

AGENCY NAME:	SC Conservation Bank		
AGENCY CODE:	P400	SECTION:	53



**Fiscal Year 2025-26
Agency Budget Plan**

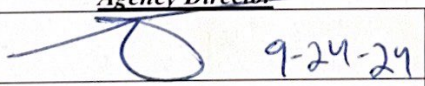
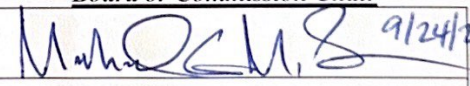
FORM A - BUDGET PLAN SUMMARY

OPERATING REQUESTS (FORM B1)	For FY 2025-26, my agency is (mark "X"):	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Requesting General Fund Appropriations.
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Requesting Federal/Other Authorization.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not requesting any changes.
NON-RECURRING REQUESTS (FORM B2)	For FY 2025-26, my agency is (mark "X"):	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Requesting Non-Recurring Appropriations.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Requesting Non-Recurring Federal/Other Authorization.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not requesting any changes.
CAPITAL REQUESTS (FORM C)	For FY 2025-26, my agency is (mark "X"):	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Requesting funding for Capital Projects.
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Not requesting any changes.
	For FY 2025-26, my agency is (mark "X"):	
PROVISOS (FORM D)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Requesting a new proviso and/or substantive changes to existing provisos.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Only requesting technical proviso changes (such as date references).
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Not requesting any proviso changes.

Please identify your agency's preferred contacts for this year's budget process.

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Email</u>
PRIMARY CONTACT:	Adair Roark	803-608-7775	Adair.Roark@sccbanc.sc.gov
SECONDARY CONTACT:	Amber Larck	803-917-1033	Amber.Larck@sccbanc.sc.gov

I have reviewed and approved the enclosed FY 2025-26 Agency Budget Plan, which is complete and accurate to the extent of my knowledge.

	<u>Agency Director</u>	<u>Board or Commission Chair</u>
SIGN/DATE:	 9-24-24	 9/24/24
TYPE/PRINT NAME:	J. Raleigh West III	Michael G. McShane

This form must be signed by the agency head – not a delegate.

Agency Name:	SC Conservation Bank
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BUDGET REQUESTS			FUNDING					FTES				
Priority	Request Type	Request Title	State	Federal	Earmarked	Restricted	Total	State	Federal	Earmarked	Restricted	Total
1	B1 - Recurring	Conservation Grant Fund	5,500,000	0	0	0	5,500,000	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2	B2 - Non-Recurring	Conservation Grant Funding	20,000,000	0	0	0	20,000,000	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
3	B2 - Non-Recurring	Working Agricultural Lands Preservation	3,000,000	0	0	0	3,000,000	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
4	B1 - Recurring	Prior Year(s) Reimbursements Authority	0	0	25,000,000	0	25,000,000	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
TOTALS			28,500,000	0	25,000,000	0	53,500,000	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Agency Name:	SC Conservation Bank		
Agency Code:	P400	Section:	53

FORM B1 – RECURRING OPERATING REQUEST

AGENCY PRIORITY	1
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Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.

TITLE	Conservation Grant Fund
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Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.

AMOUNT	General: \$5,500,000 Federal: \$0 Other: \$0 Total: \$5,500,000
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What is the net change in requested appropriations for FY 2025-2026? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.

NEW POSITIONS	0.00
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Please provide the total number of new positions needed for this request.

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REQUEST	Mark "X" for all that apply:	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Change in cost of providing current services to existing program audience
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Change in case load/enrollment under existing program guidelines
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-mandated change in eligibility/enrollment for existing program
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-mandated program change in service levels or areas
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Proposed establishment of a new program or initiative
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Loss of federal or other external financial support for existing program
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Exhaustion of fund balances previously used to support program
	<input type="checkbox"/>	IT Technology/Security related
	<input type="checkbox"/>	HR/Personnel Related
<input type="checkbox"/>	Consulted DTO during development	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Related to a Non-Recurring request – If so, Priority #	

STATEWIDE ENTERPRISE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	Mark "X" for primary applicable Statewide Enterprise Strategic Objective:	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Education, Training, and Human Development
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Healthy and Safe Families
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Maintaining Safety, Integrity, and Security
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Public Infrastructure and Economic Development
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Government and Citizens	

ACCOUNTABILITY OF FUNDS	<p>This funding request supports all agency goals and objectives outlined in the Strategic Plan Template of the FY2024 Accountability Report. This funds request advances the agency's objectives by allowing the Conservation Bank to permanently conserve, preserve and protect significant natural resources, farmlands, forestlands, wetlands, open lands, historic and archaeological sites, and urban parks statewide through conservation easements, low interest loans and purchase of land for the purpose of improving the quality of life in SC for current and future generations.</p>
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What specific strategy, as outlined in the most recent Strategic Planning and Performance Measurement template of agency's accountability report, does this funding request support? How would this request advance that strategy? How would the use of these funds be evaluated?

