

An aerial photograph of a river winding through a forest. The trees show vibrant autumn colors, including bright yellows, oranges, and some bare branches. A small white boat with several people is visible on the river in the lower-left quadrant. The water is a deep blue-green. The text 'SOUTH CAROLINA CONSERVATION BANK' is overlaid in white, with a small map of South Carolina between 'SOUTH' and 'CAROLINA'.

SOUTH  CAROLINA
CONSERVATION
BANK

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



The stunning Slater Tract is a keystone property in the Southern Coastal Biodiversity Project and secures habitat for federally at-risk species like the gopher tortoise. As part of a SCDNR WMA, South Carolina citizens and visitors will have access to hunting, fishing, hiking, and wildlife watching opportunities.

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FY 2023 CONSERVATION MAP

Where we work

Image provided



Image provided

Buckfield protects over 2,000 acres in a fast-growing area of South Carolina along the Coosawhatchie River and will become part of a SCDNR WMA as publicly accessible recreation land.

**The SC Conservation Bank Act
Title 48 Chapter 59
S.C. Code of Laws Act 200**

MISSION

To improve the quality of life in South Carolina through the conservation of significant natural resource lands, wetlands, historical properties, archaeological sites, and urban parks.

CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

- Wildlife Habitat
- Water Quality
- Forest Lands
- Farmland
- Scenic Vistas
- Historical and Archaeological Sites
- Hunting and Fishing Opportunities
- Public Outdoor Recreation

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- J. Raleigh West III, Executive Director
- Amber J. Larck, Program Manager
- Margaret Pennebaker, Business Manager

The South Carolina Conservation Bank publishes its Annual Report in January to report on the previous fiscal year. This report is printed in limited quantities but is available in digital format on the agency's website, www.sccbanc.sc.gov.

*Cover provided courtesy of
Open Space Institute*



LETTER *from the* DIRECTOR

J. RALEIGH WEST III

As a father of a high schooler, I often find myself hearing new words and phrases, most of which I find amusing, albeit forgettable, but occasionally I come across a new expression that lodges itself in my psyche and to which my mind often returns. In one such instance, while perusing an article in BBC, I stumbled upon the term, “solastalgia”—a portmanteau of ‘solace’ and ‘nostalgia’ coined by an Australian philosopher Glenn Albrecht—that he used to describe a form of depression centered around the sense of loss people feel as their environment rapidly changes around them to the point it becomes unrecognizable. Apparently, it does not refer to broad notions of environmentalism about climate change or global warming, but rather something much more personal and immediate—the unmooring of one’s sense of place in their own home.

My role with the SC Conservation Bank has afforded me the opportunity and privilege to meet so many of my fellow South Carolinians from all corners of the state and from all backgrounds. In speaking with folks, the concerns I most often hear about Mr. Albrecht would probably categorize as a form of solastalgia—that their surrounding environment and their cultural identity that rests upon it are changing so rapidly that they fear they may no longer recognize their homes in the future. This seems to hold true regardless of whether I am talking to farming villages struggling to balance their agricultural economies as the area converts to suburbia, settlement communities grappling with gentrification, historic towns wrestling with modernization, and so on. I acknowledge this as just my own anecdotal observation but it certainly seems to me that our state’s landscape is changing so rapidly that it is triggering a palpable fear among many of my fellow South Carolinians that we may lose our collective sense of place in the process.

Perhaps Governor McMaster captured that sentiment better than anyone else when, in his most recent State of the State, he asked, “Will anyone recognize South Carolina in 100 years? Will we allow our state’s culturally

and environmentally significant structures, monuments, lands, islands and waters to be lost—to over-development, mismanagement, flooding, erosion or storm damage? Or will we preserve and protect our history, our culture and our environment, and the public’s access to them, before they are lost forever? This is our moment to act. While we still can.”

So what’s the solution? I think the answer involves first acknowledging that our State will continue to grow at a fast pace. In my probable lifetime, our population will triple from about 3 to 10 million people, all of whom will live on the same 20 million acres we call South Carolina, and that population spike will inevitably cause our landscape to change as more folks move here. The second component is setting policies that encourage the proactive identification and protection of those places that remain critical to our sense of place so that we and our children always have them as anchor points for our collective identity as South Carolinians in the face of growth and change.

At the heart of the conservation movement lies the notion that certain places are so unique and important to our communities that we should ensure they survive in an unaltered state for the sake of posterity. As you peruse through our list of projects, you will notice the breadth of projects the SCCB has helped fund, ranging from historic homes and churches, Revolutionary War battlefields, family farms and wilderness areas along our famed rivers. While they vary to a great degree in size, type and location, they all bear in common the theme of ensuring that we as South Carolinians will be able to recognize our home as our state grows and changes in the coming years.

J. Raleigh West, III
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

HISTORICAL PROJECTS

A Sacred Heritage

BY SUSAN FRAMPTON AND MARGARET PENNEBAKER

FISHING CREEK TRACT PROJECT

At the edge of the stream, running past rocks and boulders, a white-tailed doe pauses to lap at the cool, clear water of Fishing Creek, a serene scene that remains happily timeless due to recent conservation and preservation measures. A visitor today might happen on this sight, but it could have just as easily been viewed by an enslaved woman walking near the bank or a man of the pre-western colonization period, poised with a crude flint-head arrow drawn in his bow. Each second of time has its own story to be discovered, whether washed by the currents, lying beneath the forest floor, or buried in an abandoned cemetery nearby.

Ecologically, the 101-acre Fishing Creek Tract hosts a diverse range of flora and fauna, creating habitat for an abundance of deer, raccoon, beaver, and other small mammals. Bottomland hardwoods and upland areas draw pileated woodpeckers, birds of prey, and songbirds who lend their voices to the soundtrack of the land. At the same time, the low flow of water through persistent wetlands creates a





Headstones mark the graves of 144 enslaved people which was discovered on the property. A last rites ceremony to acknowledge and celebrate the lives of “The 144” was performed in February of 2023 by Pastor John McCullough from Friendship Christian Church (pictured below).



sustainable spawning environment perfect for many species of fish and amphibians. Due west of Rock Hill, SC, Fishing Creek is a water source for much of York County.

Historically, the land can be traced back to its original 1760 land grant to the Hanna family, and a portion of the property line remains the same as that shown in the original grant. The yet-to-be-discovered stories of those whose remains lie in a possible “enslaved people’s” graveyard focus on a continuing investigation of the site of 144 graves. Research is underway to determine the identities of graves dating from 1780 to 1865. This study will undoubtedly help reveal the site’s past significance, as will discovered artifacts alluding to the pre-western colonization period. The owner hopes to incorporate some public access to the site for educational and historical purposes.

With a rental home on the property and a barn for horses and donkeys located within a gated, electric fence, the tract has several walkable trails wide enough for all-terrain vehicle usage. The nature of the resources protected by this conservation easement modeled by the Fishing Creek Tract not only serves to help educate the public about the significance and vital nature of land trusts but also shows nearby landowners the benefits and value of these critical instruments.

