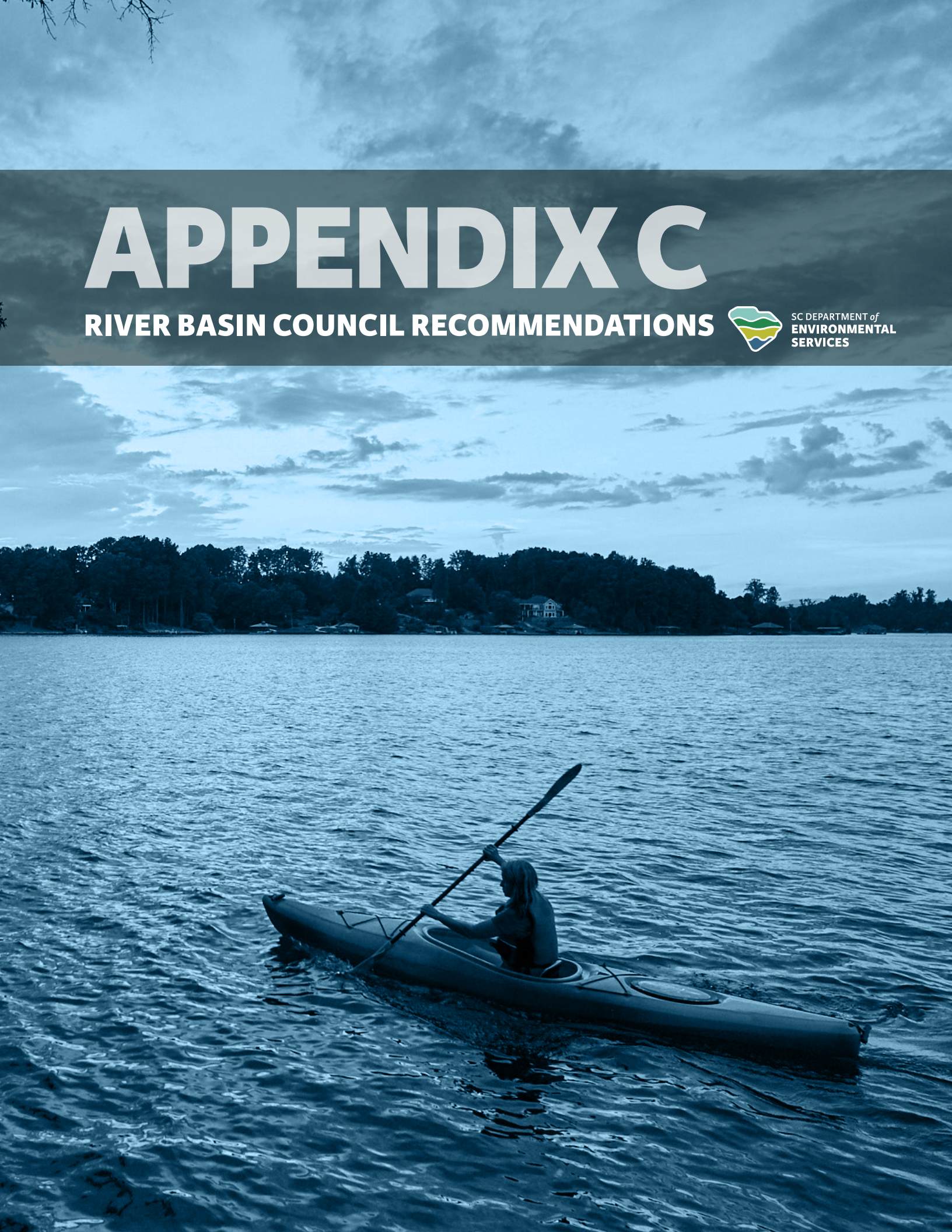
APPENDIX C

RIVER BASIN COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS

SC DEPARTMENT *of* ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES



Appendix C. River Basin Council Recommendations

Table C-1. RBC Planning Process Recommendations.

