



Jocassee Journal

Information and News about the Jocassee Gorges

Winter/Spring, 2000

Volume I, Number 1

Second phase of Jocassee Gorges deal is completed

The second phase of the Jocassee Gorges land protection project has been completed with the purchase of 7,891 acres in South Carolina's mountain region, bringing the total acreage of

the South Carolina DNR tract to nearly 33,000.

The Richard King Mellon Foundation purchased the land with assistance from The Conservation Fund and simultaneously deeded it to the state of South Carolina. Closing on the property took place Nov. 9, 1999. The Richard King Mellon Foundation previously purchased 9,093 acres, and South Carolina acquired about 16,000 acres with funds from a \$10 million bond and \$1 million from the North American Wetlands Conservation Council. A thousand-acre parcel, known as Laurel Fork Heritage Preserve, was purchased in 1997 through the S.C. Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Heritage Trust Program.

"We have now completed the second phase of what some have determined to be the most significant conservation land acquisition in the Southern Appalachians in the latter half of the 20th Century," said Dr. Paul Sandifer, director of the DNR, which manages Jocassee Gorges.

By designation of the S.C. Natural Resources Board, the property is now called the **James A. Timmerman Natural Resources Area at Jocassee Gorges**, in honor of the DNR's director emeritus. Timmerman, DNR director from 1974 to 1997, played a key role in the Jocassee acquisition.

Sandifer praised the Richard King Mellon Foundation Fund for its generous support. "Thanks to the foresight and commitment of the Richard King Mellon Foundation and The Conservation Fund, Jocassee Gorges is becoming a prominent part of the nature-based tourism economy of the Southern Appalachians and adding to the quality of life for all South Carolinians," Sandifer said. "Not only are these lands important for wildlife, they are exceptional destinations for outdoor recreation. Families can enjoy hunting, hiking, fishing and camping now and for generations to come."

Duke Energy, through its subsidiary, Crescent Resources Inc., has now transferred almost 33,000 acres in the Lake Jocassee area to the state of South Carolina. The collaborative effort to purchase the land involved many state and federal agencies and private conservation organizations. Duke Energy will continue to manage 10,000 acres it has reserved for future power generation options

in concert with the goals of the natural resource agencies. Along with the property acquisition, the DNR will hold a conservation easement on about 6,500 acres of Duke Energy lands within the Jocassee watershed.

Patrick F. Noonan, chairman of The Conservation Fund, said: "We are honored to assist the Richard King Mellon Foundation and play a role in helping create this newest addition to South Carolina's outdoor heritage."

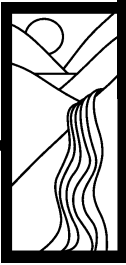
Over the years, Sandifer said, Duke Energy and Crescent Resources have kept the tract intact for future power production opportunities and because they recognized its ecological value as a large undeveloped woodland, and a reserve for rare species. In November 1996, Duke gave South Carolina's conservation community first opportunity to purchase the land, making the property available through 1999.

A private fund-raising initiative — the Jocassee Gorges Trust Fund — will support maintenance and management of the Jocassee tract. For details, see page five.



Laurel Fork Falls spills into Lake Jocassee.

photo courtesy of South Carolina Wildlife magazine



Improvements already in place at upstate's Jocassee Gorges

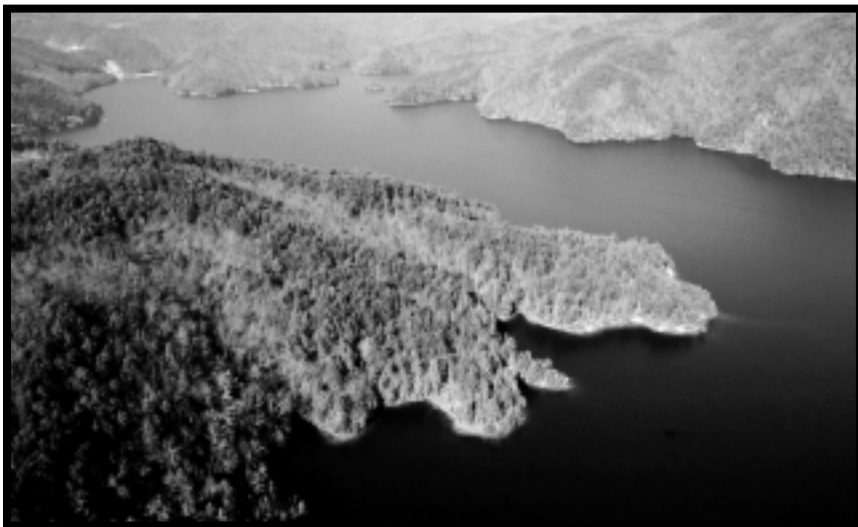
About 13 miles of roads have been stabilized, more biological staff will be hired and two new conservation officers will soon be patrolling the Jocassee Gorges tract in South Carolina's mountains, according to state natural resources officials.

