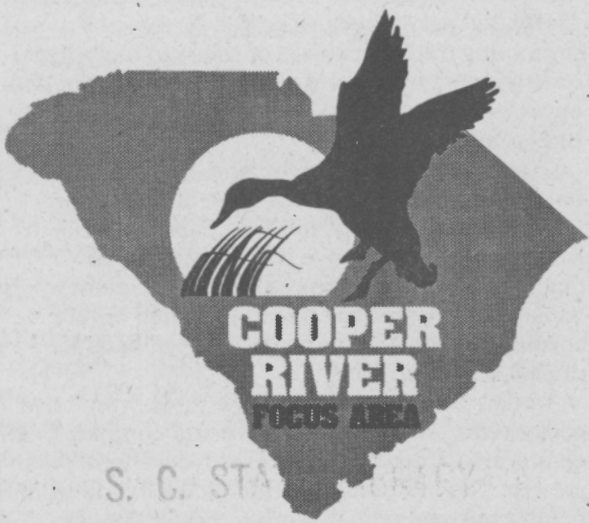


C1787
Z.H11
Copy 2

COOPER RIVER FOCUS AREA HABITAT PROTECTION PROJECT



S. C. STATE ARCHIVES
JAN 1 1994
STATE DOCUMENTS

**Conserving the Natural
Resources and Historic
Character of the Cooper,
Ashley, Wando and Stono
River Systems.**



he Cooper River Focus Area (CRFA) is a cooperative project among individual and corporate landowners, conservation organizations and governmental agencies working within the framework of the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan to protect, enhance and create wetlands habitat in the Cooper, Ashley, Wando and Stono River Basins.

This project will include a comprehensive conservation strategy to preserve and protect natural, historical and cultural resources of the associated watersheds. This will be done by promoting traditional uses of the land including forestry, agriculture and wildlife management and encouraging voluntary long term protection of important properties.

Wetlands are some of the most important wildlife habitats and have been lost at an alarming rate. Over the past century, millions of acres of North American wetlands have been destroyed or degraded and many communities dependent upon wetlands have suffered. Many wetlands wildlife species including migratory waterfowl have seen drastic declines.

Wetlands support some of the most productive ecosystems on earth. Extensive and complex food chains arise from highly productive wetland plant growth. They not only provide vital fish and wildlife habitat but also recharge groundwater supplies, retain floodwaters and act as water purifiers. Many of our recreational pursuits are wetlands dependent as well.

The North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) is a cooperative effort between the



United States, Canada and Mexico to protect over 10 million acres of wetlands by the year 2010. It encourages "joint ventures". The CRFA is a local project established under the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture of the Plan.

The Project Area

The project area comprises approximately 800,000 acres in portions of Berkeley, Charleston, and Dorchester counties. It includes the Cooper River Basin from Pinopolis Dam to the mouth of Charleston Harbor, the Ashley River Basin from US 17A southward and the entire Stono and Wando River Basins. Approximately 250,000 acres have been developed beyond the point of providing significant wildlife habitat. The project goal is to protect 225,000 acres of important habitats including wetlands and associated uplands in the CRFA.

PROTECTED AREAS	ACRES
Francis Marion National Forest	156,600
Medway Plantation	7,000
Low Country Open Land Trust Easements	4,600
Capers Island	2,000
North Mulberry Plantation	800
Dill Sanctuary	580
Cypress Gardens	169
Bird Key Stono	20
Total Protected	171,769
TOTAL PROTECTION GOAL	225,000
Balance of Protection Goal	53,231

Natural Resources

The CRFA contains over 125,000 acres of wetlands including 80,000 acres of tidal marsh, 7,400 acres of managed wetlands and over 30,000 acres of forested wetlands.

The area contains important historical and archeological sites relating to the early colonization of the state and to the rice culture which created some of these important natural habitats.

The area is an important nesting and foraging area for the Osprey and the endangered Bald Eagle.

One of the largest populations in the world of the endangered Red-cockaded Woodpecker occurs on the upland area of the CRFA.

It has historically been an important wintering area for migratory waterfowl and is an important area for Wood Ducks year round.

The CRFA provides important nesting and foraging habitat for the formerly endangered American Alligator.

The northernmost nesting population of the Swallow-tailed Kite occurs here.

The Longleaf Pine natural community which is one of the most diverse vegetative communities in the United States occurred here historically and is being restored on much of the Francis Marion National Forest.

The barrier islands provide important nesting areas for the endangered Loggerhead Sea Turtle.

Many important colonial waterbird rookeries occur in the CRFA.

The forest land in the area is primarily owned by private non-industrial landowners. These woodlands have supported a thriving forest products economy while providing important wildlife habitat, since the area was settled in the late 1600's.

