

**MAYOR:**  
Bradley D. Belt

**TOWN ADMINISTRATOR:**  
Stephanie Tillerson

**TOWN ATTORNEY:**  
Stafford J. McQuillin III



**MAYOR PRO TEMPORE:**  
Russell A. Berner

**COUNCIL MEMBERS:**  
E. Luke Farrell  
Madeleine Kaye  
Lance Spencer

**ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE MEETING**  
Council Meeting Room and via Zoom  
December 10, 2025; 1:00 PM

**AGENDA**

- I. Call to Order:**
- II. Approval of Minutes:**
  - A. Minutes of the October 22, 2025 meeting
- III. Citizen's Comments:**
- IV. Program Updates**
  - A. Shorebird Stewardship Program
  - B. Kiawah Conservancy Projects
  - C. Resiliency Committee
- V. Old Business**
  - A. Article 15, Chapter 5 Fish and Wildlife Regulations Discussion
- VI. New Business**
  - A. Bird Banding Research Overview – Aaron Given (TOKI)
- VII. Reports:**
  - A. Town of Kiawah Island
  - B. Kiawah Island Community Association Land & Lakes Management
  - C. Kiawah Island Golf Resort
  - D. Kiawah Island Architectural Review Board
  - E. Kiawah Conservancy
  - F. Turtle Patrol
- VIII. Citizen Comments:**
- IX. Chairman's Comments:**
- X. Committee Member Comments:**
- XI. Adjournment:**

FOIA: Notice of this meeting has been published and posted in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act and the requirements of the Town of Kiawah Island.

## Minutes of the October 22, 2025 Town of Kiawah Island Environmental Committee Meeting

**Attendees:** Madeleine Kaye, Jim Jordan, Matt Hill, Lynne Sager, Lynda Leffler, Cindy Perry, Jennifer Hayes, Pam Wilson.

### Approval of Minutes

- Minutes from Septemb 17 meeting approved.

### Program Updates

- Shorebird Stewardship: Shorebird protection sign washed away; new yellow-band design sign to be installed to reduce off-leash dogs and confusion in Critical Habitat.
- Conservancy Projects: Building 800 manufactured wire reefs at Betsy Kerrison property with installation planned for March-July at the Kiawah River Bridge. Marsh mapping from Murrels Inlet to Folly Beach (including Kiawah) is underway to guide in protection from sea level rise. Also, developing a watershed plan for three regional watersheds to support water quality. Long standing abandoned sailboat in the Kiawah River has been removed by nonprofit Wounded Nature. Complex ownership and high removal costs (~\$30,000) had stalled action; new state law on abandoned boats helped enable removal without local entities paying the full cost.
- Resiliency Committee: Kiawah Conversations (Resiliency Committee's lecture series) launched:
  - First program: Composting, Thursday, Nov 13, 3 p.m.; members asked to attend and bring guests to build attendance.
  - Second program: Field trip to the North Charleston Recycling Center, Thursday, Dec 4, limited to ~20 attendees.
- Permeable Surfaces & Stormwater - Council's permeable parking lot ordinance was tabled for broader review; some council members want a partial move forward to avoid major repaving projects locking in impervious surfaces. Focus is currently on multi-family and commercial properties; single family homes excluded for now. Discussion of: Successful mixed surface lots (e.g., Sandcastle) vs. problematic drainage (Ocean Woods). Tradeoffs with gravel driveways, possible glue/binder products (environmental safety questioned). High water table and constraints on infiltration systems. Examples like Night Heron's subsurface storage under asphalt as an advanced (but costly) stormwater solution.
- Marathon Composting Initiative - Kiawah Marathon/Half Marathon – Dec 13 (~5,000 runners). New strategy: concentrate composting at the celebration tent (West Beach Conference Center) rather than on-course. Many plates/bowls confirmed compostable;

volunteers will staff a compost tent (10:00–1:30) to direct runners on what is compostable, prevent contamination, and provide educational messaging on composting and food waste reduction. Volunteer shifts: 1 hour blocks; Madeline to circulate the sign up.

### **Fish & Wildlife Regulation (Article 15, Chapter 5):**

Subcommittee rewrote Article 15, Chapter 5 as “Offenses Against Wildlife and the Environment”: Adopts relevant state Fish & Game and watercraft codes. Adds clear definitions.

