SPARTANBURG AREA CONSERVANCY

THE SPACE REPORT

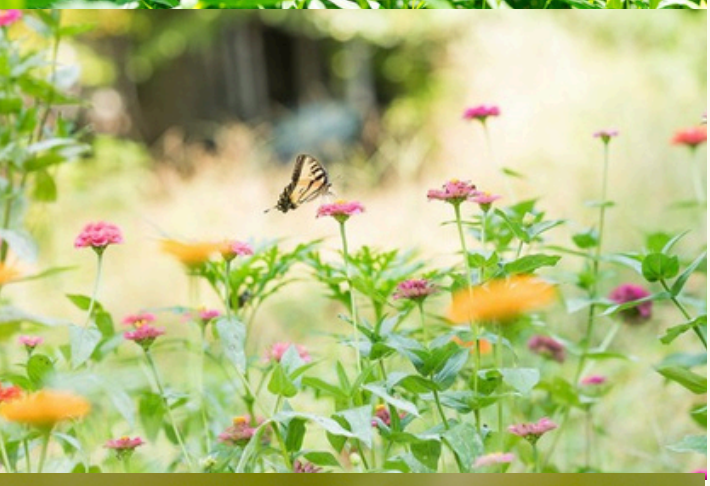
Fall 2026

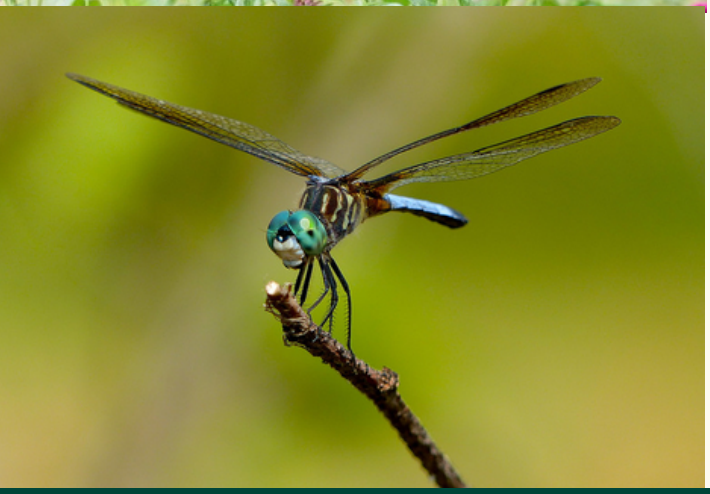


keep spartanburg wild.









SPACE
SPARTANBURG AREA CONSERVANCY

100 E. Main St., Ste 7b, Spartanburg, SC 29306
(864)948-0000 | info@spartanburgconservation.org

MISSION

To promote, protect, and preserve natural resources and open spaces in the Spartanburg community.

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A Message from Sam



On May 18th, Governor McMaster signed the “South Carolina Protected Lands and Conservation Coordination Act”, a bill sponsored and championed by Rep. Travis Moore out of Spartanburg County. This Bill codified an ambitious statewide goal to protect 7,000,000 acres (or approximately 33% of South Carolina’s land area) by 2050. There are currently approximately 3,400,000 acres of protected land in South Carolina. So, to paraphrase, this bill states that we need to double the acres of protected land in South Carolina over the next 25 years; and also that the permanent protection of our state’s natural resources is critically important to South Carolinian’s quality of life. This is the directive that has been issued to South Carolina’s land conservation organizations like SPACE.

Since January of 2024, SPACE has protected 2,626 acres locally. In short, 34% of the total acreage protected by SPACE during our organization’s 37-year history has occurred within the last 2.5 years. This is no coincidence. Like our elected officials in Columbia, SPACE’s staff and Board of Directors recognize the critical importance of protecting land today.

Despite the dramatic increase in SPACE’s conservation output, only 3% of Spartanburg County’s land area is currently protected today. This ‘percentage of protected land’ ranks 42nd out of South Carolina’s 46 Counties. And, according to the latest census data, Spartanburg is the 3rd fastest growing metro area in the United States of America.

Our message to the citizens of Spartanburg County and the Upstate is this: SPACE is more committed than ever to protecting the local farms and forests that bring balance to the rapidly developing landscape around us. We are a local organization, led and governed by your neighbors, that shares your love for greenspaces and also shares your concerns about losing them. We are proud of the significant increase in conservation output that we’ve achieved in recent years, but are not satisfied. We recognize that now, more than ever, the citizens of our community need SPACE to protect our region’s special natural areas before our opportunity to do so is lost.

If this message (and our work) is meaningful to you, we hope that you will support SPACE. We cannot achieve our land protection goals without a supportive community of friends and likeminded conservationists.

Sincerely,

Sam Parrott

Sam Parrott
Executive Director

A Note from Luke Allen, SPACE Board President



Dear Friends-

As the outgoing Board President for Spartanburg Area Conservancy, I have been exceedingly proud of the conservation successes that this organization has achieved during my term. We have an incredible staff and boardroom. I would like to thank each of you for your individual and collective contributions to that success. We have expanded our commitment to land protection by setting internal goals to increase the number of projects and acres that this organization conserves. Over the last few years we have routinely achieved those goals, protecting more land annually than this organization ever has before.

As that work continues, SPACE hired a new Conservation Associate this summer. This marks the first time in our organization's 37-year history that we've had four full-time employees. We intend to continue to grow to meet the land protection needs of our community.

Our organization's growth requires the growth of our support network and the community members who value our work. As Sam referenced in his letter, SPACE has protected 2,626 acres over the last 2.5 years. Over our last three fiscal years, SPACE has raised $2.1M in operational income. Over that same time period, the value of the land protected by SPACE is over $30M. That means that our organization has leveraged every operational dollar 15x into permanently protected property in your backyard. This is a leverage number that we're very proud of. It means that we are wise stewards of the dollars that are gifted to us.

Thank you all for your support of SPACE. It has been an honor to serve as the Board President of this wonderful organization that provides a critical service to the citizens of the Spartanburg area!

Sincerely,

Luke Allen

Luke Allen
Board President

Welcome our new board members!

