

**SOUTH CAROLINA
STATE COMPREHENSIVE OUTDOOR
RECREATION PLAN
(SCORP)**

2008

MARK SANFORD
Governor of South Carolina

CHAD PROSSER
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Parks, Recreation and Tourism

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- ***Numerous workshop participants and representatives*** of the more than 50 agencies and organizations that actively participated in the SCORP planning process, provided current information and data, submitted recommendations and contributed valuable comments and insight for the draft document.

The main cover photo of this publication is of Caesars Head State Park and the back cover photo is of Hickory Knob State Resort Park. The back inset photos were taken at the following State Parks: Colleton State Park (left photo), Hunting Island State Park (center photo), and Table Rock State Park (right photo).

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State of South Carolina

Office of the Governor

MARK SANFORD
GOVERNOR

POST OFFICE Box 12267
COLUMBIA 29211

April 22, 2008

Dear Reader,

Enclosed is a copy of the 2008 South Carolina Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) developed by the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism (PRT). This document represents the State's official comprehensive outdoor recreation plan and meets the requirements of Section 630.1 of the Land & Water Conservation Fund Grant Manual.

The 2008 SCORP analyzes the current status of recreation trends, demand and supply in our state. PRT Director Chad Prosser, his staff and the consultants have worked diligently to ensure that this plan improves outdoor recreation in South Carolina through its identification of critical issues and recommendations to address these concerns. I am hopeful that the quality of life and economic well-being of all South Carolinians will be enriched by the recommendations in this report.

Public participation, including a statewide recreation participation and preference study, interagency meetings, public workshops and review of the draft plan by numerous individuals and organizations, has been a key factor in the development of this plan, and I am pleased to endorse the 2008 SCORP as the guide for outdoor recreation management in the state for the next five years. Take care.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mark Sanford".

Mark Sanford

MS/se.ll

Enclosure

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TITLE PAGE	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
GOVERNOR’S LETTER	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iv
LIST OF FIGURES, CHARTS AND TABLES	v-vi
ACRONYMS	vii
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	E1-E19
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. STATE PROFILE	
A. GEOGRAPHIC PROFILE	2-5
B. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE	5-9
C. ECONOMIC PROFILE	9-10
III. 2002 SCORP ACCOMPLISHMENTS	11-15
IV. STATE OUTDOOR RECREATION GOALS	
A. LEGISLATIVE GOALS	16-17
B. SCORP MISSION AND GOALS	17-18
C. SCORP GOALS	18
V. SCORP PLANNING PROCESS.....	19-20
VI. SCORP PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS.....	21-22
VII. STATE OUTDOOR RECREATION ASSESSMENT	
A. RECREATION RESOURCES	23-66
B. ASSESSMENT OF DEMAND	66-94
C. ISSUE IDENTIFICATION AND PRIORITIZATION	94-101
VIII SCORP IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM	
A. FUTURE NEEDS	102-103
B. RECOMMENDATIONS	103-114
IX. SELECTED REFERENCES.....	115-120
X. APPENDICES	
A. RECREATION PARTICIPATION BY PLANNING DISTRICT	121-131
B. SOUTH CAROLINA HERITAGE PRESERVES	132-140
C. LIST OF SAMPLE GRANTS AND FUNDING SOURCES.....	141-145
D. SUMMARY OF FEDERAL LEGISLATION.....	146
E. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC WORKSHOPS AND COMMENTS.....	147-157
F. 2002 SCORP ACCOMPLISHMENTS.....	158-171

LIST OF FIGURES, CHARTS AND TABLES

<u>FIGURES</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Figure 1. South Carolina Surface Water	3
Figure 2. South Carolina Planning Districts and MSAs	6
Figure 3. South Carolina Population Change by County, 1990-2000	7
Figure 4. South Carolina Population Density by County, 2000	8
Figure 5. South Carolina State Park Service	27

<u>CHARTS</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Chart 1. 2002 SCORP Priority Implementation Issues	11
Chart 2. SC State Park Service 2003 Strategic Management Goals	24
Chart 3. Design Recommendations for an Aging Society	85
Chart 4. 2008 SCORP Priority Issues	95-97
Chart 5. Key Issues Facing Outdoor Recreation	98
Chart 6. Suggested Actions and Solutions to Key Outdoor Recreation Issues	98-99
Chart 7. Issues of National Concern	100-101
Chart 8. Outdoor Recreation Guiding Policy and Planning Principles	102
Chart 9. 2008 SCORP Implementation Issues	103-104

<u>TABLES</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Table 1. Major Reservoirs in South Carolina	4
Table 2. South Carolina Population by MSA	6
Table 3. South Carolina Population by Regional Planning Area	7
Table 4. South Carolina Population by Age	9
Table 5. South Carolina Population by Race and Ethnicity	9
Table 6. South Carolina State Park Service Facilities	25-26
Table 7. National and State Designated Scenic Rivers in SC	29
Table 8. South Carolina Trail Mileage by Type of Use	32
Table 9. Popular South Carolina Public Trails	35-36
Table 10. South Carolina Scenic Highways	37-38
Table 11. Recreational Facilities at Thurmond, Hartwell and Russell Lakes	43
Table 12. South Carolina Land Trust Network	48-51
Table 13. Summary of Resource Category River Miles in SC	52
Table 14. Important Wetlands in South Carolina	55-56
Table 15. Summary of Grants Funded by the SC Conservation Bank, FY 2004-2007	63
Table 16. Statewide Recreation Participation Trends	68-69
Table 17. Average Recreation Participation per SC Resident by Activity	70-71
Table 18. Total Participation in Recreational Activities	71-72
Table 19. Statewide Recreation Participation by Age Group	73-74
Table 20. Statewide Recreation Participation by Gender	75-76
Table 21. Statewide Recreation Participation by Family Income	77-78
Table 22. Statewide Recreation Participation by Race	78-79

LIST OF FIGURES, CHARTS AND TABLES

<u>TABLES</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Table 23. Persons with Disabilities Rehabilitated by the SC Vocational Rehabilitation Department, Fiscal Years 2001-2004	87
Table 24. Poverty Status for South Carolina Residents by Age	89
Table 25. 2008 SCORP Implementation Strategies	105-114
Table 26. State Recreation Participation, Appalachian Planning District	122
Table 27. State Recreation Participation, Upper Savannah Planning District	123
Table 28. State Recreation Participation, Catawba Planning District	124
Table 29. State Recreation Participation, Central Midlands Planning District	125
Table 30. State Recreation Participation, Lower Savannah Planning District	126
Table 31. State Recreation Participation, Santee-Lynches Planning District	127
Table 32. State Recreation Participation, Pee Dee Planning District	128
Table 33. State Recreation Participation, Waccamaw Planning District	129
Table 34. State Recreation Participation, Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Planning District	130
Table 35. State Recreation Participation, Lowcountry Planning District	131