Key provisions:

- Bobcats: Explicit prohibition on killing/harming bobcats (subject to attorney review for legality).
- Feeding wildlife: General ban on feeding wildlife, with explicit exemption for bird feeders.
- Birds: Prohibits trapping and hunting of birds within town limits (with exemption for legal hunting in state waters).
- Alligators: Expands from “no feeding” to also no harming/harassing/killing.
- Livestock & exotics: Prohibits keeping certain livestock and exotic animals in residential settings, with planned exemptions for: DNR licensed activities, Town wildlife management, educational uses at the Nature Center.
- Domesticated fowl: Bans backyard chickens/ducks/geese/pigeons, with similar exemptions needed for Town/DNR operations.
- Pet waste: New dog waste pick up requirement.
- Surf fishing & chumming: Prohibits chumming near the beach. Allows fishing but lets code enforcement officers order anglers to move if they endanger swimmers.
- Fish regulations: Makes current DNR size, season, and bag limits enforceable locally without listing numbers.
- Boating: Incorporates state no wake within 50 feet of docks/vessels rule.
- Prohibits harassing wildlife with boats, except during legal hunting/fishing.

Next steps: Add necessary exemptions and send to Town Attorney and Mayor for review.

### **Second-Generation Anticoagulants (SGAs)**

- Jim and Madeline briefed the **KICA Board** on SGA risks and bobcat impacts. Concept proposed: a **KICA rule** (not covenant) to bar **commercial pest control providers** from using SGAs on Kiawah, enforceable via revoking gate passes. Reception was **mixed**; KICA’s governance/legal team (e.g., Paul Hennessy) is reviewing feasibility.

## Wildlife Monitoring

- Bobcats - planning for 2026 bobcat collaring: 3 coyote collars and 6 GPS/VHF collars available.

## Town survey

- Two questions included:
  1. Importance of preserving **Kiawah's bobcat population**.
  2. Willingness to take actions (education, pledge, support SGA restrictions, pay more for wildlife-safe services, etc.).
- Survey to close shortly; results will gauge resident support.

## Deer

- Fall 2025 spotlight surveys: 46 deer/mi<sup>2</sup>, down from 68/mi<sup>2</sup> last fall. Lowest fall density since 2005; prior peaks around 100–127/mi<sup>2</sup>. Current year deer–vehicle collisions: 4 (down from 5 in 2021). Target density: ~60/mi<sup>2</sup>. Winter survey will be combined with fall to decide on 2025–26 harvest: If low density confirmed, any cull would be minimal (~25–30) vs. 80 last year.

## Bird banding:

- Fall migration banding (since August): 7,028 birds banded, 1,447 recaptures, 94 species. Above-average year; detailed logs on Aaron's bird banding blog.

## Tallow Tree control

- Contractor started Chinese tallow removal: Focus on KICA trails and Cougar, Turtle, Osprey golf courses. Using hack-and-squirt/girdle-and-squirt and stump-painting methods.

## Community Association, ARB & Landscaping

- KICA Land & Lakes line-of-sight project: Clearing and lowering vegetation at key intersections (Parkway, Governors). Replanting using all native plant mixes (sun/shade, tall/low), contract-grown via Charleston Aquatic Nurseries. Intended as a safety improvement and model for native landscaping.

## Town Center expansion & resiliency:

- Resiliency Committee passed a **resolution** encouraging: Native, resilient, and stormwater-friendly landscaping (e.g., pollinator gardens, replacement of the existing rain garden with resilient design) in the **expansion of this building**.

## **Kiawah Island Golf Resort**

- Pollinator garden at the temporary Nature Center: Extremely active with bees and Gulf fritillary caterpillars on passionflower. Will partly be lost when the trailer and boardwalk are removed; a larger pollinator garden is planned at the new Nature Center. New Nature Center building: Target opening: November / end of year (schedule tight). Will feature the Kiawah wildlife video (from the CVB) on a ~17-ft wall, shown periodically to educate visitors on bobcats, SGAs, and broader environmental issues. Venomous snake training: Christian attended a venomous snake conference in Florida. Organizer is considering a regional conference; contact info shared with Jim in case the Town is interested in involvement.

## **Turtle Patrol**

- Season ended Oct 6: Last nest inventory completed that morning; end-of-season dinner held that evening. Nesting: Low Loggerhead nesting year on Kiawah, consistent with statewide patterns; DNR emphasizes cyclical variation. Florida comparison: Some species had record years there, but Florida counts crawls, not only confirmed nests. New DNR research: Initiated paternal DNA sampling to estimate the number of male Loggerheads off the SC coast (nearshore foraging/breeding waters).

## **Adjournment**

## **CHAPTER 5. – OFFENSES AGAINST WILDLIFE AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

### **Sec. 15-501 – Adoption of State Code**

The Town hereby adopts by reference Title 50, Fish, Game and Watercraft, Chapters 1, 5, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 20, and 21 of the Code of Laws of South Carolina, 1976, and any subsequent amendments thereto.

### **Sec. 15-502 - Definitions**

*Chumming* means the depositing into water chopped or ground bait consisting of raw meat or fish parts including blood and oil thereof, but excluding poultry, in an attempt to catch fish.

*Exotic animal* means any animal not normally domesticated in the United States or any animal which is wild by nature.

*Personal watercraft* means a vessel, usually less than sixteen feet in length, that uses an inboard motor powering a water jet pump as its primary source of propulsion and that is intended to be operated by a person sitting, standing, or kneeling on the vessel, rather than within the confines of the hull.

