

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSISTANCE CONFERENCE



Keynote

*Myra Reece
Director, South Carolina Department
of Environmental Services*



Myra served in leadership roles with the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) for more than 30 years. She was Regional Office Director and Chief of the Bureau of Air Quality prior to becoming DHEC's Director of Environmental Affairs.

She currently serves as the Chair of WaterSC, as SCDES is the lead coordinating agency for that statewide water planning initiative. In the summer of 2022, Myra was named president of the Environmental Council of States (ECOS), the national non-profit, non-partisan association of state and territorial environmental agency leaders. ECOS plays a critical role in facilitating a quality relationship among federal and state agencies across the country. Myra previously served in leadership roles with ECOS as Planning Committee Chair, Secretary-Treasurer, and Vice President. As "past-president" of ECOS, she continues to be a part of important national conversations about successes and challenges of protecting human health and the environment.

Myra received a bachelor's degree in microbiology from Clemson University and a master's degree in public health from the University of South Carolina. She is also a graduate of the Management Academy for Public Health at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, a graduate of the Southern Center of Excellence in Environmental Health at Emory University and has obtained professional certification as a Certified Hazardous Materials Manager.

SCDES's New Office of Compliance Assistance

Presenter:

*Keith Frost, Director, Office of Compliance Assistance
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Keith Frost served the state of South Carolina 32 years through his work with South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control/South Carolina Department of Environmental Services. While most of his career was spent in the Bureau of Air, he also worked in the CERCLA and NPDES programs. Keith's career has been defined by his collaborative approach to regulatory compliance, working closely with regulated entities to interpret complex environmental requirements and identify practical, effective pathways to meet both state and federal standards.

Breakout Session Presenters

Navigating ePermitting & Online Resources: Empowering Environmental Compliance Through SCDES's Online Tools

This session will explore how the South Carolina Department of Environmental Services (SCDES) is enhancing access to permitting tools, training materials, and program-specific resources through its website and ePermitting platform.

Presenters will highlight key features, demonstrate helpful tools, and discuss strategies for improving user experience across various environmental programs. Whether you're a permittee, consultant, or local government representative, you'll gain insights into how to find the information you need, understand system capabilities, and make the most of available support resources.

*Sean M. Briggs, Chief Technology Officer
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Sean brings key experience and leadership to the SCDES team with 13 years of service in environmental programs and 6 years in administration. He began his career in 2007 with the Bureau of Coastal Management's Compliance and Enforcement Section, later serving as the manager. Sean then took on the task of leading the ePermitting team and project where they implemented 19 programs over the course of 4 years. From there, Sean's responsibilities continued to increase with his most recent prior position being the director of digital and financial strategy.

Throughout his tenure in state government, Sean has been a champion of leveraging available technology to improve communication, collaboration, and efficiency all in support of environmental service.

Sean is a graduate of Coastal Carolina University with a bachelor's degree in marine science. He is also a Clemson University Master Naturalist, FAA Certificated Remote & Student Pilot, and a candidate for Project Management Professional certification.

Marissa Maria, ePermitting Project Leader
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Marissa Maria is a graduate of Coastal Carolina University and has been with the agency for over ten years. She began her career as a Food Inspector before advancing into Land and Waste Management, where she oversaw regulatory programs in Air Quality, Solid Waste, Mining, and Hazardous Waste. Marissa contributed to the implementation of multiple programs within the agency's ePermitting system and now serves as the Project Lead, driving modernization initiatives to streamline operations and enhance environmental compliance services.

Implementing a Recycling Program: Smart Business Recycling Program, Recycle Right SC, and the Smart Business Recycling Program Manager

Want to recycle or reduce waste at your business but don't know where to start? SCDES's Smart Business Recycling Program provides free, confidential technical guidance to S.C. companies on ways to implement recycling and waste reduction efforts. Learn how to set up a site visit, find a recycling vendor, track and submit your recycling amounts, educate your employees, and use SCDES resources.

