SC DEPARTMENT *of*
ENVIRONMENTAL
SERVICES

WaterSC Kickoff 2026

Working Together to Put Recommendations from the State Water Plan into Action

February 24, 2026

SC DEPARTMENT of ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Our Water Future

The Leadership Guide to South Carolina's Water Plan





2025 SOUTH CAROLINA STATE WATER PLAN

THIRD EDITION







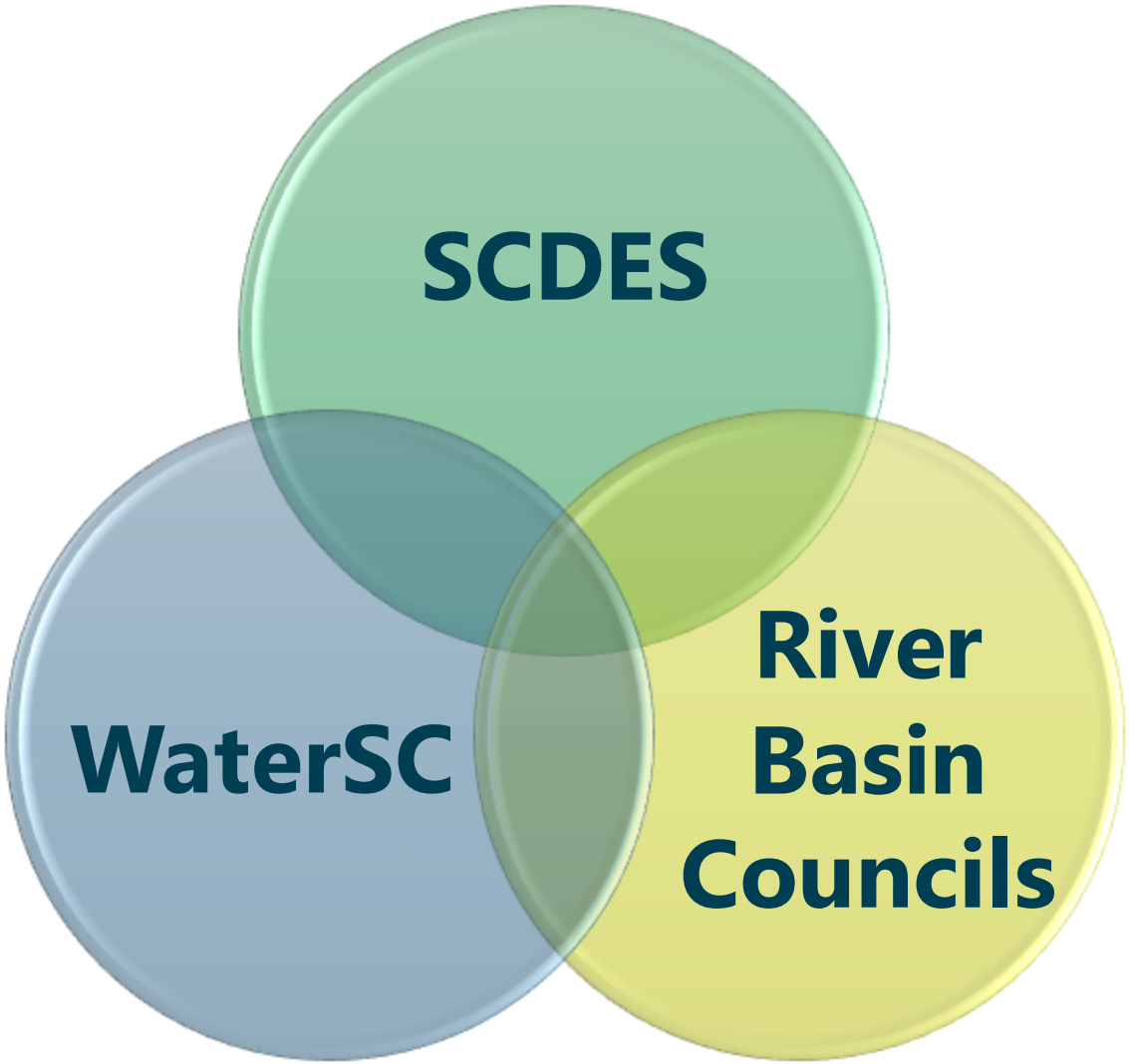




Today's Agenda

- Welcome & kicking off 2026
- How we will work together
  - Roles, Responsibilities, Structure & Sustainable Funding
  - WaterSC, RBCs and SCDES
- Lunch
- Recommendations, goals & priorities
- Next steps
- Adjourn