LENDALE MILL PROJECT

In the early 1830s, Dr. James Bivings had a dream that would forever change the landscape of the land along Lawson's Fork Creek. The Bivingsville Cotton Factory he built there became the backdrop for the village that would come to bear his name and created lives and livelihoods for the workers, stonemasons,

carpenters, and machinists he brought to the area. Suffering the ups and downs of an ever-evolving world, changing owners and names over the next century, by 1961, the factory now known as Glendale Mill was the oldest continuous operating mill in Spartanburg County. But its glory days were behind it, and the iron bridge leading to its doors no longer echoed with the footsteps of workers. The factory and surrounding land lay fallow until 1993 when its owner donated 14 acres on the south bank of Lawson's Fork to the Spartanburg Area Conservancy (SPACE) for protection and the establishment of a riverfront

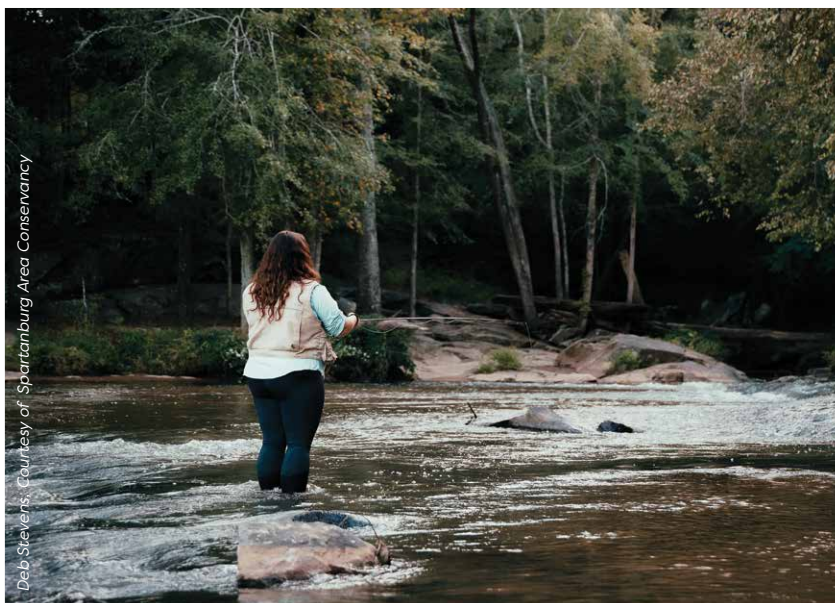


The remains of Spartanburg's historic Glendale Mill and its iconic tower will be preserved for future generations and will join the existing Glendale Shoals Preserve.

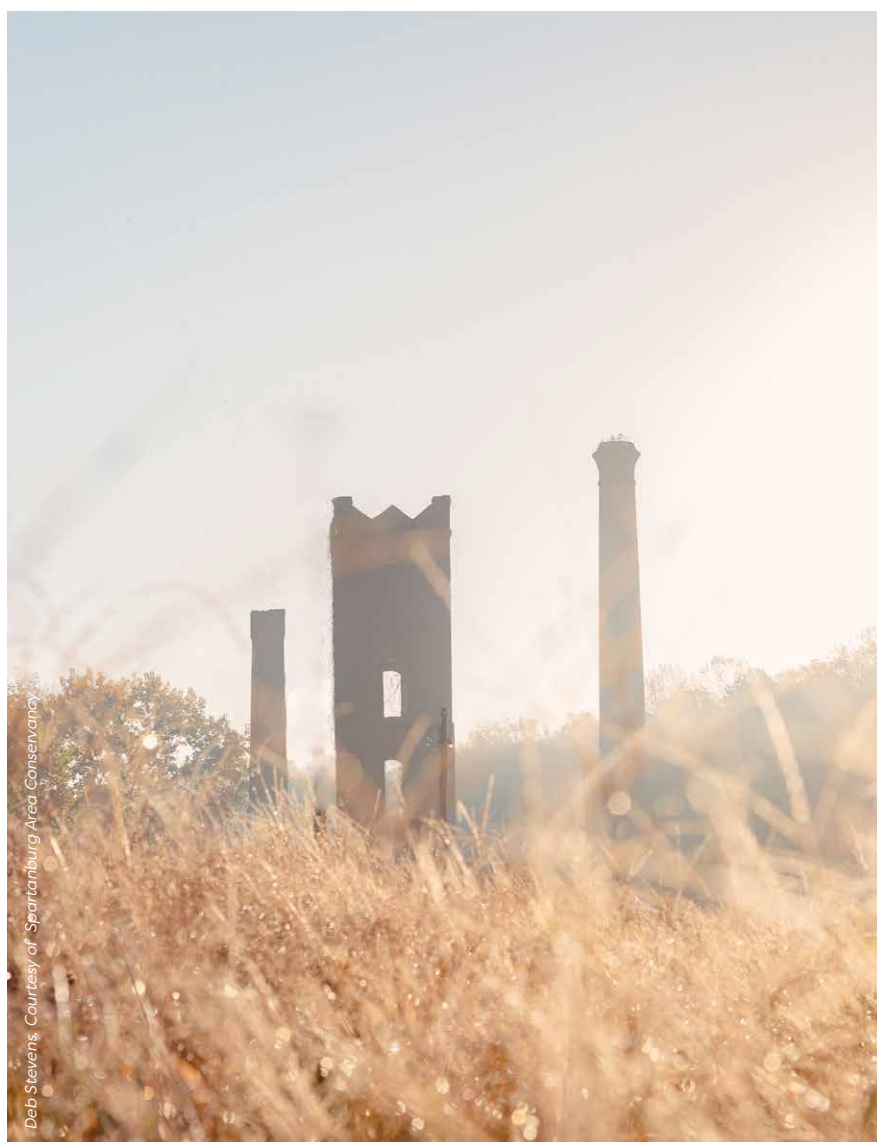
park, and a new day dawned for the historic Glendale Mill Site, its surrounding property and beautiful shoals. Renamed the Glendale Shoals Preserve, the protected property continues to provide public access to the shoals, adjacent waterways, and greenspace. Fate, however, was not finished with the mill. In 2004, a tragic fire destroyed all but its staircase towers, chimneys, and office.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world," Anthropologist Margaret Mead once advised of the power held by those who believe in a cause. Unique partnerships were formed to protect and preserve the mill property, making 10 acres of greenspace available for

recreation, waterway access points, research and education opportunities, and public events. When the acquisition of an adjacent 16.49 acres caught the interest of developers, rather than accept the almost inevitable development of the mill site and the creek's riparian buffer, SPACE accepted the challenge of raising the \$1,500,000 asking price of the property. Corporations, private citizens, and public and private organizations answered the call, pledging \$603,000 toward the property acquisition successfully applying for the balance of the funding from SCCB.



Deb Stevens, Courtesy of Spartanburg Area Conservancy



Deb Stevens, Courtesy of Spartanburg Area Conservancy

JENKINS HOUSE PROJECT

Long before Scottish and Irish immigrants began to settle in South Carolina's upcountry, the land that is now Pendleton was once territory of the Cherokee nation. Laid out in 1790 and virtually unchanged since its founding, Pendleton is one of South Carolina's earliest upcountry towns and home to one of the largest historic districts in the nation. More than 50 buildings dating back to the 18th and 19th centuries remain in the town or just outside the town limits. A picturesque village green is the centerpiece of historic Pendleton. The spotlight is not only on the majestic past, but on the opportunities for the present and the future.