Kaye Savage



Dr.Kaye Savage is a professor of Environmental Studies at Wofford College and an accomplished artist whose creative work explores the intersection of art and nature. As a dedicated conservationist, Kaye has been a supporter of SPACE and our mission for many years and was instrumental in championing the protection of the Glendale Mill property.

Jeff Owen



Jeff fell in love with Spartanburg as a student at Wofford College where he now lives with his wife Ashley, kiddos Liam and Eliza, and wild golden retriever Pawley. He is a CPA and finance lead for Southern Tide, adjunct Professor of Finance at Wofford, Deacon at First Presbyterian Church, and serves on a number of other community boards. He loves spending time outside with his family and enjoys hiking, camping, canoeing, hunting, and fishing.

Kam Neely



A native of Spartanburg, Kam Neely is the President and Owner of Neely's Windows, Doors and More, a building materials dealer in Upstate South Carolina specializing in windows, doors, millwork and architectural hardware. Kam is a fourth generation building supply professional. He is a graduate of Furman University, the Goethe University in Frankfurt, Germany and UNC-Chapel Hill. He has served as Chair of the Diaconte, Session member, and Scoutmaster of Troop 2 at First Presbyterian Church and served on various local boards. He is married to Emily Crow Neely and has three sons. He enjoys reading, hiking, camping, golf and tennis. He is committed to SPACE's mission to protect and preserve special natural areas in our community and county.

Jared Wilson



Jared Wilson serves as the Director of South Carolina Properties at Johnson Development Associates. Jared completed his undergraduate and graduate degrees from Clemson University and currently serves as the Vice President of the Spartanburg Day School Board of Trustees.

Meet Sara Strakhov



SPACE welcomed Sara Strakhov as our new Conservation Associate in June, 2026. Before stepping into her permanent position, Sara interned for SPACE while finishing out her final year at Wofford College. Her work at SPACE will involve facilitating land transactions, conducting annual monitoring visits, assisting with mapping projects, and serving as a helping hand wherever needed!

Born in Hackettstown, New Jersey, Sara spent her youth moving with her family up and down the East Coast before finally settling in Wilmington, North Carolina. In 2022, she moved to Spartanburg to attend Wofford College and has stayed ever since. There, Sara served in many leadership positions, studied abroad in three countries, and made invaluable connections with students and faculty. In May, Sara graduated Summa Cum Laude with a Bachelors of Arts in Environmental Studies, and minors in English and Business. Before walking across the Wofford stage, Sara received the Environmental Studies John W. Harrington Award, which is presented to the graduating senior who best exemplifies curiosity, creativity, excitement for field learning, and high academic achievement in their environmental studies.

Sara's love for the outdoors has been with her since a young age. She enjoys hiking, camping, fishing, and swimming. Sara expresses deep gratitude for the opportunity to work at SPACE, an organization centered around a genuine love for the outdoors and a commitment to protect them.



Protecting the Tyger River with a

By: Sara Strakhov

On a hot sunny day this August, a collaborative conservation project between Johnson Development Associates and SPACE came to fruition. Located on a beautiful 2.5 mile stretch of the Tyger River, the aptly named “Johnson Tyger River” (JTR) property protects 545 acres of Spartanburg’s critical wetlands.

The beautiful JTR is situated in the southeastern region of Spartanburg County. Unlike many other regions in Spartanburg, development pressure has yet to significantly reach this area. However, the threat becomes closer and closer each day. Observing this trend, Johnson Development Associates recognized the JTR property as a priority conservation area and began their work with SPACE to ensure its protection. The 545 acres of permanently protected wetlands habitat will now serve as a safeguard against encroaching development on some of Spartanburg’s most ecologically important lands.

By entering into this conservation project, Johnson Development Associates has committed to stewarding the JTR wetlands and waterways into restoration and permanent protection. This 545 acre property, including wetlands, 2.5 miles of N. Tyger River frontage, and 4 miles of tributary stream banks, has been flagged for restorative and ecological-enhancement work. Under Johnson Development Associate’s oversight, these improvements will transition into a long-term conservation project centered around maintaining JTR’s most natural characteristics.



Conservation Easement on 544 acres

With deep ties to the Spartanburg area, Johnson Development Associates' pride for the JTR stems from its protection of one of Spartanburg's most iconic natural features, the Tyger River, and its expanse of wetlands. SPACE Board Member and Johnson Development Associates employee, Jared Wilson, says, "We are excited about improving the condition of the natural areas along the stream banks of the property and to protect them for the future."

The Tyger River's importance to Spartanburg can be tied to its residents enjoying fishing, kayaking, hiking, and taking in the beautiful scenery on the river. But why is protecting the land surrounding Spartanburg's waterways, like the Tyger River, so important to SPACE's conservation work?

We'll tell you! Ensuring Spartanburg's water stays clean for its residents (human and non-human alike) means making sure the lands around our waterways stay free from development. This is because development on and around wetlands is incredibly destructive to native wildlife, can lead to high levels of pollution, and ultimately deteriorate the health of the ecosystem. Think of healthy wetlands as an ecological city. Instead of people and cars, these cities buzz with all different kinds of critters, brought together by the rich array of food and habitat wetlands offer. The networks built in the wetlands make nearby watersheds stronger by providing nutrients, preventing flooding, and filtering pollutants. With healthy wetlands surrounding our waters like the Tyger River, Spartanburg's waterways may remain clean for all to enjoy!

Thank you to Johnson Development Associates for collaborating with SPACE to protect an important piece of Spartanburg County!

Habitat Enhancement
at the Edwin M. Griffin Preserve

By: Deb Stevens

You may have noticed some changes around the Edwin M. Griffin Nature Preserve over the past couple of years. After Hurricane Helene wiped out hundreds of trees, SPACE took the opportunity to improve the preserve's ecological health through a large-scale habitat enhancement project. Working with the SC Forestry Commission, we removed acres of invasive species, like Chinese privet and Russian olive, and replanted canopy gaps with native species.

With the help of dozens of volunteers, over the past year or so SPACE has planted about 200 new native trees, many along the Cottonwood Trail. We carefully selected site-appropriate native species, like white oaks, bald cypress, and persimmon trees, that will provide food and habitat for local wildlife, improve biodiversity, and help mitigate erosion along Lawson's Fork Creek.

