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WaterSC 2026 Working Group Meeting

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

June 30, 2026



Agenda

- Welcome and Updates
- Water Summit Recap
- Funding Overview and Discussion
- Nonpoint Source Program
- Outreach Branding Overview
- Next steps
- Adjourn

2026 Water Summit

- ~250 attendees
- 26 speakers in 11 sessions
- 5 partner programs

- Engaged stakeholders beyond WaterSC and RBCs
- Educated stakeholders on current Bureau of Water programs and activities
- Invited collaboration to implement State Water Plan

To access presentations:
https://des.sc.gov/programs/bureau-water/water-summit



Water Planning Funding Discussion

- Chris Wimberly – Chief Financial Officer
- Scott Hagins – Operations Director Finance and Operations
- Purpose of presentation:
  - Available funds overview
  - Proviso fund expenditures
  - Potential use of proviso funds
  - General timeline
  - Implementation funding discussion

Available Funds Overview

Recurring Funds for Hydrology Program

- ~$2,000,000 recurring funds annually
- ~$1,000,000 committed to USGS stream gage maintenance and SW & GW monitoring
- ~$1,000,000 for Hydrology Section staff and routine program activities including groundwater well installation

Proviso Funds for Water Planning

- ~$8,000,000 overall current balance across six individual proviso funds
- Pending FY27 budget request to allow spending for general water planning activities from each individual proviso

Proviso Fund Expenditures FY25-FY26

FY25: $1,897,893

- Five basins meeting monthly and two completing their plans
- WaterSC meeting monthly
- State Water Plan development with contractor support began in December 2024 and continued through the FY

FY26: ~$955,622

- Three basins meeting monthly and three basins completing their plans
- State Water Plan development with contractor continued through December 2025
- WaterSC meeting monthly through December 2025 and quarterly in 2026

Potential Use of Proviso Funds



Implementing Next Steps and Considerations

Continued Planning and Coordination

Enhancing Data Collection and Models



Updating Water Plans

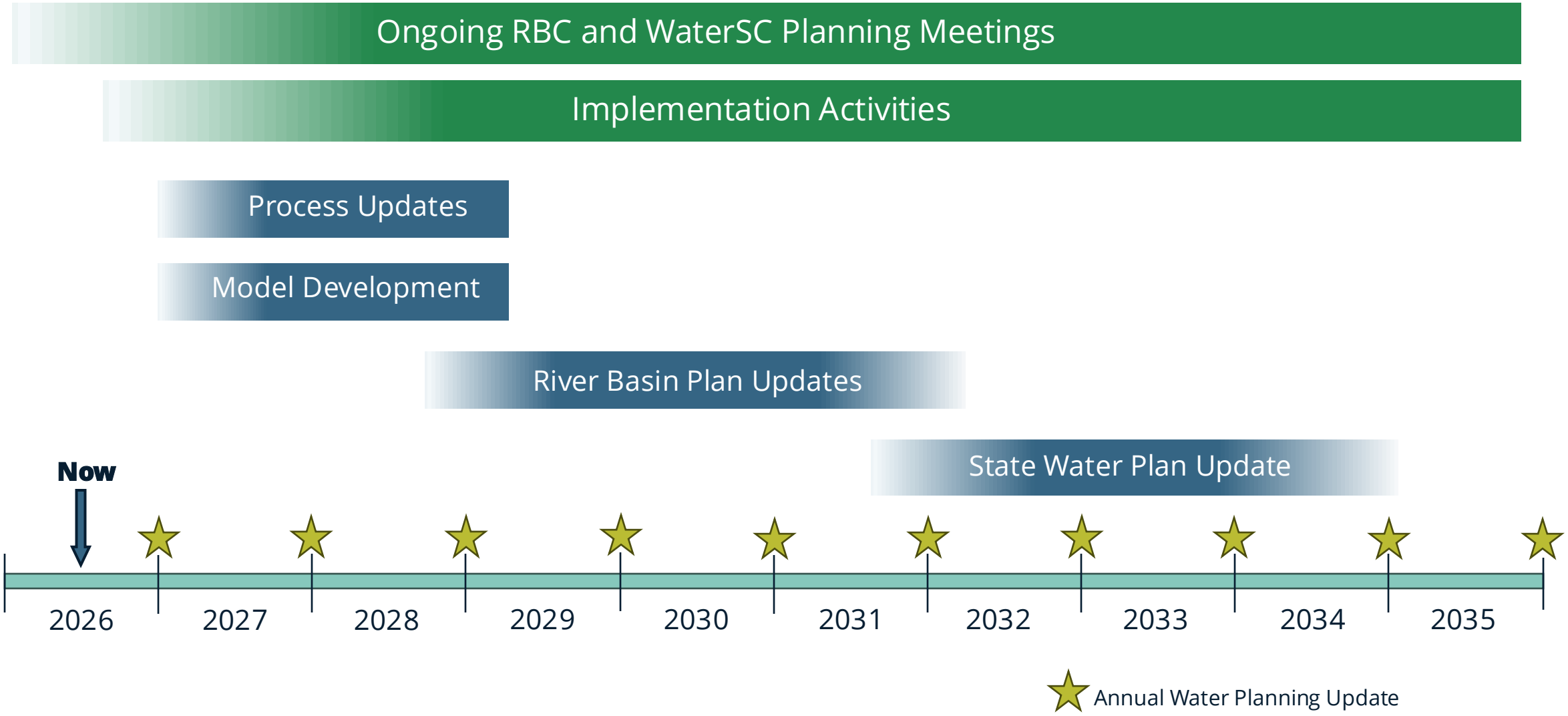


Other Implementation

Next Steps and Considerations

Next Steps		Considerations		
Continuous Water Planning	Intentional Education and Outreach	**Enhanced Data Collection and Modeling**	**Other Planning Considerations**	**Funding for River Basin Plan Implementation**
RBCs and Inter-Basin Councils	Education and Outreach Plan and Goals	Expand Monitoring Networks	Hydrologic Variability	Federal Funding
WaterSC Continuation	State Water Plan Awareness	Expand Ecological Flow Relationships	Water Reuse	Private Funding
State Water Summit	Public Outreach	Other Models	Water Quality	State/Grant Funding
Updates of River Basin Plans and State Water Plan	Legislative Outreach			