Topic	Recommendation	Upper Sav.	Saluda	Broad	Catawba	Lower Sav.-Salk	Edisto	Santee	Pee Dee
Membership, Bylaws, Meeting Schedules and Preferences	Diversify/rotate meeting locations.						■		■
	Review RBC membership regularly to make sure all interest categories are adequately represented.	■	■	■		■		■	
	Conduct an initial get-to-know-you meeting to introduce and promote trust among RBC members.						■		
	Establish attendance requirements.						■		
	Incorporate into the RBC bylaws a preference for in-person attendance with a hybrid option as needed, recognizing that it is not always feasible to travel to monthly meetings.						■		
	Send the previous meeting's summary just before the next meeting or briefly review past outcomes at the start of each meeting, time permitting.						■		
	Accomplish the goals of the river basin planning process in fewer meetings, if possible.						■		
	RBCs and their Planning Teams should consider regularly polling the RBC members to identify if adjustments to meeting times, locations, and dates would allow for easier and/or more member attendance and/or increased in-person attendance.			■					
	Where appropriate and allowed, experts who present technical information to the RBCs should offer proposed recommendations for RBC consideration.			■					
	The RBCs (in conjunction with SCDES) should develop guidance and guidelines for processes to replace RBC members if current members resign, and to adjust member terms if necessary. They should develop best practices for recruiting new members.			■					
	Include more field trips, if possible.			■					

Table C-1. RBC Planning Process Recommendations (cont.)

Topic	Recommendation	Upper Sav.	Saluda	Broad	Catawba	Lower Sav.-Salk	Edisto	Santee	Pee Dee
Communication	Coordinate regular state-wide meetings of RBCs and State agencies.	■	■	■		■		■	■
	In the Savannah River Basin, the RBCs should attempt to increase engagement with USACE Planning and Operations Divisions.	■				■			
	RBC members should communicate with legislative delegations throughout the river basin planning process to promote their familiarity with the process and its goals and to generate buy-in on its recommendations.					■	■		
	The Edisto and Santee RBCs should coordinate and participate in future monitoring, planning, modeling, and other activities focused on the Calhoun County Groundwater Area of Concern, which extends into both basins.						■		
	RBCs should communicate through SCDES to the stakeholders that participated in the development of Groundwater Management Plans and the establishment of Capacity Use Areas.						■		
	RBCs should communicate with the Drought Response Committee as described in Chapter 8.2.2.						■		
	RBCs should consider developing and executing a communication plan early in the initial 2-year planning process and conducting education and outreach prior to completion of the River Basin Plan.			■					
	RBCs should hold additional public meetings to enhance public engagement.		■						
	During 2025, the RBCs should initiate and coordinate discussions with SCDES to begin the process of updating the State Water Plan.	■							
	The Savannah RBCs, with the support of SCDES, should coordinate and communicate with the Coastal Georgia Regional Council.					■			
Funding	The legislature should continue to fund state water planning activities, including river basin planning.	■		■		■	■		■
	SCDES should designate staff to continue to coordinate and support ongoing RBC activities.					■		■	
	Following development of the initial River Basin Plans, the RBCs should work with SCDES to identify the scope of future RBC activities and help develop funding needs and requests.	■							

Table C-1. RBC Planning Process Recommendations (cont.)

Topic	Recommendation	Upper Sav.	Saluda	Broad	Catawba	Lower Sav.-Salk	Edisto	Santee	Pee Dee
Public Outreach	RBC members should be encouraged to present observations and outcomes of the river basin planning process.						■	■	■
	The RBCs should establish a social media presence to engage with the public and describe the river basin planning process.						■		■
	RBC members representing municipalities should consider including inserts in mailings to inform their customers of RBC activities.						■		
	Public relations and communication strategies should be developed to educate the public on who the RBCs are, what they do, and the benefits of participation. Strategies should focus on both the role of the RBCs in planning and in implementation.								■
	The RBCs should support public outreach and education to increase awareness within the general public by coordinating with groups that have existing education and outreach efforts focused on water conservation, such as Clemson University and South Carolina State Extension Services.	■	■			■	■		
Implementation Process	The RBCs should conduct quarterly meetings immediately following the release of the River Basin Plan to facilitate implementation and seek funding sources.						■		
	SCDES and/or RBC facilitators should offer new RBC member orientation to introduce basin concerns, strategies, and implementation plans.						■		
	RBCs should develop and implement an engagement plan to improve awareness and build support for the recommendations, actions, and strategies identified in the River Basin Plan.	■							
	SCDES should form an Upstate Interbasin River Council (IRC).		■						
	WaterSC should consider recommendations from the RBCs.					■			

Table C-2. RBC Technical Recommendations.