SCORP ACRONYMS

ACE:	Ashepoo-Combahee-Edisto Rivers
ADA:	Americans with Disabilities Act
ATV:	All-Terrain Vehicle
BMPs:	Best Management Practices
COG:	Council of Governments
CORPS:	US Army Corps of Engineers
DU:	Ducks Unlimited
FERC:	Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
GIS:	Geographic Information System
HLTF:	Heritage Land Trust Fund (State)
KVLT:	Katawba Valley Land Trust
LWCF:	Land and Water Conservation Fund (Federal)
NERR:	National Estuarine Research Reserve
NF:	National Forest
NPS:	National Park Service
NRCS:	Natural Resources Conservation Service (formerly Soil Conservation Service)
NRT:	National Recreation Trail
OCRM:	Ocean and Coastal Resources Management Office (SCDHEC)
OHV:	Off-Highway Vehicle
OPSP:	Open Project Selection Process
OSHA:	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
PARD:	Parks and Recreation Development Fund (State)
PCF:	Palmetto Conservation Foundation
QU:	Quail Unlimited
RAC:	State Forests Recreational Advisory Council
RELT:	Recreation Land Trust Fund (State)
RTP:	Recreational Trails Program Fund (Federal)
SAFETEA-LU:	Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act/Legacy for Users
SC:	South Carolina
SCDAH:	South Carolina Department of Archives and History
SCDHEC:	South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control
SCDNR:	South Carolina Department of Natural Resources
SCDOT:	South Carolina Department of Transportation
SCE&G:	South Carolina Electric and Gas Company
SCFC:	South Carolina Forestry Commission
SCORP:	State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan
SCPRT:	South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism
SCRPA:	South Carolina Recreation and Parks Association
TEA 21:	Transportation Equity Act for the 21 st Century
TU:	Trout Unlimited
UPARR:	Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Program (Federal)
USDA:	United States Department of Agriculture
USFS:	United States Forest Service
USFWS:	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
WMA:	Wildlife Management Area

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *2008 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan* (SCORP) is South Carolina's official outdoor recreation plan and serves as a guide to Federal, State and local governmental agencies and non-profit and private sector entities involved in recreation and natural resources planning and development. The purpose of the Plan is to consider outdoor recreation issues relating to the needs of both residents and visitors to South Carolina, examine the State's recreational resources, analyze demand for recreational opportunities, develop an implementation program to address the identified needs and issues, identify funding opportunities, and identify issues of state and national importance. The South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism (SCPRT) is the designated agency responsible for outdoor recreation planning in the State to include the update of the SCORP every five years.

The SCORP process provides an opportunity for a variety of agencies and organizations to communicate upcoming projects, leverage limited resources, and coordinate activities. The SCORP is used as a guide for distribution of State recreation grant funds such as the *Recreation Land Trust (RELT) Fund* and the *Parks and Recreation and Development (PARD) Fund*. The SCORP meets the National Park Service requirements for a state plan and serves as the planning document for the disbursement of South Carolina's share of the Federal *Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)*, administered by the National Park Service of the US Department of the Interior, and as a guide for the distribution of the *Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Fund*. The Plan is also used by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), the USDA Forest Service, SCPRT, the SC Department of Natural Resources, and other State, regional and local agencies and organizations to identify recreation usage patterns and needs.

State Profile

South Carolina is located in the heart of a region that is experiencing unprecedented growth. An overview of the State's geographic, population, and economic development trends provides a glimpse into the challenges and opportunities faced by South Carolinians as we work to accommodate growth while preserving and enhancing our State's abundant natural resources and quality of life. These conditions have a profound affect on recreation and tourism resources and help define the direction and focus of outdoor recreation planning in the Palmetto State.

- South Carolina ranks 40th in land area among the fifty states at more than 32,000 square miles. The State offers a full range of topographic features – from the mountains and foothills of the southern Blue Ridge; to the rolling Piedmont, Sandhills, and broad Coastal Plains; and to the coastal barrier islands and expansive beaches on the Atlantic Ocean.
- The State's climate offers long summers and mild winters that provide year-round recreational opportunities.
- South Carolina benefits from an abundant supply of water in the form of lakes, streams, rivers, wetlands and aquifers. There are 11,000 miles of permanently flowing rivers and

streams in the State, or nearly one-half mile for every square mile of land surface. There are also more than 1,600 lakes larger than 10 acres throughout the State. Of these lakes, 19 reservoirs that are larger than 1,000 acres each collectively account for more than 461,400 acres of surface water.

- Almost one-fourth of the State (4.6 million acres) is considered wetlands. Only 4 other states have a higher percentage of wetlands – Alaska, Florida, Louisiana and Maine. South Carolina’s wetlands comprise nearly 12% of the total wetland area of the southeastern United States. Of the State’s wetlands, 90% are freshwater and 10% consist of saltwater or brackish marshland. Freshwater wetlands occur throughout the State and include freshwater marshes, forested wetlands (primarily cypress-tupelo swamps and bottomland hardwood forests), and isolated wetlands (Carolina bays, pocosins, potholes, mountain bogs, and sinkholes).
- The State has 190 miles of coastline. The coastal beaches are the State’s greatest single attraction among the various natural, historic, and man-made recreational resources and are the focal point of the State’s travel and tourism industry. The 60-mile Grand Strand contains some of the Atlantic Coast’s longest unbroken stretches of beaches. Other coastal resources include 240 miles of Intracoastal Waterway, extensive saltwater marshes, and numerous bays and sounds.
- South Carolina has experienced steady population growth over the past three decades and is currently the 10th fastest growing state in the nation. Between 1970 and 2000, the State’s population grew by nearly 55%, from approximately 2.6 million to more than 4 million.
- South Carolina’s population has become increasingly urbanized, with more than 60% of the State now classified as urban. There are 10 Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) in South Carolina that encompass 21 of the State’s 46 counties. The combined population for these MSAs exceeds 3 million, with 75% of the State’s population living within these 10 metropolitan areas.
- The number of South Carolina households, at more than 1.5 million, has grown at a faster rate than the population as a whole. This trend is the result of smaller family size with fewer children, an increase in the number of single-parent households, longevity among the elderly population, and delayed marriages. Household growth has been accompanied by a rise in the median age of State residents to 35.4 years. These demographic trends will influence outdoor recreation planning efforts in future years.
- South Carolina ranks 7th highest in the nation in the overall percentage of minority population. Caucasians and African-Americans comprise 68% and 29% of the State’s population, respectively. The racial composition of the State’s population will continue to change in the coming decades. Both the State’s Asian and Hispanic populations are projected to more than double from 1990 to 2025, representing growth rates six times higher than the South Carolina population as a whole.
- Emerging from an agrarian tradition, the State has launched the transformation of its economy into a diversified base of manufacturing, trade, services, and tourism. Tourism has evolved into a major economic asset for the Palmetto State, with South Carolina hosting

29 million domestic visitors annually for a total of 103 million visitor days. The State hosts nearly 1 million international visitors each year, primarily from Canada and Europe.