To help visitors learn more about native trees, we've also recently installed several new tree identification signs throughout the preserve. Each sign highlights key features that can be used for identification, like bark characteristics, leaf shape, mature height, and other interesting features. We also created an interactive StoryMap that guides visitors around the preserve to the locations of both new and mature native trees and offers even more information. Check out the StoryMap by scanning the QR code below, then see how many native trees you can find on your next trip to the Cottonwood Trail!

Scan with your phone, then scroll through the StoryMap for fun tree facts!



New Tree IDs


Bigleaf magnolia


Swamp white oak

Together, we hope these enhancements, both ecological and educational, improve the biodiversity and habitat health of the Cottonwood Trail to better support local wildlife, and cultivate a more engaging experience for trail users. Now, the Cottonwood's visitors can immerse themselves in the active restoration of native habitat, and witness firsthand the importance of ecological rehabilitation.

These restoration and educational enhancements have helped the Edwin M. Griffin Preserve achieve accreditation as a Level 1 Arboretum through the Morton Arboretum's ArbNet program, an international initiative to recognize arboreta around the world based on a set of professional standards and practices. Achieving accredited arboretum status is an exciting milestone that recognizes SPACE's commitment to excellence in the management of our public lands.

ACCREDITED ARBORETUM
LEVEL 1
ArbNet
BY THE MORTON ARBORETUM



Lance Hawthorns @ Woodburn Rd. (above)
New native tree plantings at the Cottonwood Trail (below)







Piedmont Prairie on the Powerline Trail

Another aspect of our native habitat restoration project can be seen along the Powerline trail at the Woodburn Rd. entrance to the Edwin M. Griffin Preserve. This is a project that has taken some time to come to fruition. Over the last several years, Lynn Rhodes, our Lands Manager, worked to remove the fescue grass that had dominated this area. That effort created the perfect opportunity to reestablish a diverse community of native wildflowers and grasses commonly found in traditional piedmont prairies, such as purple coneflower, Joe Pye weed, rattlesnake master, coreopsis, wild bergamot, purple giant hyssop, white boneset, and brown-eyed Susan.



While Piedmont prairies were once more common across our region, they have become increasingly rare as development has altered the landscape. Restoring even small areas of prairie habitat helps preserve a unique piece of our natural heritage while providing essential food and shelter for pollinators, birds, and other wildlife.

As these plantings continue to mature, you can look forward to a beautiful display of seasonal flowers and the bees, butterflies, and birds they attract!



Coreopsis





Purple coneflower



Rosinweed



Rattlesnake master



Greater Tickseed (coreopsis)





Wild bergamot





Spotted Joe Pye Weed



Benito
the Bison

By: Sara Strakhov

On a piece of land with one of SPACE's conservation easements lives North America's largest native land mammal. Nick Zatorsky, a true cowboy and proud Spartanburg resident, cares for an American Bison by the name of Benito on his home ranch. Though weighing over eleven times the average adult person, Benito shares a special kinship with his caretaker. Benito is a quirky mix of domestic and wild. Discontent when Nick is not giving him attention, Benito will huff until given a treat and a couple pats on the head. A ride past him in Nick's grey golf cart is no problem, but a ride in the green golf cart may end in a lost limb, or at least a popped tire. We will try not to take Benito's distaste for SPACE's favorite color, green, too personally.

With dense, fluffy brown fur, a massive head, a large hump on the back, and a body the size of a truck, Benito and the rest of his bison family take on a prehistoric look. However, before the 18th century, wild bison herds roamed with Native Nations around much of central North America. Also known as "buffalo", the tens of millions of bison that called North America home claimed a massive expanse of land, with the most northern herds found in Canada and the most southerly herds found in Mexico.

Contrary to popular belief, the bison's native range expanded well east of the Mississippi. Encouraged by Native Nations who intentionally created eastern prairie habitat through calculated burns, Bison, along with turkey, elk, and deer, began to fill eastern prairies in great numbers.

Bison once thrived in the Appalachian range, primarily due to the abundant presence of salt. Once covered almost entirely by seawater, North America stores great amounts of salt from this period deep in the Earth. However, in the

Appalachian range, natural salt springs bring this ancient feature to the surface. Bison treasure the salt so greatly that they would travel hundreds of miles along the Appalachian ridges, avoiding high peaks and hugging safe valleys, to find the salt springs. On their long journeys to the salt, the size of the bison, both in stature and in the number of heads in each herd, would carve trails known as “traces” through the landscape. Native Nations and European early settlers relied heavily on these traces, as some were wide enough to fit a wagon.

As the bison moved along the Appalachian range, some populations even made it as far as the piedmont prairies of upstate South Carolina. Bison are heavily associated with prairie landscape, and rightly so. As a keystone species, bison play a pivotal role in strengthening the health and biodiversity of a prairie habitat. As the large animals graze on native flora, their weight breaks up the soil to allow for improved rainfall absorption. Clinging to their fur and dispersed through their dung, bison spread seeds across fields to encourage diverse growth.

As the bison move, they leave behind prairies that are primed for lush vegetation and plentiful habitat for native fauna to come and enjoy.

Today, however, no wild bison roam our piedmont or Appalachian range. Across the continent, wild bison occupy only 1% of their historic native range. Due to over-hunting, the once thriving bison population became nearly extinct by the 19th century.

Conscious of the ecological importance of grazing bison, initiatives to reintroduce the bison to North America have recently become popularized. However, these initiatives are concentrated almost entirely in the great planes region. Benito now stands as one of the only reminders Spartanburg has of one of our earliest, and largest residents. Today, Benito, and his fellow South Carolinian Bison, exist only in captivity. Though not carving paths to the salt springs of Appalachia, it is clear to see that Benito thoroughly enjoys his comfortable life with Nick, and his many mustang friends.



Benito’s mustang friends



Benito, the Bison

Managing Hardwoods:

Cutting down oaks to enhance a conserved property

By Jacob McClain (Quail Forever), with introductory comments by Jim Little (SPACE Board)

SPACE Board of Directors Member, Jim Little, is a co-owner of Four Leaf Farm, a 170-acre property on the Spartanburg / Union County Line. "The owners of Four Leaf Farm and I purchased this property for the express purpose of owning and stewarding a beautiful place where we could hunt and spend time with our family and friends outdoors," states Little. "Our vision from the very beginning was that Four Leaf Farm wasn't a place for commercial or residential development, but a place for native plants and animals to thrive. That's why we partnered with SPACE to put a conservation easement on our property in 2024. And that's also why we chose to work with Quail Forever to develop a custom Wildlife Habitat Improvement Plan for Four Leaf Farm. Our goal in partnering with Quail Forever is right there in the name of the plan; 'Wildlife Habitat Improvement' - and some people reading this may be surprised to learn that part of that Plan is cutting down hardwood trees, including oaks."

