

2016 Rural and Critical Land Preservation Program

Annual Report

Preserving our greenways, waterways, and way of life



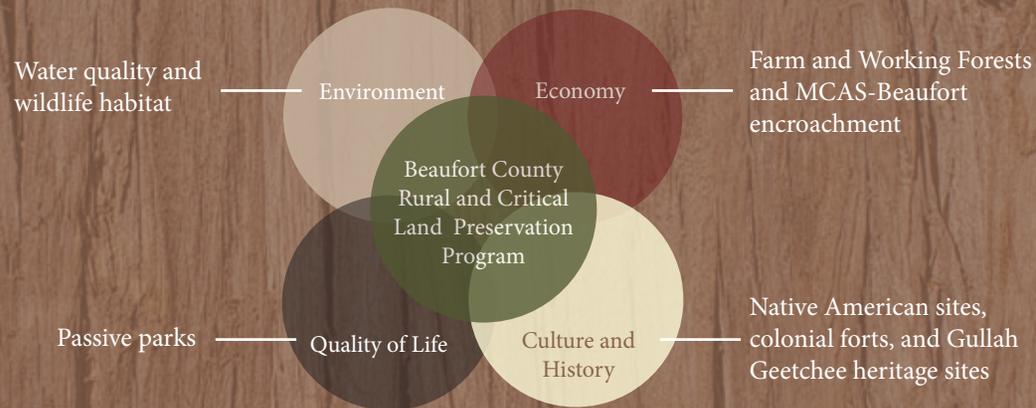
Rural and Critical Land Preservation Program

KEEPING OUR COMMUNITY HEALTHY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

The Rural and Critical Land Preservation Program is a dynamic tool for preserving the health and quality of life of everyone that lives in, works in, and visits Beaufort County. Strategic land conservation preserves our culture, history, and way of life. It protects working farms and forests, jobs, and availability of local food. It also keeps our waterways clean, protects wildlife habitat, and provides protection from flooding.

Using a focused approach, the Rural and Critical Land Preservation Program is comprehensive, strategic, natural resource driven, and watershed based. It reduces our impact on the land by protecting our coastal environment and keeping land healthy for future generations.

Through 2016, Beaufort County's Rural and Critical Land Preservation Program has preserved almost 24,000 acres. Land is preserved through fee simple purchase or conservation easements (purchase of development rights). Conservation easements allow landowners and their family to remain on their property and enjoy farming, hunting, fishing and other historic uses.



Preserving our greenways, waterways, and way of life

Rural and Critical Land Preservation Program

CURRENT STATE OF THE PROGRAM

\$135 million dollars in funding approved by Beaufort County voters

108 projects completed through 2016

\$38 million in Partners funds brought into the County for land preservation

\$129.1 million in County funds to preserve land

11,190 acres preserved through fee simple purchase

12,225 acres preserved with conservation easements



Rural and Critical Program Achievements by the Numbers

394 acres of protected maritime forest

52 islands considered critical migratory bird habitat

8,790 acres of protected wetlands that receive and filter stormwater and protect rivers

6,507 acres of protected working forests

1,703 acres of protected working farmland on St. Helena Island

8,000 acres protected in the historic and iconic ACE Basin

25 sites that are habitats for 14 different rare, threatened or endangered species

84 archaeological sites and 21 historic structures have been preserved

845 acres protected in the Okatie River watershed

725 acres protected in the Chechessee and Broad Rivers watersheds

Progress through the Years...

1999



Beaufort County protects, Lemon Island, through a conservation easement

2002

Citizens pass first bond referendum for \$40 million dollars with 3:1 margin to fund land purchases

2006



Citizens pass second bond referendum for \$50 million dollars to fund land purchases

Land protected around the May and New River watersheds reaches 1,650 acres

2011

Protection of agriculture lands and historic sites on iconic St. Helena Island exceeds 2,000 acres

2013

Beaufort County protects 230 acre Pinckney Point Preserve, a key property between the Colleton and the Okatie Rivers.