Defining Roles and Relationships



Brainstorming

Record one idea per Post-It note and Place it on the Entity's Flip Chart.

Respond to the following:

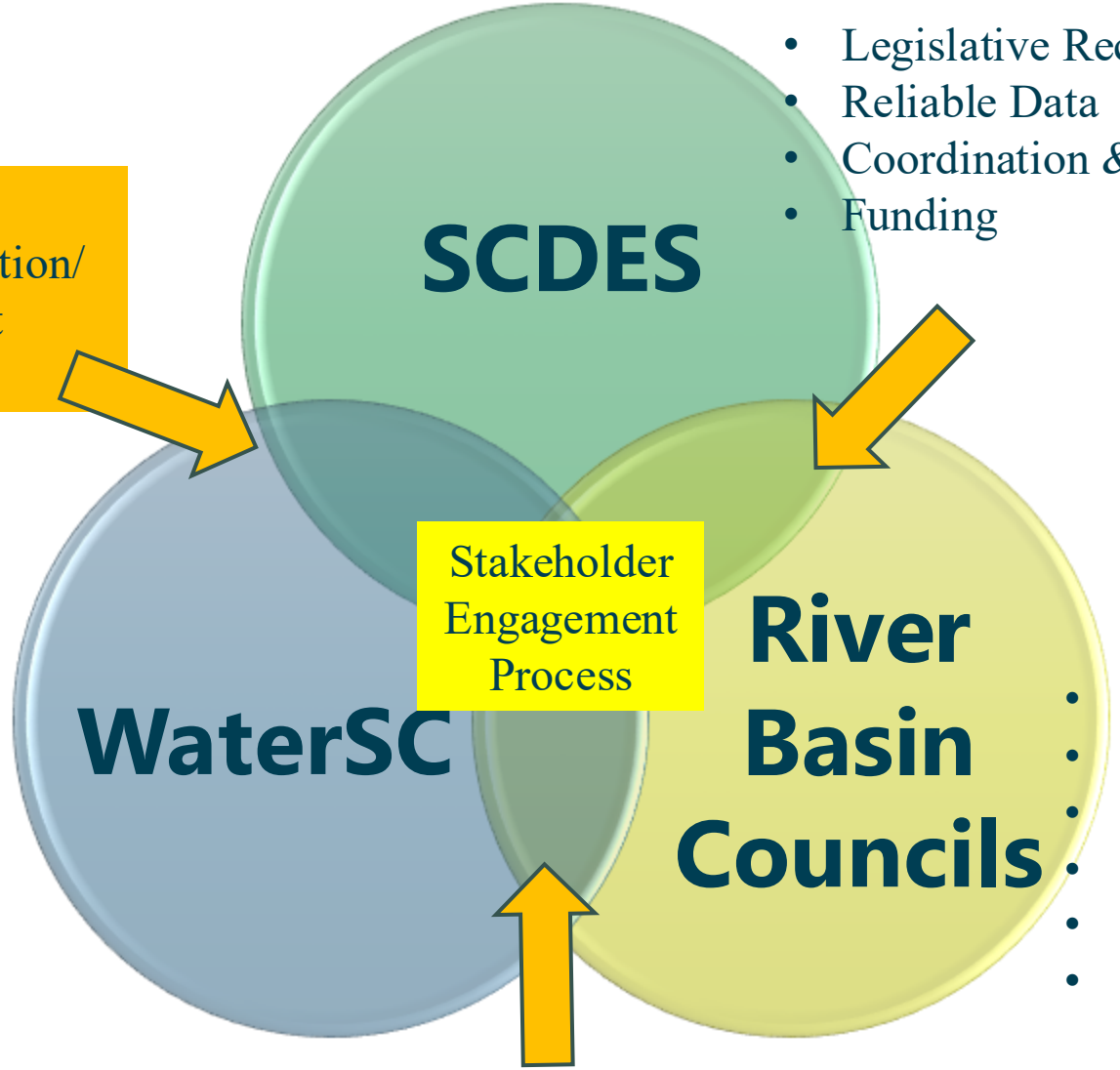
- Who does what?
- What kinds of decisions can each entity make?
- What does each entity provide to other entities? How?
- What does each entity need from the other entities? How would they get it?
- How does each entity communicate or coordinate with other entities?