To cut an oak tree is almost as taboo as killing a mockingbird. Deer, turkey, and bear relish their acorns, and so these trees are prized by hunters. Bird watchers value oaks because they act as host plants for over 500 species of caterpillars which are collected by dutiful feathered parents and flown back to the nest and delivered directly to hungry, young bird gullets. Even the most nature disconnected of us can see the value of the cool shade of the mighty oak on a hot summer day. With all of this in mind, no wonder cutting an oak is viewed as almost sinful.



Closed-canopy pre-harvest hardwood stand on Four Leaf Farm

Harvesting oaks and other hardwoods can be beneficial contrary to popular belief. When early European explorers mapped the Piedmont ecoregion of what is now South Carolina, they documented extensive savannas, woodlands, and prairies filled with rich biodiversity. Much of our current forests are now far too dense and shaded to support the plants and animals native to the Piedmont. Commercial thinning of upland hardwoods to get sunlight to the ground can be the first step in restoring the diverse woodland plant communities that were once here.

Studies have shown that acorn mast production can be improved with careful commercial thinning. Care is taken to mark desirable individual trees considering factors such as species, form, size (i.e. diameter), health, and acorn production. In this way, loggers know which trees to save and which to

harvest. We leave the best and take the rest, we allow the canopies of our best white and red oaks to expand outward, making more solar-powered factories (leaves) and increasing flowering. More oak flowers mean more acorns.

But the increased mast is only a small part of the story. When the canopy of an upland oak-hickory stand is opened, life-giving sunlight at last reaches the forest floor and stimulates the seed bank into action. Grasses, wildflowers, legumes, and shrubs begin to grow within the canopy gaps. The understory vegetation allows for many types of wildlife to thrive. The upright bluestem grasses that begin to grow provide quail with a place to nest and excellent fawning cover for deer. The wildflowers and weeds produce an abundance of seeds eaten by birds and small mammals as well as act as brooding cover for turkey and quail. The shrubs like blackberry and beautyberry provide fruits for a whole variety of critters to eat, excellent bedding areas for deer, and nesting sites for a variety of songbirds.

It may seem odd or shocking to see timber harvests occurring at Four Leaf Farm, a property with a conservation easement on it. The seemingly destructive act of cutting hardwoods on this property is, in reality, just the first messy step in restoring the native plant community. With patience and continued management, these oak woodlands will become hotspots for wildlife activity by providing vital food and cover not found across many of our forests.

A wildlife biologist with Quail Forever wrote a Wildlife Habitat Improvement Plan tailored to the needs and goals of Four Leaf Farm. This plan included practices like commercial timber thinning, prescribed fire, planting native plants, and controlling invasive species. If you are interested in learning more about managing fields and forests for wildlife, please reach out to Quail Forever State Coordinator, Jake McClain, at jmcclain@quailforever.org.



Post timber harvest oak savannah, (above)
Notice how much sun is reaching the forest floor!



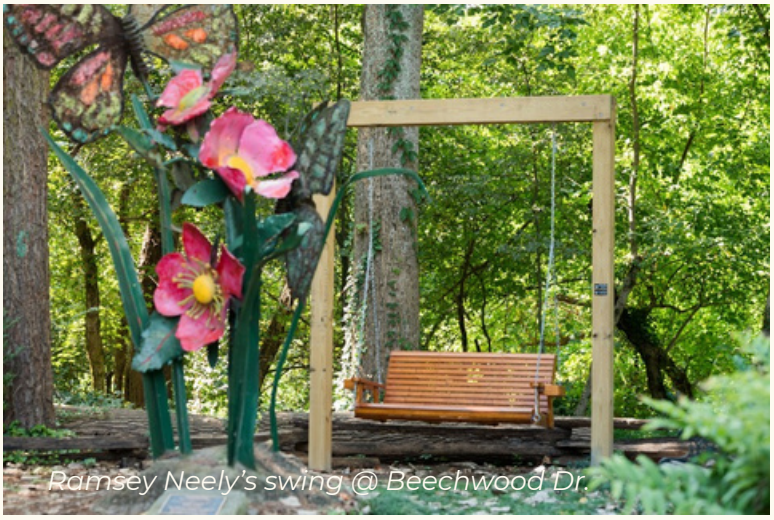
Goal: Hardwood savannah habitat with a lush understory of native plants and grasses perfect for local wildlife.

Eagle Scouts Making a Lasting Difference

Something that makes our public greenspaces truly special is the community that helps care for them. Many of the improvements visitors enjoy today, for example, are the result of Eagle Scout projects. Over the past couple of years, Eagle Scouts have enhanced our preserves with bridges, benches, stairs, and swings making them more accessible and enjoyable for everyone.

We are especially grateful for Anderson Hanke who built a beautiful bridge crossing a creek in the picnic area on the Edwin M. Griffin Nature Preserve; Ramsey Neely who built the swing at the Woodburn Rd. trailhead and a bench on Wildflower Way; Sam Strickland who installed two new bridges at the Upper Chinquapin Greenway; Evins Taylor who built the “Stairway to Evins” connecting the Cottonwood and Ridge trails; and Andrew Bright who installed the swing overlooking the waterfall at Glendale Shoals.