The S.C. Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has spent about \$150,000 just on rock to stabilize 13 miles of roads in the Jocassee Gorges, according to Sam Stokes Sr., DNR regional wildlife biologist based in Clemson. A cooperative effort between Duke Power and DNR resulted in the hydroseeding and roadside stabilization of these 13 miles. The DNR will assign two members of its biological staff exclusively to Jocassee Gorges, including one new position. The General Assembly provided funding for two new conservation officers who will soon be patrolling the 33,000-acre tract in Pickens and Oconee counties.

Besides the many forms of wildlife-related recreation available on Jocassee Gorges, the land is home to many species of rare plants and animals.

In accordance with the Jocassee Gorges Management Plan, which went through a lengthy public review process before approval by the S.C. Natural Resources Board, survey and monitoring of rare elements on the tract is underway. Among those species being studied by the DNR are the green salamander, Rafinesque's big-eared bat, small-footed bat, Appalachian woodrat and Oconee bell, all candidate species for the federal Endangered Species List. Survey work has also been done on the federally endangered mountain sweet pitcher plant. Botanical surveys, conducted by Clemson University faculty and graduate students, are also underway on two tracts.

Did you know? Poinsett Lumber Company, a subsidiary of Singer Sewing Machine Company, owned the Jocassee tract from 1939-1963 and harvested lumber used to build sewing machine cabinets.



Aerial view of scenic Lake Jocassee.

photo courtesy of South Carolina Wildlife magazine

"These roads are in much better shape now than when we acquired the property," Stokes said. "Many of the places we're working on for erosion control are not those readily visible to visitors, but they are the ones where sediment has been going into trout streams, and those are our highest priority."

It will take a few more years to get all the roads stabilized on the property, Stokes said, a task that will be helped this spring when the South Carolina National Guard arrives for two-years worth of work on roads, trails and bridges.

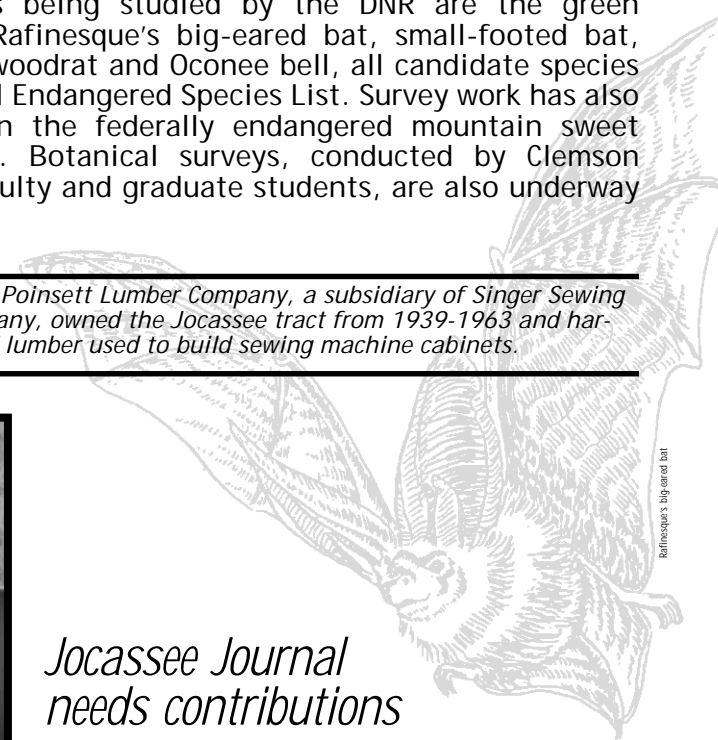
Jocassee Journal needs contributions

Beginning with this issue, the Jocassee Gorges newsletter, *Jocassee Journal*, will be published twice a year. The newsletter will feature timely articles and facts about the Jocassee Gorges land protection project.