- The economic impact of tourism in South Carolina is significant and growing, generating \$16 billion in annual economic activity. The tourism and travel industry now directly and indirectly supports more than 216,000 jobs for South Carolinians and contributes \$10.9 billion to the gross state product (GSP). This contribution to the GSP is anticipated to grow to \$17 billion by the year 2010.
- Outdoor recreation plays an integral, yet largely untapped, role in South Carolina's burgeoning tourist industry. More than 11 million annual visitors participate in some form of outdoor recreation during their trip. Coupled with heritage and cultural tourism, outdoor recreation offers significant economic development opportunities for all regions of the State, especially for our rural, inland communities.

Public Participation

Public participation in the SCORP process was generated through multiple forums that included formal surveys, public workshops, interagency focus meetings, interviews, and web-based review of planning documents:

- South Carolina Recreational Resources Forum – In March 2005, SCPRT convened the statewide *Recreational Resources Forum*, bringing together State, Federal, and local agencies to explore common issues and share information related to public recreation resources, as well as explore opportunities for collaboration and partnerships.
- South Carolina Recreation Participation and Preference Study – SCPRT contracted with the University of South Carolina's Institute for Public Service and Policy Research to conduct a 2005 telephone survey of more than 2,100 State residents aged 12 and older. Respondents were asked a series of questions about their favorite recreational activities and actual participation rates for almost four dozen recreational activities over the past year.
- Participation in South Carolina State Survey – The USC Institute for Public Service and Policy Research surveyed more than 800 South Carolinians in 2007 about issues such as the role of SCPRT, the primary role of state parks, visits to state parks, state park services, and environmental protection. A previous survey conducted in 2001 also included questions related to the acquisition, prioritization and development of land for public open space and trails.
- Public Workshops – In October and November of 2007, SCPRT and the Matheny-Burns Group conducted a series of five regional public workshops held in Greenville, Columbia, North Charleston, Barnwell County, and Darlington County. News releases were distributed to media, along with direct mail or email notification to representatives of more than 275 local parks and recreation departments, councils of government, State and Federal agencies and public and private recreation interests. Participants in the regional workshops identified 60 recreational issues, which were subsequently refined into 15 major issues. An additional 15 emails were received that provided further commentary on issues, proposed actions, or other recommendations for outdoor recreation in South Carolina.

- *Interagency Focus Group Meeting* – A broad representation of State, Federal, and local organizations met in November 2007 to consider implementation strategies, partnerships and resources to impact the identified outdoor recreation issues.
- *Draft Plan Review* – Review and comments on the draft plan were requested from agency and organization representatives, those attending the public workshops, and the general public. This review was facilitated by posting the draft plan on the SCPRT website, notifying planning participants and interested parties of its availability, and providing print copies upon request to those lacking web access.

Recreation Resources

South Carolina is home to a variety of outdoor recreation resources ranging from public lands and facilities provided by Federal, State, and local governments to private facilities and properties open to the public or for exclusive use through ownership or lease. Demand for recreational opportunities continues to grow as the State's population grows, as more residents and visitors expand interest and usage, and as residents and visitors alike seek new activities.

Public Facilities

There are numerous publicly-owned recreation facilities in South Carolina ranging from national forests, national parks and state parks, to local parks and single purpose facilities such as boat access ramps. The various public facilities in the State are developed and managed by multiple agencies at different levels of government, with some recreational facilities leased from the private sector. As traditional funding sources decline and maintenance and upgrade costs for recreational facilities continue to increase, most public facilities have adopted user fees to offset operational and maintenance costs.

State Parks

The South Carolina State Park Service is comprised of 48 state parks totaling more than 80,000 acres. Activities and events vary at each park but commonly include a combination of natural or historical attractions, camping, lodging, picnicking, interpretive and educational programs, swimming, fishing, boating, hiking, equestrian trails, playgrounds, biking, or community buildings. These park properties contribute to the State's protected base of natural and historic areas, providing South Carolinians with public access to diverse outdoor experiences that are representative of the State's rich base of natural, cultural and historic resources.

Scenic Rivers

Nine South Carolina river segments have been designated State Scenic Rivers to date – the Middle Saluda, Little Pee Dee (US 378 to the Greater Pee Dee River), Lower Saluda, Broad, Lynches, Ashley, Black, Great Pee Dee and Little Pee Dee (Dillon County). Several others are now considered eligible under the State Scenic River Program – the Congaree, Whitewater, Thompson, Edisto and Little Pee Dee/Lumber. South Carolina also shares most of the Chattooga National Wild and Scenic River along its northwestern border with the State of Georgia.

State Forests

The South Carolina Forestry Commission manages five state forests in South Carolina - Sand Hills in Chesterfield and Darlington Counties (46,000 acres), Harbison in Richland County (2,177 acres), Poe Creek in Pickens County (1,806 acres), Manchester in Sumter County (28,000 acres), and Wee Tee in Williamsburg and Georgetown Counties (12,439 acres). A wide and varied range of outdoor recreational activities are offered within each forest, ranging from picnicking and fishing to equestrian and all-terrain vehicle trails.

Heritage Preserves

The SC Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) manages 70 State Heritage Preserves totaling 81,409 acres throughout the State. These preserves range in size from 1 acre to more than 18,000 acres and represent unique natural or cultural sites. Recreational opportunities at most sites include trails and wildlife observation, with organized nature and historical outings, picnicking, and hunting opportunities provided at many of the preserves.

