

Kershaw County

STATE OF THE TRAILS 2023



PRESENTED BY



KC TRAILS

RUN • WALK • BIKE • PADDLE

A FOCUS ON COMMUNITY HEALTH

KC Trails was founded in 2019 in support of Kershaw County Council's effort to implement Kershaw Vision 2030 and its goal to make Kershaw County a great place to live, work, play, worship, and raise a family, and to transform the way Kershaw County citizens think and act to improve healthy outcomes. During 2019 and early 2020, discussions with the public indicated three major interests - 1. The need for more nature trails in the county; 2. Added recreational opportunities in the northeast part of Kershaw County; 3. Improvement in road safety. These three areas of public interest have provided focus for many of our activities.

AN ENVIRONMENT THAT PROMOTES A HEALTHY LIFE

KC Trails was formed as a citizen's advocacy group to promote more trails in Kershaw County. We have worked closely with the County and LiveWell Kershaw Coalition and Wholespire to help implement the Community Health Improvement plan (CHIP).

KC Trails' mission is tied directly to the objectives in the CHIP, in particular:

1. Provide an environment that promotes a healthy life, and
2. Provide opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy recreation.

KC Trails supports Kershaw County's goals, which have included:

- Continue to implement objectives of the trails plan, with a goal of having 15 miles of paved walking trails completed
- Empower individuals to improve their own health through responsible choices
- Develop a plan to enhance outdoor recreation facilities throughout the county
- Promote and support LiveWell Kershaw Coalition (LWK) and the implementation of the CHIP.



HOW TO REACH KC TRAILS

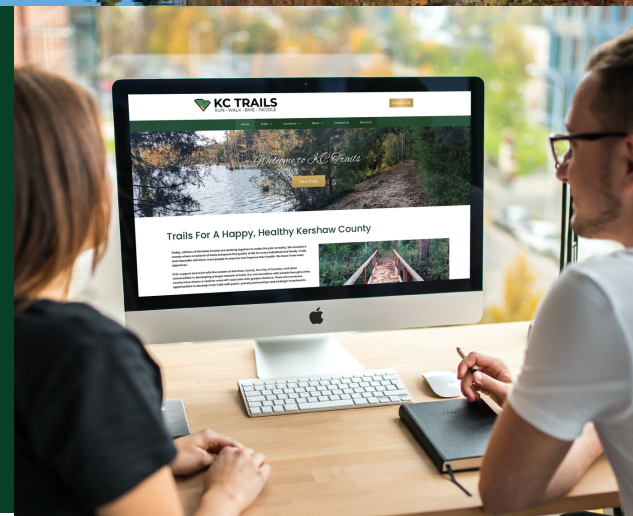
The best way to stay in touch is through our website and Facebook page:

- www.KCTrails.org - includes a list of public trails in Kershaw County
- [Facebook.com/kctrails](https://www.facebook.com/kctrails) - this is Facebook page with around 2000 followers that will keep you updated on local outdoor events.

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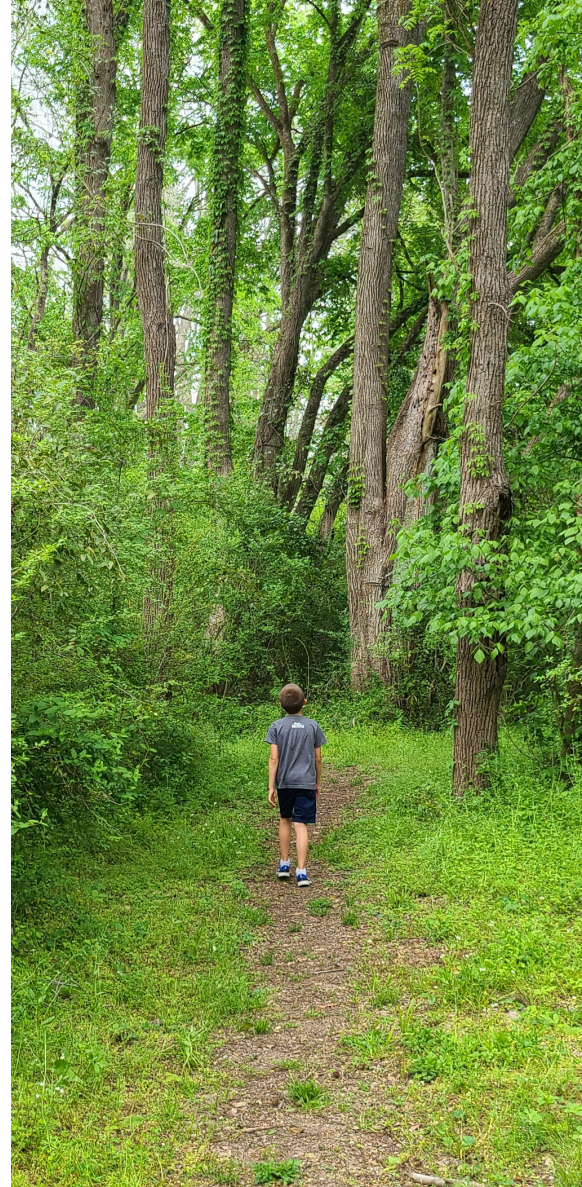
Photos courtesy of Shawn Young and Tom Sliker.
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EXPAND & PROMOTE OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECREATION

KC Trails advocates for the following activities, many of which have previously been identified as objectives by local government:

- Encourage the consideration and inclusion of trails or greenways in all new recreation programs, services, housing developments and facilities across the county.
- Develop a comprehensive network of recreational trails, greenways, & paths in Kershaw County by optimizing existing trails and planning for new trails.
- Engage with SCPRT and the Friends of Goodale to identify a strategic plan for expanding Goodale State Park recreational activities.
- Expand organized recreation opportunities to provide opportunities to run, walk, bike, and paddle.
- Encourage usability and public access to sites in Kershaw County where members of the public can run, walk, bike, and paddle.
- Identify additional access points and needs for facilities and improvements along the Wateree River in Kershaw County.
- Further develop recreation opportunities on the rivers and lakes of the county – e.g. create a shuttle service to encourage paddling the Wateree River.
- Research and develop the abandoned Norfolk Southern rail corridor through the City of Camden and beyond (north and south) as a greenway.





WATEREE RIVER VETERANS PARK

Waterree River Veterans Park was created in 2020 and includes a .4-mile hard surface walking track that links with a second natural surface track for a total of .75 miles of trail.

In addition there is a handicap accessible kayak launch, gravel parking areas and an emergency call box.

In Phase II, a fishing pier is planned along with the beginning of a boardwalk/trail that will ultimately encircle the park and run along the Waterree River and Twenty-Five Mile Creek.

Future phases will finish the boardwalk and add a small amphitheater and public restrooms.

The park has quickly become a very popular venue for community events as well as an excellent location for family walks and bike rides.





COMMUNITY EVENTS AT THE RIVER

A PLACE TO GATHER

Wateree River Veterans Park has become a gathering place for the community and has featured several popular family-friendly events:

- "Jack O' Lantern Jamboree" provides a safe place to trick or treat and a long walk outdoors for the whole family.
- "Touch a Truck" in November brings out children of all ages to get up close and personal with some amazing and large vehicles.
- "Tinsel Trail" is a Christmas holiday event that includes outdoor movies and other entertainment as well as a long walk on the 1 mile handicapped-friendly walking trail.
- Recently, a StoryWalk® installation was completed through a grant awarded to the Kershaw County Library, providing an excellent opportunity for a family to walk and learn.





CAMDEN RIVERFRONT



Camden Riverfront Environmental Park, opened in September, 2020 is a unique, multi-phase riverfront park and wetlands designed to attract a vast array of birds and wildlife. The 26 acre site features an interior half-mile meandering waterway which hosts fish and improves bird habitats.

The waterway includes demonstration islands for agricultural and wildlife education and includes a near one mile natural surface trail which will ultimately connect to a county-wide trail system linking other area parks and trails. A major park feature is an ADA compliant canoe and kayak launch.

Future phases of the park's development will include boardwalks connecting to the lagoon's Duck Head Island and covered observation platforms, as well as additional educational amenities. For the first time in more than a decade, the public now has recreational access to the Wateree River in Camden.





ENVIRONMENTAL PARK

DEDICATION OF THE CHOTTY TRAIL

On July 16, 2022, after the Yakkin' the River event, a ribbon cutting ceremony was held for the Chotty Trail, a 3.5-mile spur running from the east bank of the Wateree River through Historic Camden, S.C. Named for the late Charles "Chotty" Mullikin, a celebrated World War II veteran and father of Dr. Tom Mullikin, a renowned global expedition leader; the Chotty Trail spur will ultimately connect Camden with the primary spine of the 500-mile Palmetto Trail which currently passes within 21 miles of the west bank of the Wateree River.