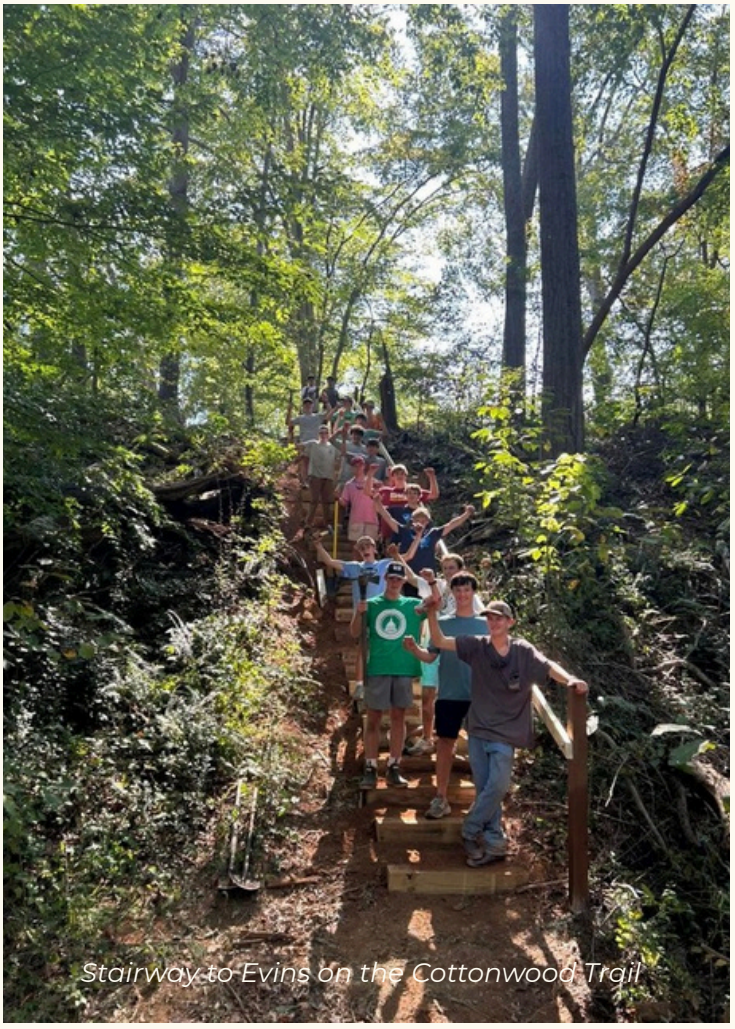
These thoughtful additions have become popular features for many visitors and add both function and charm to our preserves. We are proud of these young leaders and deeply appreciative of their contributions, which leave a lasting legacy for the entire community to enjoy.



Ramsey Neely’s swing @ Beechwood Dr.



Sam Strickland’s bridge @ Upper Chinquapin Greenway



Stairway to Evins on the Cottonwood Trail

What's Happening at the Upper Chinquapin Greenway



SPACE was awarded 2026 Nonprofit of the Year by the Environmental Education Association of SC. (above)

This year, SPACE had the honor of being recognized as the Nonprofit of the Year by the Environmental Education Association of South Carolina (EEASC), largely for our work with the Engage Green program at USC Upstate. 2026 marks our third year working with college students across all programs of study by incorporating basic principles of conservation into their class curriculum and bringing classes out to the Upper Chinquapin Greenway to participate in hands-on work removing invasive plants.

To date, over 1600 students have visited the Greenway putting in over 3000 hours of hard work - and it shows! This volunteer program has been truly transformational, taking the Greenway from a somewhat neglected forest overgrown with invasive privet and eleagnus to a lush forest recovering with happy, healthy native plants. During EEASC's annual Environmental Education Conference, which was held in Spartanburg this year, we had the pleasure of hosting educators from across the state for a walk on the trails at the Greenway to showcase the restoration outcomes the students have accomplished. The walk was led by the Upstate SC Native Plant Society President, Rick Huffman, who was delighted by the variety of native trees and plants he found. "This is what a recovering forest looks like," said Huffman, "and it's proof that the work we do makes a difference."

In other Upper Chinquapin Greenway news, construction will begin soon on a new driveway that will traverse the property from Graham Rd to Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System's Hospice House. This is a project that has been planned for since the beginning of the Greenway's establishment and will ultimately be greatly beneficial to the park. We've worked closely with engineers to strategically route the driveway to avoid sensitive areas and plants, like the until recently federally endangered dwarf-flowered heartleaf. The new drive will also provide a new primary parking area and trailhead for the Greenway, offering improved public access to the greenspace.



USC Upstate Engage Green student volunteers



Native Plant Walk w/ Rick Huffman

Spartanburg Area Conservancy's 3rd Annual

EARTH DAY FESTIVAL


Spartanburg Creative Reuse Art Project (SCRAP)


Aaron & Wendy from Carolina Bamboo


Alix R. leading yoga on the bridge


Duncan Cecil demonstrating wheel throwing


Nature Scavenger Hunt


Duke & Miller & friends


SC Falconry Association - American Kestrel

Save the date for next year's festival,
Saturday, April 22, 2027!

Frog Walk!

This year, we started what we hope will become a new tradition: Frog Walk! Partnering with our pals at PAL: Play. Advocate. Live Well., and Professor Jonathon Storm from USC Upstate, a group of enthusiastic amphibian fans gathered for an evening stroll to the boardwalk on the Edwin M. Griffin Preserve. There, participants had the opportunity to observe and learn about the frogs that inhabit the preserve's wetlands. We look forward to bringing Frog Walk back next year, and explore ways to contribute to amphibian conservation through citizen science.



Frog Walk photos by: Tim Kimzey







The Native Fruit That Fueled North America

By: Sara Strakhov

The next time you walk through the Cottonwood Trail, keep your eyes peeled for one of North America's best kept secrets. Standing anywhere from 1 ft to 30 ft tall, this tropical-looking tree with a slender trunk, and large, drooping leaves sticks out amongst the flora of our typical piedmont forests. Once a year, between August and October, this tropical tree will produce even more tropical fruit. Small and round like a potato, but with bright green flesh, this fragrant, creamy fruit is described as tasting like a vibrant combination of banana, mango, and vanilla. You better act fast once you find a ripe fruit, as these delicious treats spoil quickly once ripened.

This strange feature of one of Spartanburg's most beloved green spaces is known as the pawpaw. Contrary to its tropical aesthetic, pawpaw stands alone as the largest edible fruit native to North America. Though abundant on the Cottonwood Trail, pawpaw can be found all over Spartanburg. Their thriving communities can be attributed to the fact that deer find pawpaw leaves unpalatable, leaving them to grow freely.

