

Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan

For the State of South
Carolina



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I. Introduction

The National Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program

The Department of Commerce, Justice, and State Appropriations Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-77), directed the Secretary of Commerce to establish a Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program “for the purpose of protecting important coastal and estuarine areas that have significant conservation, recreation, ecological, historical, or aesthetic values, or that are threatened by conversion from their natural or recreational state to other uses,” giving priority to lands which can be effectively managed and protected and that have significant ecological value. The Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (Public Law 111-11) later authorized Congress to appropriate up to \$60 million to CELCP annually and approved under the national Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA). The State of South Carolina has developed a *Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Plan (CELC Plan)* that provides an assessment of priority land conservation needs and clear guidance for nominating and selecting land conservation projects within the state.

The South Carolina Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program

The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control/Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (SCDHEC/OCRM) is responsible for implementing the South Carolina Coastal Zone Management Program (CZMP) for the eight-county coastal zone and, therefore, is serving as the lead agency for CELC Plan development and Program implementation. The CZMP was established through the 1977 South Carolina Coastal Tidelands and Wetlands Act (CTWA, a.k.a. SC Coastal Zone Management Act). Through the CTWA, SCDHEC/OCRM protects the state's sensitive coastal environment, while fostering responsible economic development along the coast.

Land Use Trends in South Carolina's CELCP area

South Carolina's coastal zone has an abundance of significant coastal and estuarine environments that function as critical habitats for endangered and threatened species, have important historical value, provide aesthetic values and protect water quality for the citizens of South Carolina. Population trends for South Carolina's coastal zone indicate increased urban growth and land conversion for residential uses. The Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments (BCD-COG) found an urban growth to population growth ratio of 6.2:1 for the tri-county area, with the urban area increasing 256% from 1973 to 1994 (BCD COG, 1997). In a study of future urban growth in the Charleston region, predictive models indicated that by 2030, at current growth rates, “...35% of wetlands, 70% of tidal creeks, and 60% of shellfish beds may be impacted; and over 50% of historic landmarks and 30% of archeological sites will be at risk of losing their rural attributes” (Allen and Lu, 2003). Predictive models are currently being developed for other coastal areas, such as Beaufort and Myrtle Beach, which are experiencing similar urban growth trends. Based on a study of South Carolina's wetland status and trends from 1982 to 1989, South Carolina had over four million acres of wetlands in 1989, 89 percent of which were freshwater, or palustrine, wetlands. Wetland losses were most notable in palustrine forested wetlands, and these losses were attributed, in part, to conversion for urban expansion

(Dahl, 1999). Wetland losses due to urban expansion were most significant within the coastal zone, in particular in Charleston, North Charleston, Hilton Head, and Myrtle Beach (Dahl, 1999). Through the Coastal Change Analysis Program (C-CAP), NOAA's Coastal Services Center found that from 1990 to 1995, over 16,000 acres of coastal habitat were converted for high and low intensity development within the coastal counties (NOAA CSC, 1999).

Traditional land uses such as agriculture and forestry are diminishing as land on the urban fringe is converted for residential and commercial development. These areas have the corresponding losses of important habitat, water quality impacts from nonpoint source pollution, and increased needs for mitigation and other regulatory controls. While baseline environmental assessments have been established for open water and tidal habitats, the full impacts resulting from rapid land conversion along the coast will not be realized for several years (SCECAP, 2000). Therefore, strategic, effective land conservation is a timely issue for South Carolina, and the CELC Program provides an opportunity to bring state and local governments together with non-governmental organizations and private landowners to achieve the common goal of resource conservation.

The South Carolina CELC Program will augment ongoing efforts, such as the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) Heritage Trust Program, and will support the management plans, including land acquisition priorities, for the two National Estuarine Research Reserves (NERRS) at the ACE Basin and North Inlet/Winyah Bay. Finally, this Program will provide a forum for cooperative efforts between governmental entities and the nongovernmental organizations that have expertise in land conservation practices and have worked to protect thousands of acres of property along South Carolina's coast.

II. Priorities for Coastal and Estuarine Land Protection

A. Definition of CELC Program Area in South Carolina:

For the purposes of the CELC Program, NOAA-OCRM has defined coastal and estuarine areas as places within a coastal state that are: part of the state's coastal zone, as designated in the state's federally approved coastal management program under the federal CZMA or within the state's coastal watershed boundary as described in NOAA's Coastal Zone Boundary Review (October 1992). The coastal watershed boundary is defined: for estuarine drainage areas by the inland boundary of those 8-digit USGS hydrologic cataloguing units that contain the head of tide, and; for the Great Lakes region or those portions of watersheds along the marine coast that drain directly to marine waters by those cataloguing units that are located adjacent to the coast."

The South Carolina CELC Program area is a compilation of the eight-county state coastal zone boundary, the Land Conservation Focus Area Boundaries used by nongovernmental organizations to define priority areas for conservation, and the coastal watershed boundary as described by NOAA and defined by the 8-digit USGS hydrologic cataloguing units. The eight-county coastal zone boundary is designated in Section 48-39-30(B) of the CTWA and includes Jasper, Beaufort, Colleton, Charleston, Berkeley, Dorchester, Georgetown and Horry counties. The Land Conservation Focus Area Boundaries are comprised of ten areas, nine of which fall within the CELC Program area:

- ❑ Southern Lowcountry
- ❑ ACE Basin (Ashepoo, Combahee, and Edisto Rivers)
- ❑ CAWS Basin (Cooper, Ashley, Wando and Stono Rivers),
- ❑ Santee
- ❑ Winyah Bay
- ❑ Santee Cooper Lakes
- ❑ Upper Waccamaw River
- ❑ Little Pee Dee-Lumber River
- ❑ Great Pee Dee-Lynches River

Task forces for each area developed these boundaries based on conservation needs within each region. By combining the coastal zone with the focus area boundaries and the NOAA watershed boundary, a comprehensive CELC Program area has been produced that incorporates critical upstream habitats. The inclusion of these habitats is critical given their direct impact on the quality of coastal and estuarine environments. **Figure 1** illustrates the CELC Program area within SC.

B. The South Carolina CELC Program will focus on the protection of properties that:

- 1.) contain significant natural and/or rare habitats that include coastal types, river corridors, associated unprotected wetlands and small coastal hummock islands all of which provide habitat for State and Federal designated threatened and endangered species,
- 2.) will enhance ongoing conservation efforts by serving as buffers and providing wildlife corridors that would provide critical linkages between ecologically significant lands,
- 3.) possess historic or cultural significant areas that are threatened by development; and/or
- 4.) provide additional areas adjacent to or near the priority watersheds of the Edisto and Santee Rivers that serve to protect aesthetic values and water quality.

The South Carolina CELC Program will promote conservation efforts that demonstrate effective, cooperative methods for land acquisition and successfully implement the priorities for South Carolina. SCDHEC/OCRM anticipates that in order to address these priority values, conservation through acquisition will be necessary for lands facing an imminent threat from land conversion, in particular properties on the urban fringe where traditional land uses are being threatened by residential and commercial development. Given the complexity of the issues relating to urban/suburban sprawl in many coastal counties, acquisition is the most effective and timely method to ensure protection in perpetuity. Whether through acquisition of interests in properties or through fee simple ownership, eligible entities can utilize CELC Program funding to protect ecologically and historically important areas that may otherwise be sold for uses that conflict with conservation goals.

C. South Carolina CELC Project Areas

NOAA-OCRM defines “*Project Areas*” as discrete areas to be identified within a CELC Plan that describe the state’s priority areas for conservation based on national and state criteria, representing the values to be protected through the program and areas threatened by conversion. Project areas may consist of, for example: geographic areas or habitat types identified by a state

coastal management plan as areas of concern; significant areas within other coastal, estuarine, or watershed management plan(s) that may be priority areas for conservation; or areas that provide linkages or corridors among conservation areas within a geographical area.”

The national criteria for projects and project areas are as follows:

- ❑ Protects important coastal and estuarine areas that have significant conservation, recreation, ecological, historical, or aesthetic values, or that are threatened by conversion from their natural or recreational state to other uses;
- ❑ Gives priority to lands which can be effectively managed and protected and that have significant ecological value;
- ❑ Directly advances the goals, objectives, or implementation of the state’s coastal management plan or program, NERR management plans approved under the CZMA, national objectives of the CZMA, or a regional or state watershed protection plan involving coastal states with approved coastal management plans; and
- ❑ Is consistent with the state’s approved coastal management program.

Priority Areas for South Carolina:

South Carolina’s Priority Areas reflect the common interests of federal, state, and local governments, as well as non-governmental organizations, actively involved in conservation efforts within the CELC Program boundary. Further, these priority areas implement the four program focus areas as defined in **Section II B**. The priority areas were first identified in 2004 during the initial stages in the development of this plan through partner meetings and public hearings. The following South Carolina CELCP Priority Areas represent a combination of habitat types and geographic areas:

1. Lands that contain ecologically significant coastal forest types in those areas illustrated in **Figure 1**, such as:
 - ❑ Longleaf pine forests
 - ❑ Maritime forest, including South Atlantic Inland maritime forests
 - ❑ Alluvial swamp forests, including cypress-tupelo swamp, bottomland hardwoods, and riverine swamp forests
2. Properties that provide critical habitat for migratory bird species, particularly hummock islands located in the tidal estuarine areas within the CELCP Boundary as shown in **Figure 1**.
3. Properties that provide habitat for state and federally designated threatened and endangered species (**Figure 2**).

4. Properties that are currently preserved through various conservation efforts (**Figure 3**). Conserved lands provide critical linkages between ecologically significant lands, particularly properties that serve as buffers.
5. River corridors and associated wetlands, including freshwater/low salinity wetlands and intertidal emergent wetlands such as tidal freshwater marsh and saltmarsh (**Figure 4**).
6. Properties that provide critical linkages between ecologically significant lands, particularly properties that serve as buffers and wildlife corridors as shown on **Figures 4, 5, 6, and 7**.
7. Properties within designated priority watersheds that, if protected, will help maintain current water quality standards or prevent future degradation of water resources. The current priority watersheds established by SCDHEC and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are the Edisto River and the Santee River watersheds as illustrated in **Figures 5 and 6**, respectively.
8. Properties within the designated targeted watersheds for each of the State's National Estuarine Research Reserves, those being North Inlet-Winyah Bay (NI-WB) and the Ashepoo-Combahee-Edisto (ACE) Basin NERRs properties as shown on **Figures 7 and 8**.

The following examples demonstrate how current conservation programs may utilize CELC Program funding to protect properties in one or more of the Priority Areas:

1. South Carolina Protected Lands Network:

The State's Protected Lands Network consists of multiple State, Federal, local governmental as well as private entities whose individual purpose is to obtain threatened properties for the enjoyment of future generations. **Figure 3** depicts the South Carolina Protected Lands Network protected properties, including properties protected by state, federal and private entities through 2008. These properties were identified for conservation efforts based on their unique habitats, their location with regard to threat of conversion, or their ability to serve as buffers and corridors based on their proximity to other protected properties. One priority of the CELC Program that is relevant to the Protected Lands efforts is to aid or facilitate the ongoing endeavor to protect properties in proximity to those shown in **Figure 3**, which would create significant continuous areas of natural habitat and wildlife corridors. This effort would link threatened properties with protected properties while giving priority to lands, which can be effectively managed and protected. The Nature Conservancy (TNC), The Lowcountry Open Land Trust, and Ducks Unlimited are several of the partners in the South Carolina Protected Lands Network, along with SC DNR and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. These partners collaborate on land conservation efforts in the focus areas shown in **Figure 1**. While each organization has specific habitats or areas of interest, the protected properties share many of the same habitats and conservation values listed as Priority Areas consistent with the objectives of the CELC plan.

