

# **RICHLAND COUNTY CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

Richland County Council created the Richland County Conservation Commission (RCCC) by ordinance in 1998. The RCCC is charged with promoting the protection of the county's natural, historical, and cultural resources and promoting nature-based recreation and eco- and heritage tourism.

## **GRANTS**

RCCC offers grants to support historic preservation and community conservation efforts in Richland County. Grant-funded projects preserve and restore historically significant sites and buildings, develop educational and research programs about Richland County's natural and historical resources, improve water quality, and build recreational and interpretive trails. Since 2006, RCCC has received more than \$7.5M in grant requests and awarded more than \$3.8M to preserve and protect natural, cultural, and historic resources in Richland County. Many of these grant-funded projects support the preservation and interpretation of African-American history, including the Modjeska Monteith Simkins Dependency, Reeder House, Pine Grove Rosenwald School, Historic Harriet Barber House, and Lower Richland Oral History Project.

## **HISTORIC MARKERS**

RCCC provides funding for historical markers through the SC Historical Marker Program to promote the recognition and interpretation of sites, structures, and events of historical significance in Richland County. Thanks to the work of the RCCC, Historic Columbia, and others, Richland County hosts more memorials honoring Black women than any other county in the nation!

## **CONSERVATION EASEMENTS**

A conservation easement is a voluntary agreement between a landowner and a land trust or public agency that permanently restricts development of land in order to protect natural and/or historic resources important to the public. As of 2021, over 1,200 acres of forests, wetlands, agricultural lands, and other green spaces in Richland County are being protected through conservation easements held by RCCC.

## **CONSERVATION LAND MANAGEMENT**

RCCC manages more than 3,800 acres of County-owned lands for conservation, nature-based recreation, and eco- and heritage tourism. Examples include the Mill Creek Mitigation Bank, Pinewood Lake Park, and properties at Cabin Branch and Broad River Road.

## **LOWER RICHLAND TOURISM PLAN**

Lower Richland is home to an incredible wealth of natural and heritage resources, including Congaree National Park, the Wateree River Heritage Preserve, and an extensive network of cultural and historical sites. These sites include several plantations as well as historically African-American neighborhoods that help to tell the story of the African-American experience in Richland County from enslavement through reconstruction, the Jim Crow era, the Civil Rights movement, and into the present day. In 2018, RCCC developed the Lower Richland Tourism Plan to create a vision for a sustainable, inclusive tourism economy in Lower Richland that builds on and strengthens local nature and heritage assets while promoting local entrepreneurship. RCCC is now working to implement aspects of the plan.