Topic	Recommendation	Upper Sav.	Saluda	Broad	Catawba	Lower Sav.-Salk	Edisto	Santee	Pee Dee
Water Quality Planning	Future RBC planning efforts should address **water quality.**	■	■	■		■	■	■	■
Need for Additional Data	Fund and establish an **automated monitoring network of weather and climate monitoring stations** (also called a mesoscale network).	■	■	■		■		■	
	Support continued efforts to maintain and expand **streamflow gages**. The RBCs recognize that comprehensive, reliable, and long-term hydrologic data are critical to water planning and management.	■	■	■		■		■	
	Establish an **online library** of, or a catalog of links to, technical information that will enhance RBCs' technical understanding of water resources concepts and issues.		■	■					
	SCDES should work with the USGS and other partners (e.g., property owners, well owners, and stakeholders representing Capacity Use Areas) to **enhance groundwater monitoring capabilities** in areas where model simulations indicate potential for water levels to drop below the top of the aquifer.						■	■	
	Develop more and/or **higher quality data** to inform better decision making.								■
	SCDES should explore expansion of the **ambient water quality monitoring** network.		■						
	State agencies and partners should collect and organize **existing water quality data.**		■						
	Compile the **data obtained from established credible systems** in alignment with RBC goals for utilization across the State before creating new systems, databases, or monitoring stations.	■							

Table C-2. RBC Technical Recommendations (cont.)

Topic	Recommendation	Upper Sav.	Saluda	Broad	Catawba	Lower Sav.-Salk	Edisto	Santee	Pee Dee
Modeling Tools and Efforts	Incorporate **future climate projections** into modeling analyses.			■			■	■	■
	Complete the **groundwater model** developed by the USGS					■		■	■
	Surface water modeling should incorporate scenarios that further examine **future uncertainties**, such as changes in rainfall and hydrology, alternative population growth scenarios, and potential impacts of future development on runoff.		■			■			
	SCDES and USGS should carve out a **regional groundwater model(s)** covering potential Groundwater Areas of Concern and (1) further calibrate the model to local land conditions, including seasonal drawdowns, and (2) evaluate seasonal drawdowns through the planning horizon under each planning scenario.						■		
	Surface water modeling should extend to **coastal areas.**								■
	Improved calibration efforts: Additional surface water gaging stations should be installed in **headwater areas** to better understand flow conditions and improve future model calibration.								■
	Future SWAM modeling should incorporate flow **monitoring data collected at the county level** to validate flows.		■						
	RBCs should coordinate with SCDES to identify and **define data gaps** and possible avenues for filling gaps in future phases (or in preparation for future planning phases).		■						
	A groundwater model should be used to analyze and predict **chloride levels** in the Upper Floridan and Middle Floridan aquifers in Beaufort County.					■			
	Funding should be provided to SCDES to add **deeper aquifer monitoring** wells in the central part of the basin, such as Colleton, Bamberg, and Hampton counties.					■			
	Coordinate with Georgia on the use and impacts to the shared groundwater resources, perhaps with the Coastal Georgia Regional Council. Projected groundwater use in Georgia should be considered in future groundwater modeling scenarios and analysis.					■			

Table C-2. RBC Technical Recommendations (cont.)

Topic	Recommendation	Upper Sav.	Saluda	Broad	Catawba	Lower Sav.-Salk	Edisto	Santee	Pee Dee
Technical Studies	Incorporate **lessons learned from other basins** in future River Basin Plan updates.	■		■			■		■
	Continue to evaluate and discuss **ecological flow standards** and flow-ecology relationships.	■	■	■					
	Explore the potential **impacts of private and community/commercial wells** and how they may affect surface water.	■	■						
	The RBC should identify the **financial impacts of increased sedimentation** on reservoirs and water resources and communicate the results to local governments to demonstrate the value of riparian buffers, sedimentation and erosion control measures, and other policies and controls that reduce sediment generation and transport.	■		■					
	The state should request for and cost-share in the completion of Phase 2 of the **USACE Comprehensive Study and Drought Plan Update**.	■				■			
	Study the **impacts of land use changes** on water resources.	■		■			■	■	■
	Study the relationship between the duration of drawdown below the top of aquifer and negative impacts such as compaction and **reduced aquifer yield**.						■		
	RBCs should identify potential pinch points where current and projected low flows may lower the **assimilative capacity** of the streams. Strategies may need to be identified to mitigate low flows at these potential pinch points.			■					
	Further investigate and potential piloting of low-tech, process-based approaches to **stream restoration**.			■					
	Improve the understanding of **land use and land protection** by studying and developing a strategy for additional land protection.								■
	More **Doppler radar capabilities** should be created to help with storm prediction and data collection.								■
	The drivers of **unsustainable groundwater withdrawals** (i.e. cones of depression), such as water demands, local aquifer conditions, and groundwater well spacing and pumping rates should be more thoroughly understood to better inform groundwater management strategies.								■
	SCDES should perform studies and analyses in support of a **recycled water statute** in South Carolina.					■		■	
	Future focus on **flooding**, which poses an important water-related risk that not only threatens life and property but can also impact the ability to provide reliable water supplies when and after a flood occurs.								■
	Identify and prioritize **properties for conservation** to protect quantity and quality of water. The state and local governments should develop and fund county conservation and mitigation banks and collaborate with South Carolina Conservation Bank and Land Trusts to conserve priority properties.	■							

Table C-2. RBC Technical Recommendations (cont.)