2. ACE Basin and North Inlet-Winyah Bay National Estuarine Research Reserves:

A primary goal of the SC CELC Program is to augment the land conservation efforts described in the ACE Basin and North Inlet-Winyah Bay National Estuarine Research Reserves (NERRs) Management Plans. The management plans for the ACE Basin and North Inlet NERRs can be found at www.dnr.sc.gov/marine/NEER/index.html and www.northinlet.sc.edu/, respectively. The management plans specify core and buffer areas within the NERR boundaries and targeted watersheds that reflect geographic regions that are likely to have the most direct impacts on the reserves (**Figures 7 and 8.**) These targeted watersheds contain significant habitat and serve as buffers and wildlife corridors for the existing NERR properties. These areas are continuously faced with the threat of land conversion; in particular properties on the urban fringe in the Waccamaw Neck area where traditional land uses are being threatened by residential and commercial development. To further facilitate conservation in the vicinity of the NERRs, recent CELCP legislation require that no less than 15% of appropriated program funds be reserved for acquisitions that benefit NERRs sites. The benefit must occur within the targeted watersheds of each of South Carolina's NERRs properties (Figures 7 and 8). The conservation goals of CELCP are consistent with the land protection efforts outlined in each NERR Management Plan. As well, the conservation goals and efforts are very similar in that protected lands are to be preserved in as pristine setting as possible. In furthering these similarities DHEC-OCRM recently determined the Management Plans for each of the NERRs properties consistent with the State's Coastal Management Program. (See **Appendix A** for approval letters and a Memorandum of Agreement.

3. South Carolina Department of Natural Resources Habitat Protection Initiatives (Heritage Trust and Forest Legacy Programs):

South Carolina's CELC Program could support the habitat protection initiatives of SCDNR that are targeted for coastal and riparian habitat protection. These initiatives include, but are not limited to, the Heritage Trust Program and the Forest Legacy Program.

The Heritage Trust Program, which was established by the SC Heritage Trust Act, protects habitats for rare and endangered species and targets properties that provide "examples of the lands, structures and related artifacts which represent significant parts of our historical and cultural heritage" (Section 51-17-20, SC Code of Laws). A list of the 29 South Carolina Heritage Trust Preserves, Sanctuaries and Wildlife Management areas located within the CELCP boundary are shown on **Appendix B**. In addition, CELCP funds will target areas that serve as buffers and wildlife corridors for properties acquired through the Forest Legacy Program, the other SCDNR land conservation program.

The Forest Legacy Program (FLP), a Federal program in partnership with States, supports State efforts to protect environmentally sensitive forest lands. Designed to encourage the protection of privately owned forest lands, FLP is an entirely voluntary program. To maximize the public benefits it achieves, the program focuses on the acquisition of partial interests in privately owned forest lands. FLP helps the States develop and carry out their forest conservation plans. The program encourages and supports acquisition of conservation easements, legally binding agreements transferring a negotiated set of property rights from one party to another,

without removing the property from private ownership. Forest Legacy also allows for a fee simple acquisition option where the state can purchase the land. Most FLP conservation easements restrict development, require sustainable forestry practices, and protect other values. CELCP funding can be used in combination with Forest Legacy funding to conserve forest lands for long-term protection. Incidentally, FLP funding has been used in concert with two prior CELCP projects since 2004. **Appendix B** illustrates current FLP lands located within the CELCP boundary.

4. South Carolina Conservation Bank:

The SC CELC Program will also support conservation efforts funded through the South Carolina Conservation Bank, which is intended to “improve the quality of life in South Carolina through the conservation of significant natural resource lands, wetlands, historical properties, and archeological sites” For more information regarding the South Carolina Conservation Bank, please refer to <http://.sccbanc.sc.gov>. **Appendix B** also contains a current listing of the conservation bank grant sites located within the CELCP boundary and qualified entities that have conserved significant resources in the conservation bank. Fifty two (52) properties in the CELCP boundary have been conserved by the Conservation Bank Board.

5. Additional Land Conservation Programs:

South Carolina’s CELC Program will also support conservation priorities as identified by municipal and county governments for the same reasons as stated in other efforts. Several local municipalities have recognized that special properties need to be protected and funding has been obtained in these instances, which is directly relevant to the mission of the CELC Program. For example, the Trust for Public Land is actively working with Beaufort County (**Appendix C**) on the protection of properties identified through the Rural and Critical Lands Program. Also, the passage of the half-cent Charleston County sales tax referendum resulting in the creation of the Charleston County Comprehensive Greenbelt Program, some \$220 million will be generated for “green space” protection. This source of funding offers significant potential to augment and buffer key lands within the ACE Basin and Sewee to Santee regions of Charleston County. The Lowcountry Open Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy and Ducks Unlimited are working with County officials to strategically leverage greenspace funding. **Appendix D** lists those additional organizations that have exhibited conservation priorities (including total acreages) within the CELCP boundary.

D. Incorporation of existing plans:

CELC Plans may make use of work that has already been done in the state or region, such as regional, state or local watershed protection, restoration or land conservation plans. A state may incorporate existing plans, or portions thereof, by reference into a CELC Plan.

1. South Carolina Coastal Management Program

South Carolina’s Coastal Management Program (CMP), administered by the DHEC-OCRM (also the State CELCP lead agency), defines the State’s coastal policies for the

appropriate use and protection of the State's coastal resources. Generally speaking, the goals of the State's CMP require the CMP to achieve a balance between economic development and environmental conservation of natural resources in the coastal zone of South Carolina. As it relates to environmental conservation, the goals of the CELC Program are consistent with the goals of the CMP. Specifically, the following objectives of the CMP are shared with the CELC Program: to protect and conserve coastal land and water areas of a significant resource value; to protect and sustain the unique character of life on the coast that is reflected in its cultural, historical, archeological, and aesthetic values; to promote increased recreational opportunities in coastal areas; to resolve existing use conflicts and minimize potential conflicts among activities through improved coastal management reflecting the public's desires, natural resource capacity, and expected costs and benefits; and to protect and, where possible, restore or enhance the resources of the State's coastal zone for this and succeeding generations.

2. Revitalization Plans (working waterfronts)

A Revitalization Plan is a locally prepared water and land use plan and strategy that are designed to improve and enhance a community's natural and developed waterfronts and shorelines. The following Special Area Management Plans (SAMPs) have been developed by the SC Coastal Program to address these issues:

Charleston Peninsula SAMP

The genesis of this SAMP began when there was evidence of conversion of Charleston's waterfront from historically traditional water dependent uses to non-water dependent uses consisting primarily of residential development. The goals of the SAMP were to catalogue existing and potential development along the Ashley and Cooper Rivers on the Charleston peninsula waterfront and use that information to serve as a guide for future planning efforts, permit decisions and land use approvals made by local and state governmental agencies to ensure orderly and appropriate development in the proper context. Through its policies, the SAMP requires maximization of uses at existing working waterfront sites and encourages the development of zoning rules that requires the clustering of similar types of development.

Georgetown SAMP

The purpose of this SAMP was to determine land development patterns and construction policies to be used in future years to assist in the re-development and economic rebound of the City's working waterfront along Front Street. This effort was undertaken to redevelop this area in a manner that was economically beneficial, environmentally sensitive, and that embraced the historic commercial uses that had faded in previous years. The goal of the SAMP was to recreate the historical use of the waterfront for reestablishment of jobs, increased tax revenues, and general boost to the economy of the city and county. The success of the SAMP has been realized through a general revitalization of the historic district while protecting and promoting the historic uses the waterfront had become known for.

3. Watershed Management Plans

Watershed management plans are developed by local governments or by groups of cooperating municipalities to protect and improve the quality of local surface and ground waters. Such plans typically recommend corrective and preventive measures to reduce nonpoint source pollution in a watershed, and paramount among these measures is open space preservation. Thus watershed management plans provide a local source of information regarding lands for potential acquisition.

May River Waterbody Management Study

The May River Waterbody Management Study reviewed existing conditions within the May River watershed in Bluffton, S.C., and identified recurring issues, conflicts between human uses and the project goals and objectives, and possible options to avoid or minimize the problems identified. From this analysis came the identification of implementation priorities and development of a strategy to advance the goals and objectives of the Waterbody Management Plan. The priorities are currently being discussed and will be acted on by an implementation committee that was appointed by Town council.

Murrells Inlet SAMP

The purpose of the Murrells Inlet SAMP was to address water quality issues through the implementation of demonstration projects that were designed to effectively improve the water quality of the inlet. The demonstration projects were performed in partnership with Georgetown and Horry Counties to ensure that water quality was given equal consideration to water quantity in the drainage improvement projects being undertaken in the inlet watershed. The SAMP funded several demonstration projects to treat stormwater run-off to provide sufficient filtration and settling before the water reached the inlet. The demonstration projects were completed and were deemed successful in meeting the goals of the SAMP.

4. Regional Management Plans

Regional Resource Plans are collaborative in nature in bringing together reliable state, federal agencies, and other stakeholders with shared perspectives that relate to the wise management of a particular region.

Ashley River SAMP

Completed in February of 1992, the goals of the SAMP were to develop public policy for conservation of the natural and historic character of the Ashley River Corridor, thus increasing the predictability of governmental decisions and ensuring the long-term protection of the unique character of the area while taking into consideration the rights of individual citizens. The SAMP included enforceable policies related to vegetative buffers, dock size and number restrictions, and the prohibition of marinas.

5. *ACE Basin and North Inlet - Winyah Bay (NI-WB) NERR Management Plans*

The NERRs Management Plans document the means by which each Reserve implements their respective missions. For the ACE Basin, the mission is to provide “long-term protection of key resources through direct purchase or conservation easements.” Research is a by-product of this effort. The mission of the NI-WB NERR “is to promote stewardship in the North Inlet and Winyah Bay watersheds through science and education.”

In 2002, the Estuarine Reserve Division of NOAA completed a system-wide land acquisition planning project for the NERRS. Based upon land acquisition guidance documents, a flexible and efficient framework for accomplishing land protection objectives of the NERRS was provided. There is interest at both SC Reserves in land protection as discussed in the respective land conservation sections of the ACE Basin and North Inlet-Winyah Bay NERRs Management Plans. Each plan sets priorities and identifies criteria for land protection within their boundaries, although the core mission of each NERR is different. For the ACE Basin NERR, the acquisition process includes ranking, or evaluation criteria, very similar to the SC CELCP REACH Criteria. Since the time of inception of the ACE Basin NERR, thirty-one (31) parcels of property have been protected through donation, fee simple purchase or conservation easement. Future conservation efforts will focus on five categories of land protection: 1) Fee Title; 2) Conservation Easement; 3) Donation; 4) Life Estate; 5) Management Agreement and 6) Private Capital. The North Inlet-Winyah Bay NERR Management Plan places greater emphasis on educating the public on the values of land conservation rather than being directly involved with land acquisition, as described in Chapter 6, entitled “Resource Management, Regulatory Authorities, and Land Conservation.” In particular, the NI-WB plans to focus efforts through the Coastal Training Program, public education, and stewardship efforts to encourage property owners and developers to utilize practices that minimize their impacts on the environment. The NI-WB NERR also plans to continue working with conservation partners to encourage and support critical land purchases and conservation easements.

In the final analysis, the land protection directives and values contained in the NERRs Management Plans are very similar to the CELC Program and can be easily linked as part of the State CELC Plan.

6. *S. C. Land Trust Network and other Green space programs:*

Each of the following conservation and green space programs share a single mission: to preserve, enhance and protect the natural open lands and vistas of the lowcountry. These organizations have previously preserved lands within the lowcountry and within the State’s CELCP Boundary. Though the organizations may not possess a written “plan”, their collective missions and goals are consistent with the REACH Criteria contained within this State CELC Plan. **Figure 3** is a map that depicts the compilation of digital data for the Protected Properties within South Carolina, much of which includes lands that have been conserved by the groups listed below.