Cluster and Clarify

Gather at your assigned Entity Flip Chart.

1. Group similar ideas together
2. Label each final grouping with a header identifying the common theme of the ideas in that group
3. Pick a group member to report out

Overlaps, Gaps and Next Steps



- Legislative Recommendations
- Reliable Data
- Coordination & Implementation
- Funding

Info Flow
Communication/
Engagement
Funding

Stakeholder
Engagement
Process

- Strategy
- Policy
- Engagement

- Implementation
- Advocate for local needs
- Community/Outreach
- Data
- Policy (help set priorities)
- Funding

Priority Recommendations

Priority Recommendations

Increase Interstate Coordination with North Carolina and Georgia

Intentional Education and Outreach

Enhanced Data Collection and Modeling

Incorporate Water Quality

Interstate Planning and Coordination

- Data sharing, communication, and cooperation
- Collaboration at basin council level
- Panel discussions at interstate conferences



Intentional Education and Outreach

Plan and Goals

- State Water Plan awareness and general understanding of water resources and availability
- Water conservation during normal and drought times
- Legislative engagement and updates of planning activities
- How public utilities work—Tap & Toilet
- Inventory of existing resources
- Add water conservation to recycling guys
- Sustainability to industries and water

Stakeholders

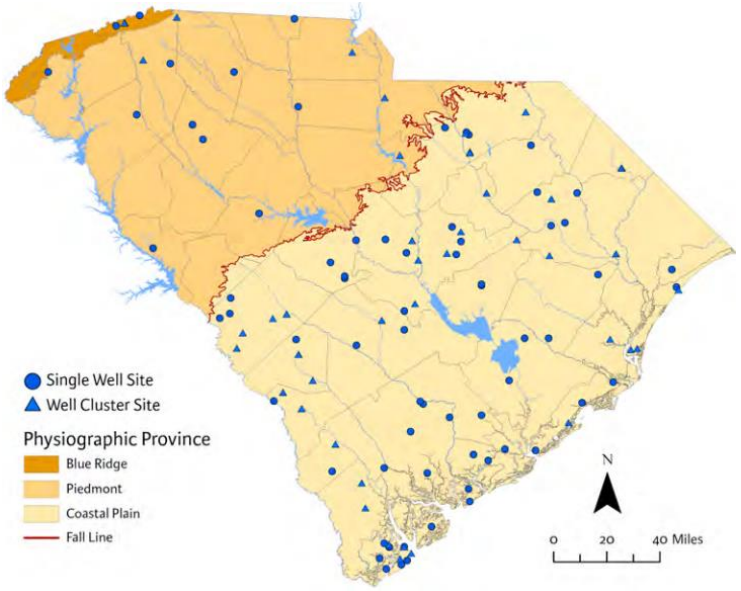
- The public
  - Audiences: Schools K-12 included
- State agencies
- County and municipal governments
- Councils of governments
- Businesses
- Watershed organizations and conservation groups

