

MAJOR EVENTS HISTORY OF DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

The agency provided the information below in the Program Evaluation Report it submitted on August 30, 2017.¹

- 1726
 - The first wildlife protection legislation was written. Under Colonial Law, the use of poisons to take “great quantities of fish” became illegal.
- 1825
 - The earliest state-sponsored work of a geologic nature in South Carolina was a 1-year “Geological and Mineralogical Survey of South Carolina” made in 1825-1826 by Lardner Vanuxem by order of the Legislature.
- 1843
 - Governor Hammond commissioned Michael Toumey to make a “Geological and Agricultural Survey of the State.” Mr. Toumey submitted a Report on the Geology of South Carolina in 1846. The report was published in 1848 and presented the results for the first real study of geology of the State.
- 1878
 - Legislation authorizing the governor to appoint a “suitable person” to act as Fish Commissioner was enacted. Fish wardens were appointed in every county.
- 1892
 - The first non-resident hunting license was issued.
- 1900
 - The Lacey Act passed. The first federal law regulating the importation of birds and animals and interstate traffic of game.
- 1904
 - Earle Sloan begins service as State Geologist until 1910. His earlier work was instrumental in our understanding of the Charleston earthquake.
- 1905
 - Provisions were made for each of the state’s forty-six counties to have game wardens. The Wardens drew no salary, but received one half of the fines they collected and one half of the fees of the non-resident licenses they sold.
- 1906
 - The S.C. General Assembly created the State Board of Fisheries and charged it with the general supervision of commercial and tidal fishing along South Carolina’s coast.
- 1907
 - The South Carolina Audubon Society was incorporated, precursor to the Wildlife Department, bringing game wardens under statewide coordination.
- 1910
 - Act No. 293 provided that South Carolina’s bird, game, and non-migratory fish laws would be administered by the Chief Game Warden James Henry Rice (1910-1913). This legislation signaled the birth of the state’s Wildlife Department.
- 1913
 - A. “Chief” Richardson becomes Chief Game Warden, and later the first State Director (1913-1958).

- 1926
 - Act authorizing the creation of game sanctuaries and within 5 years, more than 160,000 acres had been set aside where game, birds, and animals could breed unmolested.
- 1928
 - A hunting license law was established.
- 1931
 - Cleveland Fish Hatchery, the first state fish hatchery in South Carolina, opened in Greenville County to raise rainbow and brook trout.
- 1935
 - State Game and Fish Commission was created by the General Assembly.
 - Construction of Cohen Campbell Fish Hatchery.
- 1936
 - Construction of Spring Stevens Fish Hatchery.
- 1937
 - President Franklin D. Roosevelt urged states to address soil erosion by creating local conservation districts. The Conservation Districts Law, Act 182, provided for the creation of South Carolina's 46 soil and water conservation districts and a state agency, the S.C. Soil and Water Conservation Committee, which later merged into the S.C. Land Resources Commission.
 - Construction of Cheraw Fish Hatchery.
 - The Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act provided federal funding for the selection, restoration, rehabilitation and improvement of wildlife habitat, wildlife management research, and the distribution of information produced by the projects. The Act was amended October 23, 1970, to include funding for hunter training programs and the development, operation and maintenance of public target ranges.
- 1938
 - The first conservation district farm plan in the nation was initiated in Oconee County.
- 1941
 - The Wildlife Department purchased its first property, 5,866 acres in Hampton County now part of the Webb Center.
- 1947
 - The first biologist was hired by the Wildlife Department.
- 1949
 - South Carolina's deer stocking projects began.
- 1951
 - The Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Act provided federal financial assistance for state fish restoration and management plans and projects. This act and the later Wallop-Breaux (1984) Amendment allowed development of the Freshwater Fisheries section of the department.
- 1952
 - The State Board of Fisheries was incorporated into the newly created South Carolina Wildlife Resources Department, renamed the Division of Commercial Fisheries, along with the Division of Game, which included law enforcement. The department was supervised by a seven man Wildlife Resources Commission. Harry Hampton played an integral part in creation of the Commission.
- 1954
 - *South Carolina Wildlife* magazine published its first issue, a black-and-white free quarterly that communicated to the public the mission and programs of the newly formed Wildlife Resources Commission.
- 1957
 - Henry Johnson, Jr. was hired to head the new Division of Geology. The modern South Carolina Geological Survey began with Mr. Johnson's hiring, who stressed field reconnaissance, mapping, drilling, and stratigraphic description.

