

Annual Report

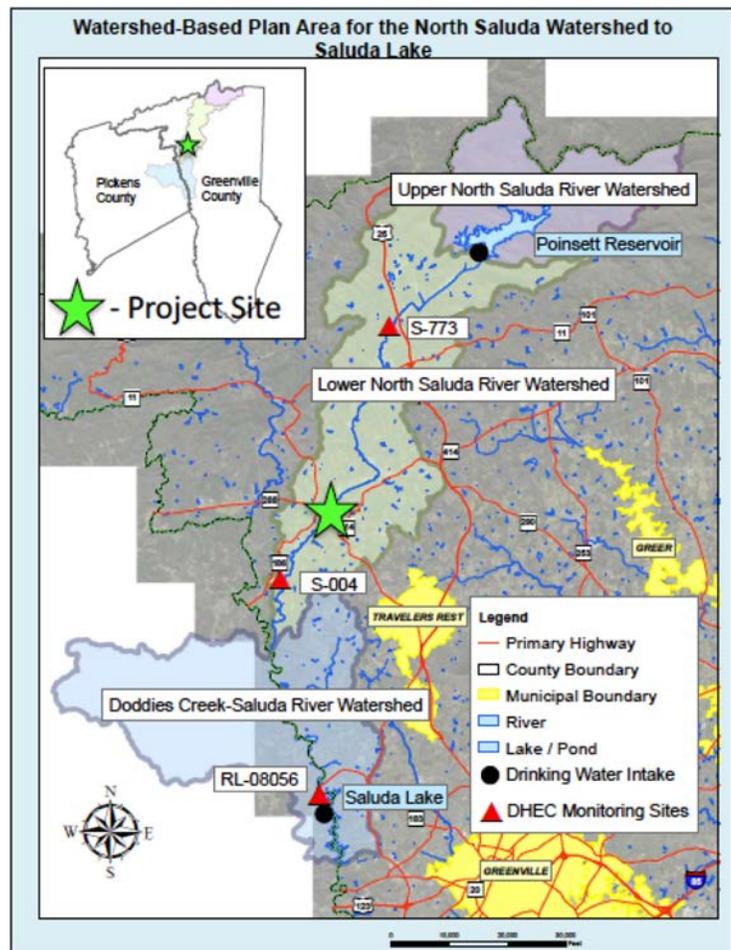
May 2017

*Exciting things are happening at Save Our Saluda (SOS)!
Thank you for your support!!*

Watershed Planning Project for the North Saluda and Saluda Lake

Save Our Saluda was awarded a grant from the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control to complete a watershed-based plan to address the problem of sediment in the North Saluda River downstream to Saluda Lake. The project will lay the groundwork for implementation of best management practices (BMPs) to control sediment runoff. Sediment is a significant pollutant affecting water quality and aquatic habitat in both the river and the lake, which provide drinking water to the greater Greenville and Easley areas. The upper part of the lake was dredged only five years ago at a cost of over six million dollars and is already filling in with sediment again, affecting recreation, aquatic habitat, and water storage capacity. The following cooperating partners are providing financial and technical support for the project:

- Easley Combined Utilities
- Clemson Cooperative Extension
- Furman University
- Greenville County
- Greenville County Soil and Water Conservation District
- Greenville Water
- Mountain Bridge Trout Unlimited
- Naturaland Trust
- Renewable Water Resources
- South Carolina Department of Natural Resources
- South Carolina Rural Water Association



Agroecosystem Management Project

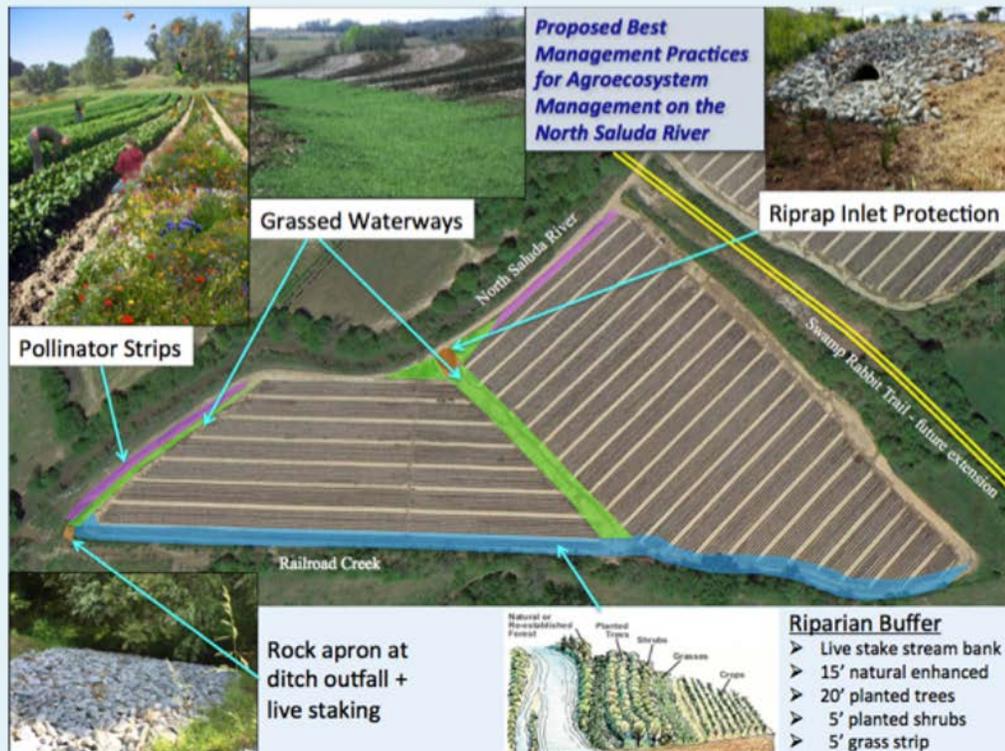
Through a grant from Michelin and in partnership with TreesGreenville, SOS will facilitate implementation of the first phase of an Agroecosystem Management Project on the North Saluda River near Marietta to demonstrate BMPs for sustainable agricultural and ecosystem management.

