

South Carolina Mitigation Association
Membership Quarterly Meeting
June 15, 2022 | 10:00 AM
Renewable Water Resources (ReWa) Laboratory, Greenville SC
Hybrid Meeting

I. Opening

Ross Nelson, SCMA President, welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order. He noted the meeting was hybrid.

Mr. Nelson thanked Wildlands Engineering, represented by Daniel Johnson, for sponsoring the meeting and noted that sponsorships are available for all Membership Quarterly Meetings at \$250 for members and \$350 for non-members.

II. *Conservation Community Round Table*

Panel: Chris Starker, Land Conservation Manager, Upstate Forever
Kristen Austin, Upstate Conservation Director, The Nature Conservancy
Raleigh West, Executive Director, SC Conservation Bank
Lyles Cooper, Executive Director, Pee Dee Land Trust
Moderator: Ross Nelson, SCMA President

This panel discussed the overlap in conservation and mitigation projects and the need to maintain communications. Conservation, development and mitigation should be discussed at the same time. Public education is also critical. It was noted that if it were not for the non-profits and conservation community, we would not have the protected lands we do have today.

Mr. West stated the SC Conservation Bank is updating its Conservation Priority Model that was first published in 2019. Mr. Nelson volunteered that the SCMA membership may be able to assist with this activity through the SCMA Partnership Committee.

Mr. Nelson suggested a statewide conversation with SCMA, land trust, conservation groups and the Conservation Bank.

Mr. Starker noted the conservation easement language in the current USACE template is from 2010 and very outdated. Specifically, it should include conservation values for historical structures and sites, allowing archaeological studies, noting that real access can be problematic, and more.

Although Mac Stone was unable to attend, he sent a comment that his biggest concern and biggest wish is a reformation of the eco regions and how they are considered. He noted that it would seem that impacts to the Saluda would be best mitigated by restoration or preservation in the headwaters of these rivers' watersheds, but that's not currently how it works. The Blue Ridge ecoregion will likely not see any mitigation dollars because it's so isolated under current guidelines.

Mr. Stone congratulated Mr. Starker on the tremendous accomplishment when he wrote an objection to the allocation of mitigation dollars that led to the funding and eventual protection of Grassy Knob, which Naturaland Trust owns and manages. This is just south of the Blue Ridge ecoregion and in the Savannah Watershed, so the Upstate has seen some benefit, but nothing close what is going on in the Lowcountry. It is critical to get more mitigation projects upstate.

Ms. Austin suggested that the SCMA and its members become involved with the SC Land Trust Network. She believes that this would be a great forum that would allow mitigation providers and consultants to interact with land trust and push mitigation projects to high priority conservation areas.

The discussion was robust and very cordial. Members asked numerous questions and provided comments and responses to panel members. There was a general agreement that the conservation and mitigation communities should interact on an annual basis, at a minimum.

III. Committee Updates

- **Member Updates:** Mr. Nelson noted that the SCMA allows traditional land trust and other similar non-profits involved in SC or nationally to submit non-voting applications. If requested by the applicant, the Executive Committee may consider waiving the membership fee of \$400, reducing the fee, or allowing a member company to sponsor the membership. Land trusts, even if non-profits, involved in the credit delivery process may also become members at the non-voting or voting level.

Mr. Nelson announced that the SCMA just joined SustainSC as a Business Membership Network. One benefit of this membership is that SCMA Voting Members may receive a 50% discount on a Business Membership Network for their own companies. SustainSC has an extensive network. The SCMA joined to be sure that mitigation is a part of every conversation.

- **Technical Committee:** Mr. Johnson reported there will be a follow up meeting on July 11 with the USACE, DHEC and DNR on the SQT. The DNR has proposed to roll out the biological component of the SQT, which would include macroinvertebrates and fish. Current discussions include what portions of the SQT will be mandated. Components for

physicochemical will likely be rolled out for that portion of the SQT for credit generation. The remaining metrics for hydrology, geomorphology and hydraulics remain the same as presented in the draft. They are still working on the conversion from legacy credits to new credits. They do not want to penalize new credits. It will cost more to generate new credits so they are looking for a balance. The debit tool may be rolled out this fall for implementation this year. The public notice for the crediting side will go out next year for full implementation by June 2023.

- **Partnership Committee:** Sydni Redmond, Co-Chair, reminded members to spread the word on the new SCMA scholarships. The Committee is seeking volunteers for the review committee. A clay shoot fund raiser for the scholarships is planned for the fall; details will be announced soon. The SCMA will host a booth at the SC Water Resources Conference in October in Columbia.
- **SCDOT Partnership Committee:** Mr. Nelson reported that the SCDOT Mitigation Dashboard should be up and running again soon. Three solicitations are open and more should be announced by the end of the year. The SCDOT is also concerned with the SQT roll out and their ability to assess projects.