Atlantic Coast Conservancy

The mission of the Atlantic Coast Conservancy is to provide 21st Century solutions and sound scientific applications for conservation of critical natural resources in the face of a changing climate focusing on the Southeastern United States with specific utilization of geographic information systems applications in land conservation, carbon sequestration and conservation biology.

Beaufort County Open Land Trust

The Beaufort County Open Land Trust (BCOLT) preserves, protects and enhances the natural beauty and vistas of Beaufort County. BCOLT has protected important threatened natural plant communities, rare species, water quality and viewsheds.

Congaree Land Trust

The mission of the Land Trust is to conserve the natural and scenic lands, farms, waterways, forests, and green space in central South Carolina by assisting landowners with voluntary conservation in 11 counties, including Williamsburg.

Edisto Island Open Land Trust

The mission of the Edisto Island Open Land Trust (EIOLT) is to preserve and protect lands, scenic vistas, heritage, and conservation resources of Edisto Island for future generations. The Land Trust has protected and conserved thousands of acres since 1995. The proximity of these conserved properties to the ACE Basin provides a desirable linkage of properties that need to be preserved in perpetuity.

Charleston County Comprehensive Greenbelt Plan

In November 2004, Charleston County voters approved a referendum for the one-half of one percent Sales and Use Tax. The Greenbelt Plan funds are intended for the protection and promotion of the health, safety, welfare, and quality of life of the citizens of Charleston County by conserving eligible properties. The program is divided into a Rural and Urban Grants Program areas, which ensures equal distribution of greenbelt funds in diverse settings.

Community Land Trust

The mission of Community Open Land Trust is to protect undeveloped natural areas, scenic views and vistas for the benefit of the community. The organization works collaboratively with property owners, developers and local governments to strategically plan for open space and natural areas.

Ducks Unlimited

The mission of Ducks Unlimited (DU) is to conserve, restore and manage wetlands and associated habitats for North America's waterfowl. These habitats also benefit other wildlife and people. In South Carolina, DU has assisted with the conservation and preservation of 120,000 acres of wetlands, the majority of which are located in the coastal areas of South Carolina.

Kiawah Island Natural Habitat Conservancy

The mission of the Kiawah Island Natural Habitat Conservancy is to provide for the identification, preservation and appropriate management of the critical natural habitat needed to maintain a healthy, balanced and diverse population of native flora and fauna on Kiawah Island, South Carolina.

Lord Berkeley Conservation Trust

The Lord Berkeley Conservation Trust (LBCT) is dedicated to protecting, preserving and managing the natural resources and habitat of Greater Berkeley County for future generations to enjoy. LBCT is directly involved in protecting land for its natural, recreational, scenic, historical or productive value.

Lowcountry Open Land Trust

The mission of the Lowcountry Open Land Trust (LOLT) is to protect irreplaceable natural and historic landscapes through private voluntary conservation measures on a State level. LOLT typically focuses on the preservation of rural lands within coastal South Carolina. Their principal tool for protection has been voluntary conservation easements donated by private landowners who design easements that preserve the natural landscape and protect wildlife habitat, water quality and historic resources, while promoting traditional uses such as agriculture, hunting and forestry.

Mount Pleasant Land Conservancy

The mission of the Mount Pleasant Open Space Foundation is “to enhance the quality of life for all East Cooper residents through education and preservation of open space by promoting protection, acquisition, and stewardship of our land resources.”

North American Land Trust

The North American Land Trust is committed to the protection of the landscape. NALT believes that preservation and conservation efforts often require different techniques and management strategies. Their goal is to be a professional organization committed to one single, but very important, purpose: long term stewardship of our natural heritage by implementing successful private land conservation projects and promoting innovative land conservation techniques. The North American Land Trust takes a unique planning approach to land protection

by integrating conservation incentives with some development rights, a role model providing opportunities that could not be accomplished by more conventional methods.

Pee Dee Land Trust

The Pee Dee Land Trust (PDLT) conserves historical, natural and agricultural resources for conservation within the Pee Dee Region, including Horry County, for future generations.

The Nature Conservancy

The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) mission is to conserve mankind's natural resources on a global level. The SC TNC Chapter has been involved in the conservation and preservation of critical lands in coastal South Carolina. Their involvement ranges from assistance with conservation projects to outright ownership/management of preserved lands.

The Trust for Public Land

The Trust for Public Land's (TPL) mission is to conserve land for the public to enjoy in a variety of passive uses while ensuring livable communities for many generations. The locations of these lands can vary from inner city to wilderness settings. The Trust for Public Land's current areas of focus (**Appendix C**) are located within the CELC Boundary consisting of critical land purchases in Beaufort, Charleston, Jasper Counties as well as the Grand Strand area of Horry County. Furthermore, TPL has acquired over 12,500 acres throughout the state since the 1980's.

III. State Process for Implementing the CELC Program

A. Identification of State Lead Agency.

The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control/Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management has been designated as the lead agency responsible for implementing the CELC Program, as it is the agency responsible for implementing the State's CZMP as approved under the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA), unless otherwise designated by the Governor. If a state's CZMP does not wish to assume the lead role, the Governor may designate as the lead agency another state agency with authority to plan, acquire or manage land for conservation purposes.

B. List of eligible entities - Agencies eligible to hold title to property acquired through the CELC Program.

NOAA may make financial assistance awards to eligible coastal states, including the state's lead Agency for implementing the CELCP, the state's CZMP or its National Estuarine Research Reserve(s)(NERRS). The designated recipient may in turn allocate grants or make sub-awards to other state Agencies, local governments as defined at 15 CFR 24.3, or entities eligible for assistance under section 306A(e) of the CTWA (16 USC 1455a(e)) to carry out approved projects.

Below is a list of entities eligible to hold title to property acquired through the South Carolina CELC Program.

- ❑ National Estuarine Research Reserves at ACE Basin and North Inlet-Winyah Bay
- ❑ South Carolina Department of Natural Resources
- ❑ County Governments
- ❑ Local Municipalities
- ❑ South Carolina Department of Parks and Tourism
- ❑ State Universities and Colleges whose charter specifically stipulates that the State of South Carolina considers the school a public Agency and that holding land for conservation purposes is included in the schools' mission statement.

C. State nomination process.

The federal CELC Program guidelines outline the following elements of a state project nomination and selection process.

1. Solicitation of Projects

SCDHEC-OCRM will, upon notification from NOAA of the availability of CELCP funding, notify eligible entities and request proposals for land acquisition projects. Projects meeting one or more of the specific priority areas designated in Section 2 will be given priority for CELCP funding. As specified in the *CELC Program Final Guidelines*, projects including several separate and distinct phases may be submitted in phases, but any succeeding phases must compete against other proposals in the year submitted.

2. State review and prioritization

a. Proposal acceptance.

Completed applications will undergo an initial review by a committee of three SCDHEC-OCRM staff to determine if the proposal meets the eligibility requirements as specified in the *CELC Program Final Guidelines* (June 2003) or subsequent versions. If the application is incomplete, the SCDHEC-OCRM may provide an opportunity for the applicant to submit any information that is missing.

b. Proposal review and ranking.

Proposals accepted for consideration will be reviewed and ranked by a committee designated by SCDHEC-OCRM. This committee will include, at a minimum:

- ❑ Three representatives from SCDHEC-OCRM
- ❑ A representative from either the ACE Basin or North Inlet/Winyah Bay NERR sites
- ❑ Representatives from SCDNR as designated by the SCDNR Director
- ❑ Representatives from non-governmental organizations actively involved in land conservation within the South Carolina coastal zone

A list of the current CELCP Review Committee members is listed in **Appendix E**.

The previous iterations of the Review Committee developed a list of review and ranking criteria that identify specific recreational, ecological, aesthetic, cultural, and historical values (REACH Criteria), as well as criteria for threat of conversion, ease of acquisition, and manageability. During proposal review, the current Review Committee will determine which proposals meet these criteria. By allowing the committee to develop this protocol, SCDHEC-OCRM ensured that input was received from a diverse group of stakeholders. The REACH Criteria are provided in **Appendix F**.

IV. Stakeholder Involvement:

A. Interagency coordination

In the development of this CELC Plan, SCDHEC-OCRM solicited input from:

- ❑ Representatives from the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management contained within NOAA.
- ❑ Representatives from each of the SC NERR sites (ACE Basin and North Inlet-Winyah Bay)
- ❑ Representatives from the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources
- ❑ Non-governmental organizations, including, but not limited to, The SC Nature Conservancy, The Trust for Public Land, The Lowcountry Open Land Trust, and Beaufort County Open Land Trust
- ❑ County and local governments within the South Carolina Coastal Zone

B. Public involvement in the development of the plan.


SCDHEC-OCRM sought public input for the development of the CELC Plan through the following steps:

1. An initial letter was sent to local municipalities, county governments, state agencies, federal agencies, and non-governmental organizations requesting their involvement in the development of the CELC Plan.
2. An Informational Meeting was held to explain the CELC Program and provide a forum for discussion about priority areas within South Carolina.
3. The minutes from the meeting were distributed via email to all participants and stakeholders, who were asked to contribute information on conservation plans, initiatives and focus areas for incorporation into the state plan.
4. The draft of the CELC Plan was distributed to SCDHEC-OCRM staff and all stakeholders for comments.
5. The comments and suggestions were incorporated into a first draft, which was submitted to NOAA for comments in July of 2004.
6. SCDHEC-OCRM established a Review Committee in the fall of 2004 to develop South Carolina's CELCP Review Criteria.
7. SCDHEC-OCRM incorporated NOAA-OCRM's comments received via conference call in late 2004 and the Committee's Review Criteria into the second draft.
8. The second draft was submitted to the Review Committee and then back to NOAA-OCRM.
9. NOAA-OCRM offered comments on the second draft and were incorporated into the latest draft version for re-submission to NOAA-OCRM for final approval.
10. With the implementation of updated program guidelines in 2011, SCDHEC-OCRM will update the state plan to include the new guidelines for NOAA-OCRM re-approval.

V. Certification and Approval

The SC CELC Plan is consistent with the policies and goals of the South Carolina Coastal Management Program as it serves to "protect the quality of the coastal environment" and supports efforts to "...achieve a rational balance between economic development and environmental conservation of natural resources" in the South Carolina coastal zone.

Approved by:



Carolyn Boltin-Kelly
Deputy Commissioner
SCDHEC-OCRM



Date

Literature Cited

Allen, J. and K. Lu. 2003. Modeling and prediction of future urban growth in the Charleston region of South Carolina: a GIS-based integrated approach. *Conservation Ecology* 8(2): 2. [online] URL: <http://www.consecol.org/vol8/iss2/art2>

Berkeley, Charleston and Dorchester Council of Government (BCD COG). 1997.

Dahl, T.E. 1999. *South Carolina's wetlands-status and trends 1982-1989*. U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C. 58 pp.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Coastal Services Center. *South Carolina's Coast: A Remote Sensing Perspective, Vols 1 and 2*. NOAA/CSC/99027-CD. CD-ROM. Charleston, SC: NOAA Coastal Services Center, 1999.

Van Dolah, R.F., P.C. Jutte, G.H.M. Riekerk, M.V. Levisen, L.E. Zimmerman, J.D. Jones, A.J. Lewitus, D.E. Chestnut, W. McDermott, D. Bearden, G.I. Scott, M.H. Fulton. 2002. *The Condition of South Carolina's Estuarine and Coastal Habitats During 1999-2000: Technical Report*. Charleston, SC: South Carolina Marine Resources Division. Technical Report No. 90. 132p.