Potential Timeline



Continued Planning and Coordination

- Continued water planning meetings, interstate meetings, and education/outreach: **$1,000,000 over two years**

Action	Explanation	Cost
Water planning meetings	Quarterly RBC and WaterSC meetings, annual Technical Workshop and Water Summit with contractor support	$500,000 per year
Education and outreach	SCDES development of branded materials and coordination with RBCs and WaterSC	$0
Interstate coordination	Routine coordination with planning councils and state staff of NC and GA	$0

Enhance Data Collection and Models & Incorporate Water Quality

- New models and expanded monitoring networks: **$2,000,000 over two years**

Action	Explanation	Cost
Supplemental Model(s)	Model(s) to supplement SWAM in forecasting water quantity, quality, climate variability, ecological flow relationships, etc.	$1,500,000
Expand and Enhance Monitoring Network	New groundwater monitoring wells, enhancement of saltwater intrusion monitoring, stream gaging, etc.	$500,000

Updating Water Plans

- Update of the State Water Plan and the River Basin Plans: **$3,000,000 as needed**

Action	Explanation	Cost
Updated SW models and tech support	Updating and running 7 SWAM models	$1,500,000
Facilitation and authorship	Contracted facilitation and authorship of river basin plans	$1,500,000

Total Potential Costs

- Implementation of the State Water Plan, continued water planning meetings, incorporation of water quality and supplemental models, and updating the plans: **$6,000,000**

Item	Cost
Continued planning and coordination for two years	$1,000,000
Enhancing data collection and models for two years	$2,000,000
Plan updates as needed	$3,000,000

Potential Available Funds for Other Implementation

- Allocated funds are aligned with implementation objectives:
  - Continued Planning
  - Supplemental models
  - Expanded monitoring networks
  - Plan updates
- Remaining funds could be used for other implementation projects

Item	Cost
Currently available funds	$8,000,000
Potentially allocated funds	$6,000,000
Potentially available funds	**$2,000,000**

Summary of Basin Plan Implementation Topics

Topic	Description
Water Conservation	Leak detection, best management practices, education
Sedimentation Studies	Land use impacts, riparian buffers, mitigation costs
Supplemental Models and Data	Rain runoff model, aquifer chloride levels, future hydrologic variability
Additional Monitoring	Groundwater monitoring wells, stream gages
Education and Outreach	Communicate findings, talking points, new programs
Private Wells	Studies of extent and potential impacts on surface water
Water Quality	Assimilative capacity, watershed plans
Flow – Ecology Relationships	Collect more data, expand analysis

SCDES Direct Procurement

RBCs or WaterSC propose implementation projects to pursue and submit project proposals

SCDES will evaluate and score the proposals based on established criteria

For the selected projects, SCDES will procure contractors and oversee the scope of work

Potential Criteria for Implementation Projects

- Consistent with a River Basin Plan implementation recommendation
- Basin-scale or multi-basin-scale projects
- Demonstrated benefits to water availability in basin
- A pilot study
- Measurable goals and progress

Example: Projects Eligible for Georgia Seed Grant

- Undertaking **specific implementation activities**
- Providing **technical assistance** for the implementation of Regional Water Plan management practices
- **Preparing and distributing technical guidance** that address management practices in two or more water planning regions
- Undertaking programs to **address critical information and/or data needs**
- Tracking and **analyzing available monitoring data and reporting on water resource conditions**

Additional Funding Options

- RBCs are encouraged to seek and leverage additional funding for projects
- Possible funding opportunities may include:
  - Federal funding through the USDA, FEMA, EPA, etc.
  - Other state agencies, e.g. SCOR
  - State Revolving Fund
  - Community Development Block Grants
  - 319 grants
  - Private grants, such as Google Water Stewardship Projects

Items to Discuss



What shape should the funding take? Cost-share process?



Who can apply and be awarded funds? RBCs? Public entities?



What criteria should be considered to prioritize proposals?



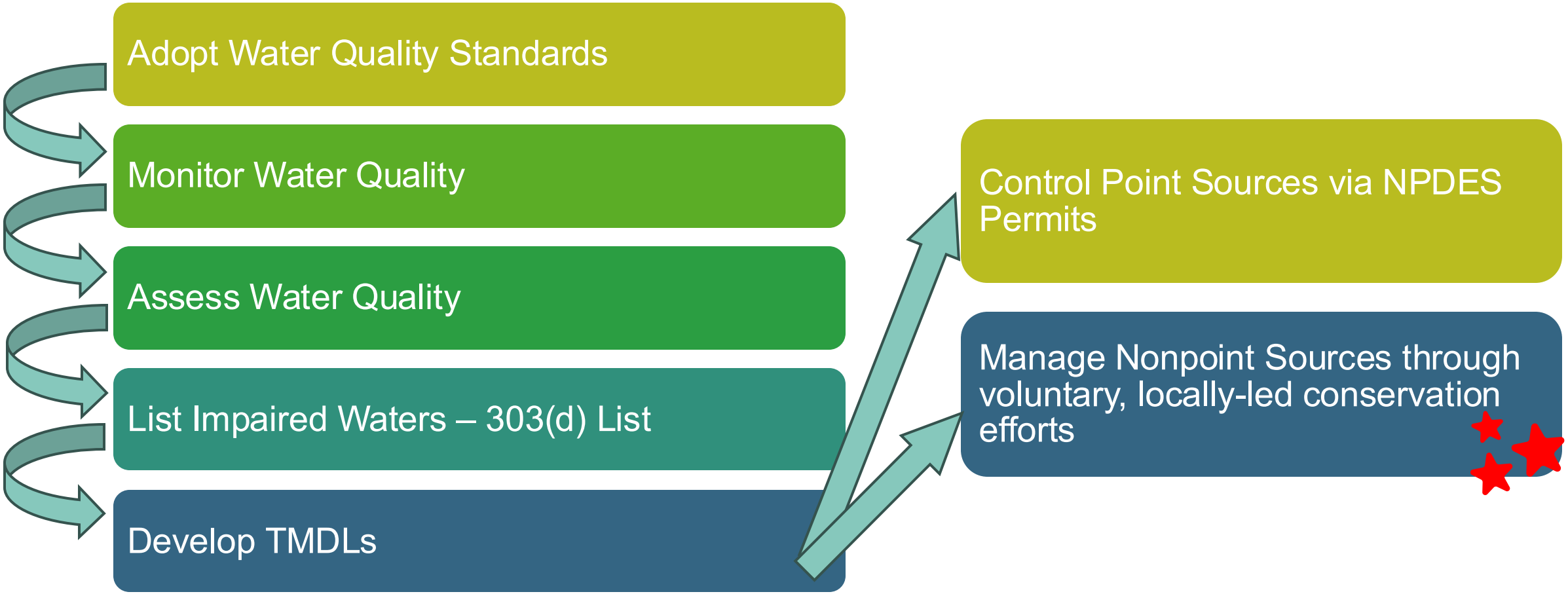
What should be the scope of the funding? Matching funds? Maximum cap?

