

# Richland County Conservation Program

---

## Use, Maintenance & Operation of Richland County's Conservation Lands




### CONSERVATION LANDS MANAGEMENT MANUAL

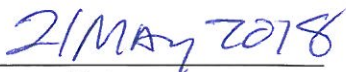
Adopted April 16, 2018

**EXECUTION PAGE**


*Use, Maintenance and Operations of Richland County's Conservation Lands* was approved by the Richland County Conservation Commission. By our signatures affixed below, we confirm that it fairly and accurately represents the management of Richland County Conservation Lands at the time of execution.

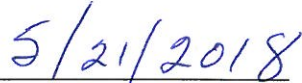
For: Conservation Director

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Quinton Epps

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

For: Richland Conservation Commission Chairman

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Carol Kososki

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **Introduction**

*Use, Maintenance and Operations of Richland County's Conservation Lands* is the framework for how Richland County manages its conservation lands. The manual is a decision-making process to move the county's Conservation Lands Program into an era of stewardship, tourism development, and appropriate public access and use.

*Use, Maintenance and Operations of Richland County's Conservation Lands* focuses on a rational and organized approach to property use and development.

## **Report Organization**

This report is divided into three primary sections each describing a different aspect of the Conservation Lands Program.

**Section 1:** *Conservation Lands Classifications* is the first section of this report. Proper stewardship is based upon an understanding of a property's characteristics and limitations. The information in this section helps in the categorization of each property consistent with good management.

**Section 2:** *Conservation Lands Management* outlines how Richland County manages and develops the Public Use of the Program. Sound program management rather than property management is the focus of this section.

**Section 3:** The *Attachments* offer further details into issues contained in the manual.

## Section 1. Conservation Lands and Classifications

---

Each conservation land has unique ecological, historical, cultural, or recreational values important to the people of Richland County. Proper stewardship of these unique values is the common goal so that the resources demonstrate a good value to the taxpayers.

Each conservation land was acquired by Richland County to protect, interpret, or celebrate an aspect of the community. A list of each county-owned conservation land and its classification is contained in Attachment 1.

### **Land Classification System**

A critical first step to any stewardship program is reaching a firm understanding of the property and its assets. The classification system reflects Richland County Conservation Commission's (RCCC) planning for the property and the sensitivity of the resource. It defines the types of properties and describes the intensity of future use of that property.

#### Category 1: Recreation Areas

Recreation Areas are defined as places where there is recreation focusing on the enjoyment of one's natural surroundings. In determining appropriate recreational uses of passive parks, the promotion and development of resource-based activities such as education and interpretation, hiking, fishing, camping, hunting, boating, gardening, bicycling, nature studies, horse-back riding, visiting historic sites, etc., shall be the predominate measure for passive park utilization.

#### Category 2: Preserves

Preserves are acquired to protect a unique resource or to further another ecological goal. The sensitive characteristics of these properties may limit some recreational use. These properties may be used in combination with other projects, for example a greenway.

#### Category 3: Historic Site

Historic sites are buildings or properties that are in public ownership because of their connection to a historic person or event, or that reflects a period of cultural significance to Richland County. Public access should be encouraged that is in keeping with the preservation and interpretive goal of this classification.

#### Category 4: Conservation Easements

The Conservation Division also protects land through conservation easements that may be donated or may involve the purchase of development rights. No public use is generally allowed on properties subject to a conservation easement and the county assumes little management responsibilities but enforces the terms of the easement.

## Section 2. Conservation Land Management

---

### **Stewardship**

All conservation lands shall be managed according to the following stewardship principals adopted by the RCCC.

Sustainability The most important stewardship principal is to promote sustainability and to safeguard conservation values on those lands. The Program hopes to go farther and restore environmental functions on some parcels.

Multi-Use Another stewardship principal is to add value to conservation lands by promoting their multi-uses while protecting conservation values. An important part of the program development is to ensure users have adequate access.

