



BEAUFORT COUNTY  
THE RURAL & CRITICAL LANDS PRESERVATION PROGRAM

“A DECADE OF CONSERVATION”



# BACKGROUND – RURAL AND CRITICAL LANDS PROGRAM

- Began in 1998 on a “pay as you go” basis.
- Program focus was initially rural in scope
- 2000 Beaufort County voters approved a \$40 million bond issue supported by a 2 mil tax
- 2001 Beaufort County hired the Nature Conservancy to manage the program.
- 2003 County hired the Trust for Public Land to manage the program





# Objectives

- Preserve Low country environment
- Defer infrastructure costs
- Reduce traffic
- Control growth
- Encourage private land conservation
- Secure passive parks
- Leverage local dollars



Photos by Ed Funk

# Rural and Critical Lands Preservation Highlights

- Conservation of more than 17,000 acres throughout the County
- Island protection in the Whale Branch and ACE Basin totaling nearly 13,000 acres.
- Restricting development of over 5500 acres in partnership with the Marine Corps Air Station.
- Preservation of the rural character of nearly 500 acres of farmland on St. Helena Island.
- Preservation of nearly 3.5 miles of land fronting on the headwaters of the Okatie River.
- Outstanding Land Conservation Award – NACO - 2009



*Photo by Darcy Kiefel*



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**Rural and Critical Lands Preservation**  
The Following are some major projects to illustrate  
Program Accomplishments:

# Ulmer Family Easements

- Series of 4 conservation easements
- 890 acres in unincorporated Bluffton
- Limits to 18 homes out of potential 2,600 units
- Funding by
  - RCLP & Town of Hilton Head Island





# McLeod Farms



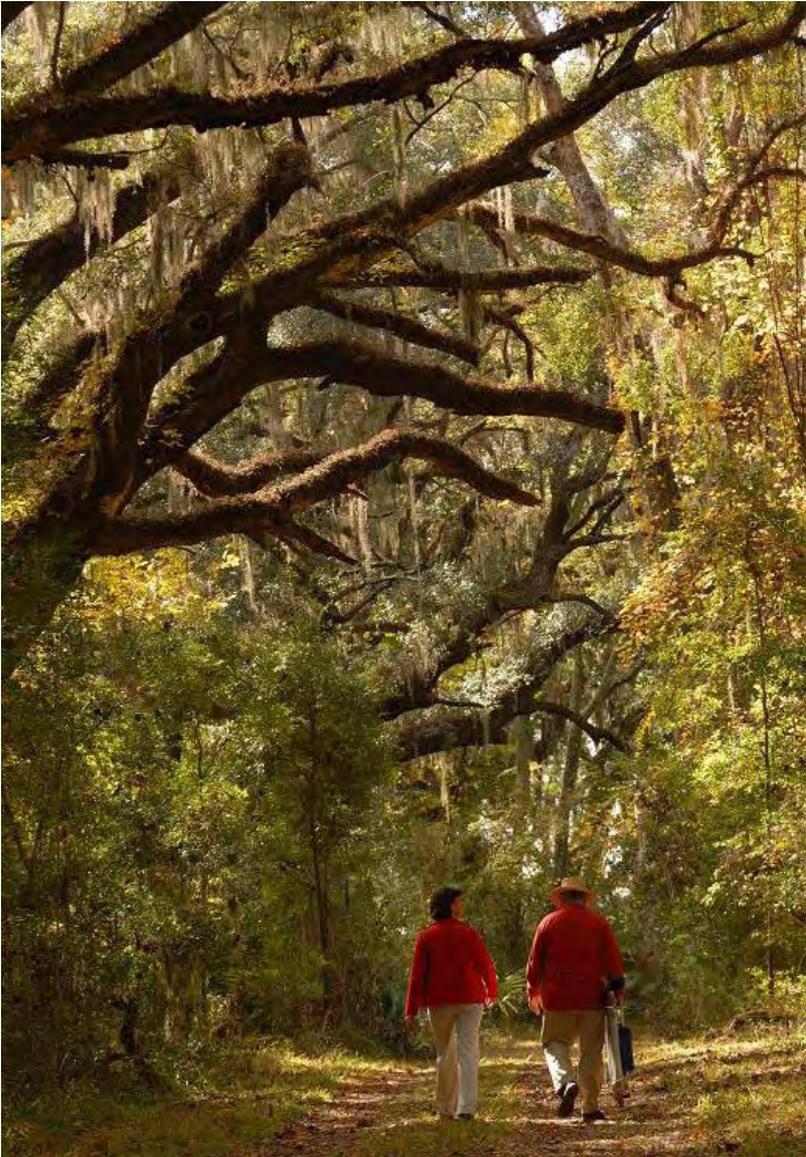
- 375 acre conservation easement
- Greatly limits potential home sites
- 98 acre future park site
  - Donation
- Resources:
  - Wildlife habitat
  - Water quality
  - Land use buffer
- Funding by
  - RCLP
  - MCAS Beaufort
  - SC Conservation Bank

- Other Program Accomplishments
  - Partnerships with local, state and Federal funding sources
  - Elimination of more than 7600 residential units
  - Elimination of more than 1.6 Million sq. ft. of commercial space
  - Reduction of more than 95,000 vehicle trips per day...nearly 30,000 at peak rush hour



# PASSIVE PARKS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY

- PARKS NOW OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
  - Bluffton Oyster Company Park
  - Pinckney Colony Preserve
  - Ft. Fremont Preserve
  - Altamaha Towne Heritage Preserve
  - The Green
- PARK SITES FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT
  - Okatie Regional Preserve
  - New Riverside Wetlands Preserve
  - Crystal Lake
  - Widgeon Point



# SUMMARY OF PROGRAM ACHIEVEMENTS

## PROJECTS

- 17,338 ACRES CONSERVED
- 62 PROJECTS
  - THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY
- 15 CONSERVATION EASEMENTS
- 47 FEE PURCHASES

## DOLLARS INVESTED

- \$74,353,265 COUNTY FUNDS
- LAND VALUE
  - \$131,532,625 Appraised Value
  - FOR EACH \$1 COUNTY FUNDS INVESTED - LAND VALUED AT \$1.76 ACQUIRED

**A PROUD ACHIEVEMENT!!**

