Foreword

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The JSCWR editorial committee is excited to introduce the Water Chats 2024 special issue (Volume 9, Issue 2), a spinoff inspired by the popular Water Chats webinar series launched in 2022 by the South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium, Clemson Extension, and Clemson's South Carolina Water Resources Center. Water Chats aims to deliver timely water quality information to inspire conversations about protecting and restoring the quality of our state's invaluable water resources. Providing opportunities for students, early career professionals, outreach professionals, and academic researchers to showcase their latest water quality research, we hope this special issue makes you think, and motivates all of us, as a community, to keep the discussion moving forward.

Alongside existing statewide efforts to quantify and sustainably manage the use of South Carolina's water resources, water researchers, managers, and practitioners remind us that we can't neglect the importance of managing for water quality in these discussions, too. South Carolina's thriving $29 billion tourism industry depends on clean water to support recreation, and our local $139 million seafood industry depends on clean water to bring their fresh catch to your plate. Our farmers rely on clean water to raise the crops and livestock that provide food for our communities, and agribusiness contributes $51.8 billion annually to our state economy. And, all of South Carolina's 5.3 million residents rely on access to safe and clean drinking water to fill their glasses and protect our public health. We have witnessed both droughts and floods over the last several years, and the impact of these often makes the news across our state. However, the issues affecting water quality are not always as apparent to a casual observer. To understand the current condition of our water resources, we must understand the historic, current, and emerging contaminants that threaten the quality of our water resources statewide. There are many researchers and managers in South Carolina working diligently to address our water quality challenges, and we are excited to highlight some of their work here.

Volume 9, Issue 2 of the *Journal of South Carolina Water Resources (JSCWR)* includes ten articles. These articles are intended to highlight water quality research with a focus on their applications to natural resource management. This special issue will include opportunities to learn about new tools that enhance our understanding and management of water quality in South Carolina, including a new public-access repository for water quality data, advances in watershed planning that enhance waterway protection, and processes for stakeholder engagement that serve as a model to aid in water resource decision-making on the state and local level. The issue will also draw attention to the ongoing impacts of non-point source pollution, such as harmful algal blooms. Sharing data, tools, and solutions to inform better decision making was a goal of the original Water Chats webinar series, and this special issue provides a platform to deliver additional in-depth content to those who need it.

The Water Chats program was developed through a collaborative, stakeholder-driven process and offered free-of-charge to provide new and emerging water quality research directly to natural resource managers and decision-makers. We are looking forward to building on 2022's successes through Water Chats and in the process of convening a new technical advisory committee to plan for the next year of the program in 2024. Visit the Water Chats website to stay up to date on offerings.

In closing, we wish to thank all of the authors and guest reviewers of this special issue for their hard work and participation. This effort would not have been possible without the commitment and dedication of our Special Issue Editorial Committee. Collaboration has been the backbone of the Water Chats program and this special issue is no exception. We thank everyone for their support.