acres in fee simple in Lexington County. Nate Berry of Open Space Institute and Ken Prosser of SCDNR spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #1 and a total funding level of \$7,000,000 subject to the Grantee reimbursing the Bank in the amount of \$5,766,000 within twelve months of the release of funds. In the event that the Grantee cannot satisfy this reimbursement condition, the applicant will reapply to the Bank to consider extending the deadline, forgiving a portion or all the required reimbursement, or seeking other remedies. The Board unanimously accepted the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

Waites Island

Open Space Institute applied for a \$4,000,000 grant to acquire 260 acres in fee simple in Horry County. Nate Berry of Open Space Institute spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #2 and a funding level of \$4,000,000 subject to the Grantee reimbursing the Bank in the amount of \$3,500,000 within twelve months of the release of funds. In the event that the Grantee cannot satisfy this reimbursement condition, the applicant will reapply to the Bank to consider extending the deadline, forgiving a portion or all the required reimbursement, or seeking other remedies. The Board unanimously accepted the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

Ingleside Park

Open Space Institute applied for a \$1,000,000 grant to acquire 440 acres in fee simple in Charleston County. Maria Whitehead of Open Space Institute spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #3 and a funding level of \$1,000,000. The Board unanimously accepted the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

Gilstrap Mountain (Scenic Hwy 11)

Naturaland Trust applied for a \$237,500 grant to acquire 172 acres in fee simple in Pickens County. Mac Stone Naturaland Trust spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #4 and a funding level of \$237,500. The Board unanimously accepted the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

Botany Bay Heritage Preserve Addition

Open Space Institute applied for a \$1,200,000 grant to acquire 180.17 acres in fee simple in Charleston County. Nate Berry of Open Space Institute and Ken Prosser of SCDNR spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #5 and a funding level of \$1,200,000. The Board unanimously accepted the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

Santee Corridor - RMS-Wadmacon

Open Space Institute applied for a \$1,950,000 grant to acquire 2,248 acres in fee simple in Georgetown County. Maria Whitehead of Open Space Institute spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #6 and a funding level of \$1,950,000. The Board unanimously accepted the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

Willowbend

SC Dept of Natural Resources applied for a \$300,000 grant to acquire 348.75 acres in fee simple in Horry County. Ken Prosser of SCDNR spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #7 and a funding level of \$300,000. The Board unanimously accepted the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

Poinsett Bridge Expansion Tracts – Southern Blue Ridge Escarpment (Boy Scouts of America)

The Nature Conservancy applied for a \$900,000 grant to acquire 294 acres in fee simple Greenville County. Kristen Austin of The Nature Conservancy spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #8 and a funding level of \$700,000. The Board unanimously accepted the Grants Review Committee’s recommendation.

George Aull Expansion Clemson Forest

Naturaland Trust applied for a \$800,000 grant to acquire 86.9 acres in fee simple in Anderson County. Mac Stone of Naturaland Trust and Carlton Owen of Greenville County Historic and Natural Resources Trust (GCHNRT) spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #9 and a funding level of \$800,000. The Board unanimously accepted the Grants Review Committee’s recommendation.

Little Eastatoee (Scenic Hwy 11)

Naturaland Trust applied for a \$400,000 grant to acquire 189 acres in fee simple in Pickens County. Mac Stone of Naturaland Trust spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommend a rank of #10 and a funding level of \$400,000. The Board unanimously accepted the Grants Review Committee’s recommendation.

Woodcock Woods

Naturaland Trust applied for a \$300,000 grant to acquire 31.64 acres in fee simple in Greenville County. Mac Stone of Naturaland Trust spoke in favor of the project. Andrea Cooper of Upstate Forever commented on the Upstate Land Conservation Fund. The Grants Review Committee recommend a rank of #11 and a funding level of \$300,000. The Board unanimously accepted the Grants Review Committee’s recommendation.

River Road

Naturaland Trust applied for a \$160,000 grant to acquire 27 acres in fee simple in Greenville County. Mac Stone of Naturaland Trust spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommend a rank of #12 and a funding level of \$160,000 with a condition that the grantee coordinate and allow reasonable access to SCDNR to continue stocking and managing the riparian habitat for trout and other wildlife. The Board unanimously accepted the Grants Review Committee’s recommendation.

White Branch (Scenic Hwy 11)

Naturaland Trust applied for a \$350,000 grant to acquire 160 acres in fee simple in Pickens County. Mac Stone of Naturaland Trust spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommend a rank of #13 and a funding level of \$350,000. The Board unanimously accepted the Grants Review Committee’s recommendation.

Buckfield

Open Land Trust applied for a \$995,000 grant for a 1,988.8 acres conservation easement in Hampton County. Kate Schaefer of Open Land Trust spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommend a rank of #14 and a funding level of \$850,000. The Board unanimously accepted the Grants Review Committee’s recommendation.

