

South Carolina Department of Natural Resources

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DNR

COWASEE Chronicle



Newsletter of the COWASEE Basin

No. 2, 2011



The winding rivers and wide floodplain forests of the COWASEE Basin appear much like the Amazon Basin from an aerial view at 1000 feet. Photo by Patrick Moore and SouthWings

This is the second annual newsletter of the COWASEE Basin Focus Area. The COWASEE Basin Focus Area is an initiative to maintain and enhance conservation and natural qualities of the area. The purpose of the organization is to provide a framework to bring focus area property owners together for the protection of natural, recreational and financial values of the area and for individual properties. It bears repeating that the COWASEE Basin Focus Area is a conservation initiative that works with landowners on a strictly voluntary basis to protect their land through the use of coordination and cooperation. It is not a government program but is entirely landowner driven.

The focus area concept got started in South Carolina years ago through the support of the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, The Nature Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited, and other conservation organizations and agencies. The private landowner has always been, and will continue to be, at the forefront of focus area efforts. We continue to use the first and most

famous focus area in South Carolina, the ACE Basin near Charleston, as a model for success. The ACE Basin has provided land use stability that has significantly enhanced value and assurance to owners for planning and investing for their property.

Let Us Hear From You

This newsletter is to inform property owners of activities, programs, changing regulations and opportunities that influence land, owners and the focus area. This newsletter most importantly provides landowners a way to express any interest or concerns that they have that influence the area. Email is an efficient and easy way to communicate. Providing your email will really be a big help to foster an exchange of issues important to property owners. Contact John Cely at johncely@congarzelt.org.

COWASEE Basin Concerns

The taskforce would like owners' input as to concerns and issues influencing the area. Some ideas suggested are:

1. Control of invasive and nuisance species i.e. feral hogs, coyotes, beavers, privet, etc.
2. Opportunities for Basin-wide grants for conservation improvements for land, water, trees and wildlife.
3. Restoration of longleaf pine.
4. Reporting systems on deer and turkey harvest, management co-ordination and co-operation to aid developing improvements.
5. Waterfowl group to create overall improvement for duck populations.
6. Legislative and programs update.

Conservation Update

2010 was a slow year for conservation easements within the 215,000 acre COWASEE Basin, as well as throughout South Carolina. Much of this was likely due to uncertainty from Congress over the tax provisions for conservation easements. Near the end of 2010, Congress did restore the favorable 50% deduction of adjusted gross income spread over 16 years. This provision will also be in effect through the end of 2011. Landowners have taken notice, as the Congaree Land Trust, as well as other land trusts throughout South Carolina, have reported an increased interest in conservation easements so far in 2011.

There were several properties within the COWASEE Basin that signed up in 2010 for the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP), a USDA program that pays landowners for wetland restoration and preservation. Currently, 47.5% of the COWASEE Basin Focus Area is in some sort of official public or private protection. Of the total acreage of private lands within the Basin, about 136,000 acres, 23,606 acres, or 17.3%, is in some type of conservation easement. This is a significant achievement and is illustrative of the conservation ethic many landowners within the COWASEE Basin have. Based on recent discussions with landowners, we feel that there will be some significant conservation easements within the Basin to report for next year's newsletter.

Please note that by the time you receive this newsletter there will only be about four months left in 2011 to take advantage of the favorable tax provisions for conservation easements. Congress could extend them for another year, revert to earlier, less favorable provisions, or make other changes to the program; the point being that no one knows what may happen for 2012 and

beyond. If you have been thinking about a conservation easement for your land, now would be a good time to touch base with a COWASEE Basin Task Force member.

New Members of the COWASEE Basin Task Force

The COWASEE Basin Task Force is composed of landowners as well as individuals from various conservation organizations and agencies. The Task Force meets about every two months or so to discuss issues and opportunities as they pertain to land protection within the COWASEE Basin. We are pleased to announce two well-known individuals have recently joined the Task Force. They are Angus Lafaye, Chairman of the Board for Milliken Forestry Company of Columbia, and Roy Belser of American Forest Management of Sumter. Both are among the most respected foresters in South Carolina and bring to the Task Force a wealth of knowledge and expertise on forestry and land management issues in South Carolina. They are acquainted with many landowners within the COWASEE Basin and understand the issues of rural property management and ownership.