Revenue Generation A third goal is to generate revenue from the land in an ecologically sensitive manner. These revenues can be from timbering, ecotourism, agricultural or concessionaire leases, use rentals, or fees and are used for the agenda of the RCCC.

### **Administration**

There are many people involved in the management of conservation lands. RCCC has an established process to define responsibility for each level of administration.

### **Records Management**

Property ownership normally comes with a set of records including but not limited to the deed, an appraisal, survey, natural resource information, and analysis. There should be two sets of conservation lands property files: one set to be held by Administration and one by Conservation Division staff.

Accurate mapping information is critical from a programmatic standpoint and can ensure against inappropriate activities on conservation lands. Conservation Division staff will send an annual update to the GIS Department so the County GIS layer can be updated.

### **Risk Management and Security**

Conservation lands require proper security to ensure there is no damage to the conservation values and that properties do not become a liability to the taxpayers.

Gates and keys: The most basic security measure is to control access. Regulating access allows the county a measure of control over inappropriate uses of property. Each conservation land will have secure gating with an organized system of keying.

Boundary Posting and Signage: All properties will have posted boundaries, clearly identifying property as belonging to Richland County. Properties to be accessed by the public should have clearly displayed use rules.

Inspections and Enforcement: There will be regular inspections of conservation lands on a schedule adopted by RCCC to prevent dumping, poaching and trespassing. A protocol for enforcing rules on conservation lands shall be included in the management plan for each property. Conservation Division staff will strive for a good relationship with law enforcement agencies.

### **Resource Management Plans**

Each conservation land is unique and is managed according to a Resource Management Plan promoting RCCC's sustainability principals. Once a property is developed for long-term public use a more detailed management plan shall be developed.

A template for Resource Management Plans is included as Attachment 2.

### **Operational Budgets**

The operation of conservation lands requires an annual budget that reflects the cost of operating facilities. RCCC will adopt a budget for the coming fiscal year by July 1.

Revenues derived from conservation lands are dedicated to the operation and development of the program.

### **Use Management**

Commercial concerns and recreational users may request to use conservation lands. RCCC will determine what activities are acceptable in terms of types, duration, and intensity of use. Any request for use shall be measured against the RCCC stewardship principals and its rental policies.

**Management Models** RCCC shall choose a management model for each property. Each decision shall be deemed to last for a period for one year unless another period is approved in writing by the RCCC. The management model for each property will be reevaluated on an annual basis as part of review of the program and nonconforming partnerships shall be terminated.

RCCC may choose among the three following management models:

County Managed: Some conservation lands shall be managed directly by county staff to fulfill the mission of the RCCC. Employees will be public employees whose work may be supplemented with the contributions of volunteers. All county personnel, purchasing, and related requirements shall be in effect.

Other Public Management: Some conservation lands may be managed by another public agency with an interest in promoting the resources on site. There may be a mixture of county and other public employees and the regulations of each agency shall apply. An intergovernmental agreement shall be adopted to describe the related duties and responsibilities of each party.

Public Private Partnership: Some conservation lands may be managed by contract with a nonprofit or commercial operator. RCCC shall approve the terms of each contract and the



Principles of Land Management Partnerships, included as Attachment 3, shall govern any relationship.

### **Conservation Land Development**

RCCC encourages public use of conservation lands subject to the stewardship principals and financial responsibility. As the demand grows for more public access and use of the properties, the process for opening properties to the public needs to be institutionalized.

Project Orientation How conservation lands will be used begins with project orientation. The Conservation Division implements a project by working with local stakeholders, staff, and consultants to produce a project design. RCCC will rely on this process to move forward with project development.

A Conservation Lands Capital Improvement Plan Conservation Division staff should prepare a Conservation Lands Capital Improvements Plan for approval by RCCC. The Capital Plan would include improvements to the properties, financing sources, and other management needs. Preparing the plan gives the public an opportunity for input and allows for better allocation of resources. With a comprehensive Capital Improvements Plan in place, County Council will be able to anticipate and plan for the properties to be developed.