- 1959
 - State Director James W. Webb becomes the Director (1959-1974).
 - South Carolina boating law was enacted requiring the registration of powered boats.
- 1961
 - The first documented production of striped bass in the country was accomplished at the striped bass hatchery in Moncks Corner.
- 1962
 - The department acquired its first airplane, a Cessna 180.
- 1963
 - The Hunter Safety program was begun.
- 1967
 - The S.C. Water Resources Planning and Coordination Act of 1967 established the S.C. Water Resources Committee. The act was amended in 1969 to change the Committee to the S.C. Water Resources Commission which subsequently merged into SCDNR.
- 1969
 - Wildlife Resources Commission approved a final report titled "A Plan for Marine Resources Research and Development in South Carolina," which noted the essential need to establish a comprehensive research and development program for marine resources.
- 1970
 - In March, James A. Timmerman Jr. was named the first director of the newly established Marine Resources Division. Construction started on the Marine Center (at Fort Johnson in Charleston) to provide a facility for marine research and management.
- 1971
 - The SC Constitution is amended to state "the conservation of its natural resources are matters of public concern..."
 - The Game Management Area (GMA), now Wildlife Management Area (WMA), program began with department-owned tracts and leases. Fees were required for a permit.
- 1972
 - The S.C. Wildlife Resources Department was renamed the S.C. Wildlife and Marine Resources Department to emphasize the importance of the Marine Resources Division.
 - The State Soil and Water Conservation Commission was designated the State Land Resources Conservation Commission, which later merged into SCDNR.
 - The Boating Education program was begun.
- 1974
 - State Director James A. Timmerman, Jr. becomes Director (1974-1997).
 - The Heritage Trust program was created to preserve those natural features and cultural remains that are disappearing as the state's population increases. The program's purpose is to inventory, evaluate and protect the elements considered the most outstanding representatives of our state's heritage. It was the first of its kind in the nation.
 - The enabling legislation for the South Carolina Geological Survey was signed into law.
- 1978
 - The Small Game and Fur Resources projects were established to provide for research, survey and management efforts for animals like bobwhite quail, doves, raccoons and beavers.
- 1980
 - The Aquatic Plant Management Council was established to provide statewide coordination of aquatic plant management efforts in public waters. Management of nuisance aquatic plants was further strengthened by law in 1990 when the S.C. Aquatic Plant Management Program and Trust Fund were established.
- 1983
 - Groundbreaking ceremonies were held in Bluffton for the Waddell Mariculture Research and Development Center for the research and development of techniques to culture saltwater plants and animals.

- 1984
 - The Operation Game Thief program was established to assist game wardens in apprehending natural resource law violators by offering rewards for information leading to the arrest and conviction of violators.
- 1986
 - The Office of State Climatologist Act provided that the State Climatology Office will serve as the “climatological focal point for state government and its agencies.”
 - The General Assembly designated revenue from a slight increase in the Real Estate Document Stamp Tax to support the Heritage Land Trust Fund which supports the protection of critical wildlife habitat.
- 1988
 - Launched the ACE (Ashepoo, Combahee, and Edisto) Basin Project in partnership with nonprofit organizations, the USFWS, and private landowners as an effort to protect and maintain the natural character of the area through voluntary conservation measures including conservation easements and fee title acquisitions of important properties for public benefits while maintaining traditional natural resource uses such as hunting, fishing (commercial and recreational), forest management, and farming.
- 1989
 - The department assisted with the response to Hurricane Hugo.
- 1992
 - The ACE Basin National Estuarine Research Reserve was dedicated in 1992 to increase knowledge and awareness of estuarine habitats through research, monitoring activities and public education in the Ashepoo, Combahee and Edisto River drainage.
- 1994
 - As a result of the Restructuring Act of 1993, the S.C. Department of Natural Resources was formed, made up of the former S.C. Wildlife and Marine Resources Department, S.C. Water Resources Commission, S.C. Land Resources Conservation Commission, S.C. Geological Survey, and S.C. Migratory Waterfowl Committee.
- 1997
 - State Director Paul Sandifer becomes Director (1997-2003).
 - The Water Resources Division, Land Resources Division, and Geological Survey were formally combined into one division—Land, Water and Conservation, by the appropriations act of 1998.
- 1998
 - The SCDNR, with the help of Duke Energy, the Richard King Mellon Foundation, and The Conservation Fund, purchased the 32,000-acre Jocassee Gorges tract, a very significant habitat protection project on the Blue Ridge Escarpment.
 - Established the Safe Harbor Program in SC as an effort to encourage landowners to provide habitat for the federally-endangered red-cockaded woodpecker.
 - First Edition of the State Water Plan published, making recommendations for Water Resources Management in SC.
- 1999
 - The agency assisted with the response to Hurricane Floyd.
- 2001
 - The Hollings Marine Laboratory, a 103,000 square foot cooperative research facility operated by the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration, opens at the Marine Resources Center in Charleston. SCDNR scientists work with researchers from four other partner organizations in this state-of-the-art lab.
- 2002
 - SCDNR began intensive investigations on cobia to adopt and improve the techniques for growing cobia in mariculture operations. SCDNR is now considered a world leader in cobia mariculture, biology, and stewardship.