We also welcome two other individuals to the Task Force that have taken the place of Jim Wilson, who recently retired as the Environmental Program Manager for the Richland County Conservation Commission. They are Dr. James "Buddy" Atkins, Manager, Environmental Planning Division for Richland County and Nancy Stone-Collum, Conservation Coordinator for the Environmental Planning Division.

Another new face on the Task Force, but certainly not to conservation, is Mary Crockett, scenic rivers coordinator for the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources. Mary takes the place of Haven Barnhill who left DNR for a position with the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Currently there are 16 members of the Task Force, representing landowners and eight conservation organizations and agencies. They are:

Richard Watkins, landowner and Task Force Chairman; also representing Friends of Congaree Swamp, 803-655-7091; dolinhill@windstream.net

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Mary Crockett, representing SC DNR, 803-734-9111; crockettm@dnr.sc.gov

Billy Cate, landowner; also representing the Congaree Land Trust, 803-988-0000; billy@congarzelt.org

John Cely, representing the Congaree Land Trust, 803-988-0000; johncely@congarzelt.org

Chris Vaughn, representing Ducks Unlimited, 843-745-9110; cvaughn@ducks.org

Jason Johnson, representing The Conservation Fund, 803-829-8054; jjohnson@conservationfund.org

James “Buddy” Atkins, Ph.D., Manager, Richland County Environmental Planning Division, 803-576-2082; atkinsj@rcgov.us

Nancy Stone-Collum, is the Conservation Coordinator for the Richland County Environmental Planning Division, 803-576-2083; stonecollumn@rcgov.us

Charles Broadwell, representing the Sumter County Soil and Water Conservation District; 803-469-2127; charlesb@fc-i.net

Hank Stallworth, landowner from Calhoun County; 803-874-3046; singleton50@windstream.net

Hugh Ryan, landowner from Sumter County; 803-968-3072; jhryan@fc-i.net

Dick Yetter, representing the Natural Resources Conservation Service, 803-253-3948; dick.yetter@sc.usda.gov; and **Sudie Thomas**, also representing the Natural Resources Conservation Service, 803-874-3337 x 104; sudie.thomas@sc.usda.gov

Angus Lafaye, Chairmen of the Board, Milliken Forestry Company, 803-788-0590; lafaye@millikenforestry.com

Roy Belser, American Forest Management, Inc., 803-773-5461, ext. 235; roy.belser@amforem.biz

New Plant Species Discovered within the COWASEE Basin

It scarcely seems possible that after more than 300 years of the state’s first settlement, along with the large number of botanists and naturalists that have explored South Carolina since, that a new species of plant could still be discovered here. But that’s exactly what happened a few years ago when well-known naturalist and environmental consultant L.L. “Chick” Gaddy of Columbia described a new species of trillium found on the east side of the COWASEE Basin in Kershaw County. Gaddy found it while doing an environmental survey for a client on the east bank of the Wateree River. He recognized it immediately as something different. After some preliminary research, he discovered that similar specimens had been collected in the same general location back in the 1930s by Duke University botanist Henry J. Oosting. Oosting, however, had mislabeled the specimens as another species. After more research and consultations with trillium authorities, Gaddy knew he had a new species, wrote up and published his findings, and named the plant the Wateree trillium, and in honor of Dr. Oosting, gave it the scientific name, *Trillium oostingii*.

There are about 17 species of trilliums in eastern North America and they are a favorite of wildflower enthusiasts everywhere. The three distinct leaves, growing a few inches off the ground on a single stalk, are a key diagnostic feature, and all have attractive blooms in white, red, pink, burgundy, or yellow. Most are found growing in rich woods and hillsides in the mountains and upper piedmont. Floodplains, although having abundant plant life, are harsh environments for trilliums and other wildflowers that grow on the forest

floor because of frequent, and sometimes powerful, flooding. The Wateree trillium has somehow managed to adapt, and even thrive, in this type environment. It is a handsome plant, sporting beautiful bluish-green mottling on the leaves with three long, slender creamy yellow flower petals with a maroon base. They are usually found growing in clumps within the higher portions of the floodplain and in early spring are fairly easy to locate, even from a distance, by the distinctive bluish-green cast of the leaves. They first start blooming around mid-April. So far the plant seems to have a very restrictive distribution, only being found within a small portion of the Wateree floodplain in lower Kershaw County and upper Richland County. Despite similar habitat and growing conditions, none have been found along the Congaree River.