One beautiful insect does benefit from the pawpaw's shiny leaves, however. The Zebra Swallowtail Butterfly, marked by bold black and white zebra stripes, exclusively feeds on the pawpaw's leaves while in their caterpillar stage.

If you happen to spot a patch of pawpaw trees around fruiting season, but notice no developing fruit, this one of pawpaw's eccentricities in action. Pawpaws are self-incompatible, meaning pollen produced by a tree cannot be used to pollinate its own flowers. Without pollen from a genetically diverse pawpaw tree, no fruit will be produced. Though you commonly see pawpaws in a patch, these patches are often one genetically identical pawpaw tree that shares an underlying connective root system. These patches will not produce fruit unless pollination from a neighboring, genetically unique pawpaw system occurs via beetles or flies. Introducing a new pawpaw tree to an existing patch can often encourage fruiting.

More than just a unique plant, the pawpaw tree has a deep-rooted history in North America. More resilient than most other native fruit producing flora, the pawpaw has served as a staple for North American communities across centuries. A popular snack for now extinct megafauna, the sweet pawpaw attracted imposing creatures such as the giant sloth and the wooly mammoth.

Native American tribes and early American settlers in the pawpaw's growing region were also known to rely on this resilient tree in times of crop failure. Many of these tribes perfected their own methods of preserving the pawpaw, most by drying them into cakes to be used later in a relish or sauce. Some Native American tribes even dedicated a whole month to pawpaws in their calendars.

When Lewis and Clark's supplies ran low on their westward expedition, they turned to pawpaw to fuel their journey. When trying to impress contemporaries in Britain, Thomas Jefferson sent pawpaw seeds abroad from his home garden in Monticello. In the antebellum period, escaping African American slaves utilized pawpaw as a critical food supply during their dangerous journeys toward freedom.

Pawpaw, though a small, unassuming tree, has fueled moments of great change, fear, and pride in North America. Today, pawpaw is mostly known by the foxes, opossums, squirrels, raccoons, birds, and the occasional observant hiker as a tasty treat. So, the next time you walk through the Cottonwood Trail, see if you can spot one of North America's best kept secrets.



How many did you get right? Check your answers below:

A) Swallowtail Butterfly: The swallowtail butterfly makes a beautiful show in the summertime sipping on the sweet nectar of our native wildflowers. If you walked Wildflower Way over summer vacation, you may have noticed their dance across the vibrant flowers.

B) Great Blue Heron: The Great Blue Heron is a stately bird that can often be found in the shallows of slow moving waters. Their distinctive long necks help them hunt for small fish and amphibians along these waters. If you've ever seen one in flight, you may have noticed their massive wingspan, which can reach up to 6.5 feet!

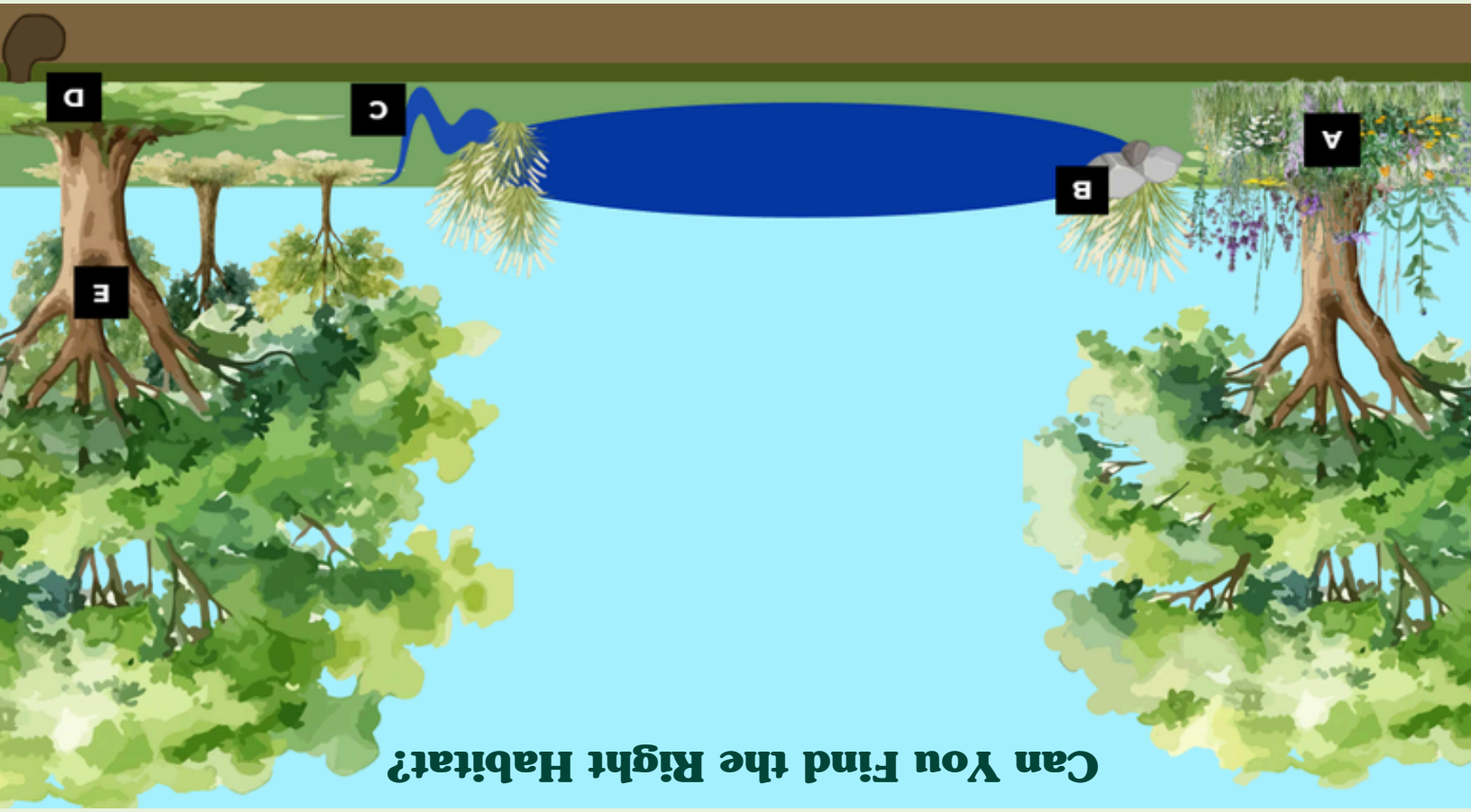
C) Red Salamander: The Red Salamander is a small, slimy amphibian with a unique ability to breath through their skin. They are semi-aquatic, meaning they move between freshwater streams to moist forest floors. The Red Salamanders sport their vibrant color as a defense mechanishm to replicate the bright red color of the extremely toxic red eft.