Wildlife Management Areas

The SCDNR leases a total of 820,082 acres of public and private land for designated wildlife management areas to provide game hunting opportunities for the public as part of its Wildlife Management Area (WMA) Program. The Department also manages 212,682 acres of state-owned WMA land, including some Heritage Preserves, and provides hunting opportunities on approximately 1 million acres of public and privately leased land.

Trails and Greenways

More than 2,800 miles of trails and greenways have been constructed and designated throughout South Carolina, with additional trails and greenways in the planning stages. These resources are managed by a variety of agencies and community-based groups and accommodate diverse land-based recreational activities including hiking, fitness walking, mountain biking, all-terrain vehicles and motorcycles, and equestrian use, as well as water activities such as canoeing, rafting and kayaking. Of particular note is the Palmetto Trail, which upon completion will link numerous existing public lands and existing trail segments to form a *mountains-to-the-sea* trail.

Scenic Highways

South Carolina currently has more than 415 miles of designated Scenic Highways. The State has three nationally designated Scenic Highways – the Cherokee Foothills National Scenic Highway in the Upstate, the Savannah River National Scenic Highway, and the Ashley River National Scenic Highway in Charleston. The USDA Forest Service also designated 14.5 miles of SC Highway 107 in Oconee County as the Oscar Wigington Scenic Byway. A 40-mile segment of the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail tour route in South Carolina is managed by the National Park Service.

National Forests

Two national forests encompass 630,000 acres in South Carolina. The Francis Marion National Forest and the Sumter National Forest offer a wide range of recreational opportunities – from world class whitewater rafting, kayaking and canoeing on the Chattooga National Wild and Scenic River to a myriad of Lowcountry experiences on blackwater rivers and swamps and in

maritime forests and marshes. Recreational opportunities are diverse and include hunting (allowed on more than 600,000 of the 630,000 acres), shooting sports, white water boating, sea kayaking, freshwater and saltwater fishing, shrimping, hiking, backpacking, boat ramps, primitive camping, tent/RV camping, ATV and motorcycle riding, mountain biking, horseback riding, interpretative trails and environmental education. More than 1 million visitors use these forests each year.

National Parks

South Carolina is home to several nationally-significant park, monument, military, battlefield and historic sites. Congaree National Park is the largest of these sites at more than 22,000 acres and preserves the largest tract of old-growth bottomland hardwood forest remaining in the United States. The Park was the 57th national park designated nationwide and is the only national park in the State. The Park offers hiking trails, a boardwalk trail, wilderness canoe trail, and areas for group and primitive camping and fishing. Other national park sites preserve and/or interpret sites from the Revolutionary and Civil Wars. Fort Sumter and Fort Moultrie National Monuments in Charleston County are two of the most visited National Park Service properties in the State. Other historic sites include Kings Mountain National Military Park in York and Cherokee Counties, Cowpens National Battlefield in Cherokee County, Charles Pinckney National Historic Site (home site of a signer of the Declaration of Independence) in Charleston County, and Ninety Six National Historic Site in Greenwood County. These national park sites offer opportunities to explore the history of the nation through historic buildings, documentaries, displays, trails, and tours.

National Wildlife Refuges

There are eight national wildlife refuges in South Carolina – Waccamaw, ACE Basin Refuge, Savannah, Pinckney Island, Cape Romain, Santee, Carolina Sand Hills and Tybee. The refuges total more than 173,000 acres and provide diverse recreational opportunities including nature drives, wildlife observation, walking, bicycling, photography blinds, interpretive displays, hiking trails, picnic facilities, fishing, canoeing/kayaking, hunting, and environmental education.

US Army Corps of Engineers Facilities

The US Army Corps of Engineers manages 325,000 acres of land and water along the Savannah River. The three lake projects – Hartwell Lake, Richard B. Russell Lake, and J. Strom Thurmond Lake – are among the largest Corps projects in the country. Visitors to all three lakes enjoy a wide range of recreational activities including water sports, hunting, hiking, picnicking, camping, boat ramps and fishing.

Local and Other Resources

Local governments in South Carolina maintain significant park areas and facilities. Locally-provided facilities include more than 1,368 athletic fields; 187 community centers; 55 swimming pools; 591 playgrounds; 780 tennis courts; 456 outdoor and 124 indoor basketball courts; 396 picnic shelters; 118 tracks for walking, jogging, and running; 368 trails for walking, biking, hiking, horseback riding, and ATVs; and 41 water trails for canoeing and kayaking. Museums, art exhibits, and other cultural facilities are also provided by organizations including the SC Arts Commission, the SC Department of Archives and History, Patriots Point

Development Authority, the SC Museum Commission, the SC State Library, and various local governmental, institutional, non-profit, and private organizations.

Grant Resources

Traditional Federal funding sources for outdoor recreation have continued at level-funding or in some cases, have declined. However, the State offers several grant opportunities to support recreation initiatives, most of which are administered through SCPRT.

- Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) – LWCF is a federally-funded grant program administered by SCPRT for the acquisition and development of outdoor recreation areas by local or state agencies.
- Recreation Land Trust Fund (RELT) – Administered through SCPRT, RELT funds are available to local governmental entities for the acquisition of land for public recreation purposes.
- Recreational Trails Program (RTP) – RTP is a federally-funded grant program available to state, federal and local government agencies or qualified private organizations for the purpose of building or improving trails.
- Parks and Recreation Development Fund (PARD) – PARD is a state-funded, non-competitive reimbursable grant program for eligible local governments or special purpose districts which provide recreational opportunities within each county.
- Tourism Partnership Program (TPP) – TPP provides grants to local governmental entities, destination marketing organizations, public sector organizations and other non-profit groups to support efforts to attract visitors and encourage visitor spending.
- Heritage Corridor Development Grants – Grants are available to communities and non-profit organizations located within the 14-county SC National Heritage Corridor to develop, implement and maintain a successful heritage tourism attraction program that benefits and attracts visitors to the area.

Additional opportunities are available through the SC Department of Archives and History and the SC Department of Transportation.

- Historic Preservation Grant Program – Through funding provided by the US Department of Interior's National Park Service, the SC Department of Archives and History administers the State's Historic Preservation Grant Program to support stabilization and weatherization projects within the State's 25 Certified Local Governments.
- Transportation Enhancement Program Grants – SCDOT allocates Federal SAFETEA-LU funds under the *Transportation Enhancement Program* to allow local governments the opportunity to construct non-traditional transportation facilities to accommodate activities such as bicycle and pedestrian facilities, streetscapes, scenic and landscaping programs, and historic preservation.