Just a short walk from the village green is the historic Jenkins House & Farm at Kirkley Hill, built by Civil War surgeon Dr. William Louis Jenkins in 1837. With many of the home's original features still intact, the Jenkins House itself is a



Reggie Mattis

Jenkins House
Project photos



Reggie Mattis

pure example of Antebellum Architecture and includes the work of enslaved craftsmen. Much of the finished woodwork and the mantles are attributed to famed craftsman and fine furniture maker William Knauff. The acquisition of the Jenkins House by the Pendleton Historic Foundation set the stage for future generations as a rich resource for

exploration of South Carolina history that spans millennia. With partnerships provided by the SCCB, this property has a bright future with plans for a living history museum, rotating exhibit and artist gallery space, medical history display, nature trail, community vegetable garden, and public gathering space. ▾



FARM PROJECTS

The Legacy of the Land

BY SUSAN FRAMPTON

The land has largely shaped South Carolina's character from verdant forests to rolling hills, blackwater swamps to majestic peaks, and golden tidelands to red clay ridges. But the land most responsible for South Carolina's success on the world stage lies in rows of fertile earth tilled to accept seeds sown in generational farmland. Interpreted in the past as a food and income source, with today's increasing development encroaching on South Carolina's farming culture, we recognize that its value lies far beyond these singular agricultural contributions.

In keeping with its mission, the SC Conservation Bank is dedicated to improving the quality of life in SC through land conservation, and in 2023, successfully entered into farm conservation partnerships with five generational farms: Bishop Branch Pastures, Blackwell Farm, Hazelwood Farm, Newton Farm, and Triple Oak Farm. Those who have worked to cultivate family farms such as these are intensely aware of the legacy propagated from seeds of hard work and love of the land. They know that their farms are far more than simply rural real estate. The three farms profiled here are examples of the inroads made in protecting the legacy of the land.

HAZELWOOD FARM PROJECT

In Chester County, west of Interstate 77, a pair of majestic bald eagles soar on thermal currents over the Hazelwood Farm Project's pastures, pines, and hardwoods. Prime habitat for the endangered species, the placement of the conservation easement on the 178-acre parcel provides a buffer protecting its natural and agricultural character from the pressure of increasing housing construction. The US has lost more than one million farmers and ranchers in the past half-century. But farming is a profession of hope for those whose roots run deep in the soil. With monetary assistance from the SC Conservation Bank to help protect this property, the owners envision Hazelwood Farm's continuation as a working family farm for future generations.

The conservation benefits provided by the family's involvement in the project ensure the protection of significant wildlife habitat for both indigenous animals and migratory birds, as well as a diverse aquatic community. By providing a 200' buffer to Bull Creek, and subsequently to the Catawba River, the easement helps to ensure the water quality of the Catawba River Basin. With approval from the owner, the public will enjoy year-round access to the Catawba watershed. The 400-acre Hazelwood Farm to its west currently offers agritourism through field trips and visits to the farm, equestrian events, and a farm store which is open to the public, as well as research studies connected to higher education.

Hazelwood Farm's entrance in Blackstock, SC

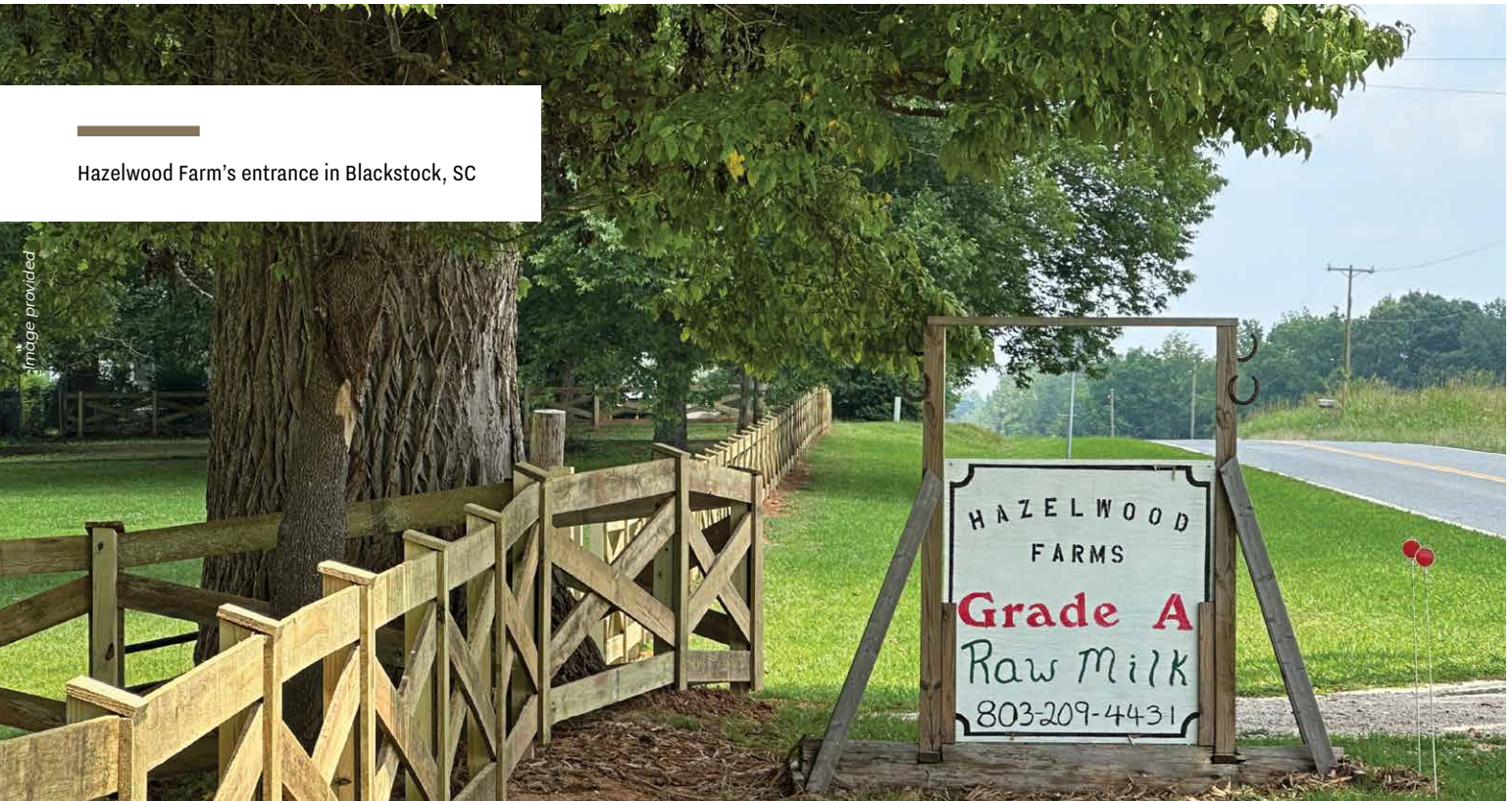


Image provided



Doug Newton and family stand among a field of sunflowers on their Marlboro County farm.

three of which were funded by SC Conservation Bank, the Newton Farm Project is vital to conserving natural resources. These projects watch over wild quail coveys huddling in the hedgerows, track bright yellow Prothonotary warblers splashing color in the trees, and marvel at endangered swallow-tailed kites floating serenely over fertile fields. Newton Farms' location within the Early Successional/Grassland Focus Area, Forested Wetland Focus Area, and SC Quail Focus Area, as defined in the South Atlantic Migratory Bird Initiative Implementation Plan, is situated to protect local, regional, and national goals.

Providing an enhanced buffer for 1.6 miles of Reedy Creek, a Little Pee Dee River tributary, and resource to the Pee Dee Watershed, the Newton Farm Project limits impervious surfaces, protecting water supplies. In addition, forested wetlands within its conservation area and 550 acres of timberland can be managed to produce timber while benefiting species reliant on early successional habitats. As farmers age and land passes from hand to hand, opportunities are created to protect farmland, particularly during and before generational transfers. Having farmed this land for decades, the owner has been an exceptional and proactive steward of the land, instituting no-till and cover-cropping techniques that have built soil quality and stability while improving drainage and groundwater leaving the fields. A conservation easement is the next step to continue their goals of protecting the land and the resources. Newton Farm's owner agreed to a bargain-sale conservation easement purchase of 33% of the land's appraised value and the further intention of donating the balance of the easement's value. The SC Conservation Bank is the sole outside funder, with the owner contributing the additional funding.