RECIPIENTS OF	<p>These funds would be distributed to the qualified entities that have submitted applications to the Conservation Bank seeking funds as established by criteria in the statute and by Board decision. The funds would be allocated only after all required</p>
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FUNDS

due diligence items have been submitted and approved by the Conservation Bank.

What individuals or entities would receive these funds (contractors, vendors, grantees, individual beneficiaries, etc.)? How would these funds be allocated – using an existing formula, through a competitive process, based upon predetermined eligibility criteria?

JUSTIFICATION OF REQUEST

The Conservation Bank’s principal purpose and program is to review and award competitive grants to qualified governmental and non-profit entities to purchase interests in land for conservation purposes, which constitutes the vast majority of our expenses. The Bank also incurs expenses associated with routine administrative and operational activities. The Conservation Bank previously only received funds from the Documentary Deed Stamp Tax but, as of FY 17-18, its funding derived from General Fund appropriations.

Historically, third party funding requests to the Bank have greatly exceeded our annual appropriations. We expect that same dynamic to play out in FY25, with several large conservation transactions anticipated to materialize in the coming months. Additionally, numerous federal programs have increased funding for conservation projects, provided they meet certain thresholds for non-federal matching partners. The Conservation Bank is one of the most efficient and reliable sources of non-federal match that can help attract federal dollars to South Carolina. Given recent increases in federal conservation programs, we anticipate corresponding increases to the Bank to support non-federal matching requirements.

Decreases to the Conservation Bank’s budget would limit partner organizations’ capabilities to protect significant natural resource lands, wetlands, historical and archaeological properties and urban parks throughout the state, and to attract federal dollars that would otherwise dramatically leverage the State’s contributions.

Please thoroughly explain the request to include the justification for funds, potential offsets, matching funds, and method of calculation. Please include any explanation of impact if funds are not received. If new positions have been requested, explain why existing vacancies are not sufficient.

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FORM B1 – RECURRING OPERATING REQUEST

AGENCY PRIORITY	4
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Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.

TITLE	Prior Year(s) Reimbursements Authority
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Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.

AMOUNT	General: \$0 Federal: \$0 Other: \$25,000,000 Total: \$25,000,000
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What is the net change in requested appropriations for FY 2025-2026? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.

NEW POSITIONS	0.00
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Please provide the total number of new positions needed for this request.

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REQUEST	Mark "X" for all that apply:	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Change in cost of providing current services to existing program audience
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Change in case load/enrollment under existing program guidelines
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-mandated change in eligibility/enrollment for existing program
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-mandated program change in service levels or areas
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Proposed establishment of a new program or initiative
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Loss of federal or other external financial support for existing program
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Exhaustion of fund balances previously used to support program
	<input type="checkbox"/>	IT Technology/Security related
	<input type="checkbox"/>	HR/Personnel Related
<input type="checkbox"/>	Consulted DTO during development	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Related to a Non-Recurring request – If so, Priority #	

STATEWIDE ENTERPRISE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	Mark "X" for primary applicable Statewide Enterprise Strategic Objective:	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Education, Training, and Human Development
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Healthy and Safe Families
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Maintaining Safety, Integrity, and Security
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Public Infrastructure and Economic Development
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Government and Citizens	

ACCOUNTABILITY OF FUNDS	<p>This funding request supports all agency goals and objectives outlined in the Strategic Plan Template of the FY2024 Accountability Report. This authorization request advances the agency's objectives by allowing the Conservation Bank to reissue reimbursements to permanently conserve, preserve and protect other significant natural resources, farmlands, forestlands, wetlands, open lands, historic and archaeological sites, and urban parks statewide through conservation easements and purchase of land for the purpose of improving the quality of life in SC for current and future generations.</p>
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What specific strategy, as outlined in the most recent Strategic Planning and Performance Measurement template of agency's accountability report, does this funding request support? How would this request advance that strategy? How would the use of these funds be evaluated?

RECIPIENTS OF	<p>These funds would be distributed to the qualified entities that have submitted applications to the Conservation Bank seeking funds as established by criteria in the statute and by Board decision. The funds would be allocated only after all required</p>
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FUNDS

due diligence items have been submitted and approved by the Conservation Bank.

What individuals or entities would receive these funds (contractors, vendors, grantees, individual beneficiaries, etc.)? How would these funds be allocated – using an existing formula, through a competitive process, based upon predetermined eligibility criteria?