Fort Motte Cliffs

Ducks Unlimited applied for a \$400,000 grant for a 400-acre conservation easement in Calhoun County. Landowner Kam Arant spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommend a rank of #15 and a funding level of \$400,000, conditional the Grantee offering the property for sale subject to a life estate to a qualified conservation entity, as set forth in the application. The Board unanimously accepted the Grants Review Committee’s recommendation.

Independence Farm

Open Space Institute applied for a \$650,000 grant to acquire 498 acres in fee simple in Florence County. Maria Whitehead of Open Space Institute and a Nathan Dawsey of Florence County spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommend a rank of #16 and a funding level of \$650,000. The Board unanimously accepted the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

Shiloh Ridge at Paris Mountain

Naturaland Trust applied for a \$1,000,000 grant to acquire 148 acres in fee simple in Greenville County. Mac Stone of Naturaland Trust, Justin Hancock of SCPRT, Daniel Neary, Park Ranger at Paris Mountain State Park, and Carlton Owen of GCHNRT spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommend a rank of #17 and a funding level of \$750,000. Mr. Lane made a motion to amend the recommendation to require a formal review of the appraisal satisfactory to Bank staff. Mr. Wilhoit seconded the amendment, and the Board unanimously accepted the Grants Review Committee's recommendation with the amended motion.

Black River (Camel, LLC) Park Ranger Tract

The Nature Conservancy applied for a \$1,200,000 grant to acquire 162.93 acres in fee simple in Georgetown County. Terry Hurley of SCPRT spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommend a rank of #18 and a funding level of \$1,200,000. The Board unanimously accepted the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

Limerick Plantation

Lord Berkeley Conservation Trust applied for a \$275,000 grant for a 241.8-acre conservation easement in Berkeley County. The Grants Review Committee recommend a rank of #19 and a funding level of \$275,500. The Board unanimously accepted the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

Bowers

Open Land Trust applied for a \$500,000 grant for a 577-acre conservation easement in Beaufort County. Kate Schaefer of Open Land Trust spoke in favor of the project and the partnership with the Department of Defense. The Grants Review Committee recommend a rank of #20 and a funding level of \$500,000. The Board unanimously accepted the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

Barberry Woods Project

City of Charleston applied for a \$100,000 grant to acquire 6.12 acres in fee simple in Charleston County. The Grants Review Committee recommend a rank of #21 and a funding level of \$100,000, subject to the Grantee providing a draft deed restriction and comprehensive management plan for the broader passive park associated with the project. The Board unanimously accepted the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

Triple Oak Farm

Upstate Forever applied for a \$150,000 grant for 87.7-acre conservation easement in Spartanburg County. Richard Carr of Upstate Forever spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommend a rank of #22 and a funding level of \$150,000. The Board unanimously accepted the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

Cooler Dairy Farm

Lowcountry Land Trust applied for a \$250,000 grant for a 654-acre conservation easement in Colleton County. David Ray of Lowcountry Land Trust spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommend a rank of #23 and a funding level of \$250,000. The Board unanimously accepted the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

Salter's Property

Due to a potential conflict of interest, Mr. Williamson recused himself from discussion or voting on this application. Pee Dee Land Trust applied for a \$385,000 grant for a 626-acre conservation easement in Williamsburg County. Seth Cook of Pee Dee Land Trust spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommend a rank of #24 and a funding level of \$385,000. The Board unanimously accepted the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

Eureka Preserve

Aiken Land Conservancy applied for a \$350,000 grant for a 601-acre easement in Aiken County. Laura Bagwell of Aiken Land Conservancy spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommend a rank of #25 and a funding level of \$350,000. The Board unanimously accepted the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

Jenkins House

Pendleton Historic Foundation applied for a \$277,000 grant to acquire 9.23 acres in fee simple in Anderson County. Kyle Campbell of the Pendleton Historic Foundation spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #26 and a funding level of \$280,000 subject to a survey creating a reasonably configured, minimally sized lot surrounding the historic home, and deed restrictions and management plan for the total 9.23-acre property satisfactory to Bank staff. Mr. Williamson seconded; the Board unanimously accepted the Grants Review Committee's recommendation with the amended motion.

Bradham Tract - SC Liberty Trail

SC Battleground Preservation Trust applied for a \$124,000 grant to acquire 4 acres in fee simple in Orangeburg County. David Reuwer of SC Battleground Preservation Trust spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommend a rank of #27 and a funding level of \$124,000. The Board unanimously accepted the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

Hammonds Store Battlefield

SC Battleground Preservation Trust applied for a \$80,000 grant to acquire 30 acres in fee simple in Laurens County. Davie Reuwer of SC Battleground Preservation Trust spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommend a rank of #28 and a funding level of \$80,000. The Board unanimously accepted the Grants Review Committee's recommendation. Director West encouraged applicant to work on protecting the corridors and surrounding landscape surrounding the battlefields.