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Reducing and Preventing Nonpoint Source Pollution

Shea McCarthy

Clean Water Act: A Summary

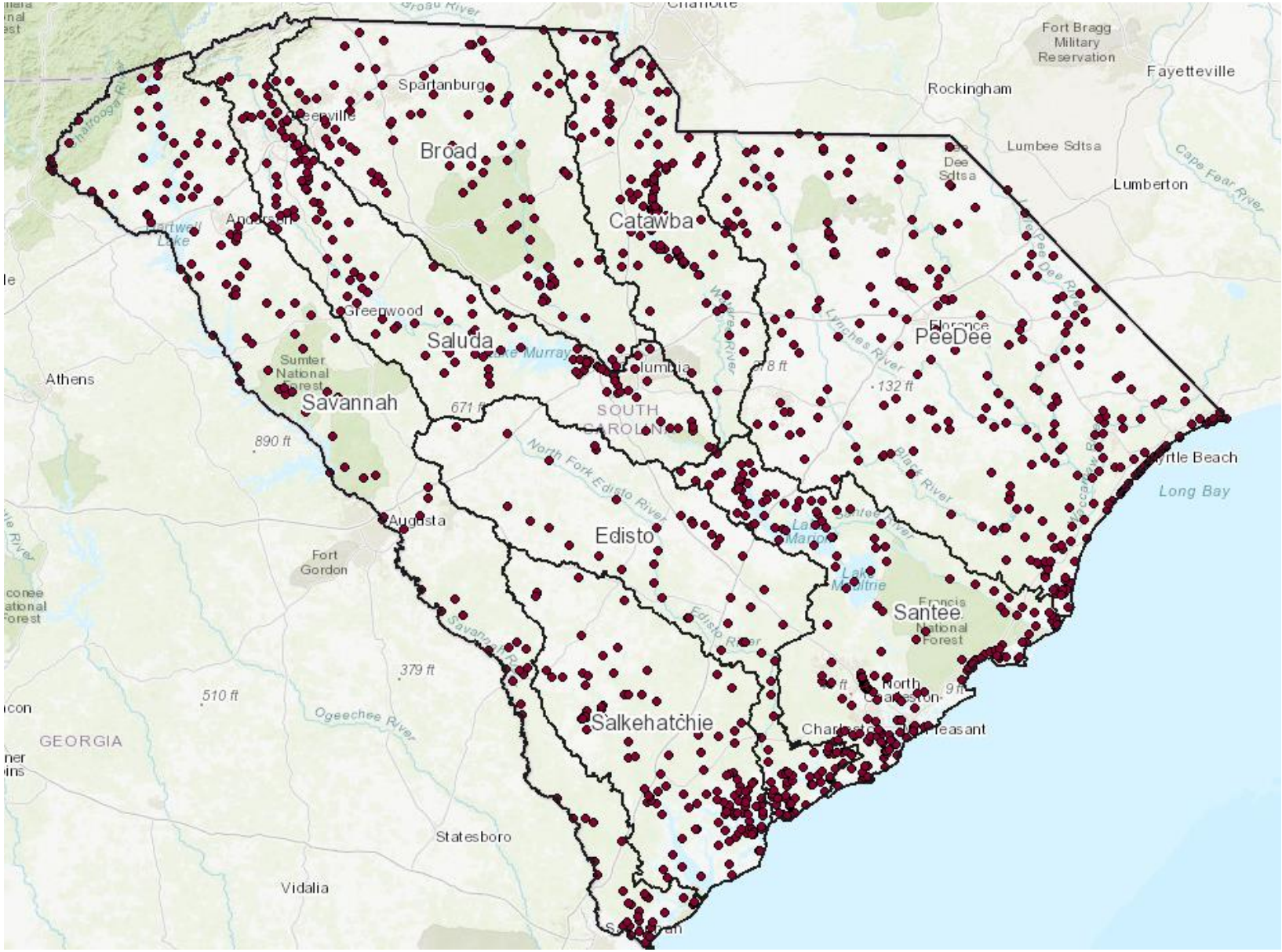


Water Quality Impairments

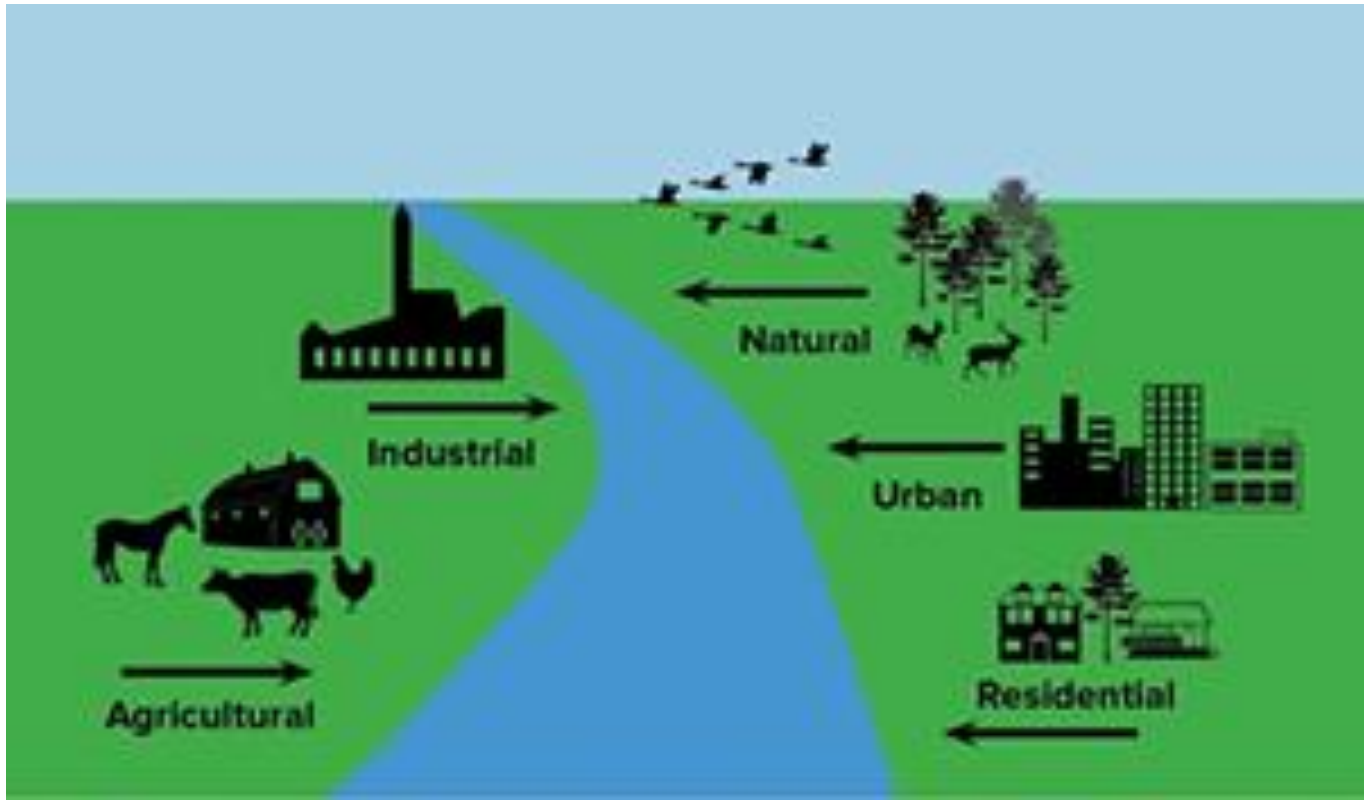
South Carolina 303(d) List of Impaired Waters

DES.SC.GOV/ WatershedAtlas

Explore water quality assessments, permits, TMDLs, drinking water intakes, watershed plans, active projects, and more!



Nonpoint Source Program Goals



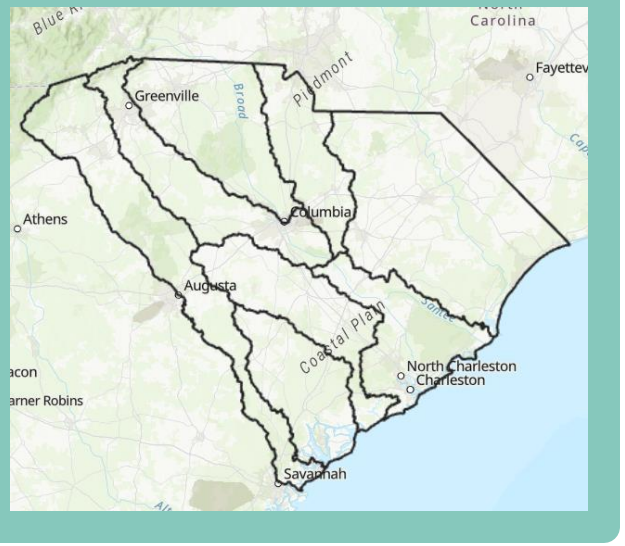
Restore waters impaired by nonpoint source pollution

Protect waters from nonpoint source pollution

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Watersheds Program

Providing technical, educational, and financial assistance to restore and protect water quality



- SC Watershed Atlas
- Watershed Planning
- Stakeholder Engagement



- Champions of the Environment Grant
- SC Adopt-a-Stream



- Watershed Plan Development Grant
- Section 319 Grant for Implementation Projects