For more information:

The State CMP:

[www.scdhec.gov/environment/ocrm/docs/program_doc/SC_Coastal_%20Program%20\(Pt.%202\).pdf](http://www.scdhec.gov/environment/ocrm/docs/program_doc/SC_Coastal_%20Program%20(Pt.%202).pdf)

Watershed Management Plans:

www.scdhec.gov/environment/ocrm/docs/May_River_WBMP.pdf

SAMPS and Revitalization Plans:

www.scdhec.gov/environment/ocrm/samp.htm

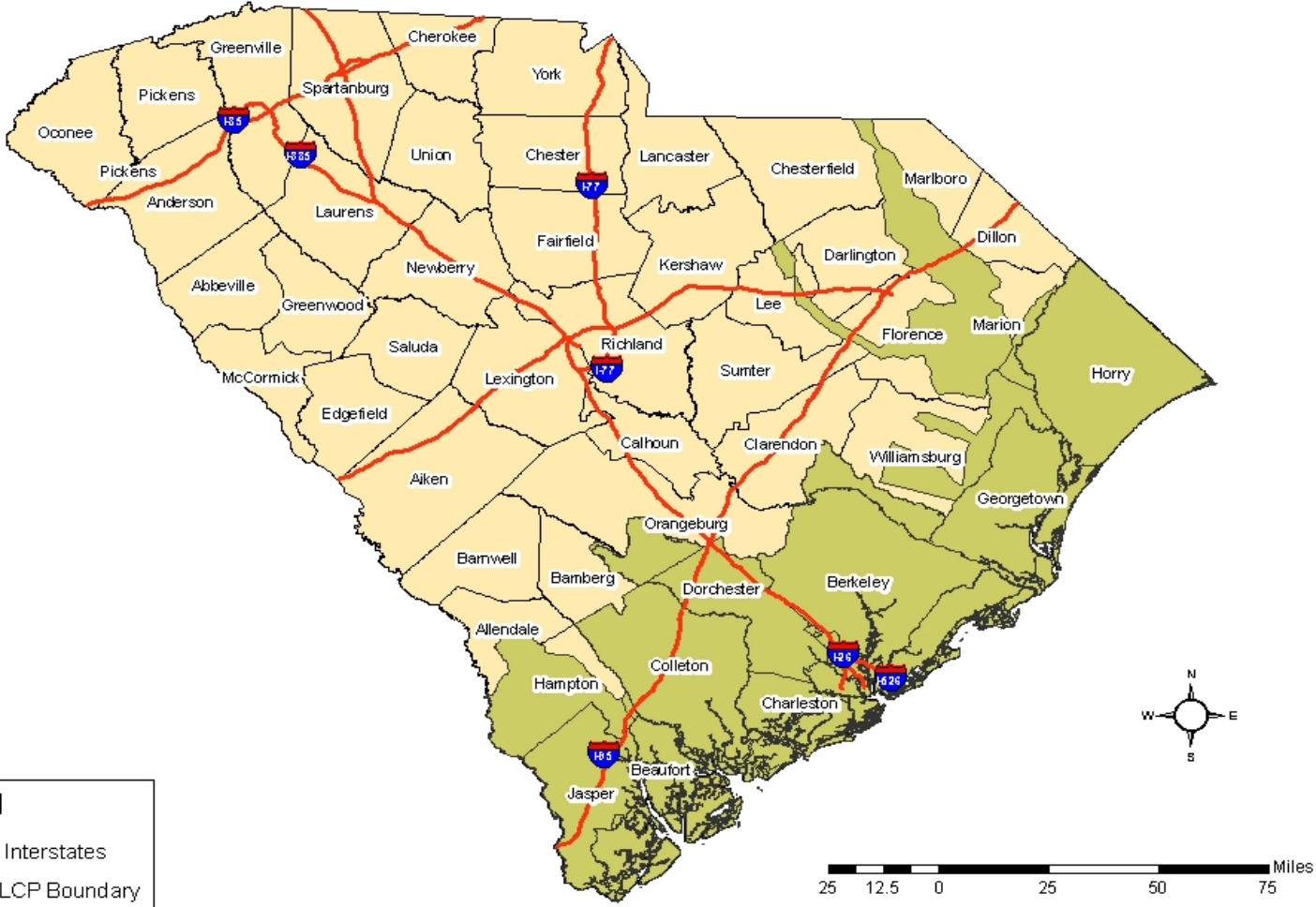
Other Land Trusts:

<http://findalandtrust.org/states/southcarolina45>

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2. South Carolina Endangered Species and Heritage Trust Preserves
3. Wetlands located within CELCP Boundary
4. South Carolina Protected Properties, 2008
5. Edisto Watershed
6. Santee Watershed
7. ACE Basin NERR Targeted Watershed
8. North Inlet-Winyah Bay NERR Targeted Watershed