The project is part of the larger watershed planning effort and will include BMPs to

- Control sediment runoff,
- Stabilize streambanks,
- Restore riparian areas and improve wildlife and pollinator habitat, and
- Protect downstream water quality and aquatic habitat.

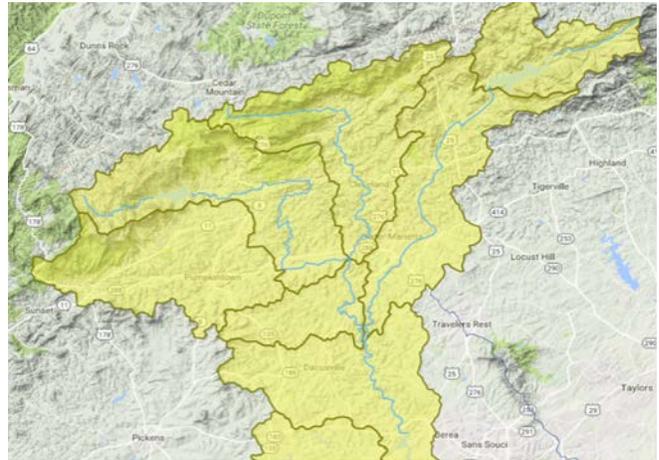
BMPs will be designed with current concepts of agroforestry and agroecosystem management in mind. Streambank and riparian areas will be restored with native woody species; grassed swales and rock filters will be installed in ditches to help filter sediment from runoff; and pollinator strips will be installed along farm fields to increase nectar and pollen sources for pollinator insects throughout the growing season. The North Saluda project offers an ideal location for demonstration as it is situated along the future Marietta extension of the Swamp Rabbit Trail.

PHASE I – Railroad Creek Restoration and Lower Field Stabilization



Interactive Mapping Project

SOS is developing an updated version of the Saluda River Watershed interactive map. Users will be able to zoom and pan to effectively “see” the watershed. The interactive map will be a useful tool to enhance environmental educational experiences and for recreational and watershed planning. Funding for the map is provided by grants from Bosch and The Greenville Zoo.



River Clean-ups

Volunteers from SOS and Foothills Paddling Club removed over 100 bags of trash, a large section of deck, tires, electronics, mattresses and rugs from the Middle Saluda River during our spring and fall river clean-ups. Thank you to our awesome volunteers!!



State and Regional Involvement

SOS is actively engaged in water issues facing our state and region. SOS is a member of the Leadership Team of South Carolina Rivers Forever (SCR4E), a state-wide network of river organizations working to address priority issues to protect South Carolina’s water resources. Priority initiatives and issues include involvement in the upcoming state water planning process, hydrologic alteration and impairment, dam safety legislation, riparian and floodplain protection, and promotion of policies and practices for healthy and sustainable river flows.

Coordinated advocacy by the state’s conservation community is essential to effectively engage in these critical issues so that outcomes result in improved state water management policies that better protect rivers and their natural flows.

- South Carolina Rivers Forever

SOS’s involvement with SCR4E is supported in part through a grant from American Rivers. SOS was also awarded a mini-grant from River Network to help guide development of a Southeast Flows Peer Learning Network.

Other Watershed News

Coal Ash Removal

Under a settlement negotiated by the Southern Environmental Law Center on behalf of Upstate Forever and Save Our Saluda, Duke Energy has removed over 650,000 tons of coal ash from unlined, leaking pits on the Saluda River near Williamston, South Carolina. The 2015 settlement requires Duke Energy to remove all its coal ash stored beside the Saluda River at Duke Energy's W.S. Lee facility in Anderson County. Duke Energy has now removed over 15 percent of the 3.6 million tons of coal that it had stored at its Saluda River facility. - **Southern Environmental Law Center**



This first step makes this coal ash site safer and removes ash from unlined old pits right on the banks of the Saluda. As this cleanup moves forward, coal ash pollution of the Saluda River will drop. - Frank Holleman, SOS board member and senior attorney for the Southern Environmental Law Center

Conservation Bank

The South Carolina Conservation Bank has facilitated the protection of the watershed and headwaters of the South Saluda River, including the Old Camp Spearhead site, lands along Highway 11, and beautiful mountain properties adjoining the Ashmore Heritage Trust Preserve – which are open for public use and trout fishing. The Bank is helping to protect forested mountain lands that include the headwaters of the Oolenoy River in Pickens County. The Bank has also provided funding for protecting one of the gems of the Middle Saluda watershed, Green Mountain, one of the most botanically rich sites in the area. It also helped fund protection of agricultural lands in the watershed of the North Saluda, which preserves the access to the Swamp Rabbit Trail into Marietta and also will help protect the waters of the North Saluda.

The Conservation Bank was created 14 years ago to safeguard our drinking water, preserve our history and culture, and protect our precious natural resources. It's the only statewide source of public funding available for willing landowners and their land trust partners to voluntarily conserve important SC lands, and it will shut down if not reauthorized by June of 2018.

– **Conservation Voters of South Carolina**