Decisions on property development shall be made pursuant to the capital improvements plan.

## **Section 3. Attachments**

---

Attachment 1: Richland County-owned Historic and Conservation Lands

Attachment 2: Short term Management Plan

Attachment 3: Principles of Land Management Partnerships

## Attachment 1

### Richland County-Owned Historic and Conservation Lands

TMS#	Description	Managed by	Acreage
<b>Historic Sites</b>			
1 R11403-08-01	Township Auditorium	Township Auditorium Board	2.74
2 R11403-07-01	Hampton Preston House	Historic Columbia Foundation	4.07
3 R11402-06-04	Woodrow Wilson House	Historic Columbia Foundation	1.04
4 R11503-01-04A	John CB Smith House	Palmetto Health & Ronald McDonald Charities	portion
5 R21614-01-02	Hopkins Elementary, Old Hopkins Presbyterian Church	RSD1, private individual	portion
<b>Recreation Areas</b>			
6 R19011-02-10	Pinewood Lake Recreation Area	RCCC, Pinewood Lake Park Fdn.	43.87
7 R07415-01-01	Broad River Recreation Area	RCCC, Columbia Rowing	30
8 R16907-03-05, 08	Decker Blvd. Natural Area	RCCC	2.7
			<b>76.57</b>
<b>Preserves</b>			
9 R17500-03-67 et al	Longtown Preserve	RCCC	241
10 R21200-01-01	Mill Creek Upper Preserve	RCCC	768.69
11 R21100-01-01	Mill Creek Lower Preserve	RCCC	1786.4
12 R20300-02-34, 40	Rice Creek parcels	RCCC	9.55
13 R24600-01-63 et al	Cabin Branch	RCCC	677.33
14 R09206-08-11	Westwood Arboretum	RCCC	2.96
15 R09411-05-71	Blue Ridge Terrace	RCCC	3.2
			<b>3489.13</b>



**Attachment 2**

**SHORT TERM MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Date of Acquisition:  
Effective Date of Plan:  
Scheduled Term of Plan

**PROPERTY NAME:**

City:                      County:      Richland  
Acres:  
Locale:  
Directions:

**TITLE INFORMATION:**

Description:    Attached  
Richland County Tax Number:  
Survey:        Attached  
Access and Frontage:  
Boundaries:  
History:  
Limits on Title:

**PROPERTY CLASSIFICATION, WITH LIMITATIONS**

**CURRENT USE OF PROPERTY**

**LAND/WATER TYPES OCCURRING ON PROPERTY**

Forest Resources

Agricultural Resources:

Other Plant Species:

Water:

Soil Types:

Wildlife:

Cultural, Threatened and other Unique or Outstanding features:

**CONSERVATION VALUES**

**CURRENT BUILDING INFORMATION**

**VALUE/TAX STATUS**

Tax Value

Appraisal summary attached

Date of Appraisal:

**EDUCATION AND PUBLIC USE**

Potential Public Uses

Development plan information attach

**CURRENT AND SHORT-TERM MANAGEMENT**

Safety and risk management

Environmental management and remediation

Building management

Public Use and Access

**BUDGET INFORMATION**

### Attachment 3

#### **Principles of Land Management Partnerships**

1. The primary focus of the partnership shall be the maintenance and well-being of the resource.
2. All partnership organizations shall adhere to a policy of nondiscrimination.
3. Access to the resource must be equally available to all residents of Richland County.
4. The organizational partner must adhere to recognized principles of financial management and maintain all appropriate registrations.
5. The organizational partner must demonstrate the ability to provide users with a safe environment for all users and not create unnecessary liability for Richland County.
6. Operations and programs will be at a level which supports Richland County's standards and values.
7. Partnership results shall be measurable and subject to periodic renewal by RCCC.