Watershed Plan Development Grant

SC DES

Watershed Planning Goals

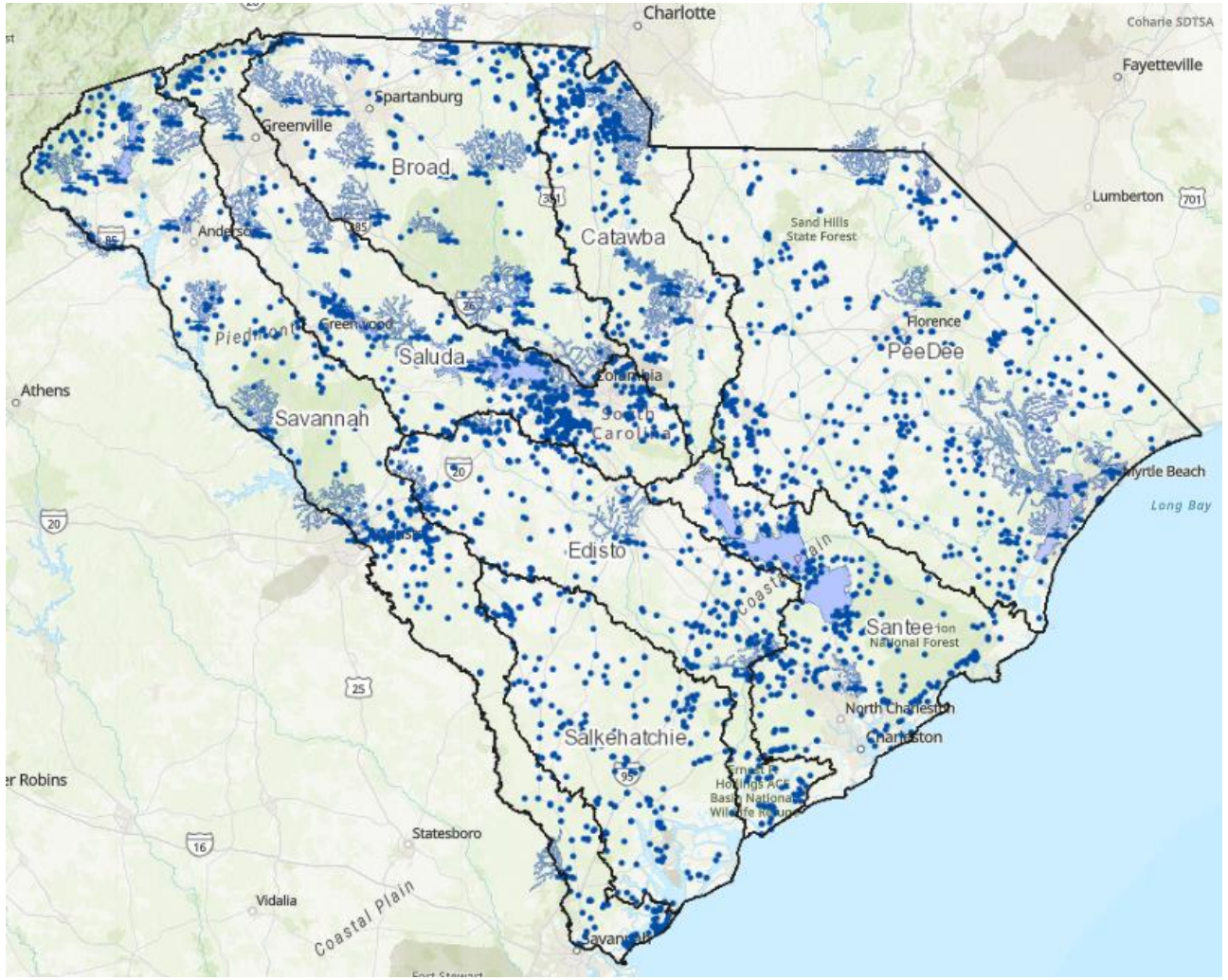
- **Incorporate** all relevant stakeholders
- **Identify** water quality concerns and pollutant sources
- **Recommend** solutions
- **Design** an implementation program

Create guidance for water quality improvement





Eligibility



Who

- Public organizations

Where

- Watersheds that contain
  - Source water for drinking water intakes *or*
  - Source water for public wells

What

- 2-year grant project
- No match requirement
- Address EPA's 9 Elements

Section 319 Grant for Implementation

Section 319 Grant Goals

Implement practices that:

- are recommended in an approved watershed plan
- reduce or prevent nonpoint source pollution
- show measurable water quality improvements



