

Carolina Heelsplitter Restoration Update



Carolina heelsplitter
SC Wildlife

One of the most endangered species of all endangered species is the Carolina heelsplitter mussel. To help restore this animal, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife

to the non living organic particles they have removed from the water column. Other undesirable particles and chemicals are bound in the mussels' waste and deposited on the river bottom.

Mussel shells provide an important substrate for algae and insect larvae to attach to. When mussels are present in large numbers, they may become underwater gardens that in turn attract fish to feed, including their host fish. Because mussels firmly anchor themselves to the lake or stream bed, they may actually stabilize the lake or stream bottom, thus minimizing the scouring affects of floods and wave action.

Mussels are also an important food source for several different kinds of terrestrial and aquatic animals, including muskrats and raccoons, as well as several species of fish.

So if you are interested in clean water, and healthy aquatic ecosystems, freshwater mussels should be your friends!

Service (the Service) has developed a successful mussel propagation facility at the Orangeburg National Fish Hatchery. This program has been exclusively focused on producing Carolina heelsplitter juveniles that are used to augment existing populations in areas of good habitat. In the fall of 2017, the Service placed almost 400 hatchery-produced heelsplitter mussels into Flat Creek, and additional mussels were stocked in Gills Creek. The land adjacent to the stocking location on both of these Lancaster County creeks is owned or protected by KVL

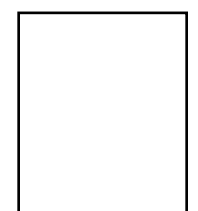
The Service's Fisheries, Refuges, and Ecological Services Programs have also teamed up with Lancaster County in the past five years or so to replace non-functioning road crossings (culverts) with designs that allow for fish passage and adequate handling of storm flows. To date, three crossings have been replaced along Gills Creek, opening up over three miles of critical habitat for the Carolina heelsplitter

So who cares about heelsplitters and other freshwater mussels? What good are they, some might ask? Mussels feed by siphoning water and filtering organic matter from the water column, processing it to build body and shell. During this feeding process, mussels "clean" the water they live in by removing phytoplankton and the bacteria and fungi that are attached



Morning Mist on the
Catawba River
Bill Stokes

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Lancaster, SC 29721

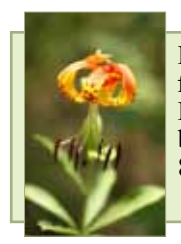


KVLT Events at a Glance

EVENTS
Spring Bird Count - April 21,
Toast to the Trees May 5
Lilyfest - May 20
Annual Meeting - October 5
Nitrolee History Hike - Nov. 4

SPEAKER SERIES
Bill Marshall, SCDNR - June 21
John Jory, Haile Gold Mine - Aug. 23
Jennifer Tsuruda, Clemson - Oct. 25

Note Cards Available



Mary Brown's beautiful note cards of area wild flowers and our special places are available at the KVLT office. The purchase of these note cards benefits the land trust. For more information call 803-285-5801 or stop by 106 E. Meeting St.



Beauty Berry
Bill Stokes



Rocky Shoals Spider Lily
Bill Stokes



Tiger Swallowtail on
Botton Bush
Bill Stokes

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Recent Land Protection Efforts



Barred Owl
Bill Stokes

KVLT completed two conservation easements and one land donation in December of 2017 for a total of 906 acres of land. The largest tract protected is a 525-acre conservation easement in the Flat Creek Community. The easement on this property is designed to protect

water quality in Flat Creek and tributaries, as well as to provide diverse wildlife habitat, and includes the use of best management forestry practices, a forest management plan, and streamside vegetated buffers 400 feet in width.

The second conservation easement is the Craig Farm in Lancaster. This easement will protect 15.5 acres of open and forested land, preserve the rural character, protect the scenic character of the historic farmhouse, protect and preserve open space, and

protect important wildlife habitat.