Grace Anne Martin, Recycle Right SC / Smart Business Recycling
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Grace Anne Martin is the Recycle Right SC and Smart Business Recycling Program Coordinator in SCDES's Office of Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling. Her roles are focused on increasing recycling rates by providing local governments, businesses, and the public technical support, trainings, and education related to recycling and waste reduction. Grace Anne has been in recycling the past two years but started with the agency seven years ago as a member of the Environmental Surveillance and Oversight Program (ESOP) team in the Aiken office. She holds a BS in Biology and minor in Chemistry from Centre College in Kentucky.

Water & Coast 101

SCDES's role under the Section 401 of the Clean Water Act and the Coastal Zone Management Act for the review of projects that will impact freshwater wetlands. Presenters will discuss steps of the review process, necessary information to streamline review, and mitigation requirements.

*Chuck Hightower, Program Manager
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Chuck graduated from the University of South Carolina with a BS in Biology. He's been with the Department for 29 years, and has served as the manager of the 401 Water Quality and Wetlands Section for the past 19 years.

*Benjamin Thépaut, Director of the Coastal Zone Consistency Division
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Benjamin Thépaut is the Director of the Coastal Zone Consistency Division in Charleston. He started with the Bureau of Coastal Management in December 2019. Prior to that, he served as a Hydrologist with the United States Geological Survey for 6 years collecting and disseminating hydrologic data for South Carolina rivers and streams. He also currently serves as BCM representative on the South Atlantic Fishery Council Habitat and Ecosystem Advisory Panel. Benjamin holds a B.S. in Marine Science and M.S. in Coastal, Marine, and Wetland Studies both from Coastal Carolina University. He enjoys collaborating on Microsoft Teams meetings at work and is found in or near coastal waters with his wife and dogs in his free time.

Stormwater Compliance and Environmental Stewardship for Industrial Facilities

This session provides practical guidance for industrial facility operators and environmental managers on meeting stormwater and environmental regulatory requirements.

Attendees will gain insight into current compliance expectations, best practices for effective stormwater management, and strategies to maintain inspection readiness. The presentation will also highlight resources

from SCDES designed to help facilities stay proactive in compliance efforts and advance environmental stewardship.

Presenter:

*Brandon Kersbergen, Stormwater Compliance Section Manager
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Brandon has a BS in Geology from the University of South Carolina. He's been with SCDES for 7 years.



The Sooner the Better: Coordinating with Economic Development Allies on New and Prospective Industry

SCDES Permit Central and Community Engagement play vital roles in helping new and prospective industries look at permitting timelines, multi-agency coordination and meaningful community involvement. Hear best practices of how to connect with SCDES early in the economic development and permitting process.

Presenters:

*Chaquetta Greene, Community Engagement Liaison
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Chaquetta Greene is a dedicated Environmental Health Manager with seven years of experience in regulatory enforcement and community engagement at the South Carolina Department of Environmental Services (SCDES). She holds a Master of Environmental Management from Duke University (2013) and a bachelor's degree in Geology from Clemson University (2011).

She is a strong advocate for public service and is recognized for ensuring facility compliance with state and federal regulations and fostering key relationships across South Carolina. In her current role as the Community Engagement Liaison, she focuses on developing collaborative partnerships and leading public outreach initiatives.

*Ryan Ariail, Economic Development Liaison
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Ryan Ariail is the Economic Development Liaison for the South Carolina Department of Environmental Services. In this role, Ryan works with economic development partners, industries and small businesses to assist with permitting process coordination and communication.

Previously, Ryan served in the Underground Storage Tank Management Division, working closely with businesses and communities. He also worked in private industry assisting with environmental cleanups across South Carolina.

Ryan is a graduate of Francis Marion University with a Bachelor of Science in Biology, and he resides in Lexington, SC with his family.

Bureau of Air Quality: What's New in Asbestos and MACT

This session will cover Asbestos building material basics: what's regulated? Asbestos permitting and licensing timeline, and compliance issues.

The Air Toxics presentation will focus on Common Compliance and Reporting Questions.