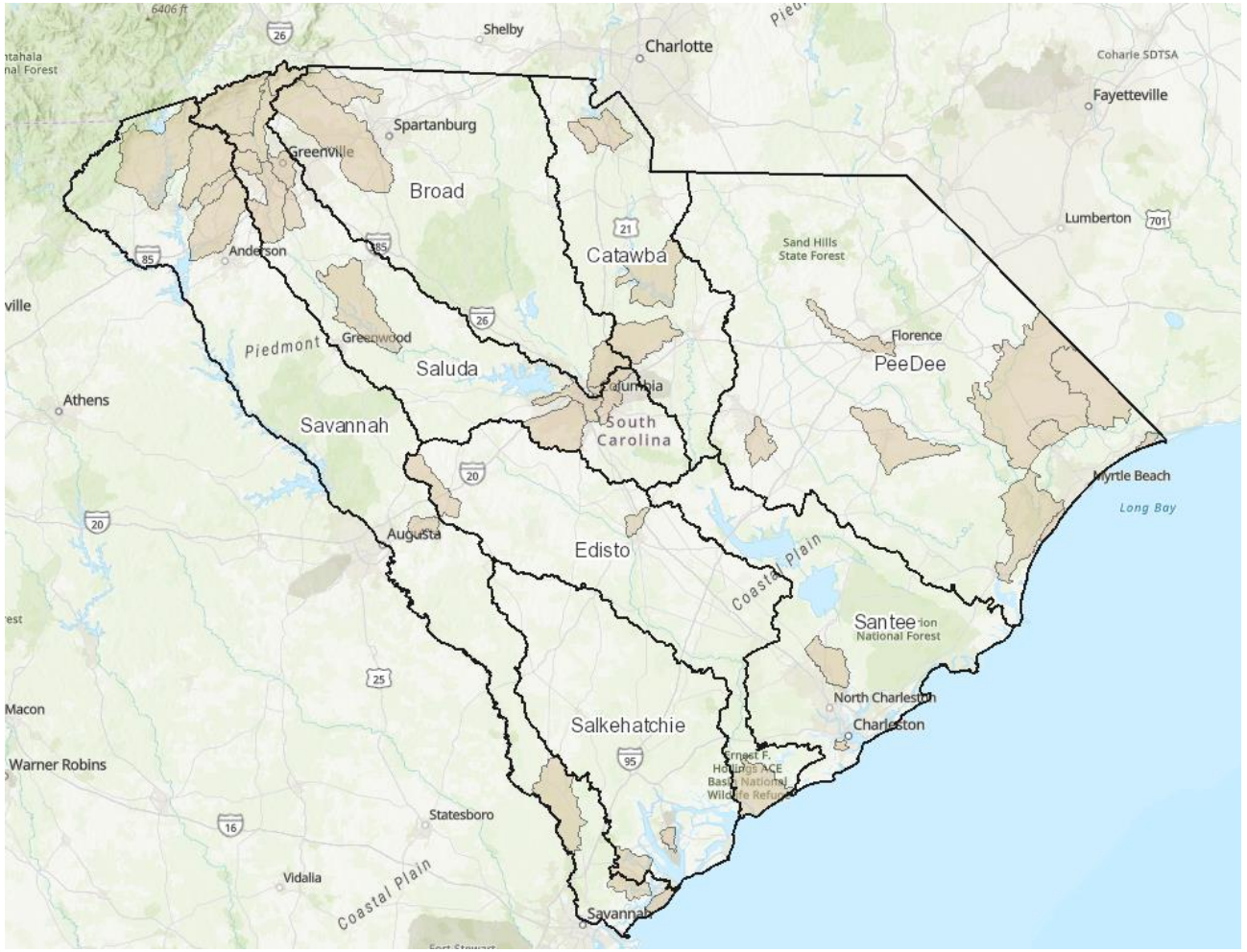
During Implementation



After Implementation

Section 319 Grant

- 3-year projects
- Available to SC public organizations
- 40% non-federal match funding requirement
- 75% of federal funds must be used for on-the-ground implementation
- Includes education and outreach



Timeline & Important Dates

Watershed Plan Development → Section 319 Grant Implementation → Measurable Water Quality Improvement

RFA in February 2027

Accepting applications until August 14, 2026

Sign up for our email list!

Partnership

- Forestry Commission
- NRCS
- SWCDs
- Municipal Government
- Non-profits
- Watershed Organizations
- Tribal governments



Section 319 and NRCS EQIP

319 funding can supplement the landowner portion of NRCS EQIP contracts

Example:

Project total = $100,000

EQIP funding = $75,000

Remaining = $25,000 → **319 funding = $15,000**

Landowner portion = $10,000

BMP Examples



- Septic repair / sewer tie-on
- Stream improvement
- Cropland management
- Livestock management
- Forestry best practices
- Stormwater practices
- Protection efforts
- Nature-based solutions