YAKKIN' THE RIVER STARTS AND ENDS HERE

Yakkin' the River draws paddlers for a day on the river. In 2022, more than 300 paddlers made the 8.6 mile trip from the Lake Wateree Dam to Camden Environmental Park, more than triple the number of participants in 2021. A free shuttle allowed paddlers to drop their vehicles at their take-out location.

YAKKIN' THE RIVER - A MODEL OF COOPERATION

Kershaw County Parks & Recreation worked with the City of Camden, Duke Energy, SC7, and other organizations. Following the 2022 event, a reception was held at the Revolutionary War Visitors Center at Historic Camden. Duke energy assists the event by regulating the river level to maintain optimal depth and flow of the river.

GOODALE STATE PARK



FRIENDS OF GOODALE PARK ESTABLISHED

In 2021, Friends of Goodale Park was established to provide citizen input and support for Goodale State Park. Over many years, the park has suffered from a lack of funding and many associated problems. The new group has injected life into the park and in its first six months received a grant of \$175,000 from the South Carolina Parks, Recreation, and Tourism.

Below is the presentation of the \$250,000 check, \$175,000 to Goodale State Park and \$75,000 to Lee State Park.



Engage with SC State Parks to increase discovery of and visits to Goodale State Park

VOLUNTEER CLEAN UP DAYS

In 2022, two volunteer clean-up days were scheduled to clear out the overgrowth around the lake starting from the spillway going south. The clean-ups will continue in 2023 in cooperation with park management

TRAILS EXPANDED

The initial focus of trail expansion was on opening an existing second trail to include a connector to the existing 1.7 mile trail. The northern area of the park, approximately 130 acres, is scheduled to be thinned, and this may lead to additional trails.



FIRST DAY HIKE

KC Trails and the Friends of Goodale have organized First Day Hikes in 2022 and 2023. This event has become a very popular New Year's Day activity. In 2023 there were more than 161 hikers (adults and children) and 10 dogs that joined Park Ranger and Superintendent John Wells for a 1.7-mile hike.

PROJECTS

Projects underway or planned in the near term:

- New playground equipment
- New kayak/canoe put-in and take-out dock
- Expanding Trails - Add a second trail with a connector to the existing trail; possibly additional trails once the northern section of the park is thinned out.
- Events - Paddling with a Ranger, Photography Clinics, Wildlife Tours, & Astronomy Nights Out





HISTORIC CAMDEN & BATTLEFIELD

The Historic Camden Broad Street site of 104 acres includes the Kershaw-Cornwallis House, numerous other Colonial period buildings and a nature trail. The Battle of Camden battlefield site, located 8 miles north of Camden, is 500 acres presently under renovation. Additionally, the SC Battleground Preservation Trust has procured an additional 270 acres adjacent to the battlefield and several other properties around Camden. The SC BPT is currently developing plans for walking trails on these properties.

All Historic Camden trails are open to the public with no fees for walking the grounds.



CAMDEN BATTLEFIELD & PRESERVE

The Camden Battlefield and Longleaf Pine Preserve has several walking trails available to the public.

Longleaf forests of the Southeast have nearly disappeared. A mere 3 percent of the 90 million acres of the once-vast longleaf ecosystem remains. A multigenerational plan now exists to reforest designated acres to longleaf pine at the Battlefield site.

The recent discovery of remains of soldiers has brought new attention to this area. Marked graves will soon be added to the property, as well as interpretive walks through historically significant areas. Voices of Camden is an exhibit currently available, requiring a short walk from the main parking area.



HISTORIC CAMDEN REVOLUTIONARY WAR PARK

Historic Camden boasts a scenic nature trail and pond on the south side of the property. The trail is about a quarter of a mile long, and goes through the woods along the swamps of Big Pine Tree Creek. At the start of the trail is a fishing pond. The trail is a great place to see a variety of animals and plants.

Historic Camden has plans to incorporate more trails throughout its properties.

Historic Camden currently serves as the endpoint for the Chotty Trail, which begins at the Camden Environmental River Park.



ROAD SAFETY

Road safety has remained a major concern of the public as they pursue their exercise options. Simply put, walkers, runners and cyclists find the county's roadways to be very dangerous. Improvements to safety can be made through road design, road conditions and driver behavior.