Hazelwood Farm

Katawba Valley Land Trust applied for a \$78,050 grant for a 178-acre conservation easement in Chester County. Michelle Evans of Katawba Valley Land Trust spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommend a rank of #29 and a funding level of \$78,050. The Board unanimously accepted the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

Carter Property

Nation Ford Land Trust applied for a \$110,000 grant for a 46-acre conservation easement in York County. Steve Hamilton of Nation Ford Land Trust spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommend a rank of #30 and a funding level of \$110,000. The Board unanimously accepted the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

Horsepen Creek II

Upstate Forever applied for a \$76,500 grant for a 31.7-acre conservation easement in Greenville County. Richard Carr of Upstate Forever spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommend a rank of #31 and a funding level of \$76,500 contingent the applicant securing a financial commitment for the project from the Greenville County Historic and Natural Resources Trust subject to Bank staff approval. The Board unanimously accepted the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

Horsepen Creek I

Upstate Forever applied for a \$165,000 grant for a 45.56-acre conservation easement in Greenville County. Richard Carr spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommend a rank of #32 and a funding level of \$165,000, contingent on the applicant securing a financial commitment for the project from the Greenville County Historic and Natural Resources Trust subject to Bank staff approval. The Board unanimously accepted the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

Newton Farm

Due to a potential conflict of interest, Mr. Williamson recused himself from discussion or voting on this application. Pee Dee Land Trust applied for a \$250,000 grant for a 563.5-acre conservation easement in Marlboro County. Seth Cook of Pee Dee Land Trust spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommend a rank of #33 at a funding level of \$250,000. The Board unanimously accepted the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

Gourdin Tracts

Lord Berkeley Conservation Trust applied for a \$134,000 grant for a 351.25-acre conservation easement in Berkeley County. The Grants Review Committee recommend a rank of 34 at a funding level of \$134,000. The Board unanimously accepted the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

Possum Holler

Upstate Forever applied for a \$66,000 grant for a 79.4-acre conservation easement in Pickens County. Richard Carr of Upstate Forever spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommend a rank of #35 and a funding level of \$66,000. The Board unanimously accepted the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

Eastatoe Headwaters

Upstate Forever applied for a \$45,000 grant for a 26.61-acre conservation easement in Pickens County. Richard Carr of Upstate Forever spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommend a rank of #36 and a funding level of \$45,000. The Board unanimously accepted the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

Bishop Branch Pastures

Upstate Forever applied for a \$145,800 grant for a 64-acre conservation easement in Anderson County. Caitlyn Gendusa of Upstate Forever spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommend a rank of #37 and a funding level of \$145,800. The Board unanimously accepted the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

Saluda Dam Acres

Upstate Forever applied for a \$365,000 grant for a 69-acre conservation easement in Greenville County. Caitlyn Gendusa of Upstate Forever spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommend a rank of #38 and a funding level of \$275,000, contingent on the successful participation of Greenville County Historic and Natural Resources Trust subject to Bank staff approval. The Board unanimously accepted the Grants Review Committee's recommendation.

Curryton Academy Park

Edgefield County Historical Society applied for a \$27,565 grant to acquire 0.37 acres in fee simple in Edgefield County. The Grants Review Committee recommend a rank of #39 and a funding level of \$27,565, conditional on satisfactory draft deed restriction and comprehensive management plan for the broader passive park associated with the project. The Board unanimously accepted the Grants Review Committee's recommendation. Mr. Lane requested Director West to follow up on the applicant's pledge of a broader plan for the protection of the surrounding area.

Plantersville Cultural Center

Open Space Institute applied for a \$100,000 grant to acquire 10 acres in fee simple in Georgetown County. Ray Funney of The Village Group and Maria Whitehead of Open Space Institute spoke in favor of the project. Ms. Whitehead informed the Board of receipt of new appraisal valuating the property at \$80,000 and the commitment of the Donnelley Foundation as a partner at \$20,000 thereby reducing the grant application amount to \$60,000. The Grants Review Committee recommend a rank of #40 and a funding level of \$50,000 subject to a survey creating a reasonably configured lot not exceed 2 acres for the placement of commercial structures associated with the project and deed restrictions and management plan for the total 10-acre property satisfactory to Bank staff. Mr. Lane made a motion to amend the recommendation to fund the project at \$60,000. Mr. Wilhoit seconded the motion, and Board unanimously accepted the Grant Review Committee’s recommendation with the amended motion.

Beaverdam Creek Preserve

Upstate Forever applied for a \$30,000 grant for a 33-acre conservation easement in Greenville County. Caitlyn Gendusa of Upstate Forever spoke in favor of the project. The Grants Review Committee recommended a rank of #41 and did not recommend funding the project at this time.

8) BOARD MEMBER OPEN DISCUSSION

Chairman McShane invited Board members to make comments. Ms. Porter discussed her new children’s book and mentioned her family’s tree farm event on November 2nd. Mr. Hubright mentioned how appreciative he is of working with all these partners. Mr. Lane spoke about the value of cooperation among private and public entities to advance the shared mission of land conservation. Vice-Chairman Williamson expressed thanks for the work that went into all the project applications. Chairman McShane commended Director West for visiting every one of the applicant sites.

9) TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chairman stated that the next Board meeting will be on Wednesday, December 7, 2022. Time and place to be announced at a later date.

10) ADJOURN

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