Private Facilities

Private recreation facilities for public use are available in many forms, including baseball/softball fields provided by companies or civic groups; swimming, fishing and picnic areas provided by utilities; and campgrounds, marinas, golf courses, historic sites, and state-leased hunting lands. In addition, private non-profit land trusts have been created throughout the State in response to growing development pressures. These organizations are increasingly active in the protection of natural and cultural resources through the permanent protection of properties through land donation or purchase, or conservation easements.

Other Resources

South Carolina is blessed with a wealth of natural resources which have special attraction for outdoor recreation. Rivers, wetlands and historic and culturally significant sites contribute to the State's rich recreation environment.

Though seriously impacted by recent drought conditions, South Carolina's rivers have historically been abundant and accessible, providing a myriad of recreational opportunities for residents throughout the State. Most notable among these river resources are the Chattooga National Wild and Scenic River and the nine designated State Scenic Rivers.

Wetlands are among the most productive ecosystems in the world, comparable to rain forests and coral reefs. South Carolina's 4.6 million acres of wetlands are important to outdoor recreation because they support fishing, shellfishing, hunting, boating, wildlife observation and photography, nature study, swimming, camping, hiking, historic sites, and walking for pleasure. Plants and wildlife are abundant and many endangered, rare, or uncommon species exist in these areas. Unfortunately, the US Fish and Wildlife Service estimates that South Carolina wetland areas decreased by 27% during the last century, resulting in a loss of more than 1.75 million acres of wetlands.

South Carolina has a wealth of historic and culturally significant places. The State has 1,365 listings, including 163 historic districts, in the *National Register of Historic Places*. These listings include buildings, structures, and sites ranging from Native American campgrounds dating to 8,000 BC to sites associated with the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s; from grand mansions to modest farmhouses; and from upcountry textile mill villages to Pee Dee railroad towns and Lowcountry rice fields.

Land Acquisition and Protection

Land protection and acquisition is a critical issue for outdoor recreation in South Carolina. Virtually all outdoor recreational pursuits require or are enhanced by the amount and quality of protected land available to the public. Three programs are currently available at the State level to support land protection efforts:

- Recreation Land Trust Fund (RELT) – Approximately \$358,000 in annual RELT funds are shared by local recreation departments and state agencies, with approximately \$100,000 of these annual funds reserved for state park land purchases.
- Heritage Land Trust Fund (HLTF) – The HLTF is used to acquire and manage significant natural and cultural resources and is funded primarily through the allocation of a small percentage of the *Real Estate Documentation Stamp Tax* fee. Program funding rose steadily from FY 2002 to FY 2006 due to the State’s booming real estate market, but dropped by more than half a million dollars in FY 2007 when the real estate market began to slow.
- Conservation Land Bank – The Land Bank was established in the 2002 *Conservation Bank Act* to fund the purchase of significant conservation or recreational land as well as protective easements. Since actual funding began in July 2004, the Conservation Bank has provided more than \$70 million to conserve more than 134,000 acres, including more than 124,000 acres of forestlands and wetlands. The Bank is primarily funded by a percentage of the *Real Estate Transfer Fee*, generating average annual revenues of more than \$18 million. In the FY 2007-08 State budget, the Conservation Bank received a non-recurring additional appropriation of \$5 million.

An assessment of South Carolina’s relative position in preserving significant lands warrants concern, with the State ranking 5th nationally in urban sprawl. A study conducted by the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service estimated that nearly 200,000 acres of the State’s farmland was lost to urban uses from 1987 to 1997. South Carolina ranked 21st among the 50 states in the amount of park land statewide in 1998 and by 2006, the State had dropped to 33rd.

While South Carolina as a whole lags behind its neighbors in land protection efforts, some local jurisdictions mirror promising national trends for land conservation. The growth of private land trusts and local government conservation programs is an encouraging trend that will grow in effectiveness with broad support from the general public. In the 2001 State Survey conducted by USC’s Survey Research Laboratory, respondents viewed growth management as one of the most important problems facing the State, ranking higher than taxes, crime, and transportation and second only to education. In the State’s more urban areas that are experiencing rapid development the issue of growth ranked first, ahead of education. Survey respondents also indicated a willingness to pay more taxes for land protection – 69% supported the use of tax funds to buy land for parks, 60% to purchase environmentally sensitive areas, and 51% to protect greenbelts.

The land protection and conservation programs which appear to be most effective are those based in counties experiencing rapid growth, which have sensitive natural areas, and benefit from a stronger economic base, such as Beaufort and Charleston Counties. The loss of land from its natural state in some of these areas has prompted successful initiatives for public funding.

Land protection and acquisition efforts will be strengthened through continued support and a funding commitment for the State’s Conservation Land Bank, coupled with legislation that

actively encourages and promotes local government and private sector land conservation and removes existing constraints on the ability of local governments to fund such programs.

Assessment of Demand

Mirroring the State's population growth, the demand for new, updated and expanded recreational facilities continues to increase. However, funding remains very limited and recreational expenditures must be prioritized. To determine current and long-range outdoor recreational demand and needs in South Carolina, SCPRT launched a comprehensive needs assessment process that involved the review of up-to-date demographic and economic data, surveys of residents, a series of public meetings, interagency meetings, and a review of state and national trends in outdoor recreation. An in-depth review of the latest Census data revealed a changing population that is aging, more racially and ethnically diverse, employed in more diverse occupational sectors, and living in increasingly urbanized communities. A formal telephone survey of State residents was conducted to assess recreational participation and preference. The usage and needs of out-of-state visitors and special populations were also examined. State and national trends in outdoor recreation were reviewed and major outdoor recreation issues in South Carolina were identified through a series of regional public workshops. Issues of national concern were also considered through interagency meetings and focused research.

Recreation Participation and Preference

As part of its continuing efforts to meet the recreational needs of South Carolinians, SCPRT periodically conducts surveys of the general public to determine the extent to which the State's residents participate in a variety of recreational activities, as well as their preferences for such activities. The most recent survey was conducted in 2005 by the University of South Carolina's Institute for Public Service and Policy Research. The data also provides comparisons with the results from the 1990, 1994 and 1999 surveys. The general conclusion from the latest survey data is that participation by State residents in recreational activities has remained quite stable over the past 15 years. With only minor variations in rank and order, the same set of activities appear in the top eleven positions in 1990, 1994, 1999 and 2005.