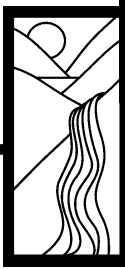
Conservation partners and other interested individuals are asked to submit articles on topics related to the conservation of the Jocassee Gorges area. Articles could feature information on land acquisition, natural history, research and survey work, upcoming conservation events or a myriad of other subjects relating to Jocassee.

All submissions are welcome. The only requirements are that articles be clear and concise, written in laymen's language (non-scientific) and no more than 300 words. Photos and illustrations are also needed.

To submit articles, or for more information, contact Greg Lucas at (803) 734-3911 or send e-mail to glucas@scdnr.state.sc.us.



Rafinesque's big-eared bat



Rare plant transplanted from Lake Jocassee shore

A project studying rare species within the Jocassee Gorges area helped relocate a plant named Oconee bells from wave action along the shore of Lake Jocassee to a more stable location.

The management plan for Jocassee Gorges requires survey and monitoring of rare plant and animal species. A S.C. Department of Natural Resources (DNR) report, authored by Mary S. Bunch and Amy Dye, looks at some of these species: green salamander, Rafinesque's big-eared bat, small-footed bat, Appalachian woodrat, Oconee bells and other rare plants.



Oconee bells

photo by Robert Clark

Oconee bells is a rare evergreen ground-covering plant native to the South Carolina mountains. The leaves are shiny, bright green, and in early spring the flower stalks terminate into bell-shaped flowers varying in color from pale pink to white. Discovered in 1787 by botanist Andre Michaux, Oconee bells is a hallmark of the Jocassee Gorges and a favorite of hikers and wildflower enthusiasts. Oconee bells, much of its former habitat inundated by lakes Jocassee and Keowee, is considered a "special concern species" by the DNR's Heritage Trust Program and is a candidate for the federal endangered species list.

A 1996 study by Charlotte Lackey of Asheville, N.C., reported that about 27 percent of Oconee bells along the immediate shoreline of Lake Jocassee would be in danger within 10 years due to shoreline erosion and undercutting. The goal of the DNR project was to locate the most imperiled Oconee bells accessible by boat, transplant these plants and map and label them for future monitoring. Oconee bells with wave-action damage on the Bad Creek and Devils Fork Creek drainage were transplanted to more stable areas where the plant was already growing.

"Once the plants were placed at the

transplant site, leaf litter was scattered on top of the plants to help shade the roots and keep moisture in," said Bunch, a DNR wildlife biologist stationed in Clemson. "The idea was to mimic the original site as much as possible."

Bunch lauded the actions of numerous volunteers who helped with the Oconee bells transplanting effort. Duke Power and Devils Fork State Park supplied the boats used to move the plants on Lake Jocassee.

The project, funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the DNR, also made the serendipitous discovery of a small-footed bat in a rock crevice during a green salamander survey. This discovery was the first natural hibernation site reported for the species in South Carolina. "Small-footed bats are known to hibernate under large rocks in caves, often in cave floors," Bunch said, "but South Carolina is lacking in caves so the question remained as to where the species overwinters."

Did you know? Locals call the Jocassee tract "The Horsepasture." The name evolved over time beginning in Civil War days. Area residents reportedly drove their horses and cattle over the mountain to a broad valley at the forks of Toxaway River and Laurel Fork Creek. Here they successfully hid their livestock from Sherman's advancing army.

The *Jocassee Journal* is building its mailing list. If you would like to receive the *Journal* twice a year, complete the form below. Please indicate if you prefer to receive by mail or electronically. See below for contact information.

