

south carolina update

from the Executive Director



FRANCIS BEIDLER FOREST SWAMP © APRIL STALLINGS/AUDUBON SOCIETY SOUTH CAROLINA

Partnership and Vision Protect Beidler Forest

The Francis Beidler Forest was established in 1969 as a collaborative effort between The Nature Conservancy and The National Audubon Society to protect approximately 3,400 acres. Since that time, the secluded sanctuary has grown to 12,500 acres through land acquired by the two organizations.



The Francis Beidler Forest is located within Four Holes Swamp, which stretches 62 miles from Calhoun County to the Edisto River. Found in the northwestern reach of the ACE Basin, it is a vital water source to the

Basin, a pristine 1.6 million-acre coastal watershed spreading downstream from the Four Holes Swamp. At its heart, approximately 1,700 acres support the largest stand of virgin growth bald cypress and tupelo gum trees on the Earth. In fact, no commercial logging has ever taken place in this portion of the old-growth forest, and tree core data estimates the age of the oldest trees at more than 1,500 years.

Designated as a Globally Important Bird Area by the American Bird Conservancy, the Francis Beidler Forest supports some of the densest breeding populations of migratory songbirds in the eastern United States, including high concentrations of such

neotropical migrants as Northern parula, hooded warbler, wood thrush, and white-eyed vireo.

However, the Francis Beidler Forest is threatened by residential and commercial development as counties in the South Carolina Lowcountry continue to grow at a rapid rate. In fact, the Charleston metro area is predicted to be at the Forest's front door by 2020. Other pressures on the sanctuary include threats of invasion from non-native plant and animal species. All of these threats contribute to habitat fragmentation and destruction, compromising the integrity of the ancient Francis Beidler Forest and Four Holes Swamp.

The Francis Beidler Forest project is a key element in The Nature Conservancy's unprecedented effort to protect 100,000 additional acres of land over the next five years. In September 2003, The Nature Conservancy purchased and transferred another 900 acres to the Audubon Society to be managed as part of the Francis Beidler Forest. This year, we hope to continue to add to the Sanctuary through acquisitions and easements. By working with Audubon and other partners, and with the support of our members and donors, The Nature Conservancy intends to continue to conserve the swamp's habitat for future generations.



HEMLOCK TREE © EDWARD FRANK

The **mission** of The Nature Conservancy is to **preserve the plants, animals, and natural communities** that represent the diversity of life on Earth by **protecting the lands and waters** they need to survive.

WHITE-EYED VIREO © PIERRE HOWARD



Hostile Aliens: Responding to Invasive Species in the Southern Blue Ridge

Nature is interdependent. Ecosystems develop and evolve over eons resulting in a natural system in which each species contributes in its own way. This balance yields the tremendous diversity of nature, but it also leaves species vulnerable. Introducing a foreign species to an ecosystem, one adapted to the rhythms of another place, can cause chaos.

Unfortunately, invasive species contribute directly to the decline of rare plants and animals. In the United States alone, more than 4,500 foreign species have taken root over the past century. All told, invasive species are estimated to cost \$137 billion annually in losses to agriculture, forestry, fisheries and the maintenance of open waterways in the United States.

Invasives Hit Home

Invasive species are one of the top threats facing the Southern Blue Ridge Escarpment. South Carolina's two hemlock species, the Eastern and Carolina hemlocks, provide critical winter habitat for many animals and provide year round shade that keep mountain streams cool for trout. However, the aesthetic, economic, and ecologic contributions of South Carolina's hemlocks are being damaged by an invasive pest called the hemlock woolly adelgid. The hemlock woolly adelgid drains the sap from hemlock shoots, causing premature defoliation, decreased tree vigor and even death to the tree.

The Nature Conservancy is working to combat invasive species like the hemlock woolly adelgid through prevention, education and direct eradication. Building on years of experience in invasive species management, The Nature Conservancy created the Invasive Species Initiative, led by Dr. John Randall, to address this urgent and pervasive threat to biological diversity in South Carolina and around the world.

The Nature Conservancy of South Carolina, in partnership with the South Carolina Native Plants Society, is pleased to host a presentation by John Randall about managing invasive species in our natural areas. Please join us in the Upstate for this informative presentation.

Save the Date
7 p.m., May 17, 2005
Verne Smith Auditorium
at Greenville Tech
Greenville
Light refreshments at 6:00 p.m.
Presentation followed by
dessert and discussion
RSVP to Monte Parsons at
mparsons@tnc.org or
(803) 254-9049 ext. 13

Leave a Legacy

What better Legacy is there to leave than your commitment to protecting this great Earth for generations to come? Contact us at scgifts@tnc.org for information about naming The Nature Conservancy in your will or estate plan.