Walking for pleasure or exercise remains the activity in which the largest percentage of State residents (83.2%) participate, followed by attending outdoor sporting events, beach swimming or sunbathing, driving for pleasure, and working out with weights or exercise machines. Approximately half of those interviewed reported participation in picnicking, swimming in a pool, or visiting historic sites. Nearly 43% of respondents had been bicycling and nearly 40% visited a museum or went freshwater fishing. Participation rates for other activities varied from nearly 35% for visiting an unusual natural feature to slightly over 1% for playing in-line hockey.

When the frequency of participation is considered, walking for pleasure or exercise remains the activity with the highest level of participation, followed by working out with weights or exercise machines, driving for pleasure, jogging or running, bird watching, bicycling, and watching wildlife. Although the overall percentage of participation may have decreased,

several activities such as playing baseball, softball or tennis have posted increases in the number of times participated. In addition, more than 80% of participation in day-to-day recreational activities including playing football, baseball, tennis, soccer, softball, bicycling, and playing golf occurs in the region closest to the respondents' homes.

In general, persons in younger age groups exhibit higher participation levels in recreational activities, particularly true in vigorous physical activities such as jogging or running, playing basketball, football, soccer, or volleyball, or working out with weights or exercise machines. However, there are activities for which those in the middle age categories are more likely to participate and one activity – bird watching – for which persons age 65 and older show the highest level of participation.

While men are more likely than women to participate in traditional outdoor sports such as fresh and saltwater fishing, hunting, shellfishing and shrimping, other shooting sports, and hunting dog field trials, women are generally more likely to engage in more passive leisure-time activities, such as visiting a zoo, museum, or historical site; picnicking; bird watching; and walking for pleasure or on a guided nature trail. Participation and preference differences by respondent's family income were also significant for a number of recreational activities. The general tendency is for South Carolinians from higher income families to participate in the surveyed recreational activities at a higher rate than persons with lower incomes. Data also demonstrated differing participation levels for a number of these activities between the races, with whites more likely to participate in water sports and traditional outdoor recreational activities such as camping, hiking, hunting, other shooting sports, and participating in hunting dog field trials. The participation of blacks was higher in active sports including basketball, football, volleyball, and softball; bicycling; jogging or running; and working out with weights or exercise machines.

The percentage of South Carolinians who feel the State has adequate outdoor recreation or leisure-time facilities and activities has increased steadily, from 59.8% in 1994 to 61.3% in 1999 and to 63.5% in 2005. Residents noted that a wide range of facilities and activities are needed, with parks mentioned most frequently as a recreational need, followed by swimming facilities, activities for youth, basketball facilities, bicycle paths and playgrounds. Moreover, a common concern that continues to surface in the survey data is the need to provide recreational opportunities for young people, with *activities for youth* and *facilities for youth* often mentioned as the State's greatest recreational need.

Special Populations

Meeting the recreational needs of all individuals is a particular challenge. Consideration must be given to those who may experience barriers to accessing recreational facilities or programs for a variety of reasons such as financial, cultural, geographic, and physical. It is recognized that the needs of these special populations extend well beyond recreation and that recreation providers must work closely with other public and private service providers in the transportation, community health, human services, and planning sectors to coordinate efforts to meet the diverse needs of these population groups.

South Carolina ranks the 7th highest in the nation – behind the District of Columbia and the states of Hawaii, Mississippi, Maryland, Louisiana and Georgia – in the overall percentage of minority population. However, the racial composition of the State’s minority population is shifting significantly. Census data shows that South Carolina’s foreign-born population grew more rapidly (a 47% increase) from 2000 to 2005 than any other state in the nation. For many minorities, access to recreational opportunities heavily depends on individual proximity to existing facilities and programs, available transportation, and costs to participate.

Mirroring national trends, South Carolina's older population is increasing. In 1960, only 6.3% of the State's population was 65 and over. This segment of the population had grown to 12.1% by 2000. More recent State estimates identified 598,550 South Carolinians aged 65 and older in 2005, comprising 14.1% of the State’s total population. Census projections indicate older adults will comprise more than one-fifth of the State's population by the year 2030. More than half of the over 65 group (51.3%) are females. To better accommodate the recreational needs of older individuals, recreation providers must consider the different limitations faced by the older adult population when developing and promoting programs and facilities.

Disabilities can include a wide range of conditions – physical limitations, mental illness, and serious medical conditions. Included are persons with mental retardation, autism, traumatic brain injury, spinal cord injury and similar disabilities. More than one out of ten South Carolinians aged 5 and over are disabled. This equates to 12% or 810,857 State residents. Adults aged 65 and older comprise nearly 46%, or 213,448 persons, and have the highest percentage of disabled persons. The recreational needs of persons with disabilities vary greatly by type of disability. Close attention must be paid to ADA requirements in providing accessibility for the disabled. Additional efforts could be made to promote and publicize available programs and facilities. In addition, the needs of individuals with temporary conditions such as those with sprains or fractures, pregnant women, and children in strollers should be considered.

More than 14%, or 547,869 South Carolinians, live below poverty. However, a closer look at poverty statistics reveals that nearly 19% of the State’s children and almost 14% of its elderly residents live below poverty. Economically disadvantaged individuals face many obstacles in meeting their recreational needs. These obstacles include the lack of transportation to existing recreational facilities and programs, the inability to pay user fees (particularly private fees) and purchase specialized equipment or uniforms, and the lack of information about available facilities and programs. User fees for recreation must be weighed carefully and maintained at the lowest levels possible, especially for public facilities. Additionally, information about low-cost recreational programs and facilities can be targeted to disadvantaged residents to increase awareness of and participation in available opportunities.

Outdoor Recreation Trends

Outdoor recreation is receiving increased attention across multiple disciplines as our communities, our nation, and the world experience rapid growth and development that concurrently pose new opportunities and daunting challenges to keep pace with recreational demand while preserving significant resources. Substantial population growth, combined with

the changing demographic composition of Americans in terms of ethnicity, race, household composition, and age have been noted as primary factors impacting recreation trends.

USDA Forest Service research and data from its *2000-2001 National Survey on Recreation and the Environment* indicate that outdoor recreation continues to grow in popularity nationwide, with 97% of Americans aged 16 or older reporting participation to some extent in outdoor recreation during any given year. The most favored recreational activities of the 1990s have remained popular in more recent studies, with *walking for pleasure* and *family gatherings* retaining the top two spots in the most recent ranking. Participation in kayaking and motorized recreational activities such as jetskiing and driving off-road grew substantially since the previous survey conducted in 1994.