*Wateree trillium, a recently discovered new species found only within the eastern portion of the COWASEE Basin.
Photo by Jerry Bright.*

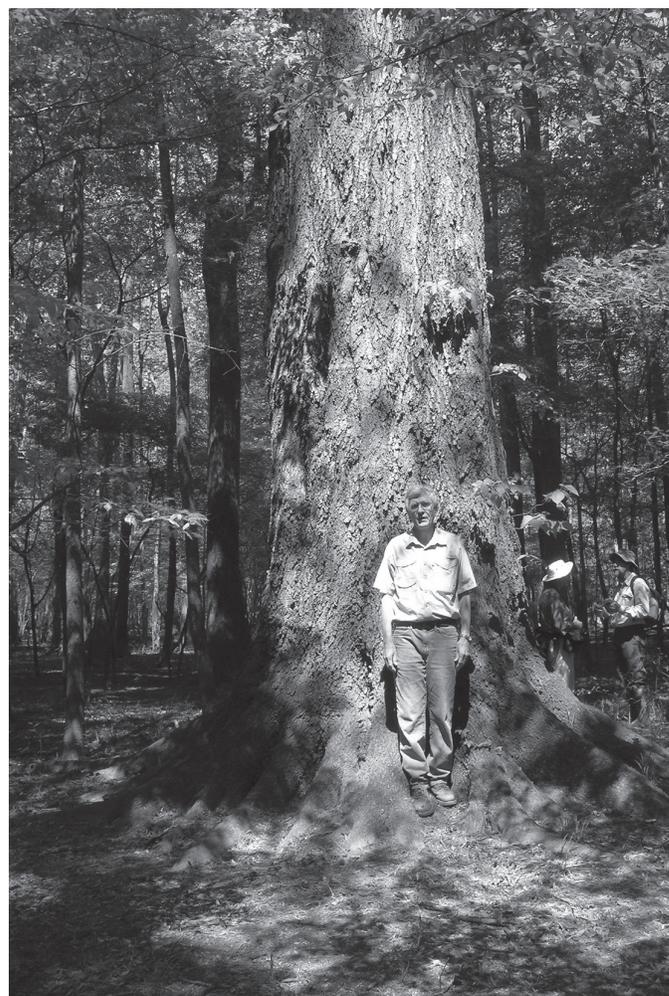
New State Champion Willow Oak Found in the COWASEE Basin

Recently a new state champion willow oak (*Quercus phellos*), meaning the biggest of its kind, has been found within the COWASEE Basin growing on landowner Jamie Guy's Wateree Floodplain Forest property. The big tree measures 21.5 feet in circumference (more than six feet in diameter), has a height of 148 feet, and an average crown spread of 66 feet. Based on the American Forestry Association's point system of ranking potential champions, this giant oak has 436 points, well above the current record-holding state co-champions of 389 and 382 points.

Willow oaks thrive in floodplain soils where they grow in company with laurel oak, cherrybark oak, Shumard oak, water oak, and other members of the red oak family. The small acorns are ideal turkey food and are relished by wood ducks and mallards. The name of the tree comes from its long, slender willow-like leaves.

Congaree National Park in the COWASEE Basin is well known for its many champion trees. Currently there are twenty-five state champions and six national champion trees in the park. The latter consist of the laurel oak, sweetgum, swamp tupelo, water hickory, deciduous holly and loblolly pine. At nearly 170 feet tall, or 17 stories, the national champion loblolly pine at Congaree is the tallest known tree in South Carolina.

The Big Tree Program for South Carolina is administered through Clemson University's Department of Forestry.



Landowner Jamie Guy poses in front of the new state champion willow oak found on his property along the Wateree River in Kershaw County.

COWASEE Basin Focus Area Book

We have recently received funding from an anonymous donor that, along with generous grants from the Richland County Conservation Commission and Friends of the Congaree Swamp, will enable us to publish the COWASEE Basin table top book. All proceeds will go to the Congaree Land Trust for its COWASEE Basin conservation program. We thank all of the photographers who have made the book possible with their donated photography. We hope to have a delivery date by late 2011. They will make great Christmas presents. Several photos that will be in the book are featured in this newsletter (with apologies to the photographers for the black and white format; they are really eye-catching in color).