FIGURE 1: SOUTH CAROLINA CELCP BOUNDARY



Legend
— US Interstates
■ CELCP Boundary

Source: SCDHEC-OCRM

FIGURE 2: SOUTH CAROLINA ENDANGERED SPECIES LOCATIONS AND HERITAGE TRUST PRESERVES

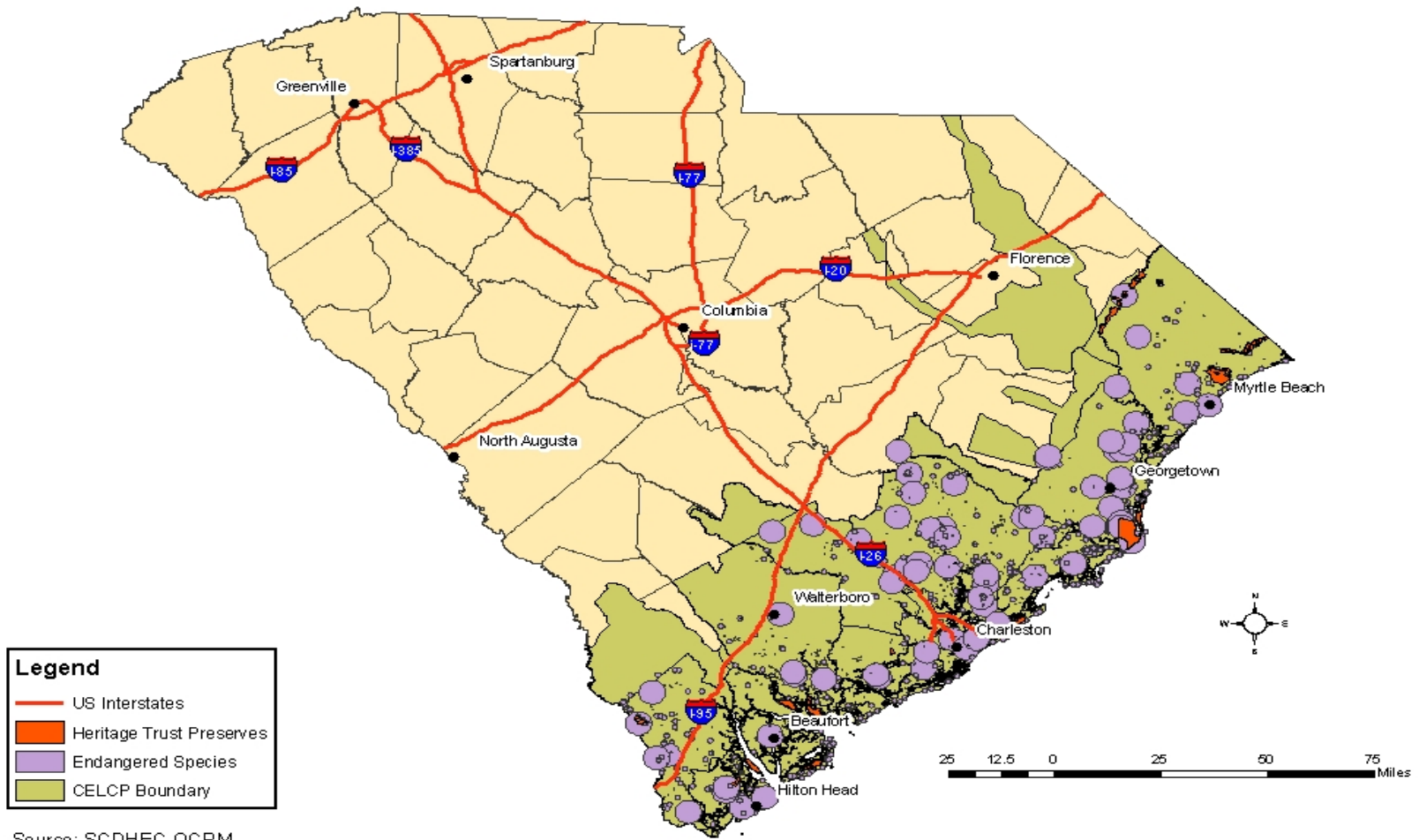


FIGURE 3: SOUTH CAROLINA PROTECTED PROPERTIES, 2008

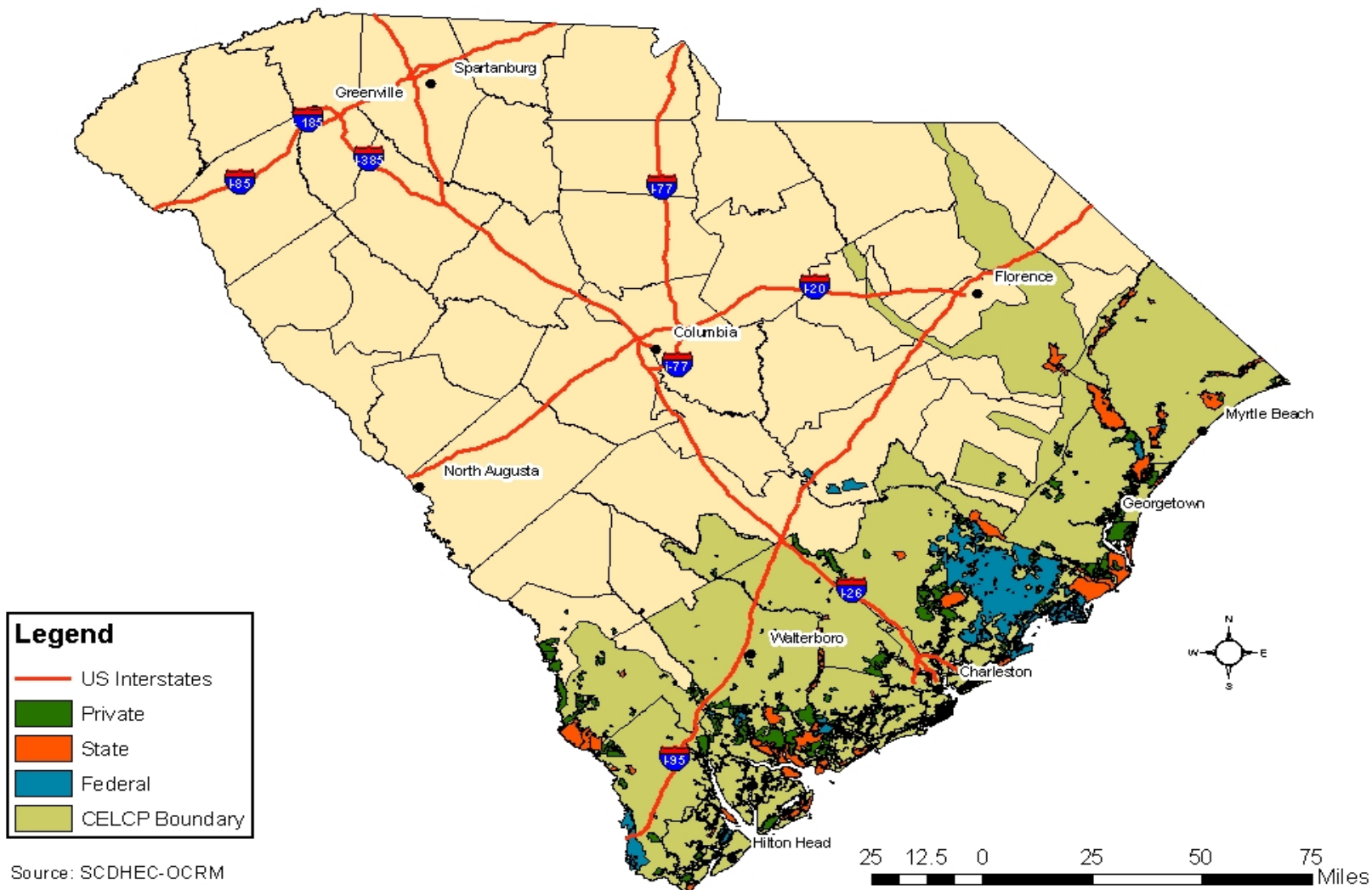


FIGURE 4: WETLANDS IN THE CELCP BOUNDARY

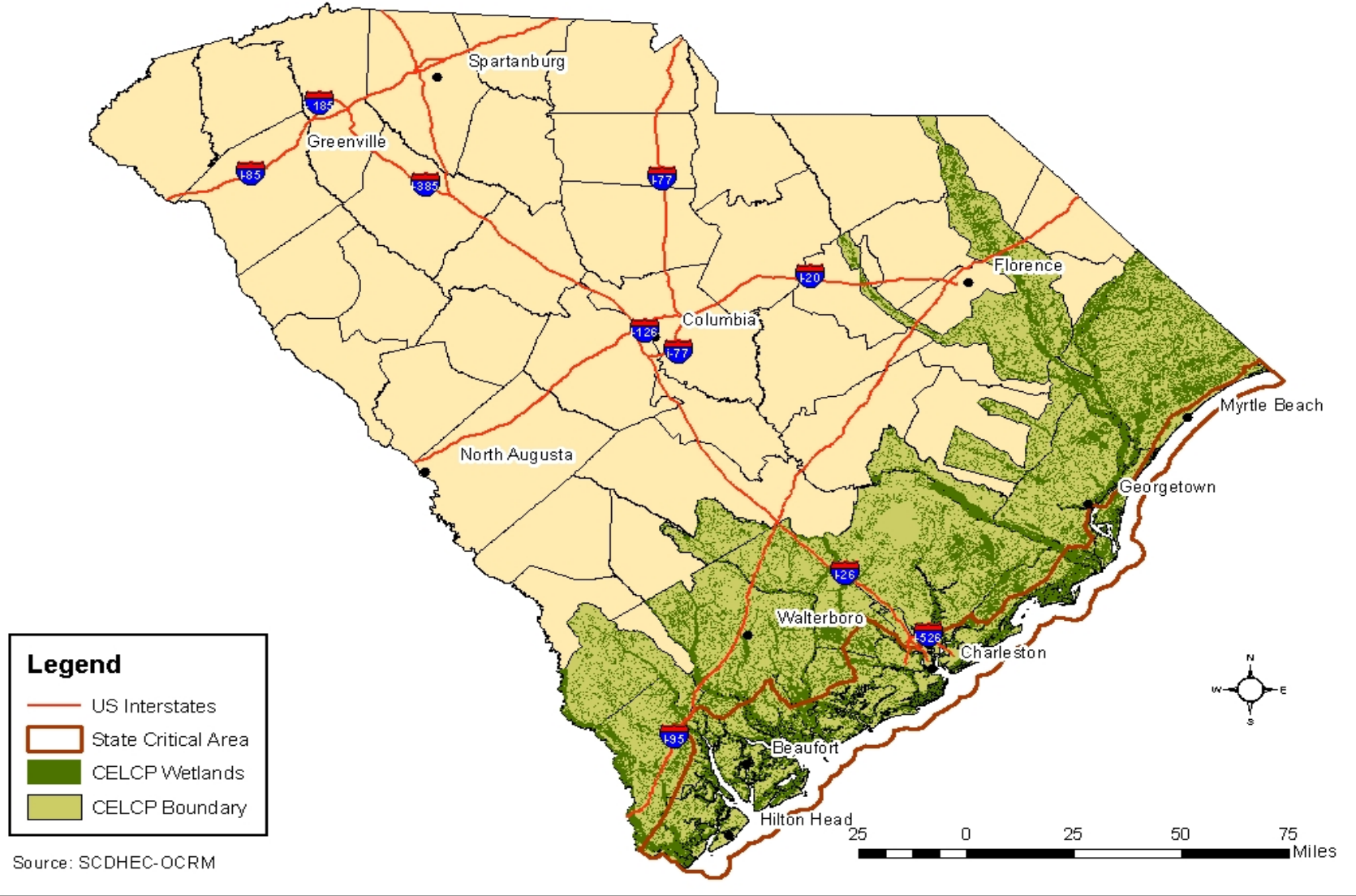




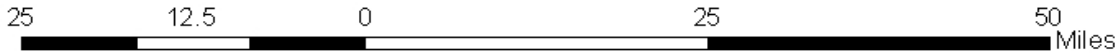
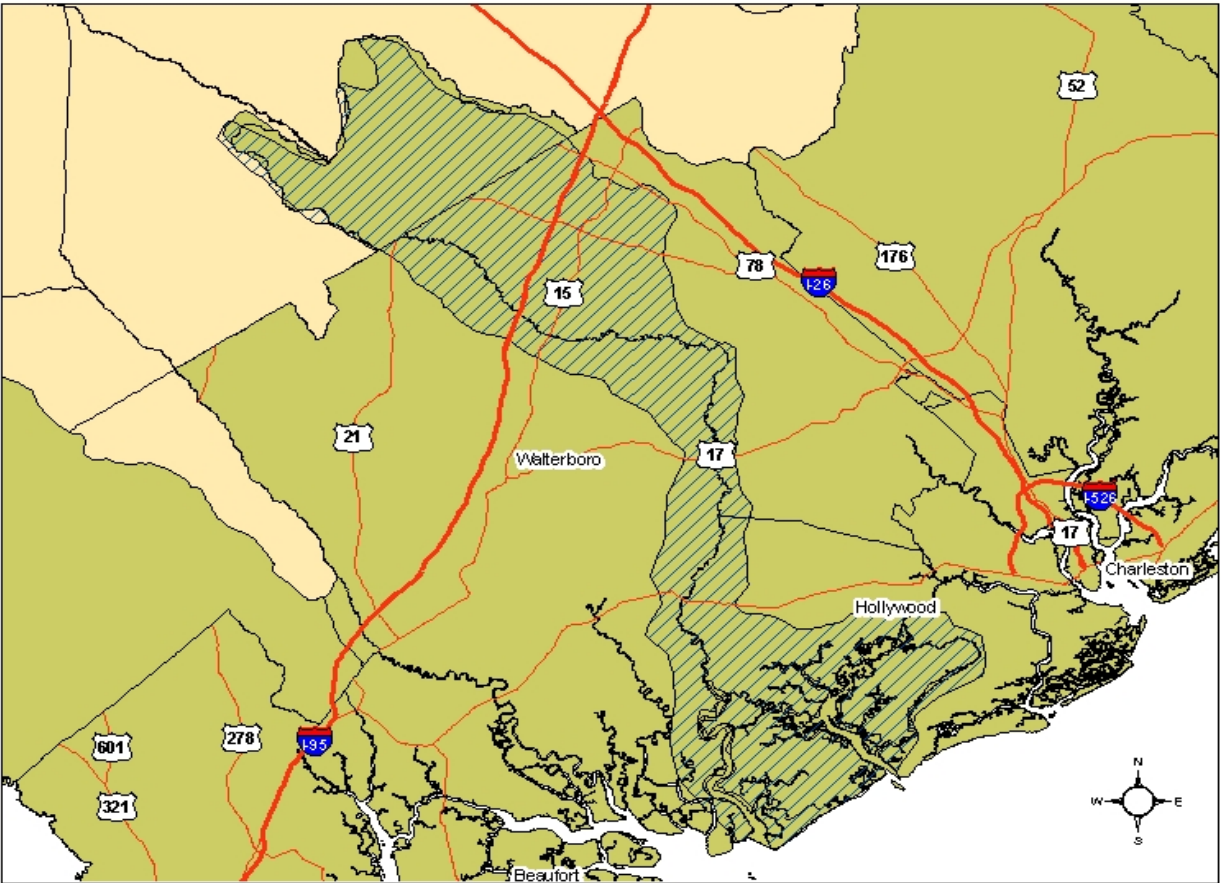