Jennifer Boryk, Asbestos Section Manager
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Jennifer has dedicated the past decade to the Bureau of Air Quality's Asbestos Section. Prior to stepping into her role as manager in 2020, she served as a field inspector and played a key role in transitioning the Section to the ePermitting system. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Geology from the College of Charleston and has completed both the Associate Public Manager (APM) and Leadership Excellence & Achievement Program (LEAP) during her tenure with the agency. Outside of work, Jennifer enjoys exploring the outdoors, visiting South Carolina's State Parks, and spending quality time with her family.

Zachary Carfley, Air Toxics Section Manager
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From Marion, SC and a graduate of the University of South Carolina. I have worked in state government for 12 years and have been with the Bureau of Air Quality for nearly 8. I enjoy spending time with my wife Georgia and our 2 year old twin daughters Frances and June.

Optimizing Permit Issuance: Strategies for Quality and Increased Efficiency

SC is growing rapidly, meaning our agency has more permits to issue. Our goal is to issue permits within 90 days, upholding the standards for environmental protection, while also providing guidance to improve the quality of applications. We are working to identify and implement best practices to assist programs with achieving improved timelines for permit issuance. This session will touch upon what we're learning and provide time for session attendees to share their experiences of time savings they've found beneficial at SCDES and with other agencies.

*Jill Stewart, P.E., Director, Office of Permitting Support
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Jill has worked for the South Carolina Department of Environmental Services in the Bureau of Water for 22 years having served in the capacity of permitting engineer, program manager and division director in the Bureau of Water. In 2025, Jill took on a new challenge to work across the agency as the Director of the Office of Permitting Support.

A graduate of the University of South Carolina with a B.S. in Civil Engineer, in 2023 she earned a Master of Environmental Management degree from Duke University through the Nicholas School of the Environment's Duke Environmental Leadership – Master of Environmental Management (DEL-MEM) Program. She is a licensed Professional Engineer in the State of South Carolina.

Bureau of Air Quality: Permit Application Completeness

This session will focus on what is needed when submitting an application. Additional topics include how to locate forms and submit them in ePermitting, and how to become an Authorized User.

*Madeline Florek, Air Permitting Section Manager
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Madeline is a section manager with 7 years of experience in air permitting. She graduated from the University of Kentucky with a BS in Chemical Engineering and is a registered professional engineer. She oversees training development for air permitting division employees and external customers. Her section mainly covers asphalt and concrete plants, mines, landfills, and textiles.

Compliance Essentials: Infectious Waste & X-Ray Safety in Practice

The Infectious Waste Management & X-Ray programs talk about best practices and regulatory guidance. Program staff will focus on internal and external training to ensure consistent compliance standards.

*Kim Clyburn, Environmental Health Manager III
Bureau of Land and Waste Management
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Kim has 37 total years of service with SCDES spanning multiple departmental areas. These areas include Finance, EQC Administration, Solid and Hazardous Waste. Since 1999, It has been with the Infectious and Rad Waste Section, serving as an Environmental Health Manager.

*Abigail James, Inspection, Tanning, and Enforcement Section Manager
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Abigail is the Inspection, Tanning, & Enforcement Manager with the Bureau of Land & Waste Management's Radiation Protection Program. She is a graduate of the University of South Carolina with a Bachelor of Science in Biology. She earned certification from South Carolina DHEC's Leadership Excellence Achievement Program (LEAP) in July 2020 and became a Certified Public Manager in May 2023. Abigail has dedicated her career to ensuring safe radiation practices for the citizens and visitors of South Carolina. During her tenure with Radiation Protection, Abigail has been an x-ray inspector, trainer, certified mammography inspector, and now section manager.

In her free time, Abigail enjoys traveling, baking delicious treats, and spending quality time making lasting memories with friends and family.

One Mission, Many Eyes: Collaborative Hazardous Waste Compliance

Hazardous waste program staff will provide practical insights into achieving compliance and preparing for inspections. Both Central Office and Regional staff will highlight key focus areas and share what inspectors typically look for during inspections.

