



COWASEE Chronicle



Newsletter of the COWASEE Basin - The Green Heart of South Carolina

No.3 2015

www.dnr.sc.gov/cowasee

“To promote land protection within the COWASEE Basin Focus Area by working with private landowners to establish, on a voluntary basis, conservation easements, and to educate landowners, the general public, civic and business leaders, and other stakeholders about the natural, cultural, and historical values of the COWASEE Basin.”

Oops

Almost from its inception in 2005 we have been reporting that the COWASEE Basin Focus Area consists of 215,000 acres. Last year, however, the map makers found it to be 315,000 acres. We are not sure how this error happened – perhaps a misplaced keystroke back in 2005. Needless to say the task force is a little embarrassed over this miscue; the good news, however, is that it means the COWASEE Basin is nearly a third bigger than what we thought it was; the bad news is that our protection efforts are less than what we have been reporting and we will have to work harder to catch up. The box score below shows the latest, and most accurate, figures for COWASEE protection efforts. Even with our new denominator we believe you will agree that great progress has been made with 45% of the COWASEE Basin now in some sort of public or private conservation protection. One of the major reasons for this success has been due to recent protection efforts in the Wateree River Valley, what we call the Wateree River Conservation Corridor (WRCC), a more than thirty mile stretch along the Wateree from I-20 south to the Santee-Cooper Reservation Boundary near the confluence of the Wateree and Santee Rivers. Much of this protection has been made possible by the *South Carolina Conservation Bank*. See article below for more detail.

COWASEE Basin Focus Area: 315,000 acres

Total Public Land.....	98,434 acres (31%)
Total Conservation Easements	43,837 acres (14%)
Total Protected Conservation Lands.....	142,271 acres (45%)

Wateree River Corridor

Billy Cate

Over the last several years, the COWASEE Basin Task Force has made remarkable progress with its land protection efforts within the Wateree River corridor on

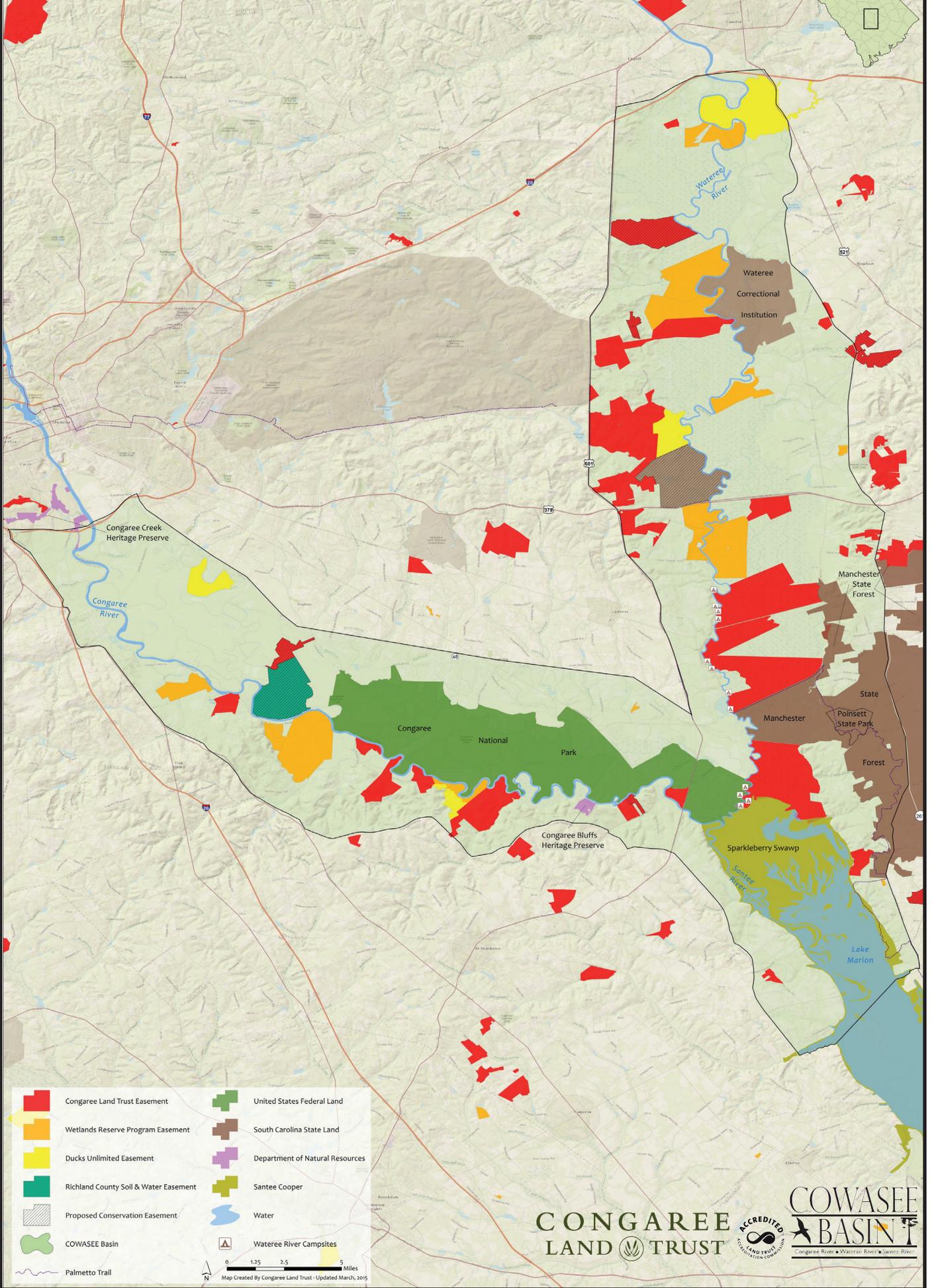
both sides of the river, primarily in Richland and Sumter counties. Landowners along the Wateree River between Camden and the upper Santee Swamp near Rimini have always felt strongly about their land. Much of the land is in large tracts (several hundred to several thousand acres), and in many cases owned by the same families for multiple generations. Most of these families have a deep land ethic and embrace the concept of what we are trying to do in the COWASEE Basin.