2016



3,608 acres of farms and forests protected to buffer the Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort from encroachment

Beaufort County program exceeds 725 acre of protection in the Chechessee and Broad River watersheds and 845 acres in the Okatie watershed

Beaufort County protects its first 30 acres in the Okatie River headwaters

Beaufort County protects North Williman Island, over 8,000 acres in the historic ACE Basin

2001

Beaufort County protects the historic Bluffton Oyster Company in the Town of Bluffton



2003

Three properties are purchased to expand the protection of Historic Mitchelville on Hilton Head

2010 & 2011

Permanent protection of the Okatie River headwaters exceeds 600 acres

Third bond referendum passes for \$25 million to fund land purchases and develop passive parks

Beaufort County protects 20,000th acre

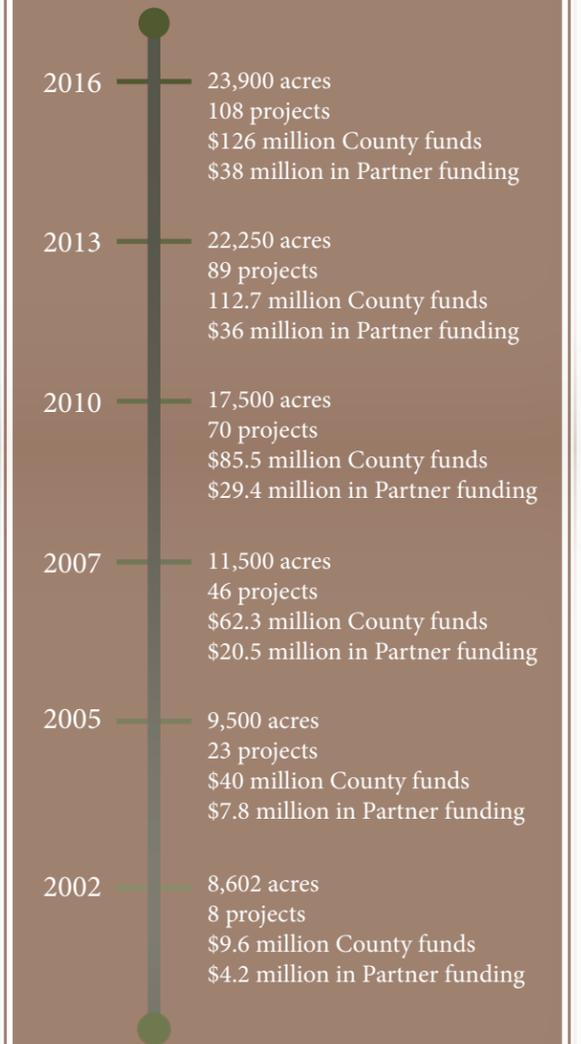


2012

Citizens pass fourth bond referendum for \$20 million to fund land purchases and develop passive parks

2014

Building the Community's Investment over the Last Sixteen Years



2016 Program Accomplishments

IN 2016, RURAL AND CRITICAL WORKED WITH LANDOWNERS TO SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE 9 PROJECTS AND PRESERVE ANOTHER 535 ACRES.

Our conservation partners are an important key to success. Partner dollars help to stretch taxpayers investment and the amount of land that can be preserved. This year partners included the Marine Corps Air Station-Beaufort, Beaufort County Stormwater Utility, Port Royal Sound Foundation and Beaufort County Open Land Trust.