FIGURE 5: EDISTO RIVER WATERSHED

Legend

-  US Highways
-  US Interstates
-  Edisto Watershed
-  CELCP Boundary



Source: SCDHEC-OCRM

FIGURE 6: SANTEE RIVER WATERSHED

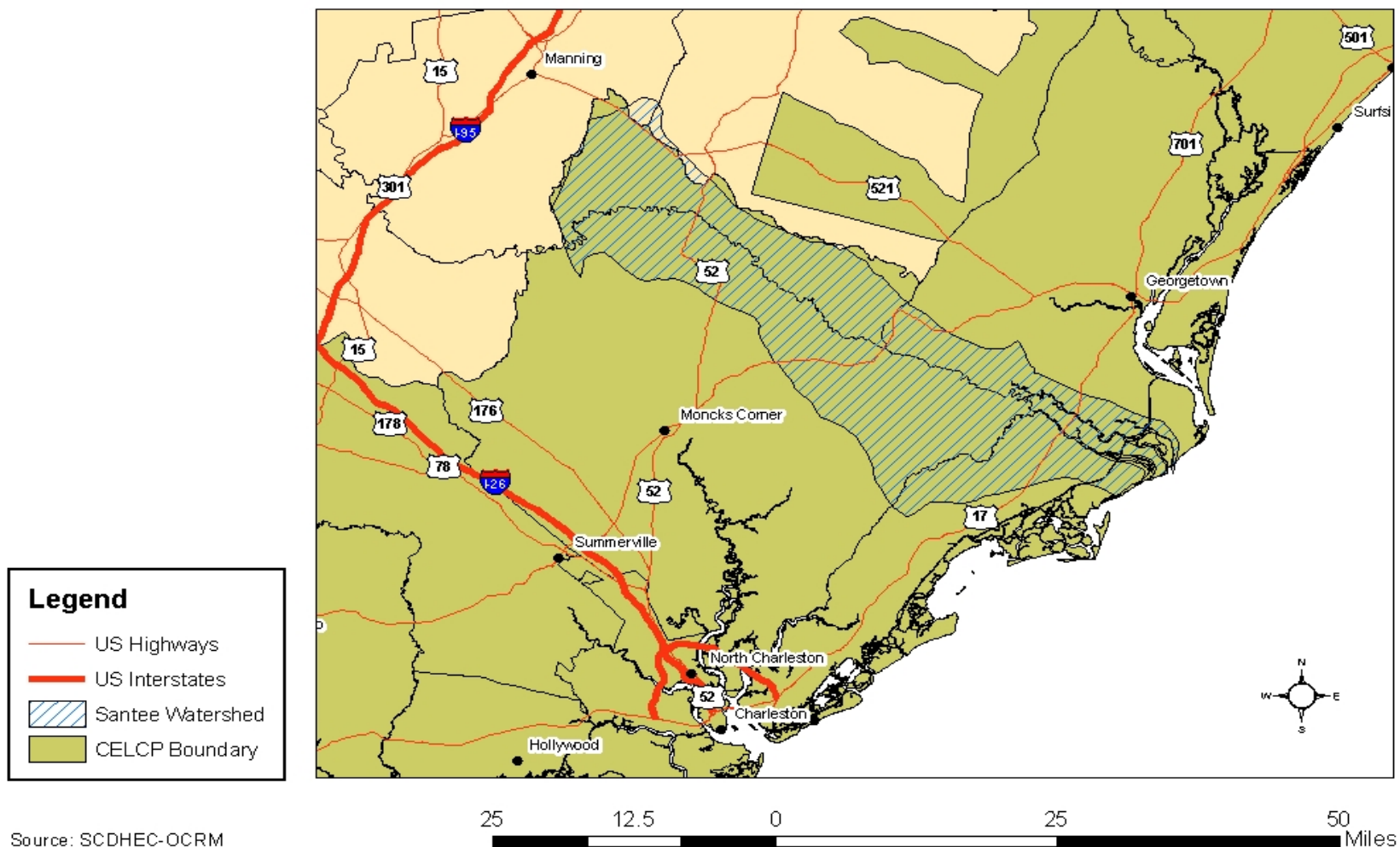


FIGURE 7: ACE BASIN NERR TARGETED WATERSHED

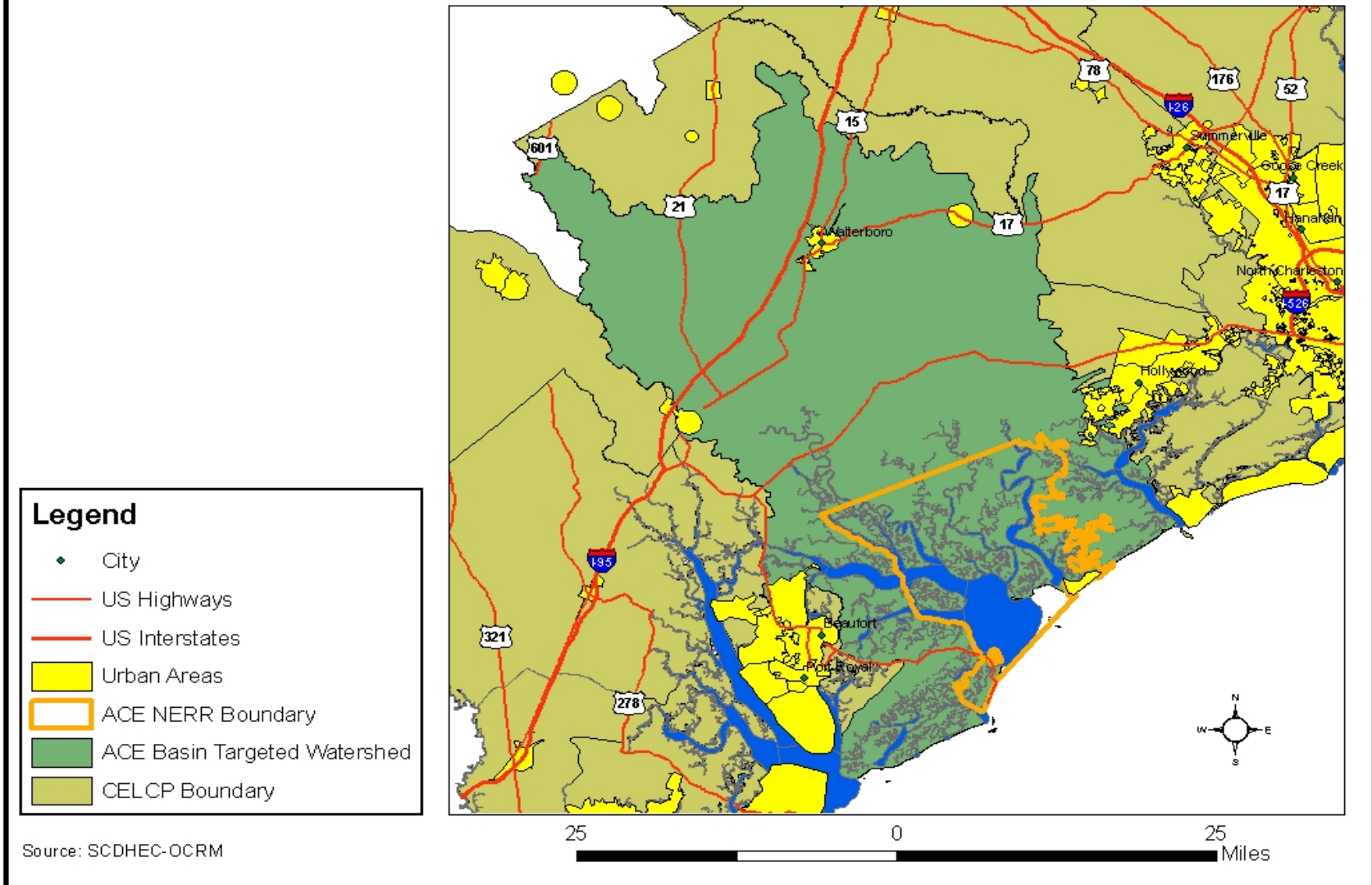
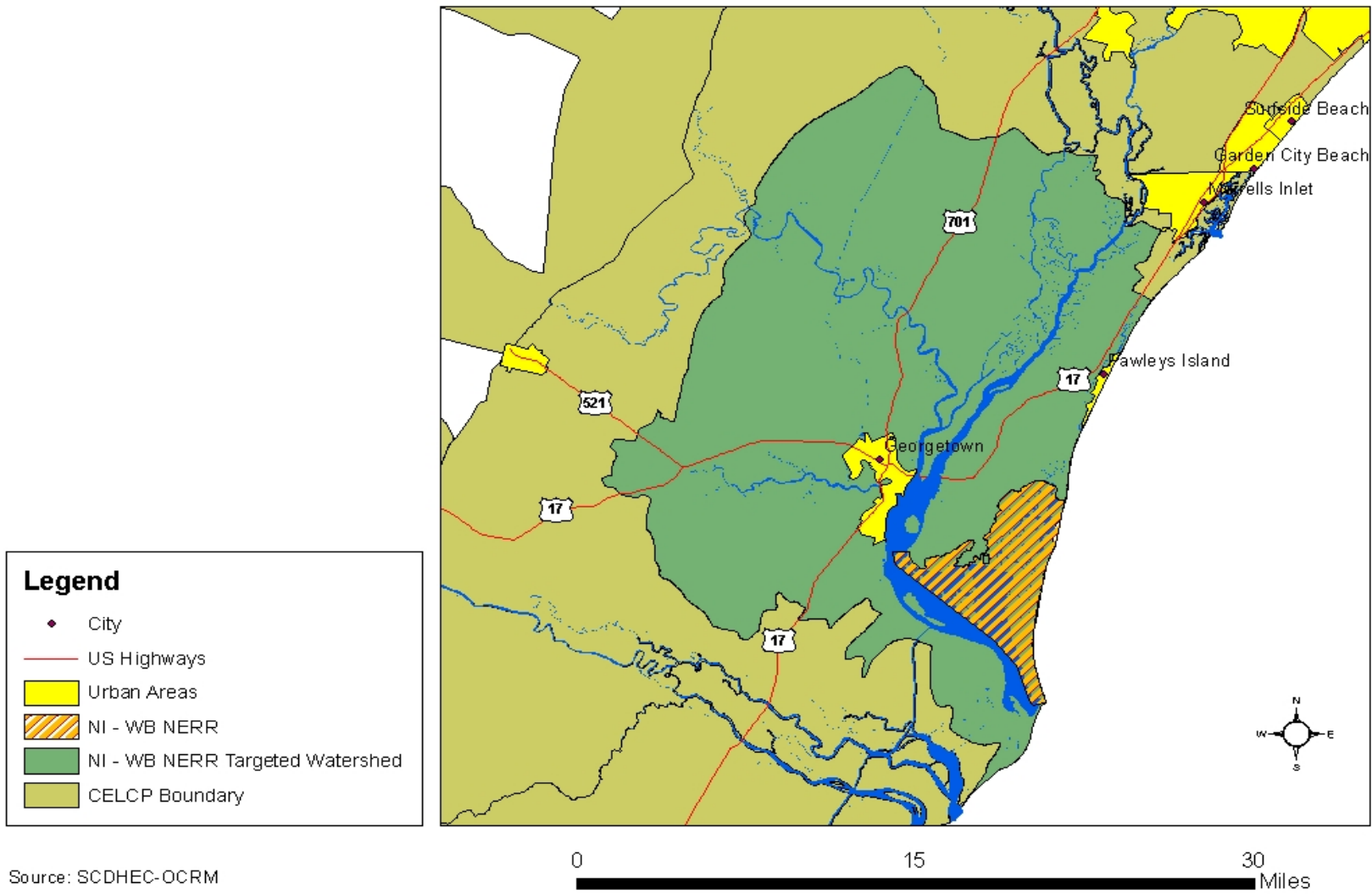


FIGURE 8: NORTH INLET - WINYAH BAY NERR TARGETED WATERSHED



List of Appendices

Appendix A: Letters of Consistency and Memorandum of Understanding relating to the State's NERRS properties.

Appendix B: Protected Lands – SCDNR Heritage Trust, Forest Legacy and S. C. Conservation Bank

Appendix C: Letter concerning Trust for Public Lands Current Focus Area

Appendix D: Additional Regional Conservation Efforts

Appendix E: Current CELCP Review Committee Members

Appendix F: SC CELCP “Reach Criteria”

Appendix A:

NI-WB letter of consistency:



C. Earl Hunter, Commissioner

Promoting and protecting the health of the public and the environment.

December 10, 2010

Ms. Wendy Allen
North Inlet – Winyah Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve Manager
P. O. Box 1630
Georgetown, SC 29442

Re: North Inlet – Winyah Bay NERR Management Plan

Dear Ms. Allen,

We appreciate the opportunity to review the draft 2011 – 2016 Management Plan for North Inlet - Winyah Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (NI-WB NERR). The plan reflects significant work on the part of your staff, and we are very supportive of the activities and approaches that you have outlined. The NI-WB Management Plan emphasizes our shared goals for the preservation, restoration and enhancement of South Carolina's coastal resources for their conservational, recreational, ecological, and research values.

Interactions between our programs were formally described in a recent Memorandum of Agreement and letter of support (dated November 4, 2010). With these continued and enhanced interactions between our programs through your Advisory Panel and specific research and outreach efforts (e.g. sea level rise and habitat research, coastal training initiatives, and conservation efforts, including the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program), we look forward to continuing our strong partnership and collaborations in the years to come.

Thank you again for the opportunity to review the management plan. Do not hesitate to contact our NERR State CZ Coordinator, Curtis Joyner, at 843-953-0205 or joynercm@dhec.sc.gov should you have any questions.

Sincerely,


Carolyn Boltin-Kelly
Deputy Commissioner

Cc: Braxton Davis, Director Policy and Planning Division
Curtis Joyner, NERR State CZ Coordinator

ACE Basin letter of consistency



C. Earl Hunter, Commissioner

Promoting and protecting the health of the public and the environment.

February 22, 2011

Mr. Phil Maier
ACE Basin Research Reserve Manager
P. O. Box 12559
Charleston, SC 29412

Re: ACE Basin NERR Management Plan

Dear Mr. Maier,

Staff have reviewed the draft 2011 – 2016 Management Plan for Ashepoo-Combahee-Edisto (ACE) Basin National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR) and find it consistent with the management goals and objectives of the South Carolina Coastal Zone Management Program (CZMP).

In referring to the CZMP for consistency, SCDHEC-OCRM staff has determined that the ACE Basin Management Plan emphasizes the preservation, restoration and enhancement of coastal resources for their conservational, recreational, ecological, and research values. Examples of the implementation of these values include (as identified in the CZMP): the protection of valuable, unique or endangered marine life; the protection of geologic and oceanographic features; the enhancement of public and other preserved areas; assistance with the survival and preservation of the nation's fisheries and other ocean resources; and the advancement and promotion of research-based actions, which leads to a more thorough understanding of the marine ecosystem and the impact of human activities.