Check your delivery preference:

Name _____

Mailing address _____

E-mail address _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

Please mail completed form to:
Greg Lucas, SCDNR, PO Box 167, Columbia, SC 29202-0167.
Or, send both sides by FAX to Greg Lucas at (803) 734-3951.



DNR law enforcement patrols net violations in Jocassee region

Law enforcement patrols by the S.C. Department of Natural Resources on the Jocassee Gorges property in Oconee and Pickens counties netted multiple violations recently ranging from the illegal use of off-road vehicles to littering.

The S.C. Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is concerned about abuses of the property and has dedicated additional law enforcement patrols in the area. On Dec. 5, 1999, DNR conservation officers on foot, in vehicles and on ATVs, saturated the area and wrote 21 tickets including 10 for riding ATVs on closed roads, seven for littering, two for violating hunting regulations and two for possession of marijuana. Three warnings on similar charges were also written.

Following the patrols, DNR Capt. J.C. Sims Jr. said, "DNR is committed to preserving the natural integrity of the Jocassee Gorges area and providing a safe, wholesome environment for outdoor enthusiasts to enjoy. This irresponsible behavior on the Jocassee property, or anywhere else, will not be tolerated.

"Intensified patrols on the property will continue indefinitely and DNR has permanently assigned officers to patrol the area daily," Sims said. Two additional conservation officers have been hired to patrol the Jocassee lands.

After Jan. 3, many of the Jocassee access gates were closed until turkey season opens April 1. Limited vehicle access on the property will be permitted for anglers and others who enjoy hiking, wildlife watching and mountain biking. No motorized vehicles will be permitted beyond posted signs and gates.

Laurel Valley Lodge donated

A lodge that will become an integral part of the Jocassee Gorges project has been donated to the people of South Carolina.

Laurel Valley Lodge, near Rocky Bottom in Pickens County on US 178, is on the eastern side of the 33,000-acre Jocassee Gorges property and includes the only paved entrance to the tract.

Developers offered Frank Masters \$350,000 for his property, but he declined. Masters, 52, of Sunset, donated to the state Laurel Valley Lodge, its contents and the land at the Horsepasture entrance to Jocassee Gorges. He sold adjoining lots with a cabin and an eight-room motel to the state for \$80,000, the amount he owed on them.

The total of nearly three acres was appraised at \$260,000. During a dedication ceremony held Dec. 15, 1999, at the lodge, the S.C. Department of Natural Resources (DNR) presented Masters with a plaque recognizing his commitment to protecting the Jocassee Gorges.

"I wanted to share Laurel Valley Lodge with all the people of South Carolina and the visitors coming through to Jocassee Gorges and the Horsepasture area," Masters told *The Greenville News*.

Masters feared that if the entrance to Horsepasture Road, a 17-mile unpaved road traversing the Jocassee Gorges tract, fell into the wrong hands, public access could be denied to the area. "A lot of people would like to have bought it, but I wanted a lot of people to be able to use it," Masters said.

The DNR will use the facilities for official purposes associated with site enhancement and accommodations for DNR personnel working in the area, according to John Frampton, DNR assistant director for development and national affairs.

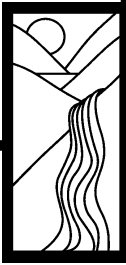
The facility could one day support educational programs such as summer youth camps and college internship programs. As part of the Jocassee project, it could be used as a destination for tourists, as a Jocassee visitor's center or as a staging area for law enforcement operations.

We're glad you picked up this issue of the *Jocassee Journal*, and hope you found it informative. Please take a moment to let us know a little about yourself, and send us your comments, requests, ideas regarding the *Jocassee Journal* or the Jocassee Gorges area.

