

Saluda River Basin Council Meeting Minutes
April 16, 2025

RBC Members Present: KC Price, Phil Fragapane, Rebecca Wade, Josie Newton, Eddie Owen, Kaleigh Sims, Paul Lewis, Katherine Amidon, Devin Orr, Charlie Timmons, Rett Templeton, Brandon Grooms, Patrick Jackson, Robert Hanley, Melanie Ruhlman, & Kevin Miller

RBC Members Absent: Jeff Boss (Jeff Phillips, alternate, present), Jay Nicholson (Guy Schmoltze, alternate, present), David Coggins, Jason Davis, Tate Davis, Rick Huffman, Larry Nates, Thompson Smith, & Michael Waddell

Planning Team Present: John Boyer, Kirk Westphal, Joe Koon, Scott Harder, Hannah Hartley, Tom Walker, Alexis Modzelesky, & Andy Wachob

Total Present: 30

K.C. Price, Chair, called the April 16th, 2025, meeting to order at 10:03 AM. The Saluda RBC's April 16th meeting objectives included performing the test of consensus of the Draft River Basin Plan, reviewing RBC membership and term limits, and reviewing the May 29th meeting presentation and speaking roles. K.C. Price called for approval of the meeting agenda. Eddie Owen – 1st made a motion to approve the meeting agenda, and it was seconded by Josie Newton – 2nd which was approved unanimously. There was a motion to approve the March 19th meeting minutes and summary from Robert Hanley – 1st and it was seconded by Jeff Phillips – 2nd. Members unanimously approved the last meeting minutes and summary.

Upcoming Events:

- April 21 – Upper Savannah Draft River Basin Plan Public Meeting, 6-8 pm. Tri-County Technical College, 511 Michelin Blvd.. Anderson
- WaterSC Working Group Meeting, 1 -4pm- Philips Market Center, 117 Ballard Court, West Columbia

Additionally, on April 3rd, the Surface Water Study Committee held its meeting. A recording is available on the state website. To access it, simply search for the April 3rd meetings under the Surface Water category.

The Surface Water Study Committee received a report from Myra Reese of SCDES, who also serves on the committee. They also heard public comments from various stakeholders, including Tommy Lavender from the Chamber of Commerce and Frank Eskridge, representing the Municipal Association of South Carolina. Frank, who also works for the City of Columbia and served on the Broad River RBC, shared notable insights. The meeting lasted about an hour, although additional speakers were scheduled.

On the 10th of April, Katherine was at the WaterSC meeting held in Greenville. Her main question concerns how the summary notes from the meeting will be compiled, especially since the format appeared to be more of an open house rather than a structured forum. However, she did have a meaningful one-on-one conversation with a well driller who expressed concern about increasing groundwater withdrawals statewide, especially in the Lowcountry, urging that this issue be considered more seriously in future planning.

John stated the meetings were designed as open house-style events intended to foster networking and allow for direct Q&A between attendees and the DES team, rather than structured public comment. As a result, no formal summary notes are expected to be produced, unlike the January meeting, where participants made public statements and a summary was generated. While copies of the sign-in sheets can be provided to document attendance, the format of these recent events did not support comprehensive note-taking or formal reporting.

Kathrine discussed the “**Confluence 2025**” Conference on December 4-5, 2025, at the DeSoto Hotel, Savannah, GA. Each year, a smaller conference called *Confluence* is held to bring together stakeholders from North Carolina, Georgia, and South Carolina for meaningful, regionally focused conversations about water. The event rotates between the three states and occurs every two years. The most recent conference took place in Greenville, South Carolina in 2023, and the upcoming session is scheduled for December 2025 in Savannah, Georgia. Unlike

larger conferences, *Confluence* offers a more intimate setting for passionate water professionals to engage in collaborative discussions and shared regional strategies.

No Public and Agency Comment.

Perform the Test of Consensus on the Draft Plan:

The next item on the agenda is to conduct a test of consensus on the draft plan that was circulated approximately two weeks ago. As previously discussed in earlier meetings, the consensus will be measured using a 1 to 5 scale: a vote of 1 signifies full endorsement, 2 indicates endorsement with minor concerns, 3 reflects major concerns but continued support, while 4 and 5 represent various levels of non-endorsement—standing aside with reservations or outright withdrawal. This preliminary vote allows the group to gauge overall support before moving to a final up-or-down vote after incorporating public comments. Both the test and final votes will be formally documented in the appendix of the final plan. Today’s process involves recording each RBC member’s vote in alphabetical order, including votes submitted in advance by members who are unable to attend.

