



WaterSC Recommendations

In October 2024, WaterSC began a series of monthly, facilitated meetings to advise SCDES on comprehensive water resources policy and to develop consensus-based recommendations. From October 2024 and through the development of this State Water Plan, the Working Group heard from specialists; participated in listening sessions; and shared their different ideas, perspectives, and experiences on a variety of topics, including:

- State of surface water and groundwater in South Carolina
- Surface water law
- Managing water resources with conjunctive use
- Interbasin transfers and multi-state water management considerations
- Surface water case studies and experiences
- Drought monitoring and response in South Carolina
- Water reuse
- Perspectives from the Councils of Government
- RBC recommendations and themes
- State of groundwater in South Carolina
- Conservation practices and water management strategies
- River basin and historic state planning

While the monthly meetings of WaterSC provided the hub for collaborative dialogue, WaterSC members or their designees also provided opportunities for sector-focused stakeholder engagement between meetings by hosting stakeholder forums. The forums connected existing organizations and other sector-specific stakeholders, offering open pathways for expanded input and involvement that was shared back with the full Working Group. Statewide listening sessions were also held to connect with a broader range of community leaders and others with interests in the state's water resources.

In August 2025, building on the knowledge, perspectives, and ideas generated from previous meetings, stakeholder forums, and listening sessions, WaterSC members participated in a 2-day retreat to begin the process of identifying recommendations to improve water planning and drought response, address data gaps and fill information needs, and suggest new or revised water resources policies. Their consensus-based recommendations developed during the retreat and in subsequent meetings are listed on the pages that follow, by topic. Each WaterSC recommendation is in **bold text** and some include additional, supporting information.

Continued Support for Water Planning



The State of South Carolina should continue the WaterSC Working Group beyond the State Water Plan updating process and should continue to support ongoing state water planning. The Working Group recognized that, faced with ever-increasing demands on the state's water resources and the uncertainty of future conditions, continued water planning is necessary to support the state's strong economy and rapidly expanding population growth, while ensuring adequate water remains for all uses.



SCDES should request and encourage the Legislature to continue funding for state water planning activities, including planning, administration, data collection, and research and grants for the implementation of water projects. Additional investment is required to continue the monitoring, planning, and technical studies, and to implement strategies that provide access to and protect water resources.



SCDES should also pursue additional funding sources or opportunities from both public and private sectors. Both federal and private programs exist that support the effective planning and management of water resources (see Chapter 8). Leveraging the funding offered by these programs will be critical to effectively implement the recommendations and strategies.

Interstate Water Management



The State of South Carolina should increase coordination with Georgia and North Carolina on interstate water management strategies and shared water resources. Recognizing that South Carolina's Broad, Catawba, and Pee Dee River basins originate in North Carolina, and the Savannah River basin is shared with Georgia, collaborative management of these shared water resources is essential to avoid conflict and the potential for costly litigation associated with conflict resolution. Collaboration and mutual planning are necessary to avoid or mitigate potential impacts from interbasin transfers, new large withdrawals, and other factors that may affect the availability of water for use in South Carolina.



Education and Outreach



SCDES should develop and implement an intentional education and outreach communication plan on efficiency of water usage throughout the state. WaterSC recognizes the importance of implementing strategies focused on water conservation and efficiency. Extending supplies by lowering demands is a hallmark of effective water management, and communicating that message through education and outreach is the first step in advancing that strategy.

Drought Response



Strengthen the Drought Response Program. In recognizing the importance of preparing for drought, SCDNR should understand improvements and actions that could be taken under the existing statutory and regulatory authority. This may lead to consideration of potential regulatory recommended changes, if needed:

- Review of Drought Response Committee structure and membership for adequate representation;
- Recommended actions to make drought response more effective, including triggers, indicators and actions; and
- Providing support to assist in updating and implementing the required/local water system Drought Response Plans to be more effective.

Water Reuse



WaterSC supports beneficial water reuse and robustly pursuing the concept where feasible and appropriate. Expansion of water reuse programs in South Carolina may help support growth, attract industry, lessen irrigation demands on existing sources, and reduce potential impacts of wastewater discharges to surface water. New regulatory programs may be needed to implement and expand water reuse in the state.

Water Quality and Quantity



Recognize the essential connections between water quality and water quantity for making better decisions for the future of water planning in our state.

Water Permitting



The State of South Carolina has the obligation to ensure waters of the state are used responsibly and the health of these waters is adequately maintained for residents. To the extent SCDES has the authority to apply judgment, it should utilize this authority and where it does not, SCDES should seek legislative authority to fulfill this responsibility, including a periodic review of water permits and registrations.



Strawberry Hill Cooley Farm