The South Carolina Conservation Bank has made a significant amount of money available through grants to incentivize landowners with cash payments to place their land under a conservation easement. In addition, the Department of Defense has also awarded grants to landowners to encourage them to protect their property from development, creating compatible use buffers for the various bases in the Midlands. For landowners in the Wateree Basin, these programs have been particularly significant. For more information on these funding sources, please contact the Congaree Land Trust.

Over the last 5 years, over 21,000 acres of privately owned land in the Wateree Corridor have been placed under conservation easement in Sumter and Richland counties alone. One of the things we really like to emphasize in the land protection business is the importance of connectivity. By that I mean that the conservation value of an easement on a particular property is really enhanced if it is near or adjacent to another protected property or sanctuary. The quality of life in a given neighborhood is greatly improved if multiple conservation easements are nearby. Two such areas are south of US 378 along Highway 261 in Sumter County and north of US 378 along US 601 in the Cooks Mountain area in Richland County. You can easily see what I mean from the map below.

While illustrating COWASEE successes of the past few years, the map also identifies areas of opportunity in the future.

Conservation Success in the COWASEE Basin



CONGAREE LAND TRUST



COWASEE BASIN
 Congaree River • Waterlee River • Santee River

New DNR Heritage Preserve on the Wateree River

Most by now are aware of Romarco Minerals' efforts to mine gold at the old Haile Gold Mine in Lancaster County. This open pit mine will be the largest in the state; one pit will be 800 feet deep, and cover about 2,000 acres of the 4,000 acre site. After a lengthy permitting process, state regulators have recently given the mine the go ahead to operate.

As part of the permitting process Romarco has committed to an extensive mitigation program which includes the purchase and donation to the state of Cooks Mountain, 1,132 acres, and about three-fourths of Goodwill Plantation, 2,545 acres (the current owner of Goodwill will retain about 700 acres, including the millpond and historic structures, for residential use), all on the west side of the Wateree River in Richland County, and within the COWASEE Basin. The total size of the two continuous properties will be 3,677 acres, and called the Wateree River Heritage Preserve. It will be managed and maintained by the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (DNR). It will also come with a 4.5 million dollar endowment to help pay for annual management and maintenance costs. The transfer of this property to DNR became effective in early June, 2015.

Most of DNR's wildlife management properties are a long drive from the state's population centers and the agency for some time has felt the need of having a major public WMA in the midlands of the state. This property will fill that need admirably. It will feature drawn waterfowl hunts as well as deer hunts. In addition to hunting, other uses will consist of fishing, birding, bicycling, hiking, nature study, fishing rodeos and family fishing clinics. The property is also well known for its history, unique geology (Cooks Mountain) and abundant wildlife. All who appreciate the great outdoors will be able to visit and enjoy the property, less than a 30-minute drive from Columbia, Sumter, and Camden. One DNR employee remarked that this property will likely see the kind of public visitation that



View from Cook's Mountain - photo by Joey Frazier

the Botany Bay DNR property at Edisto Island has experienced and which has quickly become one of the most popular DNR properties in the state.

Why Do A Conservation Easement?

Billy Cate

As a landowner in the COWASEE Basin, I would like to share my thoughts as to why you might want to place your farm or timberland under a conservation easement. I am not going to tell you that a conservation easement is a proper fit for everyone, but they can be a very helpful tool to help protect special places or important family land, and at the same time provide some fairly substantial tax benefits. 12 years ago, my family placed a conservation easement on our farm in Lower Richland County near Eastover within the COWASEE Basin. The following is to tell you of the thought process we used and how it has worked out for our family.

I have the good fortune to live on and manage our family's 1200 acre farm near the Wateree River in the COWASEE Basin. It is owned by myself, my brother, and my sister and it is set up in an LLC. It has been in my family since the mid 1940's. My parents dearly loved this land, and I have always considered it a family legacy. We all have grown children, and for some years had worried about the difficulty subsequent generations were going to have deciding the highest and best use of the property, and how best to manage it going forward.

The notion of a conservation easement was an evolutionary process, and it first occurred to us in the mid 90's. We began to seriously consider placing a conservation easement on our farm in 2000 and completed one in late 2001. Some of the things we considered was the effect on future generations, what were our goals for our land, what rights were we willing to give up, and which rights did we wish to retain. Two things that we knew we wanted was to not have a large up front cost, and that we did not want our deduction to be challenged. Or, at least if it was challenged, that our numbers would hold up under scrutiny.