Q: Can you give an example of how we should consider minor versus major?

C: One way to interpret this is that while there may be general support for most of the plan, it might not fully address the specific concerns of the organization you represent. This doesn’t necessarily mean the overall plan lacks value or should not be endorsed—it may still be a worthwhile and comprehensive effort. However, a person may feel it doesn’t adequately reflect their particular interest, which could influence how they choose to vote.

C: I’d also add that if you have a major point of contention, it’s helpful for us to know what that is so we can address it in future planning phases. Even for a rating of 2 or 3, sharing your concerns, though not required, would improve the process and help guide future planning efforts more effectively.

Level of Endorsement:

Name	Level of Endorsement
Kathrine Amidon	2- reasons - I will vote a 2, and my reasoning is that I represent the at-large category, which means I represent all interest groups. I believe there were some original recommendations we had to scale back during the consensus-building process. While I appreciate that we reached consensus, and I value that outcome, I think it's only fair—given the compromises involved—for me to vote a 2
Jeff Boss	2- same reason as Kathrine
David Coggins	
Jason Davis	
Tate Davis	Vote for 1 reason- Yes, I am voting a 1—full endorsement. I’m comfortable and satisfied that the modeling was done as thoroughly as possible, and I appreciate both the long-term outlook and the collaborative nature of the process. Therefore, I fully endorse the plan
Brandon Grooms	2- reason - I'm going to go with a 2, because I believe there were some areas that could have been improved. However, overall, I share the same sentiments that Katherine expressed.
Robert Hanley	Vote for 1
Rick Huffman	
Patrick Jackson	I'm casting a vote of 1. I knew coming into this process that there would be some negotiations involved, and I sincerely

	appreciate everyone's efforts and contributions.
Paul Lewis	
Kevin Miler	1
Larry Nates	
Jossie Newton	2.- I'd like to vote a 2, please. Overall, I'm happy with the plan, but I do think there were some compromises. I would have liked to see certain elements strengthened, but I still feel comfortable with it overall.
Jay Nicholson	2. Reason - same reason as those who voted for 2.
Devin Orr.	1. Fully endorsed
Eddie Owen	2. Reason - I am casting a vote of 2. I truly appreciate everyone's hard work on this—it involved quite a few heated arguments and discussions, which were valuable in allowing us to express our views honestly. However, there were a few aspects related to water quality where we would have preferred a different outcome. That said, the plan is still worthwhile and strong overall, and I believe there will be opportunities for continued discussion in the future
K.C. Price	2- Like other reasons stated or identified.
Melanie Ruhlman	same reason as those who voted for 2.
Kaleigh Sims-	1 full endorsement
Thompson Smith	
Rett Templeton	2- same reason
Charlie Timmons	1 full endorsement

Micheal Waddell	3
Rebecca Wade-	same reason for those who voted 2

Review RBC Membership and Term Limits (John Boyer):

Review RBC membership and term limits. As we near the end of this planning phase, we've been checking in across all RBCs to determine which members, particularly those with 2-year terms, intend to continue or step down. This information helps DHEC identify interest categories that may need new appointments, assuming the planning process continues. Those with 2-year terms (marked in red) technically ended their terms in March, but we previously agreed to continue through the first phase. If you choose to renew, your next term will be for three years, as all renewed terms follow a 3-year cycle. I'd like to ask members with expiring 2-year terms if they'd be interested in continuing for another term, pending DHEC approval. Members' responses are as follows:

Phil Fragapane- Likely to extend

Robert Hanley- Yes, as industry rep.

Patrick Jackson- Yes

Devin Orr – No

Melanie Ruhlman – Yes

Rett Templeton- Yes

Public Meeting Discussion and Presentation Review:

Draft Saluda River Basin Plan Public Meeting:

Thursday, May 29th, from 5.00 pm -8.00 pm

ReWa Graham W. Rich Operations and Training Center, 560 Mauldin Road Greenville.

Evening Agenda:

5.00 Arrival if joining for the Walking Tour

5.15 Optional Walking Tour of ReWa's brand new Swamp Rabbit Trail extension

6.00 RBC Presentation of the Draft River Basin Plan

7:00-8:00 Q&A

C: We're offering a short walking tour to showcase our clean water mural, which was painted on one of our assets at the treatment facility. We've recently opened a Centennial Walking Trail through our campus, and we'll be providing a brief educational guided tour for those interested in walking and learning more about ReWa and the water resources we help protect.

