

**South Carolina Mitigation Association
Executive Committee
Meeting Minutes
July 13, 2021
Video Conference**

I. Opening

The regular meeting of the Executive Committee of the South Carolina Mitigation Association was called to order at 9:09 AM via Zoom by Allen Conger, the SCMA President.

Attending:

Allen Conger	Kristin Knight-Meng
Tara Allden	Ross Nelson
Tommy Cousins	Sydni Redmond
Doug Hughes	Jack Smith
Daniel Johnson	Ryan Smith
Adrienne Graham	

II. Approval of Previous Minutes

Sydni Redmond made a motion to approve the minutes of June 8, 2021. Doug Hughes seconded the motion, which carried.

III. Financial Report

Mr. Nelson commented the financials look fine and everything is in order.

IV. Quarterly Meeting

- June Meeting - There were 44 attendees. Mr. Conger reminded everyone to please invite staff to these meetings. Some agreed that although the session by Dr. Althea Hagan was informative they thought it was going to be more on the state of the science of wetland restoration, research and techniques. The internship information was relevant to the programs the Partnership Committee is currently discussing.
- Inviting an academic speaker that is relevant can bridge the gap between research and practical applications. Kristen Knight-Meng will follow up with the Clemson Extension Agency on their ideas. Ms. Knight-Meng also suggested inviting students to attend at no charge on a limited basis, or as a group such as from the Clemson Extension.
- Ross Nelson suggested asking Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership (SARP) and Trout Unlimited to present at the October 13 meeting. Mr. Nelson will follow up with them.
- David Wilson has asked if he can give a brief update in October and a more lengthy presentation in December meeting.
- Elections must also be held in December.

V. Member Care

- Carolina Wetlands, Goodwyn, Mills and Cawood, and Parker Poe Adams & Bernstein joined at a non-voting level. Aquatics Restoration joined at the voting level.
- Ms. Graham will follow up with Stantec again.
- Only members will be allowed at the October and December meeting at no charge. All others must pay the fee.

VI. Old Business

- The SCMA was represented by Doug Hughes, Allen Conger and Bob Perry at a meeting with Travis Hughes, Amanda Heath, David Wilson, and James Choate of the USACE via Zoom on July 8. Mr. Hughes took minutes and will distribute soon. The focus remained timeliness and the meeting had an overall positive atmosphere.
 - Mr. Wilson began the meeting with some measures the USACE has taken to improve timeliness such as meetings with bankers based on the amount of activity. The SCMA requested expanding these calls to include consultants.
 - The USACE has set up a system in RIBITS that emails the permit applicant. This is an unfiltered email that goes out automatically.
 - The USACE has uploaded checklist and other instruments in RIBITS as the ABC Bank as a training module to assist bankers. They requested that the SCMA review these. Mr. Conger will ask the Technical Committee to review.
 - The USACE is training IRT members to assist with timeliness and in keeping comments relevant.
 - The SCMA brought up the 2008 rule which would solve most of the issues but the USACE did not respond to this. Mr. Wilson has 62 projects currently. The USACE said they are averaging 2.5 years prospectus to permit with a few outliers.
 - The USACE will begin to implement regularly scheduled site visits at the suggestion of the SCMA.
 - The SCMA brought up having a liaison funded through the WRDA 214 using the Conservation Bank. The SCMA will continue working on this although the USACE is weary of this approach.
 - The USACE is supportive of the SCMA approaching congressional delegates on the importance of funding.
 - It is important that the USACE does recognize there is a problem and they are working to address it.
 - The SCMA asked for regular meetings but a date was not set. Mr. Conger will follow up. The SCMA must have accomplished their tasks and come to the meeting prepared.
 - Priorities of the SCMA: 1. Mr. Hughes will reach out to David Olson with the USACE to set up a brief meeting on the liaison. If Mr. Olson has a favorable opinion, the SCMA will set a meeting with Raleigh West of the Conservation Bank to further discuss the position. 2. The SCMA will approach the congressional delegation in an organized manner to emphasize the importance of mitigation to permitting, the bottleneck at the USACE and how it affects the state, and what mitigation means to economic development and infrastructure. Mr. Conger will arrange a call in August to assign tasks and move on these tasks.
- The SCMA will have the booth at the NMBEC. The Executive Committee is requested to volunteer to help with the booth when they can. The SCMA is hosting a reception at Gravy on July 24 at 5:30.
- The USACE stated that they expect any new banks to use the SQT methodology although they clearly do not have any debit methodology to create the impacts. Mr. Johnson would like to revisit the potential of the SCMA hosting a workshop and have further conversations with the USACE on this. The Technical Committee will continue to look at this. Ms. Knight-Meng will coordinate a call with Mr. Conger, Chris Ryan and herself to discuss this.

VII. New Business

- The next SCMA-SCDOT meeting is scheduled for July 28th.

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:06 AM

Next Meeting: Tuesday, August 10, 9:00 AM

Minutes submitted by: Kristin Knight-Meng

Approved by: The Executive Committee, August 10, 2021