D) Eastern Box Turtle: The Eastern Box Turtle is a common friend found in our piedmont forests, thought their populations have begun to shrink due to habitat loss and human-relatedaccidents. In the summer, these reptiles spend their time amongst the forest floor, sunbathing whenever possible. Once the chill of winter comes around, they will dig warm burrows into the earth. They are the oldest animal on our list, living as long as 100 years!

E) Carolina Wren: The Carolina Wren is a small, round songbird who proudly represents South Carolina as its state bird. They are creative nest builders, but primarily set up shop in a safe tree cavity. They enjoy munching on insects and will often visit a backyard bird feeder for a premade meal!



Above is an example of a typical Upstate South Carolina piedmont ecosystem, but we're missing the native insects, birds, amphibians, and reptiles that call this ecosystem home! Can you help our friends make their way back to their homes? Carefully cut out the strip below, and glue each animal where you think it lives. Hint, where there's a black box, one of our animals lives in that very spot! Once you've found all five of our friends' homes, you can check your answers below!



Can You Find the Right Habitat?

Crossword Clues

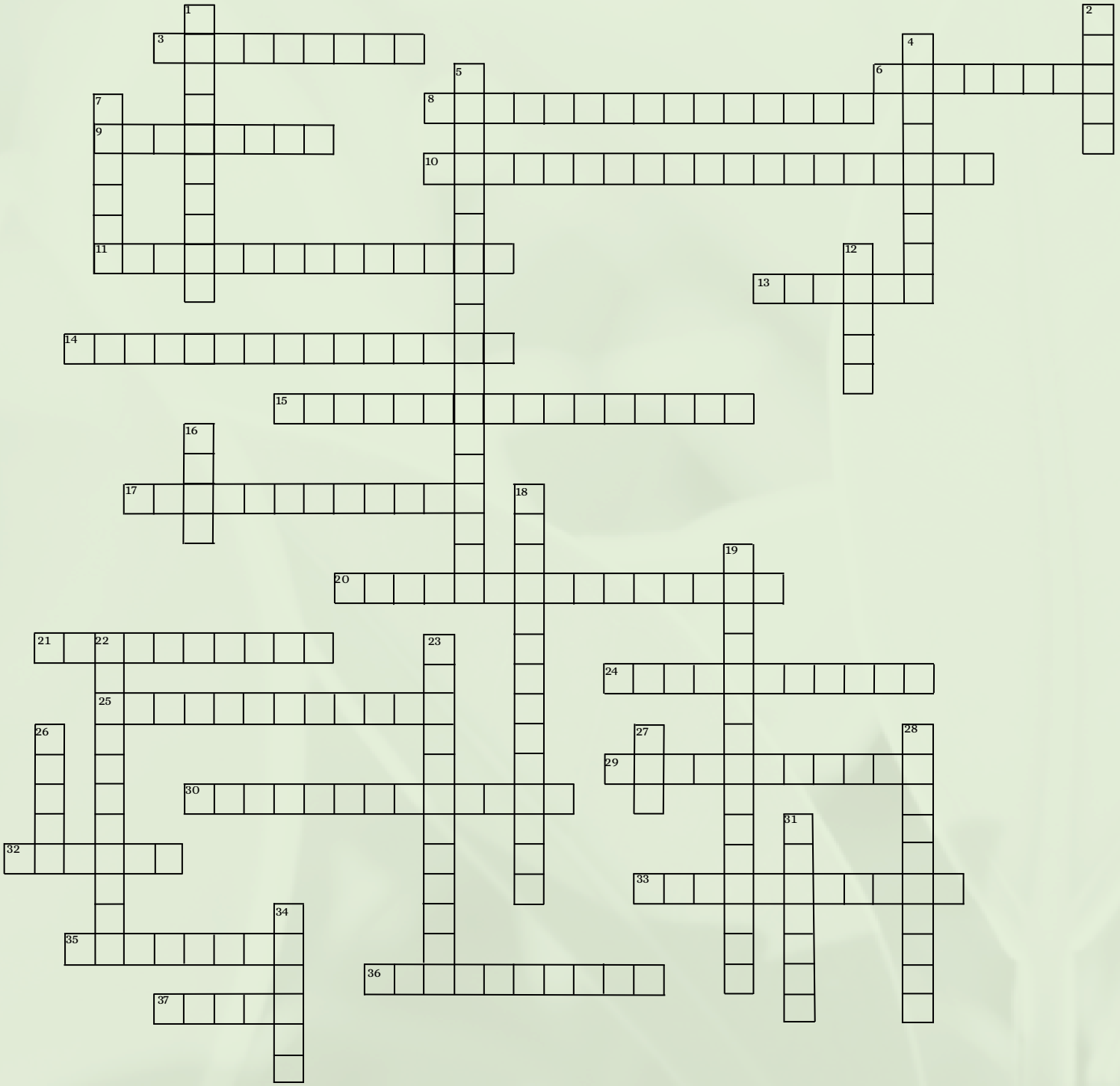
ACROSS

3. A rare native turtle with a trail named after it in the Glendale Nature Park
6. Complex ecosystems defined by their moist ground, and large populations of birds and aquatic animals
8. This tree produces the largest leaves and flowers of any native tree. Their leaves are bright green and oblong, and its showy white flowers can reach up to 14" in diameter.
9. A legal tool for conservation; allows landowners to maintain ownership while protecting the land forever. It's called a Conservation _____
10. SPACE'S slogan
11. A zone of vegetation surrounding a waterway that should not be disturbed to protect water quality and aquatic life.
13. The season when the leaves begin to change, and SPACE holds its annual Shucking Good Time
14. Within the Edward M. Griffin Nature Preserve, One of Spartanburg's most beloved nature trail systems
15. A bright orange and black north american insect with large wings and a preference for milkweed.
17. State bird of South Carolina
20. Four legged hoofed mammal that gets its name from the bright marking under its tail
21. Important to SPACE, this tree is the namesake of one of our most popular trail systems. It has grey bark with deep flat furrows, and produces catkin-like fruit that split open and release seeds attached to cotton-like threads that float in the wind.
24. A major waterway of Spartanburg, this creek flows through Glendale Shoals Preserve & Cottonwood Trail
25. Its name means "mudpuddle" which is usually where you can find this fast- growing, tall-standing pine tree. With grey, scaly bark, this tree produces long, fragrant needles which appear in bundles of three.
29. "C" in in SPACE
30. This small amphibian with short, stubby legs is named for its vibrant slimy red skin. They are semiaquatic creatures that breathe through their permeable skin.
32. A tropical-looking native tree that produces the largest edible native fruit. The creamy fruit tastes like banana, mango, and vanilla. In the spring, it is identifiable by its large, dark purple flowers.
33. This small, fast moving bird is known for its unique ability to fly backwards. The only native Upstate South Carolina species of this bird is known as the "Ruby-throated _____"
35. This freshwater crustacean calls Lawsons Fork, along with many other Spartanburg waterways, home. They are armed with large front claws used for defense, hunting, and digging.