The wetlands sustain important commercial fisheries and are intensively used by recreational fishermen.

The CRFA produces at least 30% of the state's blue



crab production and as much as 20% of the annual shrimp harvest.

The Cooper River System supports runs of anadromous shad, herring and striped bass and provides critical habitat for the endangered Short-nosed Sturgeon and the threatened Atlantic Sturgeon.

Many other threatened or endangered species nest or forage in habitats in the CRFA including: Peregrine Falcons, Least Terns, Piping Plovers and Wood Storks.

Project Objective

The CRFA includes the Charleston Metropolitan Area and much of the area is under intensive development pressure. The wildlife habitats, historical sites, archeological sites and traditional land uses will be lost or diminished if not protected soon. The objective is to protect these resources by promoting traditional uses of the land such as forestry, agriculture and wildlife management on a long term basis through the implementation of plans for the stewardship and protection of the individual properties. These land uses have created the wealth of natural resources that occur here. All efforts will be voluntary on the part of the landowner.

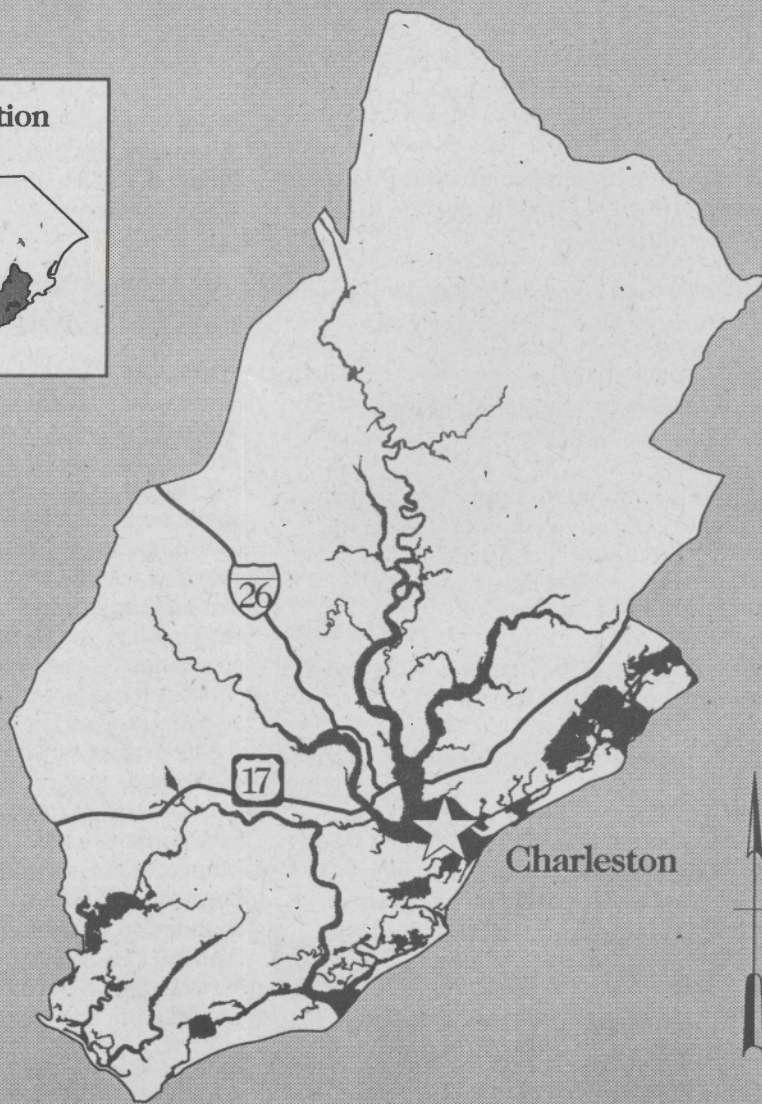
The project will be administered by a partnership coalition or task force. The task force includes representatives from private landowners including both corporate and individual landowners, Palmetto Conservation Foundation, Lord Berkeley Conservation Trust, Medway Environmental Foundation, Wildlife Habitat Enhancement Council, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, S.C. Land Resources Commission and the S.C. Wildlife and Marine Resources Department.

To learn more contact:

THE COOPER RIVER FOCUS AREA
P.O. Drawer 190, Bonneau, SC 29431
(803) 825-3387

Cooper River Focus Area

Site Location





0 01 01 0180367 3

Cooperating Organizations



Medway
Environmental
Foundation



Lord Berkeley Conservation Trust



WILDLIFE HABITAT ENHANCEMENT COUNCIL



This Brochure was partially funded by a donation
from Amoco Chemical Company.

93WL0940