Success Stories

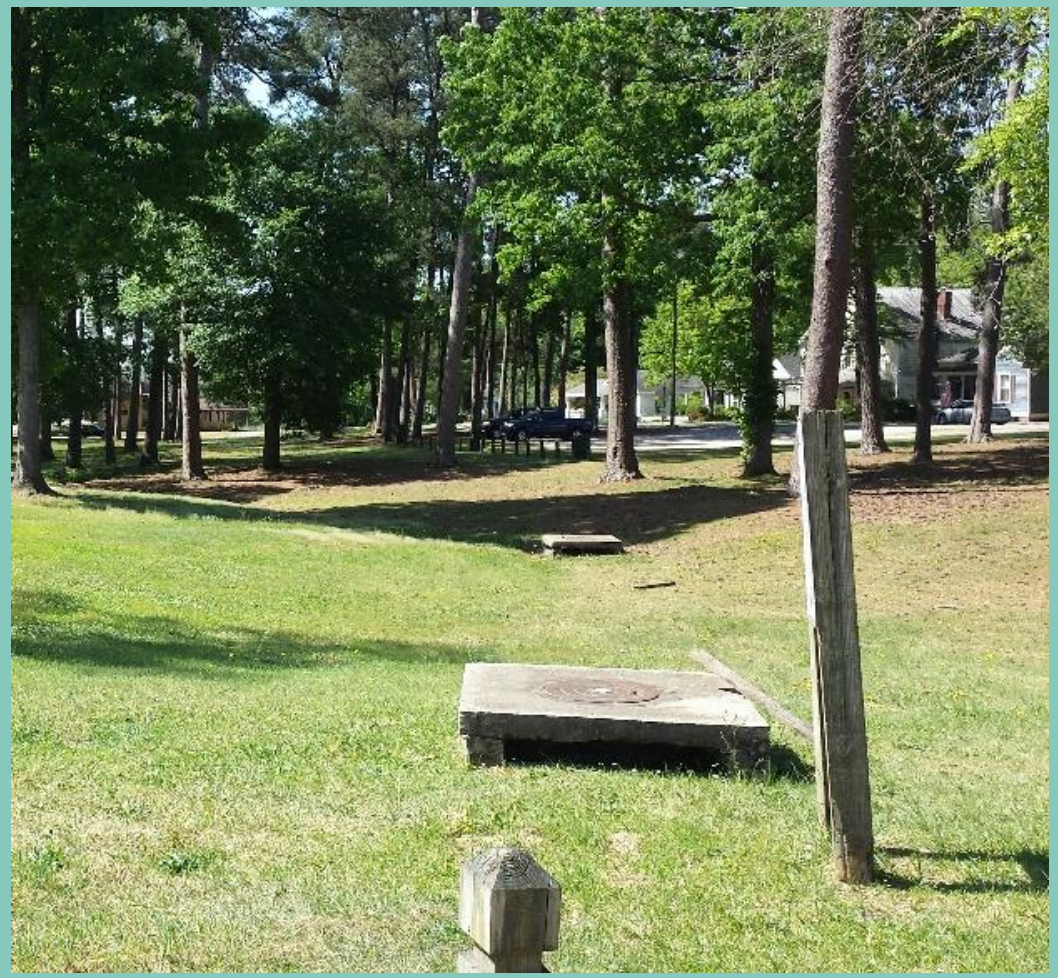




Septic Repair



Stream Daylighting





Stormwater Management





Agricultural Packages



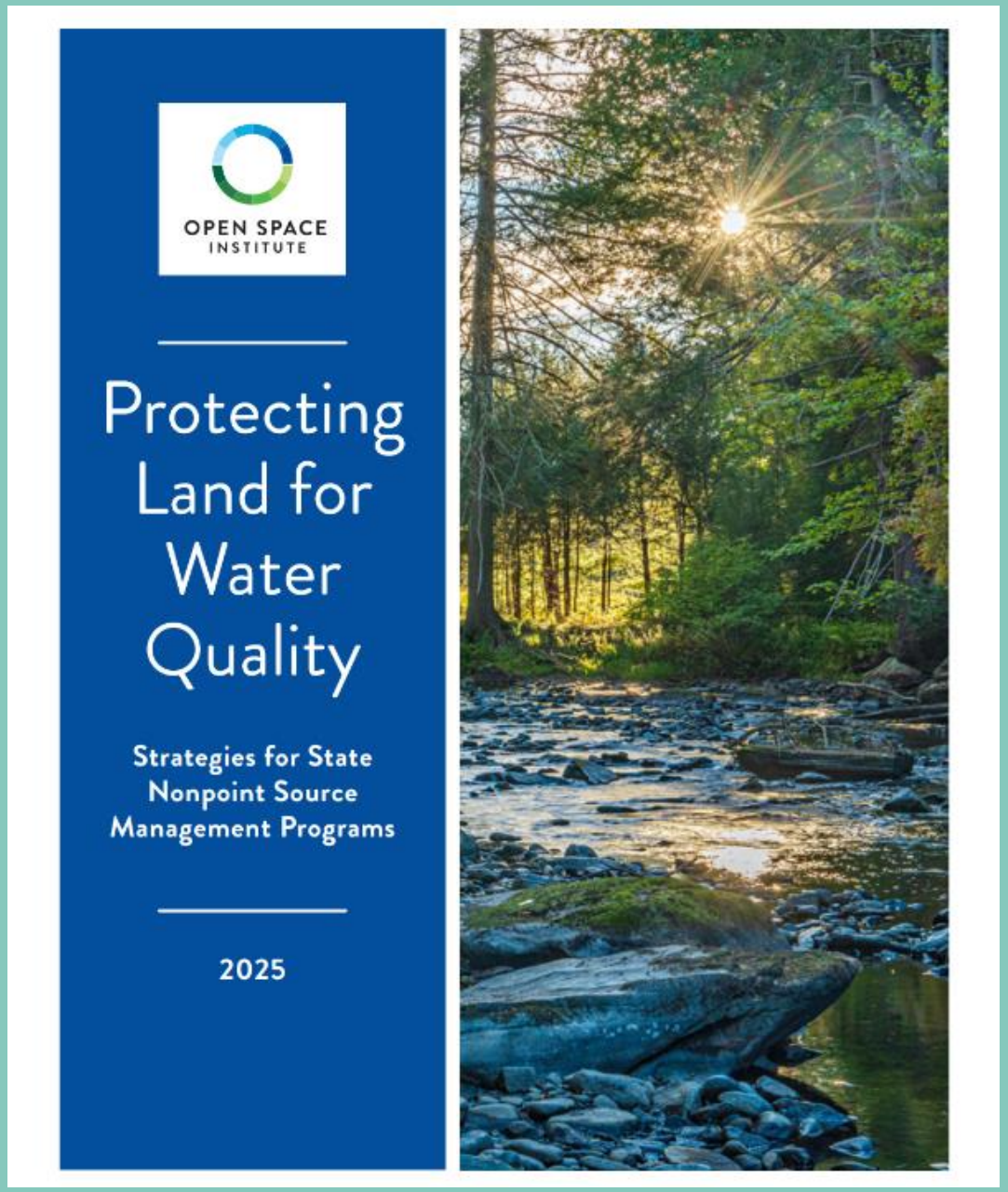
Before