Attachments:

Attachment A: Panel Bios

Kristen Austin, Upstate Conservation Director, [The Nature Conservancy](#)

Kristen has been working with the South Carolina Chapter of The Nature Conservancy since 2004 as the Southern Blue Ridge program director based in Upstate South Carolina. In this role, she focuses on forest conservation efforts in the Southern Blue Ridge area. Austin oversees a number of initiatives that range from conserving land to natural resource management to conservation planning. She began her work with The Nature Conservancy seventeen years ago when she went to work for the Missouri Chapter focused on grassland conservation. Prior to working with The Nature Conservancy, Austin worked as an environmental educator where she taught at field schools in the Great Smoky Mountain National Park. Her teaching background instilled the importance of connecting people with nature. She graduated from the University of Tennessee with a double major in Environmental Studies and Religious Studies.

Lyles Cooper, Executive Director, [Pee Dee Land Trust](#)

Lyles joined PDLT in April 2015 as the Director of Education and Outreach and was promoted to Executive Director in October 2017. Lyles' professional experience spans multiple organizations in both the corporate and non-profit worlds. A graduate of College of Charleston with a degree in Corporate Communications and Marketing, Lyles brings a unique mix of skills to PDLT. Lyles is actively involved in many community organizations and currently serves on the board of the SC Land Trust Network. Lyles enjoys outdoor activities with her son, Woods (7). Growing up and having spent much of her childhood enjoying all the Pee Dee outdoors has to offer, she is passionate about helping preserve our resources for future generations in order to sustain a balance for economic growth in our state.

Chris Starker, Land Conservation Manager, [Upstate Forever](#)

Chris received his Bachelor of Arts degree in English and Photography from the University of South Carolina and earned his master's degree in Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management from Clemson University before joining Upstate Forever's Clean Water program in 2009. During his time in the Clean Water program, he worked on projects related to low-impact development practices, riparian buffer protection, and watershed protection strategies.

He has been actively educating the public on lake-related water quality issues, including point-source and non-point source pollution such as stormwater management and nutrient reduction, and other general lake management issues and legislation. In addition, he participated in Duke Energy's Keowee-Toxaway Relicensing Project, worked to address the PCB contamination of Lake Hartwell, led a water quality improvement project in the Walnut Creek Watershed near Ware Shoals in Laurens County, and implemented green infrastructure projects in the South Pacolet Watershed in Spartanburg County. Chris joined the Land Conservation Program in 2016.

Raleigh West, Executive Director, [SC Conservation Bank](#)

Raleigh West, the Executive Director of the South Carolina Conservation Bank (SCCB). Mr. West is a Wofford University graduate who holds an MBA from the Citadel and a JD from the University of South Carolina. Prior to joining the SCCB two years ago, he worked with Haynsworth Sinkler and Boyd and served as Executive Director of the Lord Berkeley Conservation Trust.

Attachment B: Attendee List

First name	Last name	Company Name	Attended
Kristin	Austin	The Nature Conservancy	In-person
Robby	Bowen	Aquatics Restoration Inc	In-person
Tim	Burns	Passarella & Associates, Inc.	Virtually
Jean	Cheveallier	KCI technologies	Virtually
John	Collum	JMT, Inc. - Charleston, SC	Virtually
Lyles	Cooper	Pee Dee Land Trust	Virtually
Kip	Dillihay	Sandy Creek Partners, LLC	In-person
Rheta	DiNovo	RES	Virtually
Ward	Elis	Ecosystem Planning and Restoration	In-person
Monica	Folk	Norfolk Southern Railway - Brosnan Forest	Virtually
Colin	Fraser	Broadwater Innovations	In-person
Josh	Gilman	Stantec	Virtually
Adrienne	Graham	SCMA	In-person
Doug	Hughes	Weyerhaeuser	Virtually
Daniel	Johnson	Wildlands Engineering	In-person
Brandon	Kelly	Wood	Virtually
Amanda	Mathis	Spartanburg Area Conservancy	Virtually
Emory	McClary	American Mitigation Company	Virtually
Ross	Nelson	American Mitigation Company	In-person
Jonathan	Page	River Mechanics PLLC	Virtually
Bob	Perry	Water & Land Solutions	In-person
Sydni	Redmond	Passarella & Associates, Inc.	Virtually
Chris	Ryan	RES	Virtually
Marcus	Sizemore	Stantec	In-person
Ryan	Smith	Davey Resource Group (Formerly LMG)	Virtually
Chris	Starker	Upstate Forever	In-person
Matthew	Thomas	JMT	Virtually
Phillip	Todd	North State Environmental	In-person
Joel	Wells	Norfolk Southern	Virtually
Raleigh	West	SC Conservation Bank	Virtually