*Tim Stanley, Division Director for Compliance and Enforcement
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Tim Stanley began his career at SC DES (formerly DHEC) in 2005 where he gained extensive experience in both Environmental Public Health and Environmental Protection programs serving the Lowcountry Region in various disciplines to include Onsite Wastewater permitting, Retail Food Safety, Hazardous Waste Management, and Air Quality. He later transferred to the Bureau of Air Quality's Asbestos Section where he earned Asbestos Supervisor, Asbestos Building Inspector, and NIOSH Air Monitor certifications before pursuing additional opportunities outside of the organization. In 2019 Tim became the Onsite Wastewater (OSWW) Program Director, where he oversaw the implementation of the statewide OSWW permitting program. Currently Tim serves as Director in the Compliance and Enforcement Division for the Bureau of Land and Waste Management where he oversees the Solid Waste and Hazardous Waste Compliance Sections, BLWM Enforcement Section and the Waste Assessment Section.

*Christopher Cusack, Land Compliance Team Leader -
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Born and raised along the Potomac River in Western Maryland. Graduated with a BA in Biology from St. Mary's College of Southern Maryland. Work experience includes: Chesapeake Bay Foundation- Environmental Educator. Environmental and Safety Director for Wayn-Tex, Inc in Waynesboro, VA. Team Leader of Orange County Fire Ant Authority in Southern California. Coordinator for Mayor's Rodent Control Initiative in NYC. Office Manager/Environmental Health Inspector for Key West, FL Department of Environmental Health. Ecolab Inspector, Maine. South Carolina Department of Environmental Services Land Compliance Team Leader GSP Office. Line Judge for the Eastside High Boy's Volleyball Team!

SCDES's PFAS Assessment Efforts

This presentation will provide a summary of PFAS Assessment efforts from 2018 to 2025 in the context of the evolving Federal and State regulatory environment.

Henry Porter, Deputy for Environmental Programs
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Henry Porter is the Deputy Director of the Office of Environmental Programs for SCDES. He oversees the Bureau of Air Quality, Bureau of Water, Bureau of Coastal Management, Bureau of Land and Waste Management, and the Assistant to the Deputy Director of Environmental Programs.

Henry has served as the Chief of the Bureau of Land and Waste Management for the former DHEC and SCDES since September 2018. In total, he has more than 35 years of service with DHEC, during which he worked in multiple environmental program areas, including Air Quality, Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, and Radioactive Waste and Wastewater. Henry has a degree in mechanical engineering from the University of South Carolina.

Ray Holberger, Environmental Risk Specialist
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Ray Holberger grew up in rural Massachusetts and studied Environmental Science at McGill University in Montreal. He went on to work as an Environmental Consultant with a focus on human health and ecological risk assessment in Victoria, British Columbia for ten years. Next, he spent five years serving the City of New Bedford, Massachusetts as its Environmental Project, organizing risk-based cleanups of the municipality's contaminated sites. Since then, Ray has filled various positions at the SCDES, where he currently serves as its Environmental Risk Specialist. In addition to his responsibilities assessing and communicating environmental risks, he has been running the States Private Well PFAS Assessment Project for the last two years. He's also in the process of wrapping up a M.S. degree in Environmental Public Health at USC. Ray's background working on large scale contaminated sites in underserved communities and discussing hundreds of residential PFAS well water results have given him a unique perspective that he's pleased to be able to share with y'all!

Crisis to Clarity: Navigating Environmental Emergencies

Session is designed to highlight the role and responsibility of SCDES during an environmental emergency. Participants will better understand what SCDES brings to the table in support of our industry partners as they navigate an emergency response event.

Stephen Whisonant, Program Manager I
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Stephen holds a B.S. degree in Environmental Science. He began his career in the Water programs and has been a valued member of the agency since 2013. Most recently serving as the Air and Land Team Lead. He brings more than a decade of experience and leadership to the Program Manager position.

Brian Gootee, Director, Division of Environmental Emergency Response
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Brian earned a B.S. in Biology and MPH in Environmental Health Science (Industrial Hygiene) from the University of South Carolina. He's spent more than 17 years with the agency as a chemist, Environmental Health Manager, Laboratory Safety Officer, and Agency Safety Director. Brian is a Certified Safety Professional (CSP)

Ashley Auerbach, Regional Program Manager
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Ashley serves as the Regional Program Manager for the Charleston Bureau of Regional and Laboratory Services office. She's been with the agency for 23 years and has been a member of the Environmental Response Team for 18 years.