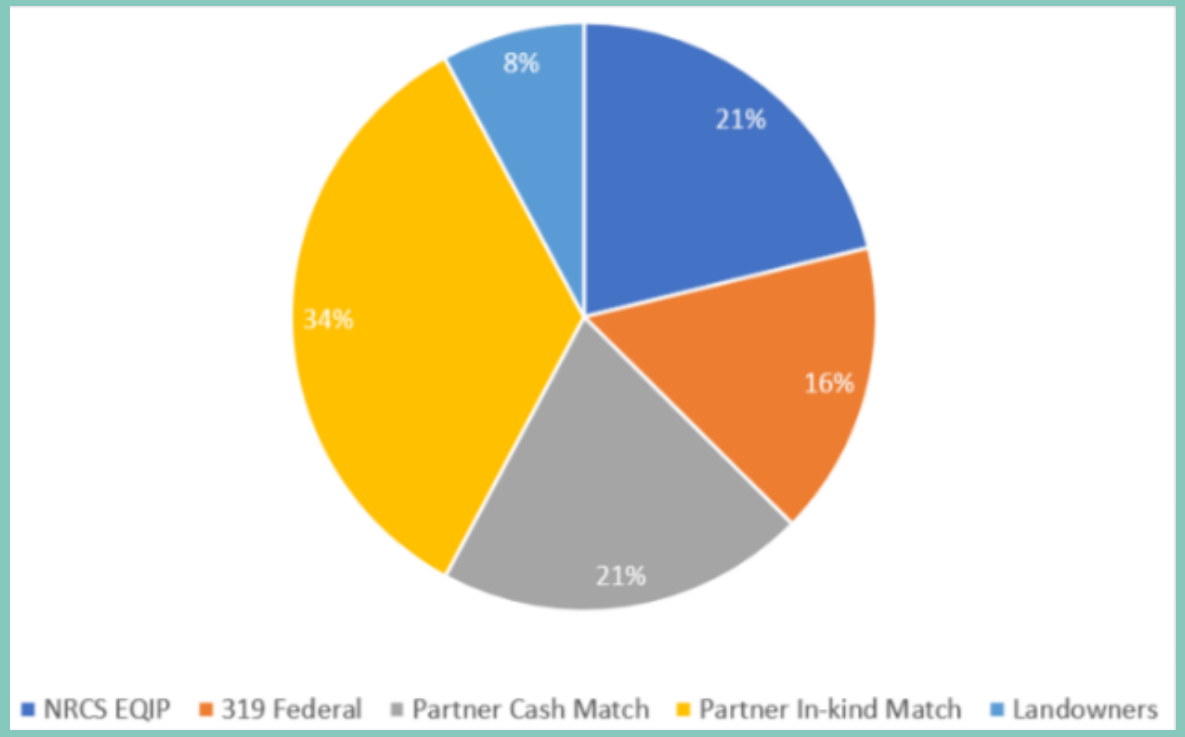
After

Land Conservation





Partnership





Partnerships for Clean Water

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Sign up for our email list!