All 3 of us came to realize about this point that none of us wanted to ever have our property developed. We discussed this aspect with all of our children, and they all felt really good about the easement, since none of them wanted it developed in any way either. Once we realized that everyone felt the same about this, the thought process became quite easy. In our easement, we gave up our development and subdivision rights, but we retained all of our agricultural, forestry and recreational rights. In essence, we kept doing what we have always done with our land. Once we made the decision to move forward, we never gave a second thought as to whether we were doing the right thing for our family and for our land.

A very important point, that didn't occur to us until we were well along with the process, is that by placing a conservation easement on our farm, we diffused the inevitable future family feud over what to do with the land. A future generation can sell it, subject to the terms of the easement of course, but they will not be able to argue over whether to develop it or not.

I have not talked about the financial aspect of a conservation easement. The tax benefits can be considerable, and they have been very meaningful to my family. That was not the overriding criteria to us, nor is it for most of the easements I have been involved in. What I do think is that it is a great way to have your cake and eat it too. There simply aren't many of those kinds of deals out there. I have come to think of a conservation easement as exercising the "ultimate property right". I get to decide how my land is going to be managed long after I'm gone, no matter who owns it! Again, I'm not going to tell you that this is for everybody, but if it fits, it is a very painless way to protect special places or important family land forever.

2014 Farm Bill Field Guide to Fish and Wildlife Conservation

A field guide version to 2014 Farm Bill fish and wildlife conservation programs has recently been made available online. The Farm Bill has dedicated some 28 billion dollars for conservation programs on private lands through 2018.

The guide includes information on such well known programs as the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP); the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP); EQIP (Environmental Quality Incentives Program) for Wildlife; as well as more recent programs such as Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) and the Healthy Forests Reserve Program (HFRP). The 31 page PDF document can be seen at:

amjv.org/documents/1_Full_Report_2014_Farm_Bill_Guide_1.pdf

For more information on Farm Bill programs for fish and wildlife, contact one of the following Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) offices in your area:

Kershaw: 1126 Little Street, Camden, SC 29020; 803-432-4174

Sumter: 1975 Castlerock Drive, Sumter, SC 29153; 803-905-7650

Calhoun-Richland: PO Box 528, 904 F.R. Huff Drive, Suite 102, St Matthews, SC 29135; 803-874-3379

Feral Hog News

We all know that the unprecedented, and unchecked, spread of feral swine within the United States over the past thirty years has created havoc within our forests and farmlands. Most landowners within the COWASEE

Basin rank wild pigs at the top or near the top in terms of destructiveness and control difficulty. Besides widespread property and ecological damage, wild pigs can transmit disease to livestock, humans, and wildlife. The proliferating pests are now found in 41 states as far west as Oregon and north as upstate New York with a total estimated population of six million animals.

The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) of the US Department of Agriculture has recently released its Record of Decision and Final Environmental Impact Statement in its nationwide, coordinated approach to feral swine control and management. Highlights include complete elimination in those states that have few wild hogs to management by population for those states with high numbers. Efforts will also consist of coordinated, cost-share approaches to build the necessary state infrastructures for wild swine management. The complete ROD can be found at:

http://www.aphis.usda.gov/wildlife_damage/downloads/nepa/Corrected%20Final%20Feral%20Swine%20ROD%207-14-2015.pdf

The local contact for the APHIS-Wildlife Services office in Columbia is **803-786-9455**

Wildlife Profile – Fox Squirrel

John Cely

I suspect the fox squirrel, *Sciurus niger*, would rank high on everyone's favorite critter list. I know it's way up there on mine. Seeing one always brings a smile on my face and well, makes my day. A lot of superlatives come to mind when thinking of fox squirrels but for me charismatic says it all. Few animals in our southern woodlands generate the enthusiasm and excitement of a fox squirrel sighting.

For me, fox squirrels are squirrels in name only, and are in a class by themselves, especially when compared to the common, ordinary run of the mill variety "tree rat." Fox squirrels are most un-squirrel like in their habits, behavior, and even appearance. For starters they seem to spend more time on the ground than in the trees, and appear to be at least twice the size of a gray squirrel, a size that is all the more enhanced by the large bushy tail that seems to wave at you when the animal is in flight. But it's probably their coloration that garners so much attention. They reputedly have the most variable pelage of any mammal in the Western Hemisphere. Gray or silver, with black faces, seems to be the most common color based on my experiences in South Carolina, but they range all the way from jet black to rusty red. I remember years ago seeing one of the most beautiful fox squirrels I've ever seen, a striking rusty red one in Kershaw County that blended in perfectly with the longleaf pine needle ground cover.

I would have to say that my personal favorite is the all-black fox squirrel, a show stopper and crowd pleaser anywhere. A study in coastal North Carolina found that black fox squirrels comprised about 25 percent of the study population.

In South Carolina fox squirrels are found throughout the state except for the mountains and upper foothills. Their stronghold seems to be in sandy soil areas of the Sandhills and Coastal Plain where they are closely associated with pine-oak woodland and mature longleaf pine stands, especially those that are burned on a regular basis. Even in their preferred habitats, however, fox squirrels don't seem to be that common. Some of this maybe as a result of their restricted habitat but it may also have something to do with their lower reproductive rate (especially when compared to their gray squirrel cousins), large home ranges, food limitations, and even competition with the much more abundant gray squirrel. The latter often has two broods a year, in spring and fall, and although the literature reports that fox squirrels also have two litters, an eight-year study in Coastal North Carolina found no evidence of two-littered fox squirrels.