NEWTON FARM PROJECT

President Dwight D. Eisenhower made an observation frighteningly applicable today: "Farming looks mighty easy when your plow is a pencil, and you're a thousand miles from the cornfield." Literally and figuratively behind the plow, today's generational farms like the Pee Dee area's Newton Farm face increasing developmental pressure from those whose pencils would draw subdivision lines.

As the backbone of rural communities, generational farms have long fed the surrounding area and provided the social and cultural opportunities that shape the character of human and wildlife resources. Along with the 4,275 acres of ten other protected farms in the vicinity—



TRIPLE OAK FARM PROJECT

The half-acre knoll on Lake W.C. Bowen's northern shore is significant. Gary Foster plans for it to be his final resting place. It is a carefully considered location. Foster is the sixth generation to own this farm, watching over it since the 1840s. "I feel at ease knowing that 100 years from now my descendants can step foot on this farm and it will remain open and undeveloped just as it is today. I appreciate the support of the SC Conservation Bank for helping protect this special place," said Mr. Foster.

Much of its original acreage now lies beneath the water, taken by eminent domain in the 1950s to create the lake on the South Pacolet River. Eighteen hundred feet of frontage sits on the lake's northern shore. Foster Road divides the property into a 30-acre parcel to the south and a 70-acre parcel to the north. These remaining acres of the family farm aren't just pieces of land. They are a living legacy that stands today as a tribute to those whose dedication, hard work, and love of the land planted its first seeds.



Having retired as a Sheriff's Deputy after two civilian police tours for the State Department, Gary and his wife, Pam, live in the South Carolina Century Farm's historic 1860 residence. The two raise horses, cattle, goats, and chickens for personal use, market, and to support Christian youth rodeo. In addition to a tenant house and historic barn on the property, several modern sheds support agricultural and equestrian activities, and a smokehouse and functioning outhouse. The family has plans to expand the farm's equestrian capacity to include a 30,000 sq. ft. covered riding arena and a 3,750 sq. ft. equestrian barn with 4 adjacent RV spaces for travelers who need to board their horses while on the road. The family plans other equestrian and agricultural activities included in the easement documents and one additional 2-acre residence under unified ownership. The easement will also allow for a .5-acre family cemetery on a knoll overlooking the lake. From this spot, the Foster family will continue their traditional stewardship of the land as their legacy lives on. ♡



An aerial photograph of a winding road through a dense forest of green trees. In the background, there are rolling mountains under a hazy, golden sky, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The road curves from the bottom left towards the top right. A few cars are visible on the road. To the left of the road, there are several power line towers.

SCENIC HIGHWAY 11
PROJECTS

The Long and Winding Road

BY SUSAN FRAMPTON

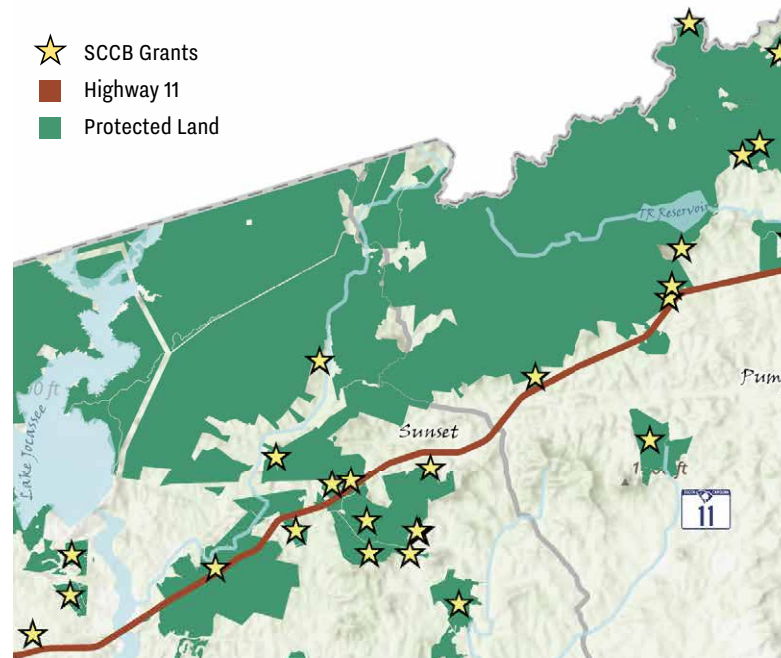
GILSTRAP MOUNTAIN PROJECT

Those who drive the winding roads of South Carolina’s Scenic Highway 11 know that sometimes the trip isn’t as much about the destination as the journey that gets you there. Each year, thousands avoid the sameness of major highway travel for the dramatic beauty of this road less traveled. But few realize the scenic vistas that make it incredibly special are not protected from development, which would forever change the pristine landscapes of the foothills of South Carolina.

Far below South Carolina’s scenic Highway 11, a trout rises in the cold, clear water of Eastatoee Creek. It is a brief, shining glimmer in the leaf-filtered light in the forest’s early morning light, but one that speaks to decades of conservation efforts in the area. Above, over 1,260 feet from the cold-water priority trout stream, the dense forest of oak and hickory rises to bisect the scenic highway. For a half-mile, the land of the Gillstrap Mountain Project fronts Highway 11, offering passersby a view of the spectrum of colors marking the ever-changing seasons. With its peak standing over the Cherokee Foothills National Scenic Byway, it connects on its north side to a protected corridor of the Jocassee Gorges Wilderness Area, a preserve of 44,000 acres owned by the SC Department of Natural Resources. Surrounded by previous National Scenic Byways Granlie Long Shoals County Park, Poe Creek State Forest, Keowee-Toxaway State Park, and two tracts protected by the Naturaland Trust. To its east is the Nine

Times Preserve. Though surrounded by protected land, the Gillstrap Mountain Project’s parcel has not been protected. The project is part of a long-term effort to strengthen sustainability goals, improve public access, and build on the areas protected by other agencies and organizations.