Furthermore, the continued and enhanced interaction between the Advisory Panel on specific issues, for example sea level rise, habitat loss, coastal training initiatives, and conservation efforts (Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program - CELCP), will lead to better utilization of each program's strengths relative to our resource management responsibilities. These interactions are captured in the MOA and letter of support dated November 4, 2010.

Thank you again for the opportunity to review the management plan. Do not hesitate to contact our NERR State CZ Coordinator, Curtis Joyner, at 843-953-0205 or joynercm@dhec.sc.gov should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Boltin-Kelly
Deputy Commissioner

Cc: Braxton Davis, Director Policy and Planning Division
Curtis Joyner, NERR State CZ Coordinator

Memorandum of Agreement



C. Earl Hunter, Commissioner

Promoting and protecting the health of the public and the environment.

November 4, 2010

Ms. Laurie McGilvray, Chief
Estuarine Reserves Division
NOS\NOAA
1305 East-West Highway,
N/ORM5, 10th Floor,
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Ms. McGilvray:

The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control – Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (SC DHEC/OCRM) fully supports the Memoranda of Agreement formally acknowledging the lead roles of the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SC DNR) and the University of South Carolina (USC) in administering the Ashepoo, Combahee, South Edisto (ACE) Basin National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR) and North Inlet-Winyah Bay (NI-WB) NERR, respectively.

SC DHEC/OCRM has been an active partner in the NERR program since designation of each of the South Carolina Reserves, acting as the fiscal agent until 2002 when the responsibility was transferred to the lead agencies, SC DNR and USC. OCRM will continue to partner with the Reserves by serving on the advisory committees of both Reserves, coordinating with Reserve staff on permitting issues within the Reserve boundaries, and coordinating with the Reserves on research, education, stewardship and management programs, as appropriate. Both Reserves have agreed to include funding for one coastal management staff to attend the annual National Estuarine Research Reserve Association (NERRA) meeting and the annual NOAA Program Managers meeting to ensure program coordination and continuity.

Yours truly,


Carolyn Boltin-Kelly
Deputy Commissioner

CC: John Frampton, Executive Director, SC DNR
Wendy Allen, Manager NI-WB NERR
Phil Maier, Manager ACE Basin NERR
Jim Morris, Director Belle W. Baruch Institute, USC
Marvin Pontiff, Assistant Deputy Commissioner, SCDHEC/OCRM
Braxton Davis, Director Policy and Planning Division, SCDHEC/OCRM
Curtis Joyner, NERR State CZ Coordinator, SCDHEC/OCRM

Appendix B:

S. C. Heritage Trust, Forest Legacy and S. C. Conservation Bank Preserved Sites in the CELCP Boundary

Key	Name	Other Name	Acres
1	BirdKey Stono Heritage Preserve		40.063
1	BirdKey Stono Heritage Preserve		2.371
2	Buzzard's Island Heritage Preserve		0.933
3	Capers Island Heritage Preserve		2213.485
4	Cartwheel Bay Heritage Preserve		591.351
5	Crab Bank Heritage Preserve		27.270
6	Crosby Oxypolis Heritage Preserve		17.842
7	Daws Island Heritage Preserve		3025.887
8	Deveaux Bank Heritage Preserve		185.460
9	Dungannon Plantation Heritage Preserve		626.520
10	Fort Lamar Heritage Preserve		12.617
11	Green's Shell Enclosure Heritage Preserve		4.973
12	Lewis Ocean Bay Heritage Preserve		9490.969
13	Little Pee Dee Heritage Preserve	Little Pee Dee	3846.772
13	Little Pee Dee Heritage Preserve	Dargan	4402.333
13	Little Pee Dee Heritage Preserve	Tilghman	678.502
13	Little Pee Dee Heritage Preserve	Ward	1221.557
14	Old Island Heritage Preserve		3000.442
15	Snee Farm Heritage Preserve		29.671
16	St. Helena Sound Heritage Preserve		3260.400
16	St. Helena Sound Heritage Preserve	Big/Warren/Beet/Ashe Islands	6423.743
16	St. Helena Sound Heritage Preserve	Otter Island	2095.003
17	Victoria Bluff Heritage Preserve		1144.543
18	Waccamaw River Heritage Preserve		1237.249
18	Waccamaw River Heritage Preserve		2745.322
18	Waccamaw River Heritage Preserve		1076.920
18	Waccamaw River Heritage Preserve		47.270
18	Waccamaw River Heritage Preserve		421.771
19	Tom Yawkey Wildlife Center Heritage Preserve	North Island	3669.032
19	Tom Yawkey Wildlife Center Heritage Preserve	Cat/South Island	16112.535
20	Stoney Creek Battery Heritage Preserve		4.352
21	Fort Frederick Heritage Preserve		3.875
22	Tillman Sand Ridge Heritage Preserve		860.565
23	Childsbury Heritage Preserve		99.270
24	South Bluff Heritage Preserve		26.257
22	Tillman Sand Ridge Heritage Preserve		461.764

Appendix C:

The Trust for Public Land's Current Focus Areas

THE
TRUST
for
PUBLIC
LAND



Conserving Land
for People

March 26, 2004

Rocky Browder
Regional Permit Administrator
Ocean and Coastal Resource Management
104 Parker Drive
Beaufort, SC 29906

Dear Rocky,

We sincerely appreciate your and Marian's time while meeting with us on the 16th. We look forward to working closely with the OCRM to secure CELCP funding for important conservation projects in South Carolina.

Per our conversation, we have attached a brief document that describes the Trust for Public Land (TPL) in general, our presence and achievements in the state of South Carolina, and our current areas of focus in the state that well match the goals of the CELCP. Please review the document and let us know if we can help in any other way in developing the state conservation program for the CELCP.

We thank you again for meeting with us and are eager to initiate CELCP funding for our coastal South Carolina projects.

Sincerely,

Slade Gleaton
Coastal Program Director

CC: Marian Page

21 Burns Lane
Suite 200
Charleston, SC 29401

Phone: 843-853-5880
Fax: 843-853-3112

www.tpl.org

Introduction

The Trust for Public Land (TPL) is a national nonprofit organization that conserves land for people to enjoy as parks, community gardens, historic sites, rural lands, and other natural places, ensuring livable communities for generations to come. Since 1972, TPL has worked with willing landowners, community groups, and national, state, and local agencies to complete 2,708 land conservation projects in 46 states, protecting more than 1.9 million acres. TPL has helped states and communities craft and pass 192 ballot measures, generating over \$35 billion in new conservation-related funding. Protecting the places people care about—from inner city to wilderness—is at the heart of TPL's work.

TPL in South Carolina

TPL has been active in South Carolina since the late 1980's and opened our Charleston office in November 2002, after nearly a year of planning and consultation with the community. TPL has acquired over 12,500 acres throughout the state, including the acquisition of critical, natural lands at Winyah Bay, Congaree National Park and along the Chattooga River. In addition, TPL has protected important lands related to historic Fort Sumter and Fort Moultrie in Charleston, and most recently, lands at the headwaters of the Okatie River in Beaufort County. While TPL's Charlotte, North Carolina staff handles projects in South Carolina's upstate, our Charleston office is concentrated on conserving land in the rapidly growing coastal areas of South Carolina and Georgia.

The Following projects have been completed in South Carolina:

- In 2001, TPL purchased a parcel adjacent to the Fort Sumter National Monument visitor center and overlooking Charleston Harbor. The land was threatened by development, but TPL stepped in to purchase the parcel and transfer it to the National Park Service. The lot now is now part of an extensive downtown waterfront trail.
- When landowners began construction of a new house only feet away from the walls of Fort Moultrie National Monument on Sullivans Island, TPL came to the rescue. We purchased the parcel, stopped construction, and preserved the integrity of the historic military landmark.
- In 1987, TPL purchased and transferred a large addition to Congaree Swamp National Monument. This addition provided further protection for the nation's largest tract of old-growth, bottomland hardwood forest, which was recently designated South Carolina's first National Park.
- Since 1991, TPL has acquired and conveyed 2,335 acres of land within the Chattooga National Wild and Scenic River watershed into the Sumter National Forest. Since 1995, we have focused on Long Creek, a major South Carolina tributary to the river, where we have protected 827 acres and are currently negotiating for an additional 90 acres.
- In 1996, TPL played a key role in the purchase of 7,600 acres in the Winyah Bay area. Those lands and others were later established as the Waccamaw National Wildlife Refuge, a haven for estuarine animals.

- In December 2003, TPL helped Beaufort County acquire an 82-acre tract on the headwaters of the Okatie River, preventing a massive development project that would have worsened traffic and degraded water quality in the area.

TPL and the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP)

As TPL continues to work throughout South Carolina, many opportunities for our involvement with the CELCP are apparent. Our broad mission of conserving land for people allows us to work in a great variety of landscapes and scenarios, and many of TPL's current and potential projects well address the goals of the CELCP. Below are descriptions of our current coastal and estuarine focus areas and project interests in South Carolina:

- **Beaufort County**—In November of 2000, the voters of Beaufort County approved a \$40 million land preservation bond referendum. The referendum authorizes County Council to issue bonds, which will be paid with tax funds, to conserve land in the rapidly growing coastal county of Beaufort. This measure is the first local greenspace funding measure in all of South Carolina, and its success could set a precedent for future conservation measures in the state.

The Program provides for conservation of two distinct but related types of land: critical lands and rural lands. Critical lands are those that possess unique or important characteristics as defined by the Land Preservation Board. Rural lands are those areas of Beaufort County that are zoned, or designated, Rural Service Area or Resource Conservation Area. A fuller description of the Rural and Critical Lands Program criteria is attached as Appendix A.

The Trust for Public Land entered into an agreement with Beaufort County in October 2003 to administer the Rural and Critical Lands Program. For the first six months of the agreement, TPL's Charleston, SC office will work to acquire previously identified conservation priorities in Beaufort as well as create a Greenprint, or conservation plan, of the area. During the second six months of the agreement, after the Greenprint has been completed, TPL will pursue acquisition of the new conservation priorities identified through the Greenprinting process. TPL and Beaufort County will negotiate continuation of TPL's services nine months into the term of the agreement.

- **Charleston County**-- We are working to advance plans for local greenspace funding in Charleston. TPL initiated the greenprinting process in Charleston in 2002 and was instrumental in promoting a half-cent sales tax initiative, which was approved by voters in November 2002 and would have brought more than \$221 million to the county for land acquisition. However, a challenge mounted by anti-tax activists brought the new tax measure ultimately to the state Supreme Court, which in August 2003 overturned the vote. The court's ruling was a major setback for the county. Beyond the need for greenspace funding, the new tax would have

provided vital funds to operate Charleston's nearly bankrupt mass transit system and alleviate traffic congestion.

TPL is continuing to work with local government and community leaders to help shape a public finance measure that will address the community's urgent growth management needs. The TPL Charleston office has been participating in a local task force addressing the development of a new financing measure, and that measure will go before voters in the upcoming November elections. If supported by voters once again, the measure could provide land acquisition funds as soon as 2005.

- **The Savannah River Area/Jasper County**— The Jasper County area, situated along the Savannah River between Beaufort County and the City of Savannah, GA, has been a sleepy farming community for many years. The population of this community has increased by 34% over the past 10 years as people have left the busy confines of Beaufort and Savannah in search of a quieter, rural locale. The community has begun to discuss ways to manage the rapid growth and may provide TPL with an opportunity to work on specific projects or help to raise local greenspace funding. The southernmost reach of the Savannah River is home to federally recognized natural areas, including the Savannah River National Wildlife Refuge, where TPL has had past involvement.
- **The Grand Strand Area**—We are researching conservation needs and opportunities in Horry and Georgetown Counties, two areas grappling with growth issues. This part of South Carolina is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the east, and we believe TPL's approach to Greenprint planning and land preservation could play a key role in helping coastal communities like these guide future growth and protect some of their remaining natural areas and open spaces.