The third project was the donation of 367 acres of land, in two contiguous tracts, in the Flat Creek community. A smaller 53-acre parcel will provide the land trust with the opportunity for forest restoration, possibly including longleaf pine trees. The larger, 314-acre tract, has a hardwood/pine mix that will provide opportunities for long-term forest management conducted in a manner to protect water quality and provide habitat diversity for wildlife. The property borders both sides of Flat Creek, and includes a dense laurel thicket that is reminiscent of a mountain stream.

This property was donated to KVLT by Haile Gold Mine.



Wild Pink Azalea
Barry Beasley

S.C. Conservation Bank Update

The mission of the South Carolina Land Bank is to improve the quality of life in South Carolina through the conservation of significant natural resource lands, wetlands, historical properties, archeological sites, and urban parks. According to the Conservation Bank webpage (sccb.sc.gov), since its inception in 2004, the Bank has protected over 288,000 acres of land, of which 86,080 have *full public access* and allow recreational activities such as hunting and fishing, and an additional 97,477 acres with *limited access* with landowner permission. KVLT has received funding from the bank for four



Redbreast Sunfish
Dick Christie

conservation projects protecting over 1,000 acres.

With the rapid pace of development occurring in SC, and particularly the Catawba River valley, it is very important to balance land development with land protection, and especially lands that have these important resource values. As of this writing (March 21st), legislation to extend the

Conservation Bank is currently in the Senate, after being passed by the House. Please thank your local House Member for supporting this legislation, and encourage your local Senator to do the same.

Lindsay Pettus Greenway Update

Under the leadership of Sherri Gregory, the Greenway is moving towards construction that will hopefully begin this summer. The Greenway provides an opportunity for KVLT to demonstrate the value of land protection. Since we are providing much of the land necessary for the Greenway, the general public will gain a better understanding of the benefits of our work. We look forward to continued involvement as plans progress.



Gills Creek
Barry Beasley

Duke Energy gets approval for Recreation Plan

Federal regulators recently approved a Duke Energy plan to improve or build new recreational areas on the Catawba River reservoirs, which will enhance recreational access to the Catawba River. Local projects include new river access areas on the Catawba Indian Reservation, at Landsford Canal State Park, and on Fishing Creek. The Fishing Creek access area, which will be constructed on KVLT property, will include parking, a toilet facility, and a boardwalk to Fishing Creek. Also planned is a paved walking trail to the Southern Electro-Chemical Company or the "Nitrolee Plant", which will be developed into an interpretive center. This short-lived plant was built by James B. Duke and William States Lee on the banks of Fishing Creek

and was going to use an experimental technology to create nitrogen, which was desperately needed in the manufacture of fertilizer. This project will be completed within a 5-year window (and probably much sooner than that).



Nitrolee Building
Barry Beasley

Comments from the Director



Old River Channel
Bill Stokes

The first few months as KVLT's Executive Director have seemed like a whirlwind. Some of the more

memorable events include a drop-in at the Native American Studies Center to honor outgoing and incoming leadership; the first Board meeting; learning how to use fundraising, membership, communications and webpage software; signing a lease with Duke Energy to provide recreational boating access to Fishing Creek and the Great Falls Reservoir and to develop the Nitrolee Interpretive Center; meeting many of the individuals committed to building the Lindsay Pettus Greenway; attending a meeting to discuss the status of the SC Land Bank; planning the annual calendar; and actually getting outside to visit some of our KVLT properties.

The Land Trust has a lot of irons in the fire, so to speak, and the first few months of 2018 have opened my eyes to the varied activities that comprise our day-to-day operations. Looking a little further down the road, we have a number of conservation projects in the pipeline, and we have an exciting schedule of upcoming events (see outings and events, or visit our website or Facebook page). As we head into spring and summer, I hope you can get out and enjoy some of the area's wonderful natural, historical and cultural resources.

As we enter our 26th year, KVLT has protected over 10,300 acres of land in the Catawba Valley and surrounding area. Our success is dependent on the



New Executive Director
Richard Christie

continued support of you, our Land Trust members. Please continue to help us pursue our mission of protecting lands that are important for natural resources, cultural resources, open lands, waters and vistas of aesthetic value in the Catawba River Valley and surrounding area. Hope to see you at some of our KVLT events!