JUSTIFICATION OF REQUEST

In accordance with Section 48-59-50 of The South Carolina Conservation Bank Act, the Bank is established and authorized to "make loans to eligible trust fund recipients for the purchase of interests in land, at no interest or at an interest rate determined by the board, and under terms determined by the board, so long as the loans advance the purposes of this chapter and meet criteria contained in Section 48-59-70". Under guidance from the SC Department of Administration, the Bank should deposit reimbursements of loans disbursed in prior fiscal years into a 30350000 fund and obtain the necessary budget authority. This is a new process for the Bank to assist in tracking and transparency.

The Bank expects receiving up to \$25 million in loan reimbursements ("reimbursable grants") in any given fiscal year. The Bank requests authorization for this fund, separate and distinct from the General Trust Fund for the purpose of collecting, holding and administering monies, arising from its reimbursable grants.

Please thoroughly explain the request to include the justification for funds, potential offsets, matching funds, and method of calculation. Please include any explanation of impact if funds are not received. If new positions have been requested, explain why existing vacancies are not sufficient.

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FORM B2 – NON-RECURRING OPERATING REQUEST

AGENCY PRIORITY	2
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Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.

TITLE	Conservation Grant Funding
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Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.

AMOUNT	\$20,000,000
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What is the net change in requested appropriations for FY 2025-2026? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REQUEST	Mark "X" for all that apply:	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Change in cost of providing current services to existing program audience
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Change in case load/enrollment under existing program guidelines
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-mandated change in eligibility/enrollment for existing program
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-mandated program change in service levels or areas
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Proposed establishment of a new program or initiative
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Loss of federal or other external financial support for existing program
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Exhaustion of fund balances previously used to support program
	<input type="checkbox"/>	IT Technology/Security related
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Consulted DTO during development
	<input type="checkbox"/>	HR/Personnel Related
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Request for Non-Recurring Appropriations
<input type="checkbox"/>	Request for Federal/Other Authorization to spend existing funding	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Related to a Recurring request – If so, Priority #	

STATEWIDE ENTERPRISE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	Mark "X" for primary applicable Statewide Enterprise Strategic Objective:	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Education, Training, and Human Development
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Healthy and Safe Families
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Maintaining Safety, Integrity, and Security
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Public Infrastructure and Economic Development
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Government and Citizens

ACCOUNTABILITY OF FUNDS	<p>This funding request supports all agency goals and objectives outlined in the Strategic Plan Template of the FY2024 Accountability Report. This funds request advances the agency's objectives by allowing the Conservation Bank to permanently conserve, preserve and protect significant natural resources, farmlands, forestlands, wetlands, open lands, historic and archaeological sites, and urban parks statewide through conservation easements, low interest loans and purchase of land for the purpose of improving the quality of life in SC for current and future generations.</p>
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What specific strategy, as outlined in the most recent Strategic Planning and Performance Measurement template of agency's accountability report, does this funding request support? How would this request advance that strategy? How would the use of these funds be evaluated?

RECIPIENTS OF FUNDS	<p>These funds would be distributed to the qualified entities that have submitted applications to the Conservation Bank seeking funds as established by criteria in the statute and by Board decision. The funds would be allocated only after all required due diligence items have been submitted and approved by the Conservation Bank.</p>
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What individuals or entities would receive these funds (contractors, vendors, grantees, individual beneficiaries, etc.)? How would these funds be allocated – using an existing formula, through a competitive process, based upon

**JUSTIFICATION
OF REQUEST**

The Conservation Bank's principal purpose and program is to review and award competitive grants to qualified governmental and non-profit entities to purchase interests in land for conservation purposes, which constitutes the vast majority of our expenses. The Bank also incurs expenses associated with routine administrative and operational activities. The Conservation Bank previously only received funds from the Documentary Deed Stamp Tax but, as of FY 17-18, its funding derived from General Fund appropriations.

Historically, third party funding requests to the Bank have greatly exceeded our annual appropriations. We expect that same dynamic to play out in FY25, with several large conservation transactions anticipated to materialize in the coming months. Additionally, numerous federal programs have increased funding for conservation projects, provided they meet certain thresholds for non-federal matching partners. The Conservation Bank is one of the most efficient and reliable sources of non-federal match that can help attract federal dollars to South Carolina. Given recent increases in federal conservation programs, we anticipate corresponding increases to the Bank to support non-federal matching requirements.

Decreases to the Conservation Bank's budget would limit partner organizations' capabilities to protect significant natural resource lands, wetlands, historical and archaeological properties and urban parks throughout the state, and to attract federal dollars that would otherwise dramatically leverage the State's contributions.

Please thoroughly explain the request to include the justification for funds, potential offsets, matching funds, and method of calculation. Please include any explanation of impact if funds are not received. If new positions have been requested, explain why existing vacancies are not sufficient.

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FORM B2 – NON-RECURRING OPERATING REQUEST

AGENCY PRIORITY	3
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Provide the Agency Priority Ranking from the Executive Summary.

TITLE	Working Agricultural Lands Preservation
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Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.