24 SCCB GRANTS RUN DIRECTLY ADJACENT TO SCENIC HIGHWAY 11, TOTALING ALMOST 7,500 ACRES.



F Y 2 0 2 3

BY THE NUMBERS

48

SCCB GRANTS FOR

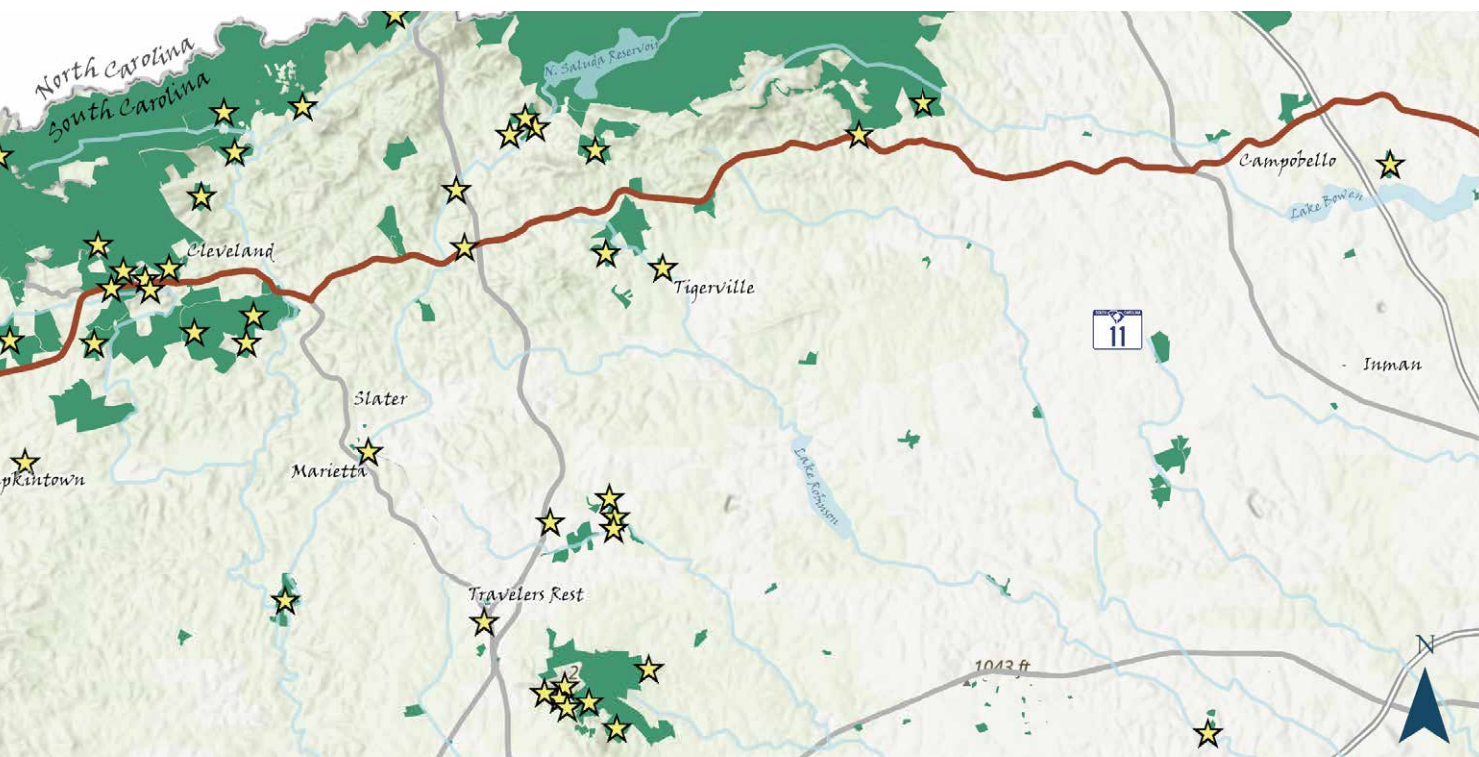
20,566
ACRES CONSERVED

FAIR MARKET VALUE:

\$90,702,003

WHITE BRANCH PROJECT

Despite lending its diverse habitat and incredible natural beauty to residents and visitors to the state and its designation as a Scenic Highway, the renowned Scenic Highway 11 has been offered little protection. Conservation efforts have diligently protected properties with frontage and connective qualities along the highway for over a decade. White Branch, named for the stream flowing through the property, benefits the 4,000 linear feet of streams leading to the Little Eastatoee trout stream. It is also a vital wildlife and habitat connectivity area for large mammals like deer and bears. It provides a contiguous corridor to the Jocassee Gorges Wilderness Area and protects important viewsheds along Highway 11. Along with funding from SCDNR, SCCB's \$350,000 contribution to the project will allow Naturaland Trust to purchase and protect this valuable asset.



EVERY **\$1** OF SCCB
GRANT DOLLARS
PROTECTED **\$3**
WORTH OF PROPERTIES

34%

SCCB GRANTS
\$30,864,707

32%

LANDOWNERS
\$29,105,134

19%

PRIVATE / LOCAL
\$16,753,462

15%

FEDERAL
\$13,978,700

FY 2023 GRA

1. Berkeley Orchard

City of Clemson / 4 acres / Pickens County / \$162,500

The City of Clemson spearheaded the Berkeley Orchard project to secure this linchpin in the Green Crescent Trail, a multi-modal network of pathways with connection points to surrounding municipalities, Clemson University, and the Clemson Experimental Forest, and create a passive park featuring an orchard of native fruiting trees, pollinators, and meadows.

2. Bishop Branch Pastures

Upstate Forever / 65 acres / Anderson County / \$145,800

The Bishop Branch Pastures tract consists of scenic agricultural land south of Pendleton along the Three & Twenty Creek Watershed. Its protection helps maintain the rural character of this historic farming community and protects the drinking water for Anderson and Pickens counties.

3. Blackwell Farm

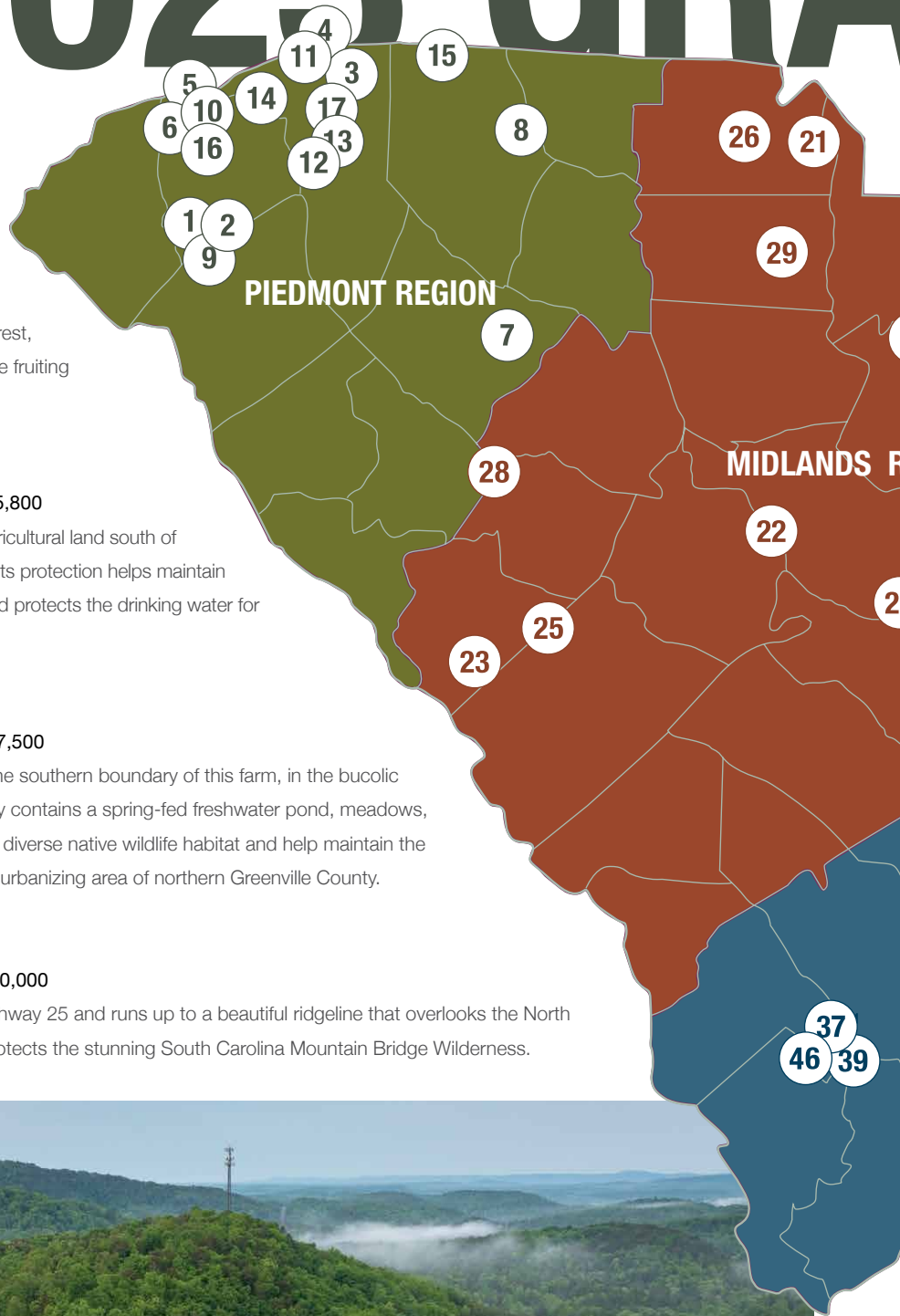
Upstate Forever / 50 acres / Greenville County / \$137,500