A number of issues have been identified that will impact the future of outdoor recreation at both the national and local levels. USDA staff emphasized several trends of note, including:

- Public properties and providers will be tasked with accommodating most of the future growth in recreation demands.
- Restoration and management of ecosystems and recreation are high priorities for Federal properties, but lack of adequate funding will be a barrier in meeting these priorities.
- State lands, especially state parks, are reaching maturity and will require investments in facilities maintenance and upgrade. Many of these parks will also experience the pressures of growing usage of existing limited facilities and acreage.
- Private landowners are continuing to close more land to public or leased access for recreational activity. Private lands are also being developed around many public sites, preventing the potential for public acquisition and expansion of existing public parks and lands.
- Increasing demands for activities such as climbing, off-road vehicle use, hiking, horseback riding, motorized vehicle use, wildlife viewing, and tourism services will contribute to more competition and conflicts on public and private properties.
- A broad spectrum of recreational activities are likely to experience increased conflict as demands grow for water access, trails, backcountry, developed sites, and roads.
- Traditional and non-mechanized recreational user groups often perceive much more conflict than newer non-traditional and mechanized user groups.

Building on earlier research and national assessments of demand and supply trends in outdoor recreation, USDA program staff also noted additional general recreation characteristics and trends that will shape recreational planning and policy in the coming years:

- Wilderness benefits are expanding.
- The outdoor recreation market will continue to grow.
- Access to the private land base for recreation continues to decline.

- Demand for nearby recreation resources is increasing.
- Recreational resource development has not been equal across regions or settings.

There are also new sports, advances in equipment and technology, and alternative ways of participating in existing sports that are changing the way people recreate. Some newer activities are attracting increased participation among women, youth, minorities, and other non-traditional groups. However, many new activities also pose conflicts with other recreation users. Emerging, growing and evolving recreational activities include:

- Mountain biking – on rough terrain rather than streets or paths
- Off-road vehicles – all-terrain vehicles, motorcycles, and full-size vehicles
- Backcountry usage – new gear, cell phones, GPS units
- Skate-boarding – new equipment, ramps and parks, tricks and high risk activities
- Sporting clays – clay target shooting on a course simulating hunting experiences and hunting preserves
- Hunting preserves – guided hunts on private land, often with pen-raised game
- Jet skis – personal watercraft powered by water jets rather than propellers
- Bass fishing – special boats and other gear, tournaments, clubs
- Fly fishing – renewed interest, classes, freshwater and saltwater
- Kayaking – whitewater or touring, fishing opportunities
- Rowing – team and individual competition, winter training opportunities in warmer climates
- Personal exercise equipment – used at home or office
- Private gyms – workout clubs, indoor pools, and other indoor activities
- Geo-caching – a techno-sport using global positioning satellites (GPS) and hand-held systems to locate specific “finds” in state, local and national parks and forests
- Field Sports – soccer, lacrosse, disc golf, ultimate Frisbee
- Dog parks – opportunities for “off leash” exercise, training, agility, obedience, conformation
- Water parks and spray facilities

The growing emphasis and interest in heritage and nature-based tourism continues to hold economic promise for many communities in South Carolina. The Palmetto State has a rich cultural history and natural resource base, much of which remains untapped and unprotected. Rural communities with attractive cultural, scenic and historical resources are among the fastest growing heritage tourism destinations. The numerous smaller towns and communities throughout the State stand to benefit from continued development of the regional heritage and nature-based tourism markets. The recognition of the State’s heritage tourism resources as an economic resource and as a catalyst for community revitalization is paramount in the creation of a sustainable economy for the State and its distinct regions. However, careful assessment, coordination and planning, coupled with adequate funding resources, are integral to preserving the State’s cultural heritage and abundant natural resources and to fostering a climate for further tourism and outdoor recreation growth.

Issue Identification and Prioritization

In order to identify the most important recreational issues to the general public, SCPRT and the Matheny-Burns Group worked with local providers and user groups in a series of five regional workshops held across the State. More than 275 organizations with recreational interests were notified and encouraged to involve their members and allied organizations. Nearly 70 representatives participated in the regional workshops, in which participants identified 60 recreational needs and concerns. These recommendations were subsequently refined into 15 major issues following completion of all the workshops and the receipt of additional written and electronic correspondence that provided further comments, proposed actions, or other recommendations for outdoor recreation in South Carolina. An interagency focus group meeting contributed additional insight into emerging issues, priorities, resources and funding trends, and evolving missions relative to outdoor recreation. Issues of broader concern were also considered by examining the work of national groups who have recommended actions on a number of recreational matters. The 15 priority issues that emerged from this extensive planning process are:

Issue 1: Increase funding for outdoor recreation facilities and programs, to include increased grant opportunities, exploring privatization and/or leveraging public-private partnerships for appropriate activities and facilities, seeking private sponsorships, and fostering increased volunteer involvement to augment staff and reduce operational costs.

Issue 2: Increase funding for locally-based recreation facilities and programs, particularly in rural communities, to reduce the need for travel, relieve crowding at major facilities, and enhance recreational access for persons with mobility or financial limitations.

Issue 3: Create an expanded network of trails that are well-designed and well-managed, are available to many, and provide appropriate facilities for:

- Equestrians
- Boating, including canoeing, kayaking and rowing
- Walkers, hikers, backpackers, and bikers in both urban and rural settings
- Historic trails (Revolutionary War, railroad, etc.)
- General use trails

Issue 4: Provide adequate support facilities for all trails including:

- Trailheads, including signage, parking and restrooms
- Potable water for people and livestock
- Parking for longer campers and horse trailers where appropriate
- Water and electrical hookups at non-primitive camp sites
- Additional secluded primitive campsites
- Bathhouses, where appropriate
- Trash collection
- Safety improvements (scheduled water releases, warning devices, call boxes, parking improvements, etc.)