(optional) I am active in the following:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> bird watching | <input type="checkbox"/> hiking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> camping | <input type="checkbox"/> horseback riding |
| <input type="checkbox"/> canoeing/kayaking | <input type="checkbox"/> hunting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> conservation group | <input type="checkbox"/> OHV/ATV recreation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fishing | <input type="checkbox"/> mountain biking |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> rock climbing |

Comments, requests, ideas: _____



Trust fund now accepting donations

Now that the state has acquired the 33,000-acre tract known as Jocassee Gorges, where will the money come from to maintain it? The answer is, ***the people who are interested in the future of this ecologically significant area, through contributions to the Jocassee Gorges Trust Fund.***

Approved in 1997 by the S.C. Natural Resources Board, the Jocassee Gorges Trust Fund will provide money to manage the area and perhaps add to it if additional properties become available. Property management will include road maintenance, erosion control and the erection of gates and signs. Donations are being solicited and will be held in a special account within the S.C. Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

"It was a sweet victory for conservation when we acquired Jocassee Gorges," said Dr. Paul Sandifer, DNR director, "and it's important that these lands be managed properly. The Trust Fund will ensure that future generations will be able to walk these hills and marvel at the scenic vistas."

Those wishing to contribute to the fund may make a check to the S.C. Department of Natural Resources and send it to:

***Jocassee Gorges Trust Fund, DNR
PO Box 167, Columbia, SC 29202***

In the "For" section of the check in the bottom left corner, write "Jocassee Gorges Trust Fund."

The Jocassee Gorges property, acquired from Duke Energy by the state and the Richard King Mellon Foundation, lies above SC 11 and stretches across upper Pickens and Oconee counties almost to Greenville County. Its lower eastern boundary joins Table Rock State Park, and its upper border is the North Carolina state line.

"Adequate maintenance of the property is a necessity, and the operations and maintenance costs will be significant," said Dr. James A. Timmerman Jr., DNR director-emeritus who spent the last several years of his tenure at DNR crusading for the land acquisition. "That's why the DNR is initiating a broad-based effort to raise private funds from donations to support maintenance of Jocassee Gorges. I believe the long-term benefits from preservation of these properties will be returned to the state for many years to come."

The fund will give the private sector a chance to contribute to the Jocassee Gorges project, according to Timmerman.

"Industry has expressed an interest," Timmerman said, "and rightly so, because this will be a boon to the quality of life in the area. The first priority is funds for management, but we won't rule out some funds for adding new properties in the same area."



Summer tanager. photo by Ted Borg

Bird diversity, densities in hardwoods to be researched

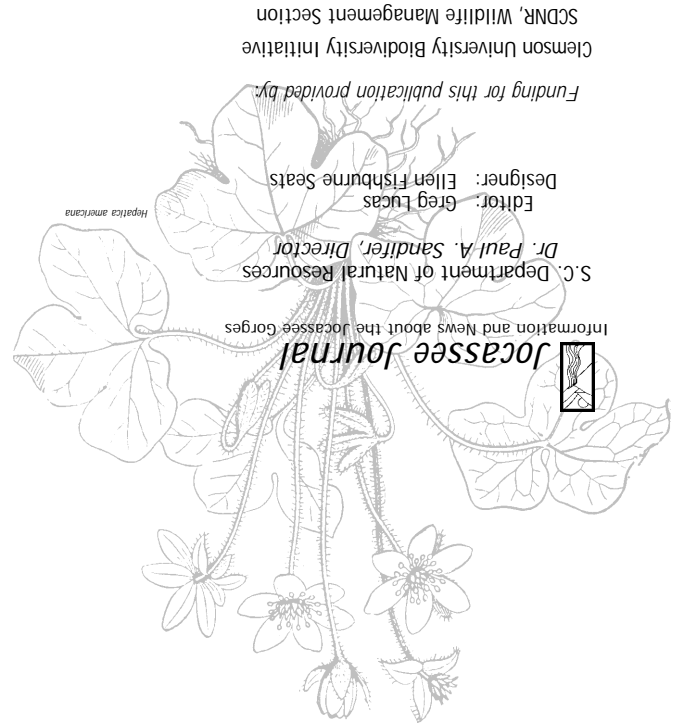
By Anna E. Huckabee,
Clemson University

My master's research is on bird diversity and densities as related to patch size of hardwoods. I will begin my point counts in May and will end in July. This is the breeding season for birds and the best time to listen for their calls as the males defend their territories.


From around 5 a.m. until 10 a.m., I will document what birds I hear and/or see from a selected point of origin within the patches and will determine what species "drop out" as patch size decreases.