COWASEE Basin History

Many significant historical events have occurred within the COWASEE Basin, including the very first exploration of the North American interior by Europeans when Hernando De Soto and his 600 Spanish conquistadors passed through the area in 1540. We are fortunate in having amateur historian Charles Broadwell of Sumter on the Task Force. Charles has written extensively on the history of the east side of the COWASEE Basin, and has put together a brief history of Stateburg for this newsletter. He has much more information and we apologize for not being able to include it all.

Stateburg, a brief history by Charles Broadwell

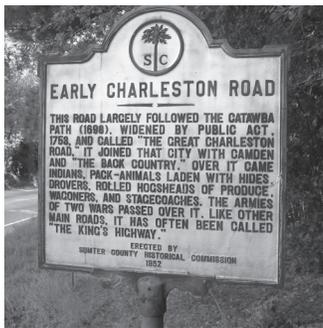
The area of the township of Stateburg has been known since the earliest of times. The first recording of this

location was by John Lawson, Surveyor General of Carolinas, when in 1701 he looked across the Wateree Swamp and described the view as “twenty miles over, to where one “alp” reared its lofty head above all the rest”. That “alp” was Cook's Mountain. Stateburg was located a few miles from the geographic center of South Carolina and on one of the most traveled roads in the state, The Great Road (SC Highway 261). In 1808 David Ramsey described Stateburg as a place where “refined society may be enjoyed in great perfection”. Some sources give credit for the name of High Hills of the Santee to a French Lieutenant who passed through the area with General Greene's army during the Revolutionary War, but the name was in use long before the Revolutionary War and the French Lieutenant.

This has been the home of General Thomas Sumter, the “Gamecock” of the Revolutionary War who led his troops up and down these hills in the struggle for independence. Here he is buried along with his son Thomas Sumter, Jr. ambassador to the Portugal Court in Brazil. Here also is the tomb and brick chapel of Natalie deLage, French wife of Thomas Sumter, Jr. whose mother was the principal attendant to Empress Josephine. Stateburg was home to John Mayrant of Bon Homme Richard fame; Richard “Fighting Dick” Heron Anderson, ranking general from South Carolina in the Civil War; Major William Harrison Saunders, first Army Observation pilot; Stephen Decatur Miller, Governor of South Carolina and US senator; John Laurens, President of South Carolina, and US Supreme Court Justice; Doctor Richard Furman, leader of the early Baptist Church; and many others of equal stature. Located at Stateburg was Acton, location of the first juggling board to be built in this country and Mine Hill the location of the first cotton mill in South Carolina.

General Thomas Sumter campaigned hard for Stateburg to be the site of the state capital. The argument for the Stateburg location was that it was the exact geographic center of the state, was more accessible to the citizens of the state and was easy to defend in case of attack because of the swamps (Wateree) surrounding it. The popular

story is that Stateburg lost its bid to be the capital of South Carolina by one vote when the legislature chose Columbia to be the capital. In actuality, however, Stateburg came nowhere near being selected as the state's capital and in fact no vote was ever taken. However, this set back did



This historical marker at Stateburg commemorates the long history of the "Great Road."

not hinder the progress of Statesborough. It became the county seat for Claremont County and one of the busiest and well known towns in South Carolina. Stateburg remained the county seat until the court house burned in November, 1801 and all records housed there were destroyed.

In March, 1793 Statesborough was granted a US Post Office and began a series of slight name changes. The first postmaster was John Horan, a native of Ireland. He came to Stateburg as a teacher at Claremont Academy. In 1858 the US Post Office Department changed the name to Statesburg. In 1877 the US Post Office changed its name back to Statesburgh. In 1893 the US Post Office Department changed the name back to Statesburg. In 1902, the US Post Office Department changed to the current name of Stateburg.

By 1850 there were taverns (Hood's Tavern, Powell's Tavern, High Hills Tavern), a post office, several academies (Edge Hill, Claremont Society, Roberts, Woodville), a circulating library, law offices of Judge William Dobein James, a jail, a pillory, whipping posts and stocks, a hotel built by General Thomas Sumter, and the well established churches (The Church of the Holy Cross, High Hills Baptist), a post office, cotton gin manufacturer, a tailor, a cobbler and a newspaper, the Claremont Gazette.