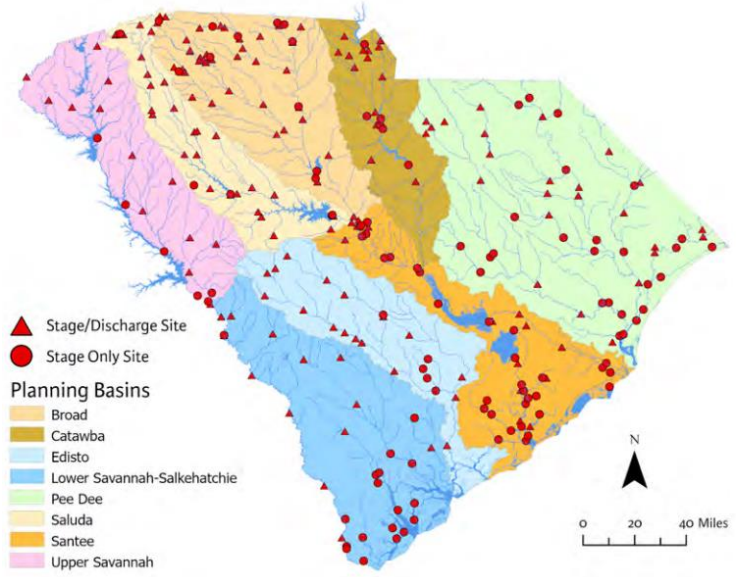
Education and Outreach Plans

- Inventories
  - Organizationally
  - Education resources
- Gaps
- Tracking

Enhanced Data Collection and Modeling

- Expand Groundwater Monitoring Network and complete USGS model update
- Coordinate with state agency partners and USGS to strengthen stream gage efficiency
- Explore supplemental models and enhancements
- Updates of models
- Reliability of data: advocate for USGS





Discussion Notes

- What data could be used and be most beneficial
- Inventory & central data collection & data sharing & availability

Incorporate Water Quality

Educate Stakeholders

- DES water quality programs
- Voluntary efforts
- Explore how to incorporate water quality into water resource planning

Water Quality Topics

- Water quality standards
- Ambient monitoring
- 303(d) modeling, impaired waters, and total maximum daily loads
- Watershed plans, nonpoint sources, and adopt-a-stream

Water Management Strategies

Demand-Side Strategies

Goal: Improve water use efficiency

Municipal

- Public education about water conservation
- Drought management plan updates
- Conservation pricing structures
- Leak detection and water loss control programs
- Water reuses programs

Irrigation

- Water audits and nozzle retrofits
- Irrigation scheduling
- Crop type, variety, and conversion
- Soil management
- Water reuse programs
- Future technologies

Industrial and Energy

- Educating employees about water conservation
- Water-saving equipment and efficient water systems/processes
- Leak detection and water loss control
- Water reuse programs

Supply-Side Strategies

Goal: Increase or optimize the availability of water resources

- Water reuse programs
- Interconnections and regionalization of public water supply systems
- Conjunctive use of surface water and groundwater
- Stormwater capture and reuse
- Adjusting reservoir operations and intake elevations
- Aquifer storage and recovery (ASR)
- Building or expanding reservoirs and small impoundments

Funding Opportunities

Funding Opportunities

- Federal: Support of water infrastructure projects. Drought mitigation and risk reduction

- Private: Water replenishment programs aimed to offset consumption
  - Public-private partnerships

- State: Dedicated funding source for implementation of water management strategies
  - Seed grant programs

Federal Funding Opportunities

Federal Funding Sources – summarized in Appendix D of State Water Plan

- United States Economic Development Administration (EDA) – *U.S. EDA Grants*
- United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – *Water Infrastructure Finance and Information Act*
- U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development – *Section 502 Direct Loan Program, Emergency Community Water Assistance Grants*
- USDA Rural Utilities Service – *National Rural Water Association Revolving Loan Fund*
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) – *Hazard Mitigation Grant Program*
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) – *can provide water planning assistance to states*

Other State Funding Programs

State Funding Programs – summarized in Appendix D of State Water Plan

- Georgia Regional Seed Grant Program – *https://epd.georgia.gov/public-announcements-0/outreach/grants/regional-water-plan-seed-grant-funds*
- Missouri Multi-Purpose Water Resources Fund – *https://dnr.mo.gov/water/financial-assistance-opportunities/multipurpose-water-resource-program-fund*
- Colorado Water Conservation Board - https://cwcb.colorado.gov/funding/grants