- Issue 5:** Provide additional education, outreach and promotion of available outdoor recreation opportunities statewide – including recreational facilities, educational programs, trails for all types of uses, and camping facilities – with a particular emphasis on reaching minorities, K-12 students and educators, lower income residents, and persons with disabilities.
- Issue 6:** Promote increased collaboration between recreational facility managers and teachers on formal and informal outdoor education opportunities.
- Issue 7:** Provide or improve outdoor recreation facilities to enable greater accessibility and use by multiple age groups and persons with disabilities.
- Issue 8:** Minimize conflicts between outdoor recreational activities that are not compatible through education, regulation, and careful planning of new or expanded facilities and programs.
- Issue 9:** Provide and properly maintain adequate facilities for and access to a diverse range of outdoor recreation activities, from traditionally popular activities such as boating and hunting to emerging activities such as rowing, rock climbing, disc golf, and dog parks.
- Issue 10:** Require and/or encourage the provision of connectivity between trails, outdoor recreation facilities, open space and residential development on all levels – local, regional and statewide.
- Issue 11:** Create and encourage partnerships among government and non-profit agencies at all levels to ensure coordination, reduce redundancies, provide training and technical assistance, and leverage resources to enable additional outdoor recreation opportunities.
- Issue 12:** Encourage small business and eco-tourism opportunities to enhance local economic development and to fill unmet outdoor recreational needs.
- Issue 13:** Protect and acquire significant lands for natural and cultural resources and identify opportunities for allowing public outdoor recreational use.
- Issue 14:** Protect shorelines (rivers, lakes, and beaches) and dedicate more waterfront lands for public recreational use and access.
- Issue 15:** Promote green technologies and energy conservation techniques in the planning, design, construction and operation of outdoor recreation facilities to reduce costs and conserve natural resources.

Issues of National Concern

Many recreational issues of national concern have surfaced over the last few years as communities, non-profits, the private sector, and individuals have joined recreational and natural resource providers in recognizing the growing importance of recreational opportunity to overall quality of life and community sustainability. Similarities and common themes on recreation and related issues are found throughout the recommendations of diverse groups such as the *2007 Regional and National Recreation Forums* convened by the American Recreation Coalition and the National Forest Foundation, the *Healthy People 2010* initiative, and studies conducted by the American Planning Association, the National Association of City and County Health Officials and the National Park Service. Current recreational issues of national concern include:

- Stable funding, as provided through mechanisms such as dedicated trust funds and user fees, is needed to continue to meet the recreational and natural resources needs of the American people.
- Adequate operational funds must be provided to maintain, update and expand existing recreation resources and new facilities added due to increased demand and population growth.
- America's outdoor recreation facilities, including trail and forest systems, are in need of significant repair and enhancement; however, sufficient funding has not been made available.
- Lack of outreach and education about the myriad of diverse outdoor recreation opportunities available continues to be a major barrier to outdoor recreation participation.
- Accommodating future outdoor recreation demands will increasingly fall on public properties and providers as private landowners close land to public access.
- As America's youth are increasingly drawn to activities other than outdoor recreation such as the internet and expanding audio/video options, creative ways to boost outdoor recreation and physical activity among this sector of the population should be explored.
- Shrinking Federal and state funds allocated for recreation-related projects and programs will necessitate the creation of outdoor recreation partnerships and collaborations among all levels of government, non-profits, volunteers, private recreation providers, and other non-traditional recreation interests to seek alternative funding sources and leverage existing funds.
- Outdoor recreation opportunities are limited for residents of highly urbanized areas, minorities, persons with disabilities, and persons of limited means.
- Different strategies must be developed to meet the outdoor recreation needs of all parts of society.
- Increased participation in and demand for a broad spectrum of outdoor activities such as climbing, motorized and off-road vehicle use, hiking, horseback riding, water sports and

wildlife viewing is likely to create competition and conflicts for the use of public and private properties.

- Demand for nearby recreation resources is increasing as the nation becomes increasingly urbanized, fuel prices climb, and security concerns related to travel increase.
- The benefits of outdoor recreation and physical activity to public health and well being are widely recognized and have begun to impact public policy.
- A national system of parks, greenways, trails, scenic corridors, and recreation areas will contribute to the health and quality of life of individuals and communities, create jobs and economic benefits, conserve natural habitat and cultural resources, improve existing resources, and meet the changing recreational needs of the American people.

Shared issues that transcend state and agency boundaries will affect the quantity and quality of outdoor recreation opportunities in communities throughout the country and include: Federal funding for resource expansion and operations; environmental concerns; public and private sector coordination and collaboration to provide recreational access; increasing demand and competition; increased emphasis on encouraging physical activity within all age groups; and on-going education and outreach efforts.

Implementation Program

The SCORP Implementation Program for outdoor recreation in South Carolina represents the five-year planning period from 2008 through 2013. Individual agencies and organizations will develop detailed plans for the identified strategies based on their respective missions, priorities, and available resources. The needs and recommendations addressed in the 2008 SCORP Implementation Program were developed through meetings and discussions with numerous Federal, State, and local agencies and organizations whose involvement is considered integral to successful implementation of the SCORP.

The Implementation Program serves as a general blueprint for guiding outdoor recreation initiatives in South Carolina over the next five years. It is important to recognize that additional windows of opportunity will likely open within the five-year plan period to address outdoor recreational needs. Although these new opportunities may not be specifically identified in this Plan, they should be incorporated as available into efforts to address future needs and advance the major plan implementation recommendations. Of particular benefit are opportunities that generate interagency and public-private collaboration and that maximize resources through partnerships, cost-sharing agreements, grant opportunities, volunteer involvement, or other major cost-saving measures. The Implementation Program identifies future outdoor recreation needs, as well as establishes specific implementation strategies and responsibilities to achieve plan goals in the coming five years.

Future Needs

Outdoor recreation policy and planning in South Carolina will be guided by the following general principles for the next five years:

- Take action on the major recreation issues identified by the general public.
- Address the continued transition of traditional funding streams and identify alternative funding sources and resource development opportunities with an increased emphasis on interagency collaboration and public-private partnerships to maximize limited resources.
- Base acquisition and development decisions on the findings of participation and preference studies within the context of the significant identified issues.
- Seek and pursue windows of opportunity such as cost-sharing, partnerships, land donations, bargain sales, and perpetual easements when possible.
- Incorporate related needs and strategies from other agency and organization planning processes and implement recommendations from other existing studies and plans.
- Encourage Federal action on issues of national concern.

Realization of the SCORP goals and implementation strategies will be shaped by these general guidelines, as well as impacted by a myriad of environmental challenges and opportunities. These external trends include: the continued transition and decline of traditional funding streams and the need to identify alternative funding sources and resource development strategies; an increased emphasis on interagency collaboration, public-private partnerships, and volunteer involvement to maximize limited resources; and continued population growth and development in South Carolina that is accompanied by an increased demand for expanded recreational opportunities, additional demand on existing recreational resources, and growing development pressure on existing and potential natural and cultural resources.

Recommendations

State and local agencies as well as non-profit and private organizations plan to accomplish a wide range of actions that will address the fifteen priority implementation issues identified during the 2008 SCORP planning process. A detailed listing of 129 ambitious, yet attainable planned implementation strategies is provided in *Part VIII* of the 2008 SCORP.