Fox squirrels also seem to be more solitary than their gregarious gray cousins - most of the ones I see are singles. This could have a lot to do with their food habits which may be more patchily distributed and scarcer than for gray squirrels. Seeds of the highly nutritious longleaf pine are a key fox squirrel food but a good crop of longleaf seeds only comes along about every five to seven years. Acorns help make up the slack but are themselves seasonal and sometimes irregular in abundance.

Recent studies have shown that underground fungi are an important fox squirrel food. This food could possibly be a three-way association that benefits the squirrel, the fungus, and the longleaf pine. The spores of the fungi are spread by the squirrel and other mushroom-eating animals. The underground fungi are also thought to be mycorrhizal, that is, they provide a pathway for extra nutrients to be absorbed by the fine rootlets of the pine.

As true throughout much of the state, fox squirrels don't seem to be common anywhere within the COW-ASEE Basin, but are widely scattered throughout on both public lands and some of the larger farms and plantations. Questionnaires and surveys by the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources suggest the possibility of a stable population in our area, but with such low, sparsely distributed numbers, it's anybody's guess on how they are truly faring.

Although vulnerable on several fronts, especially habitat fragmentation and alteration, fox squirrels have some degree of adaptability as demonstrated by their presence on golf courses and "green" developments that leave large patches of woodlands. In the Columbia area, they can be seen on a regular basis at the Fort Jackson golf

course. And there are a few fortunate folks in the country that are lucky enough to have them come to corn feeders in their backyards.

Fox squirrels seem to be poorly represented in the portfolios of most nature photographers. Both Billy Cate and I feel that a good shot of a black fox squirrel standing erect near some big longleaf pine cones would make a cover shot worthy of any nature magazine or calendar.



Fox Squirrel - photo by Stewart Grinton

Seen Any Eagles Lately?

I quit reading the newspaper some time ago and try to avoid newscasts when possible - mainly because so much of it is doom and gloom and puts me in a bad mood. And certainly we hear a lot of bad news on the environmental front as well. But there is much good conservation news that doesn't get reported enough. The comeback of the bald eagle would have to rank high on anyone's good news list. When South Carolina Department of Natural Resources biologist Tom Murphy first started doing his eagle surveys in 1976, only thirteen eagle nests, all on the outer coast, were found. Now forty years later I believe the count is over 350 nests, covering the entire state from the mountains to the sea. I knew we had turned the corner



Bald Eagle - photo by Stewart Grinton

when eagles began nesting in people's back yards and in the Columbia city limits along the Saluda River.

The COWASEE Basin because of its 115 miles of big river frontage (70 on the Wateree, 45 on the Congaree), has become prime eagle nesting habitat. I think at last count there were more than a dozen eagle nests along the Wateree and about half that number on the Congaree. Boaters, fishermen, and hunters now routinely report seeing eagles along the two rivers.

Pinewood Dump

There has been a lot of news lately about the Pinewood Dump, located near the eastern shore of Upper Lake Marion just north of Rimini. Although the COWASEE Basin Task Force is not an advocacy group and does not take stands on environmental issues, we feel it would be prudent to at least inform landowners, the general public, and other stake holders within the COWASEE Basin about developments of this type within the focus area.

Permitted by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control and becoming operational in 1978, the 279-acre toxic disposal site was active for 22 years until it closed in 2000. During its life millions of tons of toxic waste were buried at the former kitty litter mine.

The biggest concern about the dump has always been its proximity to Lake Marion (as close as 750 feet at one point), a major source of drinking water for thousands of people as well as a significant recreational and environmental resource, and the possibility of toxic leakage and groundwater contamination.

Currently it has been costing about 4.8 million dollars annually for maintenance and monitoring at the site. However since the firm that operated the dump went bankrupt, and the funding set aside for clean-up has pretty much been exhausted, annual, recurring costs will have to be borne by South Carolina taxpayers.

An environmental attorney currently overseeing the management of the landfill has recently indicated that some sort of major expenditure will be needed at some time in the future to better secure the oldest part of the dump which is also closest to Lake Marion.

A recent report by an environmental consulting firm indicated that the dump is currently safe and no contaminants are threatening Lake Marion. The report also indicated that some of the nearly five million dollars in annual maintenance and monitoring costs could be reduced by reducing some of the monitoring expenses. The real rub, of course, will come when, or if, major repairs/ reconstruction are needed to prevent leakage (and the source of the money to pay for it) and contamination of Lake Marion and that timely and adequate monitoring detects any leakage before it seeps into the lake.

Boating the Congaree and Wateree Rivers

It goes without saying that two of the main features holding the COWASEE Basin together are the Congaree and Wateree rivers (we'll discuss the Upper Santee River in another issue). And it is noteworthy that despite more than half a million people living near them, these two rivers are both so undeveloped that they appear much as they did in John Lawson's day when he passed through the COWASEE Basin more than three hundred years ago. One indication of their unspoiled condition is the fact that once you leave the public boat landing(s) of both rivers, there is a long way, fifty miles or more, to the next public take out point. It means too that there is little in the way of civilization along the way – just miles and miles of meandering river channel and floodplain vegetation. Boating the length of these rivers is one of the best ways to experience the beauty and serenity of the COWASEE Basin but it also means you need to be prepared when you do so. For me the best way to experience these rivers is by kayak or canoe. A motor boat works too but you lose some of the feel of the river with a motor, although you can cover a lot of river miles much quicker. Boating enthusiast and river lover Mary Crockett, the Congaree Land Trust's Land Protection Director, has put together the following safety list for river boat travelers; she has also constructed a map showing campsites for boaters on the Wateree.

