

# TOWN COUNCIL

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## STAFF REPORT Department of Engineering

<b>MEETING DATE:</b>	August 9, 2016
<b>PROJECT:</b>	May River Watershed Action Plan Advisory Committee Recommendation to Submit a Letter of Support for Dr. Eric Montie's University of South Carolina Aspire III Grant Application
<b>PROJECT MANAGER:</b>	Kim Jones, Watershed Management Division Manager

**REQUEST:** The May River Watershed Action Plan Advisory Committee recommends Town Council approval to submit a letter of support for Dr. Eric Montie's University of South Carolina Aspire III grant application for water quality monitoring equipment to support ecological research in the May River.

**BACKGROUND:** Dr. Montie, Assistant Professor of Biology at University of South Carolina Beaufort (USCB), requested from the Town of Bluffton a letter of support for an Aspire III grant application he is submitting internally to the University of South Carolina. Dr. Montie will be requesting approximately \$100,000 to purchase water quality monitoring equipment for USCB's Department of Natural Sciences in the spring of 2017.

The Department plans to deploy the equipment in the May River, and perhaps other local waterways as needed, to support university research efforts. Examples of the types of data to be collected include rainfall, conductivity, temperature, depth, and dissolved oxygen. These data will aid in understanding the impacts of salinity drops associated with stormwater runoff and will provide data for USCB's current research programs in the May River including bacteria concentrations, phyto- and zooplankton and other invertebrate populations, fish reproductivity including larval fish abundance, and bottlenose dolphin distribution.

**INTRODUCTION:** At the July 26, 2016 meeting of the WAPAC, the committee discussed Dr. Montie's request and the merits of his research, including the benefits to the Town's own efforts to understand the impacts of development and stormwater runoff. The Committee formally recommended that Town Council submit a letter of support for Dr. Montie's grant application to the University of South Carolina for water quality monitoring equipment.

**NEXT STEPS:** Following Town Council's approval of the letter of recommendation, staff will deliver it to Dr. Montie for inclusion with his grant application.

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Dr. Eric Montie Letter of Support for Aspire III Grant Application

Lisa Sulka  
*Mayor*

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Larry Toomer  
*Mayor Pro Tempore*

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Marc Orlando  
*Town Manager*



*Council Members*

Fred Hamilton  
Harry Lutz  
Dan Wood

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Sandra Lunceford  
*Town Clerk*

July 29, 2016

RE: Town of Bluffton Support for University of South Carolina Beaufort's Aspire III Grant

Dear Dr. Montie,

At the recommendation of the Town's May River Watershed Action Plan Advisory Committee and on behalf of the Town of Bluffton Town Council, please accept this letter of support for your Aspire III grant application to the University of South Carolina. The Town enthusiastically supports your efforts to acquire additional water quality monitoring equipment for the University of South Carolina Beaufort's Department of Natural Resources.

The Town is very interested in the Department's plans to deploy the equipment in the May River, an Outstanding Resource Water as designated by South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control. We understand the value these data will provide for a number of USCB's current research programs relating to the health of the May River including bacteria concentrations by Dr. Warren, phyto- and zooplankton and other invertebrate populations by Dr. Borgianini, and fish reproductivity including larval fish abundance and bottlenose dolphin distribution by you.

Additionally, the data collected will aid the Town's understanding of the impacts of salinity drops associated with stormwater runoff resulting from development. The Town has had a long-standing and productive collaboration with the University of South Carolina Beaufort through our formal Memorandum of Understanding in support of the water quality laboratory. We are excited to support additional water quality monitoring efforts *in situ* and determine how those data may be applied to develop sound management policies and programs at the Town as directed by the May River Watershed Action Plan.

On behalf of the Town of Bluffton, I wish you the best of luck with your grant application.

Sincerely,

Lisa Sulka  
Mayor, Town of Bluffton

cc: Town Council  
Marc Orlando, ICMA-CM, Town Manager  
Scott Marshall, Deputy Town Manager  
May River Watershed Action Plan Advisory Committee  
Kim Jones, Watershed Management Division Manager