Appendix D:

Acreages Preserved by additional Conservation Efforts within the CELCP Boundary

Atlantic Coast Conservancy	
Beaufort County Land Trust	10,051
Congaree Land Trust	20,452 (majority outside of CELCP)
Edisto Island Open Land Trust	1,166
Charleston County Comprehensive Greenbelt Plan	3,860.80 (does not include others acreage)
Community Land Trust	Unknown
Ducks Unlimited	158,031 (entire state)
Kiawah Island Natural Habitat Conservancy	324
Lord Berkeley Conservation Trust	15,738
Lowcountry Open Land Trust	83,000
Mount Pleasant Land Conservancy	192
North American Land Trust	Unknown
Pee Dee Land Trust	9,384 (majority outside of CELCP)
The Nature Conservancy	Unknown
The Trust for Public Land	Unknown

Appendix E

List of Current CELCP Review Committee Members, April 4, 2011

Curtis Joyner, Manager of Coastal Projects, SCDHEC/OCRM

Elizabeth von Kolnitz, Program Coordinator, SCDHEC/OCRM

Marian Page, Federal Grants Coordinator, SCDHEC/OCRM

Emily Cope, Assistant Director, SCDNR

Phil Maier, Coastal Reserves Manager (ACE Basin NERR), SCDNR

Wendy Allen, Reserve Manager (NI-WB NERR)

Anna Nygaard-Ghi, Director of Stewardship, Lowcountry Open Land Trust

Sara Hartman, The Nature Conservancy

Slade Gleaton, The Trust for Public Land

Appendix F

SCDHEC-OCRM “REACH” Criteria For Priority Ranking of Prospective Lands for Acquisition

SCDHEC-OCRM Reach Criteria: Land Acquisition Priority Ranking will be based upon level of importance to the overall mission of the NOAA CELC Program requirements and the primary focus area of the S. C. CELC Program.

Each criterion is worth up to 5 points.

ECOLOGICAL – Primary requirement

Potential of a parcel to provide habitat for diverse types of wildlife and fisheries:

Reach criteria	Points
Has excellent habitat or habitat potential for species, i.e. fish, mammals, other resident species, birds, etc.	
Provides habitat opportunities for migratory species.	
Provides for connective habitats, corridors, habitat linkages, or reduces biological isolation.	
Provides habitat restoration possibilities.	
Has unique habitat that function for flood and storm control, sediment filtration, or contaminant filtration.	
Have wetlands to be protected or restored, saltwater and freshwater.	
Possesses frontage along rivers, streams, or marine shores, or is within the 100 year flood plain.	
Has designated scenic-river, stream, and wetland, marine shores.	
Provides opportunities for the use of buffers.	
Possesses other types of significant land types, including bays, bogs, depressions, meadows, and ponds.	
The site is near other protected wetlands.	
Presence of surface watershed, ground water aquifer for public water supply	
Presence of or near areas with rare, threatened or endangered species	
Provides water quality benefits, i.e. groundwater recharging or filtering of surface runoff.	
Total Points (of a potential 70 points)	

Property types to be ranked from highest to lowest:

Reach criteria	Points
Provides natural/unconverted lands or wetlands	
Improves altered lands or ecologic function of wetlands	
Provides farmland/forests as a working landscape	
The Property is historic or culturally significant	
Shorelines are present, either ocean, estuarine or freshwater	
Provides parkland or other recreational use	
Total Points (of a potential 30 points)	

Property acreage or size

Reach criteria	Points
100 acres and more	
10 to 100 acres	
0 to 10 acres	
Total Points (of a potential 15 points)	

Water Quality Benefits

Reach criteria	Points
Maintains natural filtering function and contains pervious surfaces	
Ability to assist in groundwater recharge	
Presence of headwaters	
Proximity to nearest waterway: less than .25 miles	
.25 to .5 miles	
greater than .5 miles	
Total Points (of a potential 30 points)	

CONSERVATION - Primary requirement

The extent to which the purchase will enhance efforts to conserve significant resources or habitats

Reach criteria	Points
Protects or enhances existing natural areas.	
Protects existing recreational areas.	
Includes ecological communities that are dwindling or are uncommon.	
Contains the last remaining undeveloped area within a suburban or urban area with potential to provide valuable open space.	
Supports ongoing conservation efforts of local, state, or non-profit entities.	
Supports comprehensive plan or watershed management plans goals for the region.	
Presence of endangered or threatened species and habitats, both federal and state designations.	
Presence of habitats that could support endangered or threatened species, or support further development of additional habitat.	
Provides quality areas in a rural location that is threatened by development.	
Borders other protected lands and managed lands.	
Total Points (of a potential 50 points)	

HISTORICAL / CULTURAL – Primary requirement

The effect the project may have on preserving the distinctive ways of living built up by a group of people or to the shared knowledge and values of a society or a group. The project preserves historic or archeological resources, as designated by both Federal and State criteria, i.e.

Reach criteria	Points
Protects or enhances protections of historic buildings	
Protects or enhances protections of historic structures	
Protects or enhances protections of historic objects	
Protects or enhances protections of historic sites (battlefields or other)	
Protects or enhances protections of historic districts with significant history, architecture, archeology	
Reduces visual impacts to historic or pastoral landscapes	
Reduces visual impacts to historic or cultural resources	
Total Points (of a potential 35 points)	

Geographic Areas of Particular Concern, current land use and community benefits

Reach Criteria	Points
Appreciable size and scale	
Provides view corridors	
Lessens traffic	
Provides for growth containment	
Resolution of land use conflicts	
Property is located in a rural area that is threatened by development.	
Total Points (of a potential 30 points)	

Area of Potential Effects

Reach criteria	Points
Purchase of a property would protect these values that exist on an adjacent parcel of property	
Purchase would prevent physical changes to the area	
Purchase could be direct or indirect	
Total Points (of a potential 15 points)	

CONVERSION THREAT – Primary requirement

Parcel is threatened by conversion by introduction of infrastructure that could lead to residential or commercial development or subdivision into smaller parcels.

Reach Criteria	Points
Conversion imminent within a certain time frame (10- years)	
Parcel is currently on the open market,	
Parcel is to be subdivided	
Future infrastructure expansion imminent	
Loss of suitable management options	
Changing land regulations/development guidelines	

Sufficient size for standalone use, or it supports rural land use in conjunction with adjacent parcels	
Provides connection between appropriate land uses	
Adjacent to other protected lands.	
Total Points (of a potential 45 points)	

Suitability or threat of development based on land types

Reach Criteria	Points
75-100%	
50-75%	
25-50%	
0-25%	
Total Points (of a potential 20 points)	

Available infrastructure

Reach Criteria	Points
Presence of existing roads	
Currently accessible in addition to existing roads	
Presence of water service	
Presence of sewer service	
Total Points (of a potential 20 points)	

Market availability

Reach Criteria	Points
Willing seller, w/ contract or option	
Currently listed for sale	
Under market consideration	
Not for sale, under prior protected status	

Total Points (of a potential 20 points)	
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RECREATIONAL – Primary requirement

The potential of a parcel to provide the public with outdoor recreational potential including hunting, boating, kayaking, fishing, hiking, birding, horseback riding, wildlife observation, and other types of recreation.

Reach Criteria	Points
Externally accessible to public by automobile	
Internally accessible by vehicle, foot, boat, bicycle	
Potential for hiking, cycling, horseback trails	
Potential for water based recreational value	
Unique habitat, geologic features, wildlife population, or other special recreational attraction	
Hunting enhancement capabilities, to provide food and cover for wildlife	
Located in area with limited public recreation	
Will connect with adjacent publicly accessible sites	
Will provide food and cover for wildlife	
Total Points (of a potential 45 points)	

AESTHETICS – Primary requirement

The potential for this project to enhance natural and scenic values (on both a local or regional scale) and the potential for a property to have characteristics that provide for valuable aesthetic view sheds.

Reach Criteria	Points
Add to scenic views	
Add to existing trail system	
Water access points	
Adjacent to other protected lands	
Preserves scenic qualities	
Borders a scenic highway	

Amount of frontage along areas of aesthetic value	
Panoramic view of other scenic resources	
Total Points (of a potential 40 points)	

ACQUIRABILITY – Technical requirement

The ability to easily acquire the parcel at an affordable price.

Reach Criteria	Points
Willing seller	
Protection of the property is supported by key stakeholders	
Purchase would indirectly protect life and property: keeps dev out of 100 yr flood plain or high coastal hazard area	
Reasonable purchase price	
Property possesses a clear title	
No legal or social complications	
Total Points (of a potential 30 points)	

Price of purchase

Reach Criteria	Points
Bargain sale	
Partnering opportunities	
Availability of other funding	
Positive debt restructuring arrangement	
Total Points (of a potential 20 points)	

Public benefit

Reach Criteria	Points
Lack of recreation, open space, habitat in region	
Access for historically underserved community	

Access in highly urban area	
Total Points (of a potential 15 points)	

MANAGIBILITY – Technical requirement

The extent to which the property could be effectively managed to ensure its protection in perpetuity.

Reach Criteria	Points
In a area of limited public recreation	
Limited resource protection in place	
Is it accessible?	
No or limited restrictions on management activities such as burning, timber harvest	
Total Points (of a potential 20 points)	

Allows for proper stewardship, conservation principles, best management practices, such as:

Reach Criteria	Points
Erosion control	
Nutrient management	
Long term management options	
Relationship to publicly used resources	
Total Points (of a potential 20 points)	

Cost of Management

Reach Criteria	Points
Easily accessible Location	
Beneficial topography	
Beneficial vegetative community	
Total Points (of a potential 15 points)	

Management Needs

Reach Criteria	Points
Active management needed	
Minimal management needed	
Stewardship strategy developed	
Dedicated source of funding for management	
3rd party stewardship agreement	
Adjoining land uses compatible	
No reservation of building sites by current owner	
Presence of existing leases	
Total Points (of a potential 40 points)	

Special Considerations

Parcel has special attributes that are not accounted for elsewhere. Examples include but are not limited to:

Reach criteria	Points
Possesses other ecological values	
Low-cost per acre	
No other public land is available	
Had desirable size and shape	
Established roads, wildlife openings, etc.	
Near other areas of conservation efforts	
Total Points (of a potential 30 points)	

HAZARDS

Are there potential hazards located within the project area that could either be a detriment to its purchase, or whose purchase could facilitate its remediation in some way?

Reach criteria	Points
Contamination potential	
Presence of and percentage	

Non-hazardous waste present	
Has investigation been done	
Presence of and planned remediation completed with information on restoration possibilities	
Total Points (of a potential 25 points)	
Total Eligibility Points (of a potential 680 points)	

SOUTH CAROLINA'S ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The eligible project must:

- be located in a coastal or estuarine area that has been designated as a part of South Carolina's NOAA approved CELC Program Plan (Figure 1).
- provide at a minimum, a 1:1 match in funding.
- be held in public ownership and will provide conservation in perpetuity.
- provide access to the general public and will provide other public benefit, as appropriate and will be consistent with resource protection.
- protect important coastal and estuarine areas that have significant REACH values.
- is threatened by conversion from its natural or recreational state to other uses.
- can be effectively managed and protected.
- directly advance the goals, objectives, or the implementation of state coastal management plans or programs, NERR management plans
- is consistent with state's approved coastal management plan
- total points equals 70% or above of total number of eligibility criteria