Trip Safety List for the Congaree/Wateree River

Mary Crockett

Topographic Maps: Fort Motte, Wateree, Gadson, Saylor's Lake, Fort Jackson South, Gaston, Southwest Columbia; for Wateree, Lugoff, Camden South, Leesburg, Rembert, Eastover, Wedgefield, Wateree, Poinsett State Park

County Maps: Richland, Lexington, Calhoun or Kershaw, Sumter, and Richland

Wateree River and Congaree River Blue Trail Maps, produced by American Rivers; search Wateree and Congaree River Blue Trails

Difficulty: flatwater

Hazards: Swift currents during high water, fallen trees at any water level, a low-head dam (Congaree), at very low water hitting bottom, and be ready to move out of danger when you hear high-speed motorboats and personal water craft.

Planning a River trip:

1. Know the river
 - Read all you can about the river, use maps and guide books
 - Be aware of river level changes
 - Be a competent swimmer with the ability to handle oneself underwater, and in moving water with a current
2. Set up locations for put in and take outs
 - Use a public landing or seek permission of private landowners
 - Park your vehicle above the flood lines
 - Think about the location of breaks, lunch, camp etc....making sure not to trespass on private property unless you have prior permission.
 - Consider time, distance, and water level to be traveled and the amount of sunlight you have available
 - Arrange for a shuttle
3. Think about the participants
 - Never go paddling alone
 - Limit the size of the group. Think about the environmental impacts (cat holes, soil compaction, vegetation destruction, noise pollution, etc.) your group will have on the resource
 - Designate the on river leaders (they should be experienced with river travel)
 - Think about the total group strength (beginner to advanced skills)
 - All must assume the responsibility for the group
 - Group ethics
 1. Obey all rules and regulations
 2. Respect private property
 3. Be considerate of others on the water
 4. Give anglers a wide berth
 5. Never change clothes in public view
 6. Pack out human waste in sensitive or heavily used environments or dig cat holes at least 200 feet from the water
 7. Do not disturb wildlife
 8. Avoid building campfires, except in established fire rings, or for emergencies
 9. Keep the river clean and pick-up and pack out all litter (leave a place better than you found it)
 10. Volunteer your time to help the river resource
4. Equipment and Clothing
 - Plan to get wet, prepare for the weather and river water temperature
 - Stay visible have a flashlight, whistle, and other medical/safety/rescue equipment
 - Wear proper footwear, layer clothing and wear your personal flotation device (PFD). (85% of

boating fatality victims were not wearing a PFD at the time of the accident)

- Carry a supply of food and water adequate for your trip length
 - Carry a spare paddle
 - Carry navigation equipment
5. Float Plan
 - File a written plan with two people who will check on you after a certain amount of time
 - What to list on a written float plan:
 1. Name, address and phone numbers of boaters
 2. Description of boats
 3. Type of boat
 4. Hull colors
 5. Length
 6. Number of people in the group and in each craft
 - Medical problems of any person in the group
 - Communications on board...i.e. cell phone or radio
 - Vehicles
 1. Make, model, and color of vehicles in the group
 2. License numbers
 3. Where each one is parked along the river
 - Trip Expectations
 1. Expected departure time and location
 2. Expected route and alternate route
 3. Possible camp and lunch stops
 4. Dates you plan to be on the river
 5. Expected time and location of take out
 6. Date and time you would like a search to begin if you do not return

***Upon arrival you must notify the people holding your written float plan that you have returned.

A List of Suggested Gear:

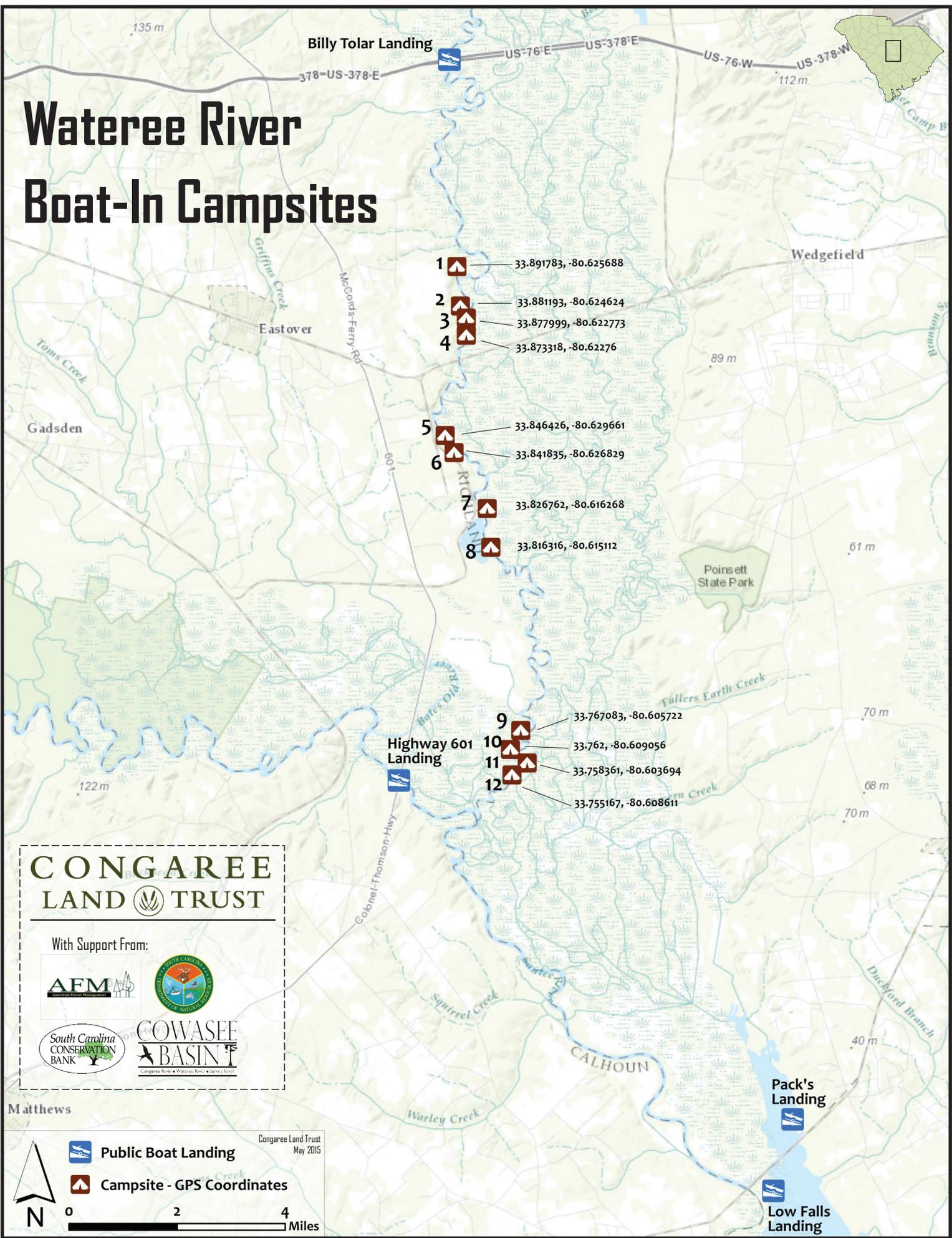
Wearable personal floatation device, sized to fit; sound device audible for ½ mile – whistle or horn ; cell phone or marine radio; map of river/compass; sunscreen; insect repellent; hat; rain gear; first aid kit; water; duct tape; trash bags; flashlight; waterproof matches; extra clothing; extra paddle or pole; food; waterproof bag for all of the preceding and secured to boat

******Please do not leave valuables in your vehicle.**

For more information consult: ACA website (www.AmericanCanoe.org); Leave No Trace website (www.Int.org); US Coast Guard website (www.uscgboating.org); SCDNR website (www.dnr.sc.gov)

Note: Most paddlers, with steady paddling and a little current behind them, can manage a river mile in 20 minutes, or three miles an hour. Counting some down time

Wateree River Boat-In Campsites



CONGAREE LAND TRUST

With Support From:

AFM
SOUTH CAROLINA CONSERVATION BANK
COWASEE BASIN

Matthews

Congaree Land Trust
May 2015

Public Boat Landing

Campsite - GPS Coordinates

0 2 4 Miles

Pack's Landing

Low Falls Landing

for lunch, stretching, fishing, photography, and enjoying the scenery, a typical day's river paddle means 11-20 miles of forward progress. This means that for the Congaree, for example, you can count on spending one night on the river (and starting early from Columbia and arriving late the next afternoon at the 601 boat landing)

COWASEE Basin Task Force Member Receives Award

Longtime DNR biologist and COWASEE Task Force Member Bob Perry was recognized for his many years of dedication to the natural resources of South Carolina as the 2014 Conservationist of the Year by the South Carolina Wildlife Federation. Bob started his long career with DNR as waterfowl project leader at Samworth Wildlife Management Area near Georgetown. Bob also served as the coordinator for the Winyah Bay Focus Area Project which has protected over 150,000 acres within the Winyah Bay Watershed. In 2005 Bob transferred to the Columbia office to take on state-wide responsibilities as environmental affairs permit coordinator. In this role Bob was instrumental in putting together the mitigation plan for the Romarco/Haile Gold Mine Operation in Kershaw County. Under this plan Cooks Mountain and a major part of Goodwill Plantation, both totaling 3,700 acres, will become open to the public as a DNR Heritage Preserve and Wildlife Management Area (see article in this newsletter for more details).

A Francis Marion Cannonball found at Fort Motte!

Luther Wannamaker

The latest [2014] in a series of discoveries at the Fort Motte battle site on the bluffs of the Congaree River in Calhoun County is a six pound cannonball left 233 years ago where Francis Marion's men created a big earthen mound roughly 250 yards downhill from Rebecca Motte's home.

The mound had to be high enough and far enough away to safely rake Mrs. Motte's roof with grape shot when the opposing soldiers climbed out on her roof to extinguish the fire set by either throwing flaming pitch on the roof, or as legend indicates, shooting Mrs. Motte's ignited arrows into it.

Just a few weeks ago Dr. Steve Smith and his archaeology team from the University of South Carolina located the mound site which had been mistakenly bulldozed away in the 1970s. Smith's team dug an exploring trench across the mound site which showed how the earth had been dug from the rear to create the large mound and were amazed to discover the cannonball.