AMOUNT	\$3,000,000
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What is the net change in requested appropriations for FY 2025-2026? This amount should correspond to the total for all funding sources on the Executive Summary.

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REQUEST	Mark "X" for all that apply:	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Change in cost of providing current services to existing program audience
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Change in case load/enrollment under existing program guidelines
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-mandated change in eligibility/enrollment for existing program
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-mandated program change in service levels or areas
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Proposed establishment of a new program or initiative
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Loss of federal or other external financial support for existing program
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Exhaustion of fund balances previously used to support program
	<input type="checkbox"/>	IT Technology/Security related
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Consulted DTO during development
	<input type="checkbox"/>	HR/Personnel Related
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Request for Non-Recurring Appropriations
<input type="checkbox"/>	Request for Federal/Other Authorization to spend existing funding	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Related to a Recurring request – If so, Priority #	

STATEWIDE ENTERPRISE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	Mark "X" for primary applicable Statewide Enterprise Strategic Objective:	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Education, Training, and Human Development
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Healthy and Safe Families
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Maintaining Safety, Integrity, and Security
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Public Infrastructure and Economic Development
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Government and Citizens

ACCOUNTABILITY OF FUNDS	<p>This funding request supports agency goals and objectives outlined in the Strategic Plan Template of the FY2025 Accountability Report. This funds request advances the agency's objectives by allowing the Conservation Bank to permanently conserve, preserve and protect working farmland properties.</p>
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What specific strategy, as outlined in the most recent Strategic Planning and Performance Measurement template of agency's accountability report, does this funding request support? How would this request advance that strategy? How would the use of these funds be evaluated?

RECIPIENTS OF FUNDS	<p>These funds would be distributed to the qualified entities that have submitted applications to the Conservation Bank seeking funds as established by criteria and by Board decision. The funds would be allocated only after all required due diligence items have been submitted and approved by the Conservation Bank.</p>
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What individuals or entities would receive these funds (contractors, vendors, grantees, individual beneficiaries, etc.)? How would these funds be allocated – using an existing formula, through a competitive process, based upon

**JUSTIFICATION
OF REQUEST**

H3951, an Act to add Section 48-59-150 to the South Carolina Code of Laws, established the Working Farmland Protection Fund for the purpose of providing permanent protection to working farmland properties whose continued availability to commercial agricultural businesses is essential to the long-term future of the economic sector.

The Working Farmland Protection Fund must be used by the bank only for the purpose of awarding grants to eligible trust fund recipients for the purchase of interests in farmland in which a landowner derives at least fifty percent of his income. The South Carolina Conservation Bank Board must evaluate applications using the criteria set forth in Section 48-59-70(D), except for Section 48-59-70(D)(9) and Section 48-59-70(D)(13), along with additional criteria added in Section 48-59-150. Balances in the fund must be retained and carried forward annually and interest earned on balances in the fund must be credited to the fund.

At the time of this submission, the Bank has already received applications requesting over \$1.6M from this fund. We expect the success of the Working Agriculture program to unfold during the remainder of FY 25 as requests will likely exceed the budget set aside for this program.

Decreases to the Working Farmland and Protection Fund would limit the Bank from protecting significant working farmland properties.

Please thoroughly explain the request to include the justification for funds, potential offsets, matching funds, and method of calculation. Please include any explanation of impact if funds are not received. If new positions have been requested, explain why existing vacancies are not sufficient.

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FORM E – AGENCY COST SAVINGS AND GENERAL FUND REDUCTION CONTINGENCY PLAN

TITLE	Agency Cost Savings and General Fund Reduction Contingency Plan
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AMOUNT	\$487,809
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What is the General Fund 3% reduction amount? This amount should correspond to the reduction spreadsheet prepared by EBO.

ASSOCIATED FTE REDUCTIONS	None
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How many FTEs would be reduced in association with this General Fund reduction?

PROGRAM / ACTIVITY IMPACT	<p>The General Funds identified support many activities including general operating expenses as well as funding grants that the SC Conservation Bank Board approves.</p>
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What programs or activities are supported by the General Funds identified?

SUMMARY	<p>A reduction in General Fund Appropriations would inhibit the SC Conservation Bank from further fulfilling its mission to improve the quality of life in South Carolina through the conservation of significant natural resource lands, wetlands, historical properties, archeological sites, and urban parks.</p>
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Please provide a detailed summary of service delivery impact caused by a reduction in General Fund Appropriations and provide the method of calculation for anticipated reductions. Agencies should prioritize reduction in expenditures that have the least significant impact on service delivery.

**AGENCY COST
SAVINGS PLANS**

The SC Conservation Bank does not have any recurring costs or operating expenses that exceed \$50,000.

What measures does the agency plan to implement to reduce its costs and operating expenses by more than \$50,000? Provide a summary of the measures taken and the estimated amount of savings. How does the agency plan to repurpose the savings?