McKinney Creek, a tributary of the Tyger River, forms the southern boundary of this farm, in the bucolic countryside of northern Greenville County. The property contains a spring-fed freshwater pond, meadows, and mixed hardwood pine forests, all of which support diverse native wildlife habitat and help maintain the rural character and agricultural economy in this rapidly urbanizing area of northern Greenville County.

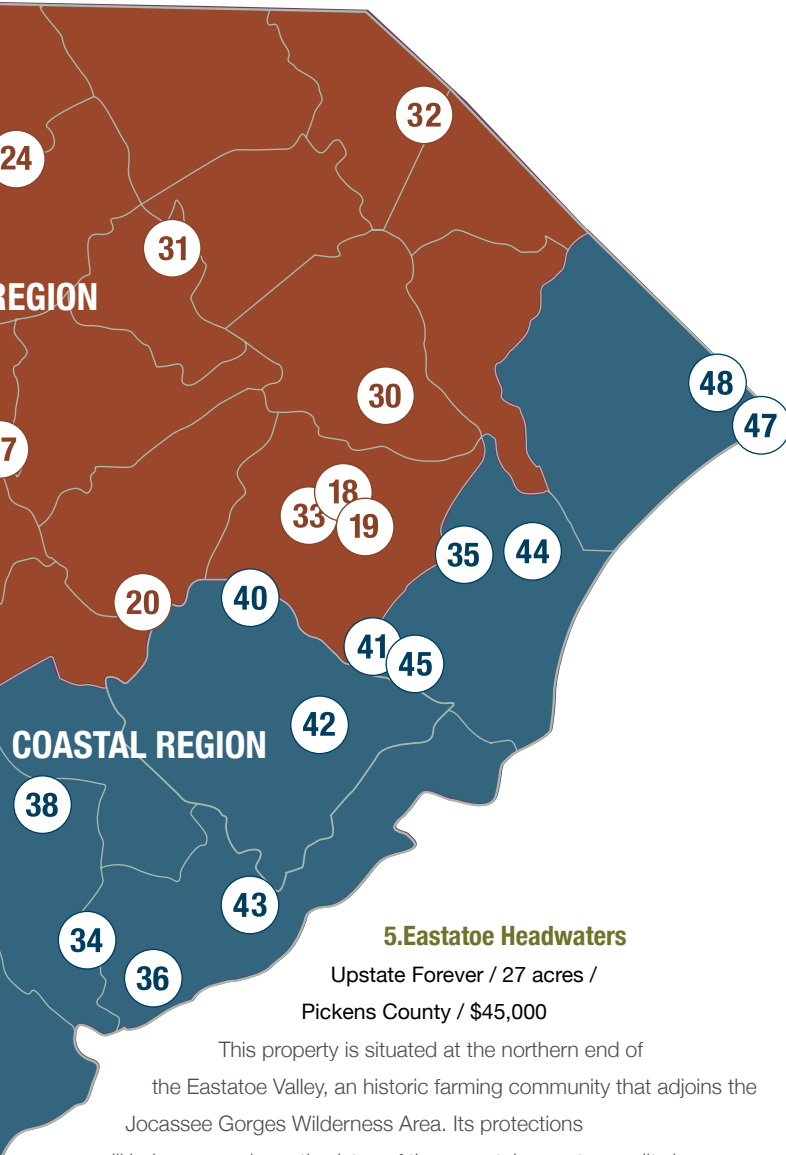
4. Cedar Mountain Expansion

Naturaland Trust / 24 acres / Greenville County / \$160,000

The Cedar Mountain Expansion tract fronts on Old Highway 25 and runs up to a beautiful ridgeline that overlooks the North Saluda River and the Greenville watershed, where it protects the stunning South Carolina Mountain Bridge Wilderness.



ANTS



5. Eastatoe Headwaters

Upstate Forever / 27 acres /
Pickens County / \$45,000

This property is situated at the northern end of the Eastatoe Valley, an historic farming community that adjoins the Jocassee Gorges Wilderness Area. Its protections will help secure dramatic vistas of the mountains, water quality in the Eastatoe River, and the rural character of the agricultural area.

6. Gilstrap Mountain on Scenic Hwy 11

Naturaland Trust / 166 acres / Pickens County / \$500,000

The Gilstrap Mountain tract includes a trout stream, mountain forests, and 0.5 miles of frontage along Highway 11, the federally designated Scenic Cherokee Foothills Highway. Its protection will expand adjoining wildlife preserves and offer opportunities for public passive recreation.

7. Hammonds Store Battlefield

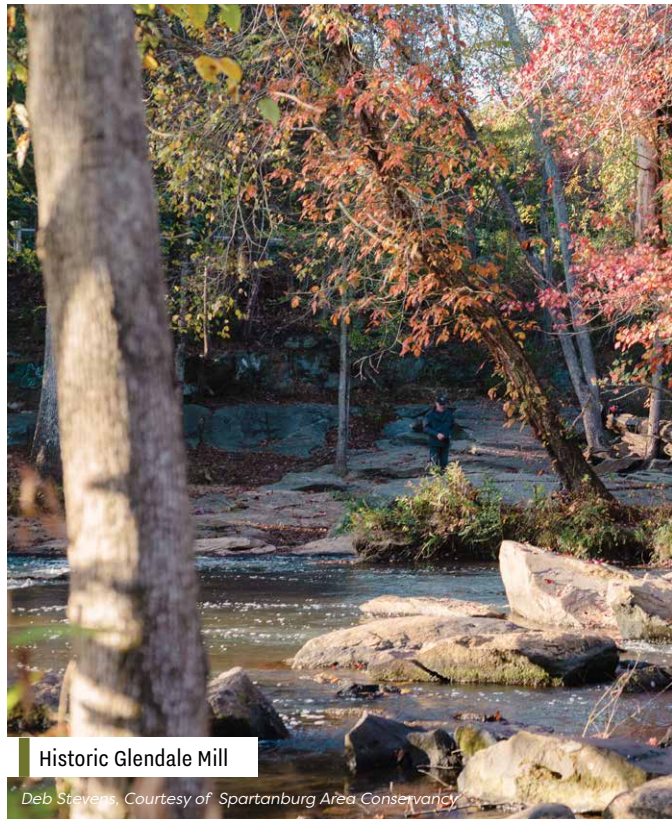
SC Battleground Preservation Trust / 30 acres / Laurens County / \$80,000

On December 30, 1780, Patriot dragoons and mounted militia led by Lt. Colonel William Washington attacked and routed Loyalist troops attacking Patriot families in the backcountry villages of Winnsborough and Ninety-Six. This significant battle was a precursor to the Battle of Cowpens, which occurred 18 days later. This site encompasses the entirety of the Revolutionary War Hammonds Store Battlefield and will be incorporated into the South Carolina Liberty Trail, where it will be utilized for public education and historic interpretation.