- 2003
 - State Director John E. Frampton becomes Director (2003-2012).
- 2004
 - Second Edition of the State Water Plan, incorporating lessons learned from the severe drought of 1998-2002.
- 2005
 - Purchase of 10,000-plus-acre Bonneau Ferry tract completed.
- 2006
 - Bonded Heritage Trust funds allowed for the acquisition of Woodbury WMA, a 25,668 acre property, and Hamilton Ridge Tract, a 13,281 acre property.
- 2008
 - Over a span of three Fiscal Years, beginning with FY2008-2009 and ending with FY2010-2011, the agency implemented a Voluntary Retirement Incentive Plan (RIP) and a Voluntary Separation Plan (VSP) on 5 separate occasions to address severe budget shortfalls. The agency also implemented a Reduction in Force (RIF) on two occasions in FY 2008-2009 and FY 2010-2011. These were in addition to other cost-cutting measures including travel restrictions, gas consumption reductions and hiring freezes, all due to severe budget reductions. Within those three Fiscal Years, the department lost a total of 90 employees as a result of budget reductions.
- 2011
 - The Right to Hunt amendment added to the South Carolina Constitution.
- 2012
 - State Director Alvin A. Taylor becomes Director (2012- present).
 - Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact signed into law.
- 2013
 - Violations, Licensing and Titling (VOLT) computer system launched.
- 2014
 - Interstate Boating Violator Compact signed into law (first in the nation).
 - Initiated the Surface Water Assessment project to consolidate hydrologic information and create computer models for the eight major river basins, the first step in updating the State Water Plan.
 - Establishment of the SC Quail Council and subsequent SC Bobwhite Initiative.
- 2015
 - Wateree River Heritage Preserve was acquired by SCDNR as partial mitigation for the Haile Gold Mine project. Wateree is a 3,677 acre tract of land including Cook's Mountain and Goodwill Plantation, providing significant cultural and ecological land preservation in Richland County. There were approximately 698 acres added to Forty-Acre Rock Heritage Preserve in Lancaster County as well.
 - SCDNR provided substantial assistance in flood recovery efforts from the October 2015 flood.
 - Completed Game Zone restructuring which created 4 game zones in SC as part of an effort to simplify regulations and provide consistency across the state.
- 2016
 - SCDNR provided substantial assistance in Hurricane Matthew recovery efforts.
 - SCDNR acquired, with assistance from Duke Energy, Liberty Hill WMA, an 8,000 acre property including 17 miles of waterfront on Lake Wateree and the Catawba River which provides natural resources dependent recreational opportunities for the public.
 - Red-cockaded woodpeckers released onto Donnelley WMA as part of an effort to re-establish populations in the ACE Basin.
- 2017
 - Wateree Rifle Range and Twin Ponds Rifle Range opened to the public, offering public shooting opportunities in Richland and Charleston Counties.

- SCDNR worked with the oyster mariculture industry to develop protocols and procedures for the production of maricultured oysters. The General Assembly approved these measures, opening the door to sale of SC-grown maricultured oysters year-round.
- Implemented a new approach to deer management in SC by requiring that all harvested deer be tagged and establishing a statewide limit on antlered deer.
- Completed the Surface Water Assessment project in support of updating the State Water Plan.

¹ The agency was asked, “Please provide the major events history of the agency by year, from its origin to the present, in a bulleted list. Include the names of each director with the year the director started and major events (e.g., programs added, cut, departments/divisions changed, etc.).”