RIDE OF SILENCE

The Ride of Silence is spearheaded by Fiona Martin, Kershaw County Runners, Walkers, and Cyclists, in honor of her brother who was hit by a car in 2009. According to numbers from the data agency Streetlight, South Carolina ranks as the second most dangerous state for people on bikes in the country, and fourth in bike rider fatalities per capita in the country.

In Kershaw County, the ride goes from Lugoff to Camden and returns to Lugoff, across the Highway #1 bridge. The Kershaw County Sheriff's Department and City of Camden Police provide safe passage for riders making this ride from Lugoff to Camden and back.



ROADS AND HIGHWAYS

New roads continue to be developed with bike lanes, intended to provide a safe way to travel by bicycle through Kershaw County. Pictured to the left is the York Street bypass in Camden.



NATURE AS TEACHER PRESERVE

Over 800 acres of riverfront property– called Hardscramble– was donated to Clemson University in 2006 by the late Margaret Lloyd, a local environmental advocate. Renamed to be the Nature as Teacher Preserve for Education, the property is being developed to teach children and adults about nature, conservation, and stewardship. Nature as Teacher’s mission is to connect communities to nature through providing and supporting educational programming.

In 2022, Nature as Teacher provided programming for over 1,500 community members in the Kershaw County area from k-4 students, to Graduate students, families and everyone in between. Nature as Teacher programming includes field trips, homeschool classes, community workshops, seminars and has begun opening up the property to the public, including seasonal events and several Open Trail Days, where the public is invited to explore the property by hiking or biking on any of the 10 miles of established trails.

Nature as Teacher has expanded its staff by adding a part-time environmental educator and in the future hopes to continue to provide infrastructure like a river view observation deck, an outdoor classroom pavilion, interpretive gardens, and expanded parking. These special places along with engaging programs will help to make Margret Lloyd’s vision of a haven for environmental education come to fruition.





GETTING OUTSIDE

KIDS TO PARKS DAY

Kids to Parks Day is a national event sponsored by the National Park Trust, and Kershaw County and the City of Camden participated for the first time on May 14, 2022.

- Scott Park was home to a Bike Rodeo, encouraging kids on bikes to ride, compete, and have fun, and a bike mechanic was on hand to tune up the bicycles
- Goodale State Park had naturalist Dr. Austin Jenkins provide a guided nature tour
- Kirkwood Park had Nature as Teacher present a morning of fun and games, all about animal tracks
- The Kershaw County Library Book mobile was at Powder Magazine Park with activities as well as some free books
- Wateree River Veterans Park was host to a class tailored to children focused on freshwater fishing safety and etiquette

The 2022 Kids to Park Day was a good start with great cooperation from many parties, and plans are underway for 2023.