8. Historic Glendale Mill

Spartanburg Area Conservancy / 16 acres / Spartanburg County / \$785,000

The Historic Glendale Mill property contains the ruins of this historic textile mill and fronts on 2,000 feet of Lawson's Fork Creek. Its acquisition expands the adjoining Glendale Shoals Preserve and buffers Wofford College's Environmental Center, while offering a passive recreational park and trail access in the heart of Spartanburg.



Historic Glendale Mill

Deb Stevens, Courtesy of Spartanburg Area Conservancy

9. Jenkins House

Pendleton Historic Foundation / 9 acres / Anderson County / \$280,000 The Jenkins House was constructed in Pendleton in 1835 and is one of the earliest examples of late Federal architecture in the area. Acquiring this property will result in the restoration of this home and multiple historic outbuildings as well as the a large block of land that will be used as a public park within town limits.

10. Little Eastatoe (Scenic Hwy 11)

Naturaland Trust / 235 acres / Pickens County / \$400,000

The Little Eastatoee tract protects the forested foothills in Pickens County, 1.6 miles of frontage on Scenic Highway 11, and a mile along Little Eastatoee Creek. The property expands the wildlife corridor between Nine Times Forest and Jocassee Gorges, and will be used as a Wildlife Management Area.



Little Eastatoe

Mac Stone

11. River Road

Naturaland Trust / 27 acres / Greenville County / \$160,000 River Road secures over 0.5 miles of frontage on the North Saluda River and will provide public access for trout fishing.

12. Saluda Dam Acres

Upstate Forever / 70 acres / Greenville County / \$275,000 Saluda Dam Acres is located less than five miles from the City of Greenville and secures a wildlife oasis in the Saluda River Focus Area within the rapidly urbanizing metropolitan area.

13. Shiloh Ridge at Paris Mountain

Naturaland Trust / 150 acres / Greenville County / \$750,000 Stunning ridge lines, mountains, streams, and mature forests make up this property. Its acquisition will expand Paris Mountain State Park, one of the state's most popular and urban parks, by approximately 10% and will add new access points into the larger park.

14. Soapstone Church

Upstate Forever / 6 acres / Pickens County / \$20,000

Nearly 150 years ago, once enslaved African Americans established Soapstone Church in the shadows of Table Rock and the Blue Ridge Escarpment in Pickens County and named it after the large soapstone boulder and outcropping on the property. An historic schoolhouse and burial grounds bear witness to the property's central role in this rural Piedmont community. Under Mabel Owens Clarke's leadership, the natural and historic integrity of the church and its grounds will be sustained in perpetuity.



Soapstone Church

Image provided

15. Triple Oak Farm

Upstate Forever / 92 acres / Spartanburg County / \$150,000

Six miles north of Inman, SC, fronting on 1,750 feet of Lake Bowen, sits Triple Oak Farm, a registered South Carolina Century Farm. The historic farmhouse and barns have survived through the years and, together with the rolling farmland and mature forests, will be preserved for posterity.



Triple Oak Farm

Image provided

16. White Branch

Naturaland Trust / 159 acres / Pickens County / \$350,000

This tract secures important vistas along the Scenic Highway 11, buffers over 4,000 linear feet along Little Eastatoe, and connects the Nine Times Forest with the Jocassee Gorges Wilderness Area. SCDNR will manage the property within the Jocassee Gorges Wilderness Area for public recreation.



17. Woodcock Woods

Naturaland Trust / 32 acres / Greenville County / \$300,000

The Woodcock Woods project builds on a decades-long conservation effort to save the federally endangered Bunched Arrowhead plants and secure suitable habitat for their repopulation. SCDNR will add the property to its Heritage Preserve program.

18. Black River State Park—RMS North

Open Space Institute / 535 acres / Williamsburg County / \$1,250,000

The 535-acre “RMS-North” project expands the Black River State Park at its upper reaches near Kingstree. Its 2.1 miles of forested riparian buffer on the Black River will protect the scenic vistas for future park users and aid water quality in this important riverine corridor.

19. Black River State Park: Sims Reach

The Nature Conservancy / 143 acres / Williamsburg County / \$300,000

The Sims Reach property expands the Black River State Park, where it will provide canoe and kayak access to the river. Its acquisition will protect scenic vistas and water quality on over one mile of the Black River.

20. Bradham Tract—SC Liberty Trail

SC Battleground Preservation Trust / 4 acres / Orangeburg County / \$124,000

This tract lies within the core of the Revolutionary War Battle of Eutaw Springs and will be incorporated into the South Carolina Liberty Trail, where it will be interpreted for historical and educational purposes.

21. Carter Property

Nation Ford Land Trust / 46 acres / York County / \$110,000

The Carter Property, a farm dating to the early 1800s, consists of old-growth along Burgis Creek near the outskirts of Rock Hill. Its protection safeguards water quality for the creek, which flows into the Catawba River, and secures family-owned farmland in a rapidly growing area of our state.

22. Congaree Creek Heritage Preserve Addition

Open Space Institute / 576 acres / Lexington County / \$7,000,000

This project expands Congaree Creek Heritage Preserve into one of the largest unfragmented public preserves inside the Columbia Metropolitan Area, where it will offer public access via an integrated trail network. Its acquisition supports water quality in the Congaree River and wildlife habitat in a rapidly urbanizing area. The property is also archeologically significant, with artifacts dating back 12,000 years.

23. Curryton Academy Park

Edgefield County Historical Society / 1 acre / Edgefield County / \$27,565

This project protects a parcel upon which the Curryton Academy once stood and where a magnificent Magnolia tree, believed to be the third largest in South Carolina, now stands.

24. Daus-Knights Hill

Katawba Valley Land Trust / 1,010 acres / Kershaw County / \$500,000

The Daus-Knights Hill tract is located in northern Kershaw County about 5 miles north of the Battle of Camden site. The property fronts on 3 miles of Flat Rock Creek and its tributaries. Its protection will secure water quality and wildlife habitat, and will allow for the continuation of sustainable forestry within this “wood basket” of South Carolina.

25. Eureka Preserve

Aiken Land Conservancy / 601 acres / Aiken County / \$350,000

The conservation easement on the Eureka Preserve supports water quality in Shaws Creek, the primary source of drinking water for the City of Aiken, as well as wildlife habitat and sustainably managed forestland.

26. Fishing Creek

Nation Ford Land Trust / 110 acres / York County / \$125,000

The Fishing Creek Tract consists of bottomland hardwoods and unique geological formations along 3,000 feet on Fishing Creek. Importantly, the owners recently discovered a 200-year-old burial site of 144 enslaved individuals and are working with archaeologists and historians to preserve and interpret the site.

27. Fort Motte Cliffs

Ducks Unlimited / 400 acres / Calhoun County / \$400,000

Fort Motte Cliffs is located just outside the historic town of Fort Motte in Calhoun County, SC, near the confluence of the Congaree and Wateree

Rivers. The property fronts on over a mile of the Congaree River, where it provides dramatic views of the adjacent 27,000-acre Congaree National Park. The property will remain privately owned during the life of the current owner and will then convey to Audubon Society, who will manage it as a bird sanctuary.

28. Halfway Swamp Creek

Upper Savannah Land Trust / 288 acres / Saluda County / \$175,000

This tract consists of unique pine and hardwood forestland, with one mile of frontage on Halfway Swamp Creek, a tributary of the Saluda River.