Calhoun County is fortunate to have Dr. Smith's enthusiastic services. He is regarded not only nationally but worldwide as one of the premier battle field archaeologist alive today...and personally hosted the biannual international battlefield archaeology conference in Columbia in March.

The sequence of discoveries he has made at Fort Motte illuminate and make easier to visualize the brief but intense contest to force the 160 British forces, most Tories, to walk out of the house and surrender to Marion.

Smith's first discovery was to confirm the actual house location with its two chimneys 60 feet apart. It turns out that the large DAR granite monument was placed exactly where her home was built. Then he located the fortifying trench dug by the British around the house by observing the growth of vegetation, more rich where the old trench had softened the earth. He confirmed this by excavating part of the trench, observing among other things, how the trowel felt while scraping away the dirt. It was amazing how the exact shape and depth of the old trench emerged.

Dr. Smith's investigations have ranged over the entire 160 acre battle site. He has found where Henry "Light Horse Harry" Lee and his light cavalry camped. He even found a rusty stirrup from one of the horsemen. He has discovered the overseer's cabin site on the scenic river bluff to which Rebecca Motte was exiled during the battle near the Lee camp. He discovered what he believes to be a metal remnant of Mrs. Motte's belt, a chatelaine, which held her keys. Only a "lady of the manor" would possess such a belt. So who else but Mrs. Motte would have such a belt, he reasons.

He has found other house sites, including one where the infamous Tory captain, Levy Smith, resided. Three Tories were hung following the battle on the orders of Harry Lee and their bodies thrown in the trench. Levy Smith was slated to be hung next and the noose was around his neck when Francis Marion, furious that Tories whom he could trade for good men, were being killed, galloped up and stopped the proceedings.

Smith continues to find hundreds of musket balls, especially British. A high percentage of the American musket balls appear to come from one or two rifles. Each rifle was individually made and markings on the musket balls are distinctly different from one rifle to another, leading Smith to conclude that the two famous American marksmen who were killed at Fort Motte did the majority of the rifle fire from the Patriot side.

Smith's latest fascination is the zig zag strategic approach trench or SAP used to approach the fortified house. In May he concentrated on digging out another section in an effort to learn just how close the patriots were able to come to the house before they set it on fire.

The ultimate value of a revolutionary battle site is to

remind us that the price of freedom is high... that nothing can be done without the cooperation of brave like-minded men and women.

Recent lectures on Rebecca Motte's life show how this lady, who was fortunate enough to inherit a huge fortune, used her money wisely after the war to pay off debts incurred in fighting the British. Her willingness to sacrifice her home at Fort Motte was only one incident in an exemplary life of service and patriotism.

General Nathanael Greene, who gave the six pound canon to Francis Marion, met Marion for the first time soon after the battle, at McCords Ferry. This historic face to face meeting cemented the resolve of those two famous men to continue the struggle. We know from their letters that both were weary and discouraged prior to this meeting and had seriously considered resigning from their commands in South Carolina.

Apparently they took heart once they met. This meeting, Steve Smith suggested at a recently history seminar, was a key turning point in the American Revolution. The bloody battle of Eutaw Springs followed and British fortunes declined rapidly.

Did You Know?

How many states have a county named after Francis Marion? The answer is seventeen: Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio, Oregon, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and West Virginia.

South Carolina has produced a lot of great men and women but the "Swamp Fox" gets my (JEC) vote as the greatest of them all. After the fall of Charleston in May, 1780, one of the greatest defeats ever suffered by a U.S. army, the Patriot cause seemed all but lost. During the bleak months that followed, until the great Patriot victory at Kings Mountain in October, Marion and his rag tag team of guerrilla fighters, along with Thomas Sumter (who has four counties named after him in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina) and Andrew Pickens (with three in South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama), kept the British and Loyalists off guard long enough in South Carolina for the Patriot's to regroup and send the Brits on to ultimate defeat at Yorktown.

And while on the subject of Francis Marion, is anyone out there old enough to remember the Walt Disney series on the Swamp Fox? And do you know who played Francis Marion? Answer: *Leslie Nielson*

And the **13th Francis Marion Symposium** will be again held in Manning, SC, on **October 23-24, 2015**. This is a great event that brings together Swamp Fox devotees from across the nation. The event includes lectures, field trips, displays and culminates with a Saturday

night dinner theater. Registration is \$90 per person, \$165 a couple. For more information, see