*Specialty propcraft* means a vessel that is similar in appearance and operation to a personal watercraft but is powered by an outboard or propeller-driven motor.

*Vessel* means every description of watercraft, other than a seaplane regulated by the federal government, used or capable of being used as a means of transportation on water.

*Watercraft* means anything used or capable of being used as a means of transportation on the water but does not include: a seaplane regulated by the federal government, water skis, aquaplanes, surfboards, windsurfers, tubes, rafts, and similar devices or anything that does not meet construction or operational requirements of the state or federal government for watercraft.

*Wildlife* means undomesticated nonhuman living things that live in their natural environment.

### **Sec. 15-503 – Bobcats Protected**

No person shall intentionally or negligently harass, injure, trap, or kill a bobcat.

### **Sec. 15-504 – Feeding Wildlife**

No person shall purposely feed or make food available for consumption by wildlife on private or public property within the Town. Each property owner or person having control of the property shall have the duty to remove any materials or devices placed on the owner's property in violation of this section. This section does not apply to the following:

- (a) Any agent of the Town, County, State of South Carolina or Federal Agency lawfully engaged in a wildlife management program.

- (b) Bird feeders, provided that the feeders are maintained in a clean and sanitary manner.
- (c) Use of baits associated with pest control activities.

**Sec. 15-505 – Trapping and hunting of birds prohibited**

No person shall trap, hunt, shoot, or attempt to shoot or molest in any manner any bird or bird nests. This section does not apply to legal hunting activities within state waters, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) personnel, persons licensed or otherwise authorized by SCDNR, or the Town's wildlife management personnel.

**Sec. 15-506. – Alligators Protected**

- (a) No person shall feed or entice with food any alligator or alligators within the Town. This section does not apply to South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) personnel, persons licensed or otherwise authorized by SCDNR, or the Town's wildlife management personnel, when capturing alligators by baiting or enticement.
- (b) No person shall harm, harass or kill any alligator or alligators within the Town. This section does not apply to South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) personnel, persons licensed or otherwise authorized by SCDNR, or the Town's wildlife management personnel.

**Sec. 15-507 - Keeping of certain animals prohibited**

No person shall keep within the Town limits any domesticated fowl, including, but not limited to, chickens, ducks, geese or pigeons, any horse, mule, cow, swine, goat, sheep, or exotic animal. This section does not apply to the following:

- (a) Licensed wildlife rehabilitators or nature centers when such animals are maintained solely for the purposes of scientific research, educational exhibition, or wildlife rehabilitation.
- (b) Any agent of the Town, County, State of South Carolina or Federal Agency lawfully engaged in a wildlife management program.

**Sec. 15-508 – Removal of animal excrement**

The owner or custodian of an animal shall immediately collect, remove and dispose of all excrement deposited by such animal on any beach, public property, street, right-of-way, sidewalk, public way, playground, or upon private property owned by others. The owner or custodian shall place the excrement in a plastic bag or other suitable container and deposit the collection in an approved waste receptacle.

**Sec. 15-509 – Chumming prohibited**

No chumming shall be allowed on or within 600 feet of the beach. Nothing in this section shall affect or prohibit the baiting of crab traps or the placement of natural bait upon a hook and line.

**Sec. 15-510 – Fishing on the beach**

Code enforcement officers shall have the authority to require persons engaged in fishing from the beach to cease fishing if, in their judgement, circumstances indicate that cessation of fishing is in

the interest of public safety. In the event the code enforcement officer determines that fishing from the beach may be unsafe for other users of the beach, the code enforcement officer may order any person engaged in fishing from the beach to immediately cease fishing until such time as he or she indicates that it is safe to resume fishing. The code enforcement officer may indicate that fishing may occur at an alternative location on the beach during the time that the cease fishing order is effective. Failure to comply with an order of the code enforcement officer shall be deemed a violation of this section.

**Sec. 15-511 – Regulation of gamefish, crustaceans, and shellfish**

The Town hereby adopts by reference all bag limits and size restrictions on gamefish, crustaceans, and shellfish established by the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources.

**Sec. 15-512 – Operation of watercraft**

- (a) No person shall operate a personal watercraft, specialty propcraft, or vessel while upon all other waters of this State in excess of idle speed within 50 feet of a moored or anchored vessel, wharf, dock, bulkhead, pier, or person in the water, or within 100 yards of the Atlantic Ocean coast line. The prohibitions contained in this item do not apply to an unoccupied, moored vessel or watercraft or to a person behind a vessel or watercraft who is on water skis or a floating device with the permission of the operator of the vessel or watercraft.
- (b) No person shall chase, harass, molest, worry, or disturb wildlife with a personal watercraft, specialty propcraft, or vessel except while lawfully angling for, hunting, or trapping wildlife.