For example, most warbler species require around 5 acres. Therefore, a 50-acre patch of hardwoods should, technically, house 10 nesting pairs. If the patch is reduced to 10 acres with different habitats surrounding it (fields, pine plantations, lakes, etc.), will there then be two pairs? Maybe there won't be any. If so, why? Perhaps another species can use this tiny piece of habitat. These are important questions for conservationists concerned about South Carolina's neotropical migratory birds.

Now that Jocassee Gorges is in public ownership, biologists have the opportunity to study the plants, animals and insects. To preserve and effectively manage this area, we must conduct studies such as this one. I think South Carolina has the opportunity to make an example of itself as a preservation-conscious state whose citizens support our scientific efforts.



S.C. Department of Natural Resources
1000 Assembly Street • PO Box 167
Columbia, SC 29202-0167

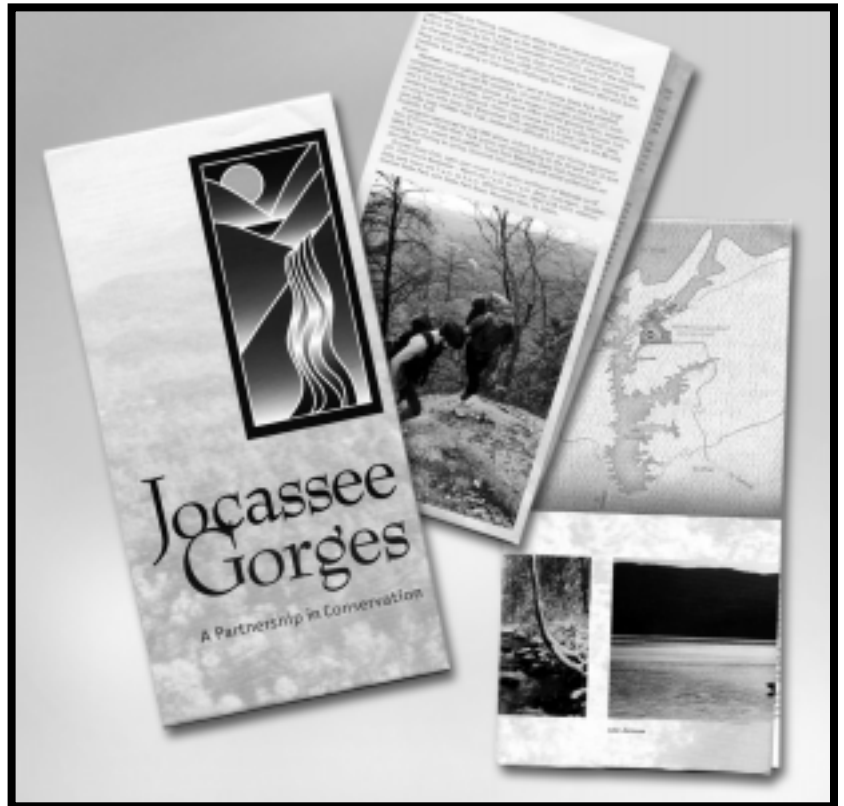


Jocassee brochure is now available

The new Jocassee Gorges brochure, published by the S.C. Department of Natural Resources with funding from Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service and Clemson University Biodiversity Initiative, is now available.

The new brochure features a full-color map showing the Jocassee Gorges tract and surrounding conservation lands. Included in the brochure is a driving tour of Jocassee Gorges and information on nearby state parks, camping opportunities, fishing, hunting, bird-watching and other recreational opportunities.

Copies of the brochure may be obtained at DNR and State Parks offices in Columbia, and at Clemson University, Keowee-Toxaway, Devils Fork, Oconee, Jones Gap, Caesars Head and Table Rock (SC 11 Visitor's Center) state parks, Walhalla State Fish Hatchery, Duke Power's World of Energy, U.S. Forest Service Andrew Pickens Ranger District, DNR Clemson office, and Clemson Extension offices in Oconee, Pickens, Greenville, Anderson and Spartanburg counties.



Brochure outlines recreational opportunities in and around Jocassee Gorges.