OAKLEY TRACT (COOL HEART SPRINGS) AND JETER PROPERTY

The protection of the 82 acre Oakley tract and 25 acre Jeter property, located in an area known as Manigault's Neck, add to the mosaic of protected parcels in the Chechessee and Broad River watersheds, economically important waterways for shellfish harvesting and fishing. *(Fee simple purchase)*

MOODY FARM

The Moody family placed a conservation easement on their 107 acre working family farm in Burton located within the Air Station's "noise zone" or Air Installation Compatible Use Zone (AICUZ). The Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort (MCAS) contributed 50% of the funds for the conservation easement purchase to fulfill the MCAS goal of preventing encroachment to protect flight operations and public safety. The property will be conserved forever, protecting farmland, wildlife habitat and water quality. *(Conservation Easement)*

NEW LEAF AND LOWCOUNTRY EVERGREEN

New Leaf and Lowcountry Evergreen, with stunning mature live oaks, hardwood forests, and wetlands, were part of a Planned Unit Development in the Town of Bluffton on Hwy 170. These properties were protected in partnership with Beaufort County Stormwater Utility to prevent high density development, alleviate the effects of the existing area developments, and prevent further impairment to the Okatie River. The Town of Bluffton also contributed by removing units via their TDR and Density Bank. *(Fee simple purchase)*

BATTERY CREEK PARK (HUDDLE HOUSE AND BARKER)

The purchase of the Huddle House and Barker property on Boundary Street is part of a partnership with the City of Beaufort and Beaufort County Open Land Trust to create a park and open vista on Boundary Street. The Land Trust purchased the United Way building, the City purchased the Sea Eagle building, and Beaufort County purchased the Huddle House and Barker property. Soon, the remaining buildings will be purchased and removed, transforming the entrance to the City of Beaufort along Battery Creek as well as preserve water quality and provide public access to the water. *(Fee simple purchase)*



MOBLEY

The preservation of the 95 acre Mobley tract, located directly across from the Port Royal Sound Maritime Center, will protect the ecosystem, water quality, and habitat for marine organisms such as shellfish and oysters, and preserve the rural character and scenic quality of the rural greenway between northern and southern Beaufort County. The Mobley tract was annexed by the Town of Port Royal in 2006 and subsequently a Development Agreement was put in place which allowed for 125 residential units. The Rural and Critical program purchased the property in partnership with the Port Royal Sound Foundation. The Town of Port Royal supported the purchase by removing the existing density, preventing any future development. The Port Royal Sound Foundation will use the property for environmental research and education. *(Fee simple purchase)*

OLSEN

The 119 acre Olsen tract, also known as "Heffalump", has an astounding 11,000 linear feet of frontage on the Okatie River and Malind Creek and is the origination site for one of the headwaters of the Okatie River. In addition to playing a vital role in continuing to preserve water quality, protecting this incredible forested tract provides abundant wildlife habitat to bald eagles, painted buntings, and many other wildlife species. The Olsen property is also adjacent to the Okatie tract protected by the Program which is adjacent to the potential site for the future Beaufort County Animal Services facility. *(109 acre Fee simple purchase, 10 acre Donated Conservation Easement)*

Fee simple: Landowner has complete ownership of the land without limitation

Conservation easement: Voluntary legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust or government agency that permanently limits some uses of the land including development to protect its conservation values. Landowners retain many rights, including the right to use the land, sell it or pass it on to heirs.

2016 Land Preservation Map

Passive Parks



Passive Parks are an important part of the future of the lands owned and managed by Beaufort County. Several passive parks with trails, interpretive centers, and more are being developed for Crystal Lake park, Fort Fremont, and the Okatie Regional Preserve.

Crystal Lake park, located between Beaufort High Stadium and Lady's Island Drive, will be the first to open its gates. Beaufort County broke ground on the new building this summer and it will serve as a model for the type of "green building" techniques presently being promoted within the County. For example, the project will include an advanced remote management system and very high efficiency HVAC units along with LED light fixtures, closed cell insulation in walls and roof instead of fiberglass, and solar panels to capture and transform sunlight into other forms of energy. The park will also include trails, a butterfly garden and rain garden. The Friends of Crystal Lake have been an active partner in the development of the park plan.





**INTERESTED IN PROTECTING YOUR LAND?
CONTACT BEAUFORT COUNTY OPEN LAND TRUST (843) 521-2175, INFO@OPENLANDTRUST.COM
GO TO WWW.RURALANDCRITICAL.ORG FOR MORE INFORMATION.**