It became fashionable around 1798 for wealthy planters from Georgetown and Charleston to have at least one summer residence. A number of the houses in the Stateburg area were either built or remodeled during that time. These planters had a common goal of escaping the “bad air” along the lowlands and the rivers where their primary residences were located. The High Hills of Santee became a preferred site for a summer home. These planters built “summer seats” and “hunting boxes”. Hunting Boxe is the English term for a building intended as a temporary residence for a person interested in hunting to include stables, kennels and rooms for guests.

Stateburg has always been an area as much as a settlement, being loosely defined as South on The Great Road to the house of the Rees family, James Hill (The Oaks), East to 441, up to Raccoon Road, then North to The Great Road. The 1878 map by M.H. McLaurin shows Stateburg Township to encompass 60 square miles. Today the highway (76/378) has bypassed Stateburg and highway 521 has become the main route to Camden but these boundaries still hold. In actuality, Stateburg is and always has been more of a state of mind than a town and with or without main roads it continues to endure and preserve a glimpse of our past.

Organizational and Staff Changes for the Richland Soil and Water Conservation District

Dr. James “Buddy” Atkins and Nancy Stone-Collum are new COWASEE Basin Task Force members and represent the Richland County Environmental Planning Division. Buddy contributed this article for the newsletter on recent changes that affect the District, the Richland County Conservation Commission, and the County’s Planning and Developmental Services Department.

For decades, the Richland Soil and Water Conservation District (District) has worked cooperatively with the U.S.D.A. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the S.C. Department of Natural Resources to promote the wise use and conservation of Richland County’s important natural resources. Along with the NRCS, the District provides technical assistance to citizens concerning soil and water conservation, farmland protection, and water quality and flooding issues. The District has also worked closely with schools to educate both students and adults on the importance of conservation.

Earlier this year, Richland County formed a new Environmental Planning Division to support and blend together programs of the District, the Richland County Conservation Commission (RCCC) and the Richland County Planning and Developmental Services Department. Having a single, unified staff will bring together similar conservation programs of the District, RCCC and the Planning Department. The new Environmental Planning Division will continue providing technical and educational staff support to the numerous programs of the District and the RCCC including agricultural soil and water conservation, conservation easements, historical restoration, greenways and trails, mitigation banking, and watershed and water quality protection projects. In addition, Division staff will provide environmental and conservation expertise in support of the County’s Comprehensive Land Use Plan, Strategic Plan, and Neighborhood Master Plans.

Staff changes at the Division include:

- Dr. James B. Atkins (Buddy) joined the Environmental Planning staff in December 2010 as Manager of the Environmental Planning Division. He fills the vacant position of Hugh Caldwell who formerly worked

with the US Department of Agriculture and served as the District Conservationist for the past decade.

- Chanda Cooper joined the Division in May 2011 as the new Division Education Program Coordinator replacing Mary Jane Henderson who had served as the District Education Specialist for almost 28 years.
- Nancy Stone-Collum joined the Division in March 2011 as the Division’s Conservation Coordinator. Nancy will be assuming the RCCC responsibilities of Jim Wilson who retired this year after 40 years of service to the USDA and Richland County.
- Charlene (Charlie) Fisher will remain as the Division’s Administrative Assistant. Charlie has worked with the District and the RCCC since April 2005.

To find out more about conservation programs in Richland County, please contact us at:

Environmental Planning Division
Richland County Planning & Developmental Services Department
2020 Hampton St., Room 3063 A
Columbia, SC 29204