Get in touch

Shea McCarthy // Nonpoint Source Coordinator

Shea.McCarthy@des.sc.gov

803.898.4401

des.sc.gov

Accepting 319 Grant applications until August 14, 2026

@SouthCarolinaDES

Brand Materials for Outreach

SC DES

New Brand Materials for WaterSC and RBCs

Brand materials help establish a familiar identity, enhance recognition and build trust and credibility.





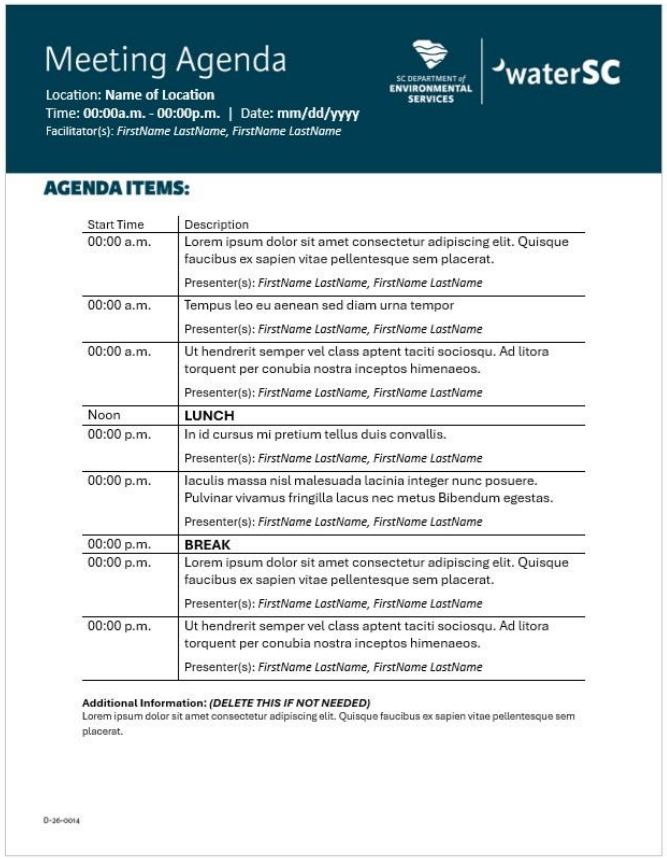
New Brand Materials for WaterSC

New branded assets include:

- Meeting agendas
- Letterhead
- Social media graphic template
- PPT template



New Brand Materials for WaterSC



Meeting Agenda

SC DEPARTMENT of ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES | waterSC

Location: **Name of Location**
Time: **00:00a.m. - 00:00p.m.** | Date: **mm/dd/yyyy**
Facilitator(s): *FirstName LastName, FirstName LastName*

AGENDA ITEMS:

Start Time	Description
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D-26-0014



SC DEPARTMENT of ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES | waterSC

Name of Contact
1234 Street Name Rd.
City, State, 56789

Dear Individual or Entity,

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Thank you,

Jane Smith
Title Goes Here

info@des.sc.gov | des.sc.gov | 803.898.3432

New Brand Materials for 8 River Basin Councils (RBCs)

New branded assets include:

- Meeting agendas
- Letterhead
- Social media graphic templates
- PPT templates





New Brand Materials for RBCs

Social media graphic templates







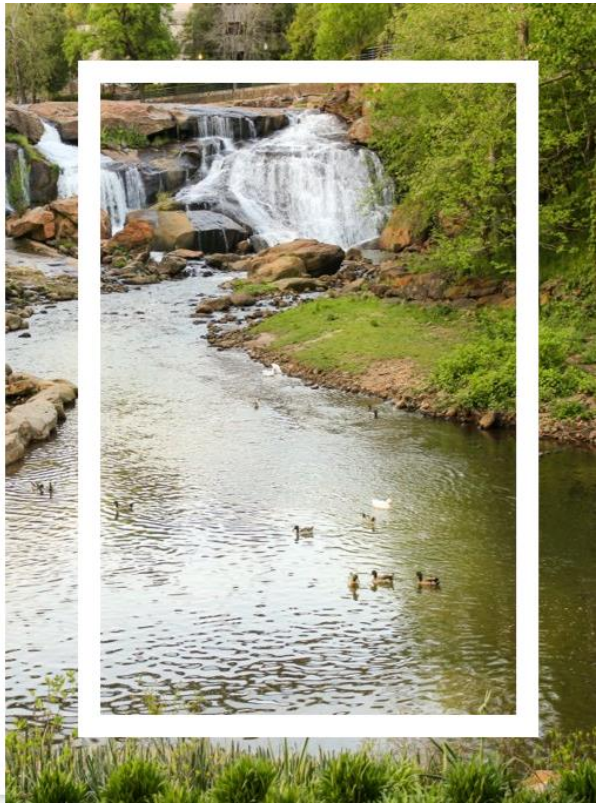


New Brand Materials for RBCs

SC DEPARTMENT of ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES | SALUDA River Basin Council

Presentation Title Goes Here

dd/mm/yyyy



Meeting Agenda

SC DEPARTMENT of ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES | LOWER SAVANNAH-SALKEHATCHIE River Basin Council

Location: **Name of Location**
Time: **00:00a.m. - 00:00p.m.** | Date: **mm/dd/yyyy**
Facilitator(s): *FirstName LastName, FirstName LastName*

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D-26-0014

Upcoming WaterSC Meeting Topics

September Topics

- Planning Guidance Document
- Water Quality Standards
- 303(d) and Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL)

December Topics

- Review Annual Water Planning Update
- Stormwater
- Drought Policy