www.francismarionsymposium.com



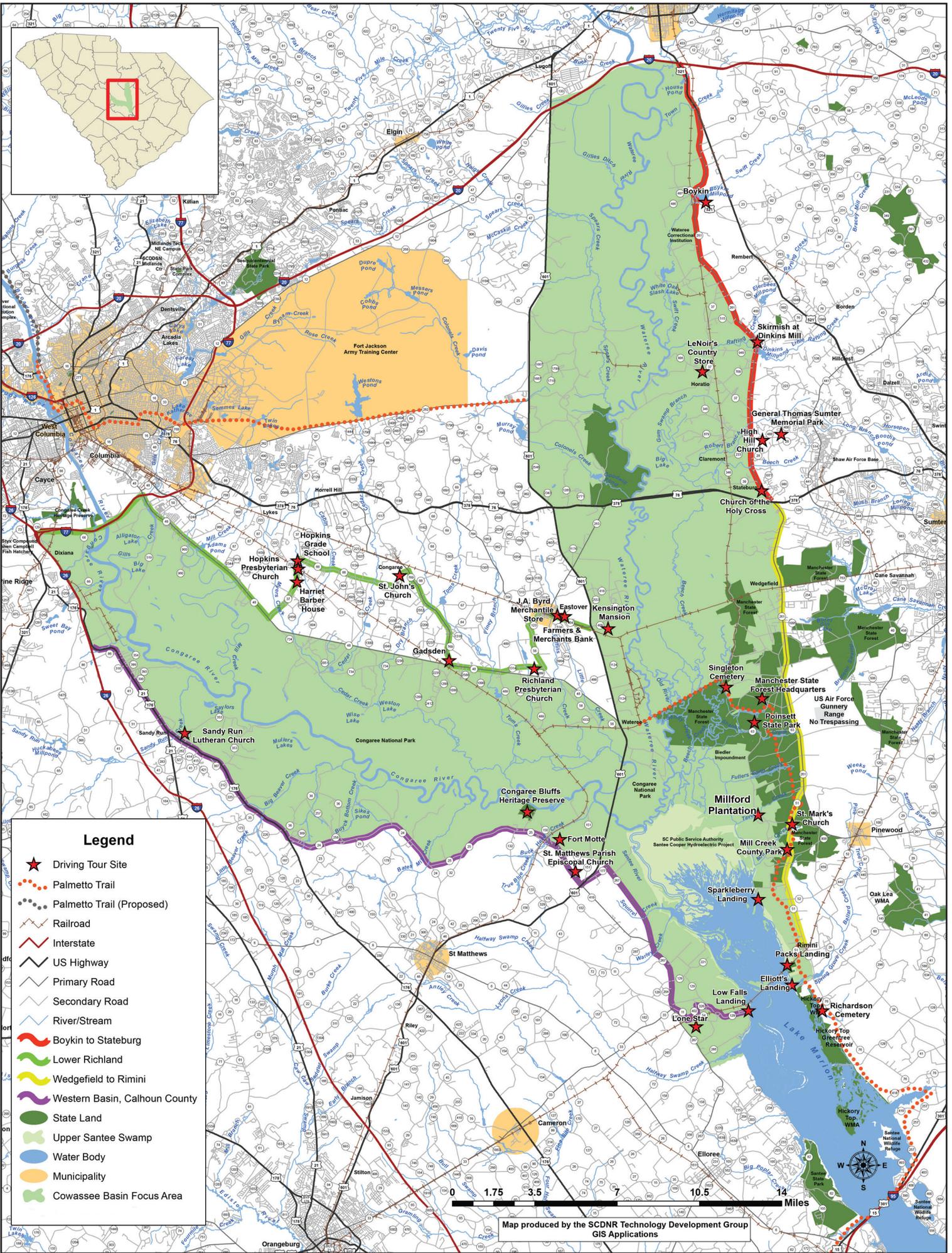
Landowner Luther Wannamaker with the DAR monument at the Fort Motte battle site

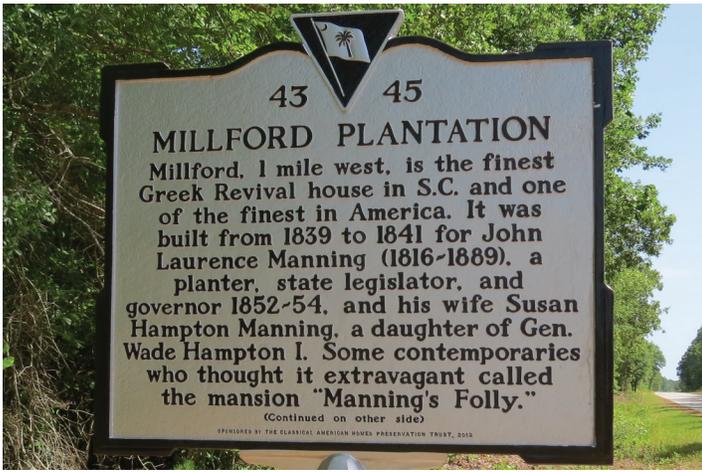
Historical Markers

New roadside historical markers have been recently erected within the COWASEE Basin. These attractive markers, sponsored by the South Carolina Department of Archives and History, are always popular with the motoring public. They are Kingville and Millford Plantation; other new ones very near the COWASEE Basin boundary include St. Matthews Parish Episcopal Church (Calhoun County); the first location of St. Marks Church (Clarendon County); and the Harriet Barber House (just off Highway 48 in Richland County). One that will soon be placed along the US 601 causeway pertains to lower Congaree River ferries.



Kingville marker





Millford Plantation marker



Millford Plantation

Millford

Millford Plantation in Sumter County a few miles south of Wedgefield is considered one of the finest examples of Greek Revival residential architecture in America. Thanks to the generosity of Richard Hampton Jenrette and Classical American Homes Preservation Trust, this magnificent home, constructed 1839-41, has been restored to its former glory and available to the general public for guided tours, on the first Saturday of each month; contact 803-452-6194 for reservations at \$15 per person. Treat yourself and don't miss seeing one of the jewels (and one

of four National Historic Landmarks) of the COWASEE Basin; and while you're at it, lunch at the Summerton Diner (closed on Thursday) is a great way to finish out the day.

Acknowledgments

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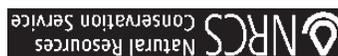
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