36. A bright native plant that attract a colorful array of pollinators. You may see them on the Cottonwood Trail!
37. Scientific term referring to all plant life that appears in a particular area, time, or habitat.

DOWN

1. A venomous snake with a head the same color as a common metal.
2. The largest native land mammal to North American, this fluffy beast is known for its massive head, distinctive back hump, and stubby horns. A SPACE's easement is home to one of these giants.
4. Famous for its fruit, which begin a dark purple then shift to a bright orange once ripe, this dioecious tree is covered with a rugged blocky bark. The female trees are the only ones to produce fragrant white flowers, and the iconic orange fruit.
5. The year SPACE was founded.
7. A small furry brown mammal that has a propensity for chopping down wood.
12. An invasive, fast growing vine SPACE is working to remove from their properties.
16. Many SPACE conservation easements can be classified as this: a plot of land dedicated to agriculture.
18. This tall standing bird loves to hang out around slow-moving rivers, lakes, and ponds where they hunt for fish and small amphibians. Their long necks help with their hunts, and their blue color makes them beautiful to behold in flight.
19. State flower of South Carolina
22. Growing incredibly tall and straight, this giant tree is adorned with grey bark that features deeply furrowed fissures. It produces large yellow, green, and orange flowers that bloom from late April to early June.
23. Historic Land protected by SPACE in 2022
26. Scientific term referring to all animal life that appears in a particular area, time, or habitat.
27. A small four legged animal characterized by being sly and fast
28. One of Spartanburg's major waterways. Shares a name with a big cat.
31. A fun cardio-exercise to do on the Cottonwood Trail
34. A shallow area in a body of water. You can find people soaking up the sun near these at Glendale _____ Preserve.

Conservation Crossword!



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With Gratitude

As several of our board members roll off the SPACE Board this year, we'd like to take a moment to recognize and thank them for their service and dedication.

- Laurence Fritz
- Jason Hill
- Jim Little
- Marghretta Shisko
- Libbo Wise

Thank you for generously sharing your time, talents, and friendship with SPACE and for all you've done to help protect the special places we cherish.

Protect the land that you love with a planned gift.

Your legacy can help protect Spartanburg's forests, rivers, and trails for generations to come. Planned giving offers flexible, tax-smart options to support the Spartanburg Area Conservancy (SPACE) while planning for your future and benefitting from strategic financial tools.

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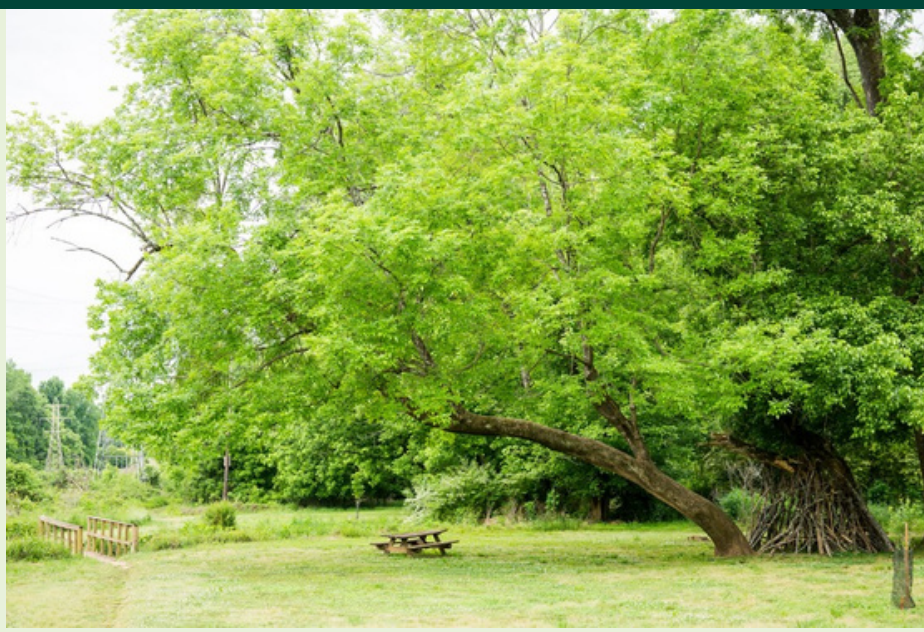
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By becoming a SPACE member, you're joining a growing community of local conservationists who value sustainability, strategic growth, and outdoor recreation. Together, we're strengthening a culture of land protection and environmental stewardship in the Upstate.

Donate today. Sign up for our newsletter. Follow us on social media. Join us in our mission to Keep Spartanburg Wild—now and forever.



Donate now!

Upcoming Events

Oct 22 - A Shucking Good Time!
6 PM @ Glendale Shoals Preserve

Nov 16 - Wine Dinner
6 PM @ The Kennedy

Jan 18 - MLK Day of Service
9 AM @ Upper Chinquapin Greenway

Apr 22 - Earth Day Festival!
10 AM @ Glendale Shoals Preserve