Topic	Recommendation	Upper Sav.	Saluda	Broad	Catawba	Lower Sav.-Salk	Edisto	Santee	Pee Dee
Technical Training	Develop and provide a **handout** of groundwater and surface water concepts to establish a common knowledge base among RBC members.						■		
	The USGS and/or SCDES should offer additional **demonstration and discussion of the groundwater model** focusing on input parameters and sensitivity of results to various parameters.						■		
	Offer and organize additional **field trips** to better understand various water users' withdrawal needs and water management strategies.						■		
	The RBC endeavors to learn more about the Pinewood site including the regulation, consent orders, controls, and monitoring in place.							■	
Alignment with Other Water-Related Planning Efforts	For river basins with state or federal specially designated streams (e.g., National Wild and Scenic Rivers or State Scenic Rivers), the RBCs should assess **alignment between the River Basin Plan and the management plan associated with the special designation.**		■	■					
	As part of the comprehensive planning process, **each local government should consult the Resilience Plan** developed by the South Carolina Office of Resilience, local Hazard Mitigation Plans, and the associated River Basin Plan(s) developed by the RBCs for inclusion within the resilience element as required by the South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act as amended in 2020.		■						
	The RBC Plans should be used as a tool for **local comprehensive plans** and economic development.		■						
Protecting Water Resources	**Reduce sediment loading to reservoirs** through various methods, including streambank restoration, riparian buffers, and green infrastructure.	■	■						
	Encourage the **building permitting process** where applicable to require developers work with water/wastewater utilities to ensure adequate availability/capacity. The RBC also encourages local governments, developers, and others to use this River Basin Plan as a guide to help inform decisions on growth and development, based on water resource availability.	■				■			
	The Saluda RBC should work to **remove the Saluda River hydrologic impairment (4C)** below the Saluda Lake hydro project.		■						

Table C-3. RBC Policy, Regulatory, and Legislative Recommendations.

Topic	Recommendation *Note that some RBCs have slightly different language but similar intent.*	Strength of Consensus *(see legend below)*							
		Upper Sav.	Saluda	Broad	Catawba Wateree Water Mgt. Group	Lower Sav.-Salk	Edisto	Santee	Pee Dee
Reasonable Use Criteria	The South Carolina Surface Water Withdrawal, Permitting, Use, and Reporting Act should allow for reasonable use criteria to be applied to all (new[1]) surface water withdrawals, like those that currently exist for groundwater withdrawals								
Improve effectiveness of water laws	Improve the current laws that allow for regulation of water use so that they are enforceable and effective. The current water law, which grandfathers most water users, needs to be improved to support effective management of the state's water resources.								
Planning, Implementation, and Funding	The South Carolina Legislature authorize recurring funding for state water planning activities, including river basin planning. Currently, nearly all the funding for the river basin planning process has come from the legislature.								
	The South Carolina Legislature should establish a grant program to help support the implementation of the actions and strategies identified in each RBC's River Basin Plan. One example is Georgia's Regional Water Plan Seed Grant Program which supports and incentivizes local governments and other water users as they undertake their Regional Water Plan implementation responsibilities.								
Permits and Registrations	Water law and implementing regulations should not distinguish between registrations and permits. All water users that withdraw above the identified threshold should be required to apply for a water withdrawal permit. Current law allows for agricultural surface water users and all groundwater users withdrawing water outside of CUAs to register their water use rather than apply for permits.								
Regulatory Alignment with State Water Plan	The water withdrawal permitting process should specifically assess the permit application's alignment with the River Basin Plan (Broad RBC rec) or the legislatively approved State Water Plan (Lower Sav-Salk RBC rec)								
Water Education	The State should support and fund RBC-led and statewide water education programs that include all sectors of water use and promote the types of water management strategies recommended in River Basin Plans.								

[1] *The Upper Savannah RBC's recommendation specified "new" surface water withdrawals.*

Color Code Legend: *RBC Consensus* | *RBC Majority Approval* | *Not Approved or Not Significantly Discussed*