C: We're currently working with Scott Harder and his team to create a flyer that can be shared on LinkedIn, social media, or as an email attachment alongside the full event agenda. I've suggested that the walking tour conclude just before 6:00 PM, allowing us to start the formal presentation around 6:15 PM to give attendees time to arrive and get settled. In addition, it would be super helpful if everybody could assist in making this event successful, including bringing something for the public meeting, and cash is also welcome.

C: Please encourage a wide range of people to attend—whether from your church, community group, or other networks—because these issues affect everyone, not just those in the water sector. If you have a board, invite them as well. We'll also be reaching out to Water SC members and the Surface Water Study Committee to encourage local participation and showcase what an RBC in action looks like. Help spread the word—every bit of outreach helps, even if it's just to a few followers on social media.

Agenda and Speaking Roles:		Speaker	Time
1. Welcome and Introduction.	K.C. Price, RBC chair		6:00-6:15
2. Overview of the Planning Process	Scott Harder, SCDES		6:15-6:30
3. Draft River Basin Highlights:			
• Vision and Goals	Kathrine Amidon, RBC Vice Chair.		6.30- 7.30
• Water Demands			
• Surface Water Availability	Phil-Fragapane, Duke Energy		
• Streamflow-Ecology Relationships	Kevin Miller, Foothills Paddling Club		

- Water Management Strategies – Jeff Boss, Greenville Water & Thompson Smith, SC Farm Bureau and Twin Oaks Farm
 - Plan Recommendations ----- Robert Hanley, Greenville County Soil & Water Conservation District
4. Public Comment Period and Questions and Answers. ----- Tom Walker, Clemson University. 7.30-8.00

C: It's encouraging to see a range of perspectives represented, especially at a public meeting where young people are less commonly present. If even one or two young attendees are there, take the opportunity to share insights about your profession and its impact—it could help spark their interest and engagement. These moments may not always lead to immediate results, but they are valuable chances to inspire future professionals.

C: Look forward to implementation and the process moving forward.

Meeting adjourned: 11:12 AM

1st – Katherine Amidon and 2nd – Patrick Jackson

Minutes: Iffy Ogbekene and Tom Walker

Approved: 7/16/25

RBC Chat:

10:00:03 From Kevin Miller to Everyone:

I'm having microphone issues and will stick to chat if I need to speak.

10:04:36 From Robert Hanley to Everyone:

I miss KC's snacks.

10:07:45 From bgrooms to Everyone:

Good Morning everyone

10:08:07 From gschmoltze to Everyone:
yes

10:13:14 From kprice to Everyone:
<https://www.scstatehouse.gov/video/archives.php>

10:22:53 From Kevin Miller to Everyone:
I will vote 1 full endorsement. (This doesn't mean I don't personally wish some things were different, but I respect others opinions and feel comfortable explaining them.)

10:29:34 From Kaleighs to Everyone:
I am voting 1 have to jump to a call

10:30:44 From Charlie Timmons to Everyone:
I'm a 1 as well

10:41:45 From katherine.amidon to Everyone:
When: May 29th from 5:00 pm-8:00 pm
Where: Graham W. Rich Operations and Training Center 560 Mauldin Road Greenville
Agenda:
5:00 Arrival if joining for the Walking Tour
5:15 Optional Walking Tour of ReWa's brand new Swamp Rabbit Trail extension
5:55 Tour wrap up
6:00 Arrival for presentation
6:15-6:45 Formal Presentation
6:45-8:00 Open House – this is your chance to ask questions and be heard!

10:45:50 From Kevin Miller to Everyone:
Our river basin has the largest outdoor recreational manufacturer in the world.

10:46:01 From Kevin Miller to Everyone:
(Confluence)

10:48:58 From katherine.amidon to Everyone:
@kamidon18 Venmo

10:52:56 From Kevin Miller to Everyone:
I'm still good for that

10:54:00 From katherine.amidon to Everyone:
@Kevin Miller do you have a contact I should reach out to?

11:02:23 From katherine.amidon to Everyone:
John, an idea...you could do a ripple in the water signifying that this plan I just the beginning of a lot more work to come

11:05:38 From Charlie Timmons to Everyone:

I'll connect with CCES. I still have great connections with them

11:07:58 From Josie Newton to Everyone:

Thank you for bringing this up, Kirk. Great idea and perspective.

11:10:49 From bgrooms to Everyone:



11:12:29 From Charlie Timmons to Everyone:

great close

11:12:33 From Charlie Timmons to Everyone:

thanks all