Protection of this tract adds to a growing complex of protected land near Sumter National Forest and the Ninety-Six National Historic Site.

29. Hazelwood Farm 1

Katawba Valley Land Trust / 178 acres / Chester County / \$78,050

Hazelwood Farms, a fourth-generation farm south of Charlotte, consists of agricultural fields, mixed pine and hardwood uplands, and bottomland hardwoods. Its protection helps maintain the rural character and open space of this agricultural community.

30. Independence Farm

Open Space Institute / 498 acres / Florence County / \$650,000

Independence Farm fronts on 1.5 meandering miles of the Scenic Lynches River, a designated State Scenic River and a National Recreation Trail. The property will be managed by Florence County as a new park with interior trails, boardwalks along the river, and access to the Lynches River.



Independence Farm

Marion Bull, courtesy Open Space Institute

31. Lee State Park (KDR/OSI)

Congaree Land Trust / 137 acres / Lee County / \$173,000

The project expands Lee State Park in Bishopville with 137 acres of floodplain forest and upland pine along the state-designated Scenic Lynches River. The property provides a scenic buffer along the river and a new access point to the State park.

32. Newton Farm

Pee Dee Land Trust / 563 acres / Marlboro County / \$250,000

The conservation easement on Newton Farm helps consolidate the

patchwork of protected agricultural lands and small family farms in this corner of the state and secures water quality buffers on 1.6 miles of Reedy Creek, a tributary of the Little Pee Dee River.

33. Salters Property

Pee Dee Land Trust / 626 acres / Williamsburg County / \$385,000

This centuries-old farm is situated on over 8,600 feet of the Black River, where it provides wildlife habitat and scenic vistas along the emerging new State Park.

34. ACE Basin: St. Helena Estuary Ti Ti 2

The Nature Conservancy / 1,742 acres / Colleton County / \$215,000

This property is situated in the heart of the Ashepoo-Combahee-Edisto (ACE) Rivers Basin next to the Bear Island Wildlife Management Area. Its protection buffers this important waterfowl sanctuary and safeguards water quality and wildlife habitat in the broader coastal plain.

35. Black River Park Ranger Tract

The Nature Conservancy / 163 acres / Georgetown County / \$1,200,000

The Park Ranger Tract fronts on over 2 miles of the Black River and is a crucial piece of the emerging State Park centering on access to the river. The project will expand nature-based economic opportunities in the surrounding rural communities and preserve the scenic vistas along the river.

36. Botany Bay Heritage Preserve Addition

Open Space Institute / 180 acres / Charleston County / \$1,200,000

SCDNR's 4,100-acre Botany Bay Heritage Preserve and Wildlife Management Area on Edisto Island remains one of the most heavily visited public preserves in the state, which will expand by 180 acres with this project. Importantly, it will secure the dramatic entrance to the historic coastal property, perhaps the most photographed vista in the state.

37. Buckfield

Open Land Trust / 2,065 acres / Hampton County / \$850,000

The Buckfield property buffers over 2 miles along I-95 and 2.5 miles along the Coosawhatchie Heritage Trust Preserve and Wildlife Management Area. Its protection helps secure the broader ecological functionality of the new public wildlife preserve, water quality in the Tulifinny River, and wildlife habitat in the ACE Basin Focus Area. Buckfield is featured on the cover.

38. Cooler Dairy Farm

Lowcountry Land Trust / 654 acres / Colleton County / \$250,000

The Cooler Dairy Farm is located in the ACE Basin Focus Area approximately five miles northeast of the City of Walterboro. The property contains a mix of upland pine woods, agricultural fields, and freshwater wetlands, including 4,305 feet of frontage along Fuller Swamp Creek. The wetlands, Fuller Swamp Creek, and its associated

tributaries drain into Horseshoe Creek Watershed and form the headwaters of the Ashepoo River, recognized as one of the most pristine estuaries on the eastern seaboard. This project builds upon years of land protection efforts in Colleton County and the ACE Basin.

39. Cotton Hall

Open Space Institute / 232 acres / Beaufort County / \$3,000,000

Cotton Hall will establish a new county park in the Port Royal Sound Focus Area and will offer new passive recreation opportunities, including fishing and trail access. It also protects scenic vistas on Hwy 17 and helps consolidate the conservation corridor associated with the ACE Basin focus area.

40. Gourdin Tracts

Lord Berkeley Conservation Trust / 343 acres / Berkeley County
\$130,757

Protection of the Gourdin Tracts permanently conserves the rural context of the historic Pineville community, and prime agricultural soils and productive timberland in one of the state's most rapidly developing counties.

41. Great Santee Swamp

Open Space Institute / 2,115 acres / Georgetown County / \$649,000

Great Santee Swamp fronts on 2.75 miles along the Santee River and forms a critical link in the regional patchwork of protected properties called the "Santee River Wilderness Corridor." SC State Forestry Commission will manage it as an expansion of the Wee Tee State Forest complex and it will be included in DNR's Wildlife Management Area program for public recreation.

42. Limerick Plantation

Lord Berkeley Conservation Trust / 234 acres / Berkeley County /
\$266,535

This historic property fronts on one mile of the East Branch of the Cooper River north of the rapidly expanding Town of Mount Pleasant and contains archeologically significant artifacts, including centuries-old burial grounds, a colonial-era wharf on Huger Creek, and historic rice fields, all of which will remain undisturbed.



Limerick Plantation

Image provided

43. Oakville–Burden Creek

Lowcountry Land Trust / 90 acres / Charleston County / \$500,000

This Johns Island property fronts on 2,700 feet of marsh along the Stono River, and its protection compliments efforts to support the Gullah Geechee heritage corridor, enhance water quality, and maintain wildlife habitat on Charleston Metropolitan's urban edge.

44. Plantersville Cultural Center

Open Space Institute / 10 acres / Georgetown County / \$60,000

The Plantersville Cultural Center will create a passive park in this historic community while also allowing the local community an opportunity to interpret the Gullah-Geechee history associated with the rice plantations along the coast.

45. Santee River—Dawhoo and Wadmacon Creek Tract

The Nature Conservancy / 1,743 acres / Georgetown County / \$645,000

This tract fronts on over two miles of the Santee River and expands the Wee Tee State Forest complex, where it will afford public hunting and recreational opportunities. The property includes a large block of forested floodplain on Wadmacon Creek and Dawhoo Lake, which provide wildlife habitat and help sustain water quality in the Santee River.

46. Slater Tract

SCDNR / 3,507 acres / Jasper County / \$1,000,000

The Slater Tract is a keystone property in the Southern Coastal Biodiversity Project and helps tie the ACE Basin to the South Lowcountry Focus Area. Two rivers - the Coosawhatchie and Tulifiny - intersect at the property and provide over 15 miles of important wetland habitat. The tract will be enrolled in the Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and Heritage Trust (HT) Programs, which will provide public access to hunting, fishing, hiking, wildlife watching, and research.

47. Waites Island

Open Space Institute / 259 acres / Horry County / \$4,000,000

Waites Island is one of the last remaining undeveloped, yet still largely unprotected, barrier islands of this size along the Eastern Seaboard. As such, it has remained a conservation priority for decades. This project will result in the northernmost section of the island being protected and acquired by the State for public use.

48. Willowbend

SCDNR / 349 acres / Horry County / \$300,000

This tract fronts on 1.8 miles on the Waccamaw River and consolidates a critical link in the Waccamaw River Heritage Preserve.