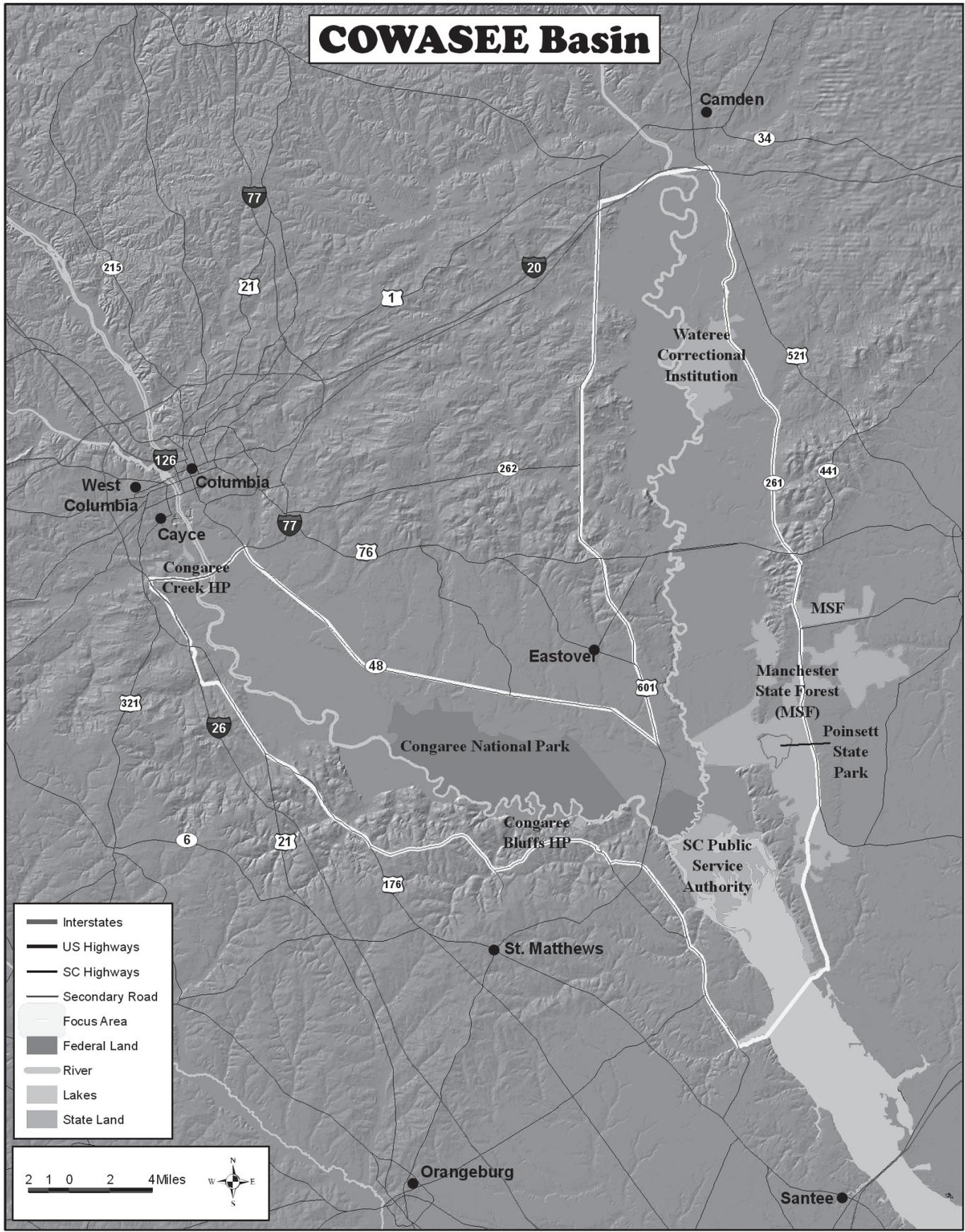
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Conserving Richland County’s Natural & Historic Legacy
Richland Soil & Water Conservation District
Richland County Conservation Commission

Acknowledgments

This newsletter was made possible by generous grants from the Richland County Conservation Commission and the Harry Hampton Memorial Wildlife Fund.

COWASEE Basin



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Congaree • Wateree • Santee Rivers

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S.C. Department of Natural Resources
John E. Frampton, Director

COWASEE Basin Task Force
See list on pages 2 and 3.

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John Cely

Total cost: \$480.00
Total copies: 1,000
Cost per copy: \$0.48

Printed On Recycled Paper

11-7694



The Conservation Fund



Sumter County
Soil & Water Conservation District



Harry Hampton Memorial Wildlife Fund
P.O. Box 2641
Columbia, SC 29202

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This picture of an old brick store in a snowstorm at Lone Star only heightens the lonely and forlorn appearance of what used to be a thriving farming community. Photo by Jim Kelly.



Sandy Run Lutheran Church in the snow; one of the oldest Lutheran churches in the state, it was first organized ca.1765. Photo by Cindy Shumpert



Hooded Warblers are one of the most characteristic and colorful warblers in bottomland hardwood forests of the COWASEE Basin. The male here sports a distinctive black throat patch. Photo by Don Wuori.



Summer Tanagers are found in a variety of forest and forest-edge habitats including bottomland hardwoods, mixed pine-hardwoods, and pine forests. The all-red male is sometimes called the "summer redbird." Photo by Don Wuori.