KERSHAW
COUNTY
LIBRARY

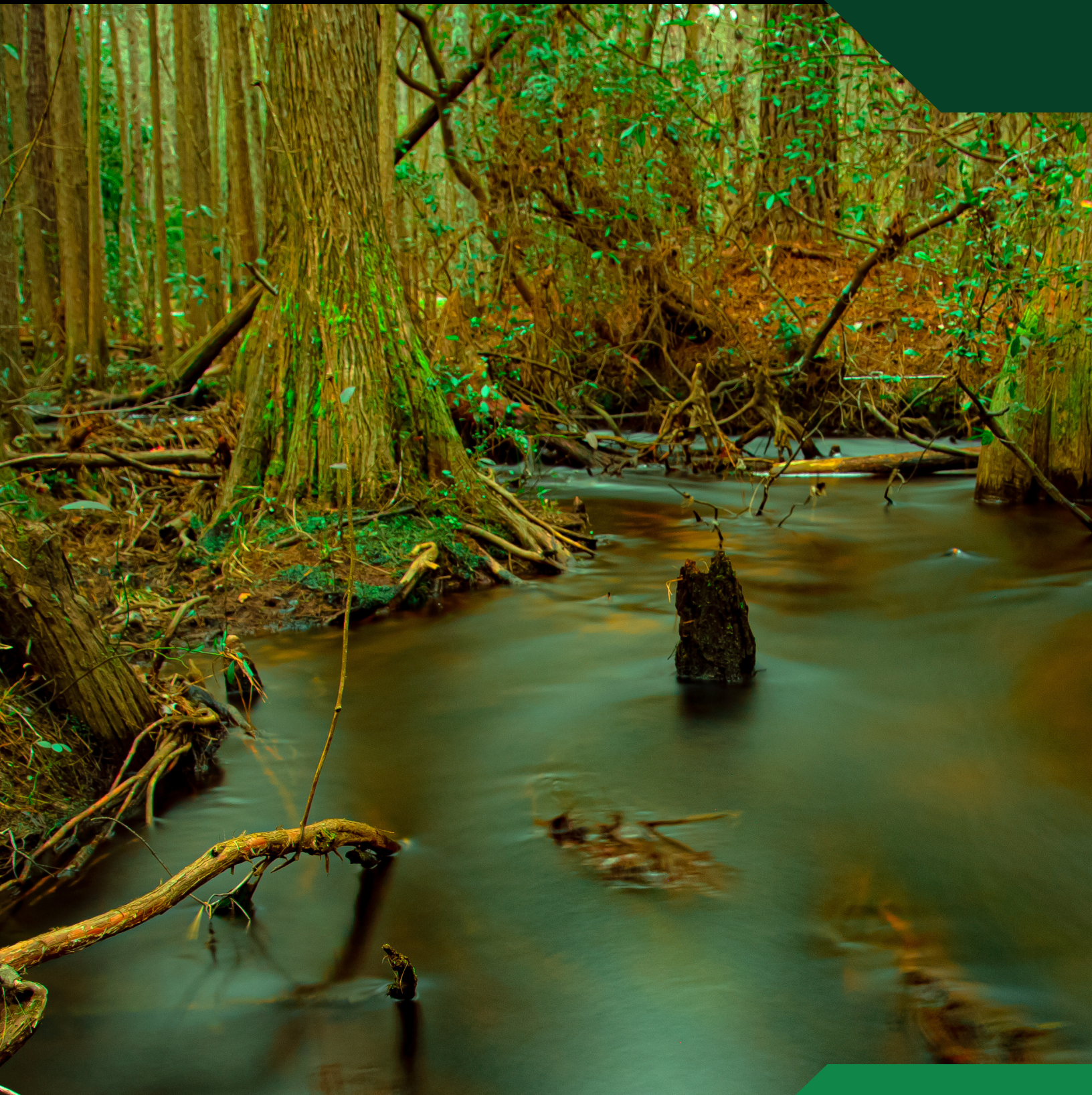




SUPPORT FOR FUTURE INITIATIVES

Currently, KC Trails has become the recognized advocate for more trails in Kershaw County. The team is committed to strengthening that position and will use all available resources to promote overall citizen wellness through a more robust county trails program – Run, Walk, Bike, Paddle.

- Nature Trails – Optimize, coordinate and enhance the existing investment in the nature trails in Kershaw County, including Wateree River Veterans Park, Camden Environmental Park, Goodale State Park, Nature As Teacher Preserve, Scott/Woodward Park, Historic Camden and the Battlefield, Chotty Trail, and the Elgin Nature Trail
- First Day Hike – Continue the First Day Hike as an annual event and promote Goodale State Park, the Friends of Goodale and the other nature trails in the county
- Goodale State Park – work with park management and Friends of Goodale to open the second trail; and develop a longer-term trail plan
- Kids in the Park Day – continue to support and promote Kids to Park Day
- Woodward Park plan – support and advocate for more nature trails in the proposed update plan
- Education – Develop a series of clinics to be held at parks about hiking/walking, cycling, and paddling
- OCU – Expand Open Community Use (OCU) of school district properties in Kershaw County
- Nature as Teacher – Assist NAT in developing a hiking and cycling tour program
- River Shuttle – Evaluate and promote a canoe/kayak shuttle service to optimize the two Wateree River put-in docks – Veterans River Park and Camden Environmental Park
- Support the Cities – Support Bethune and Elgin in their trails programs
- Coordinate with SC7 and their programs to encourage more outdoor engagement with nature
- Pump Track – Promote a pump track at Kershaw County West Wateree Complex
- Road Safety – support Ride of Silence, Move Over sign placement, advocate with County and cities for improved road safety, promote safe routes/trails to schools and parks
- Historic Camden – support the development of nature trails and bike tours on all properties
- National Trails Day – evaluate and work with the local governments and Goodale to promote
- Updated CHIP plan – support and input
- Trail recommendations – Develop new or expanded trail recommendations to include Camden/CCTC/Boykin, Veterans River Park to the dam, Veterans River Park south along the river
- Green space – promote the requirement of green space in new housing developments



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