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## Anderson

## Speaker to discuss swamp restoration

BY LIZ CAREY  
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careyme@/260.1252

A move to turn the swamp area along Williamston Road in Anderson into a nature preserve is gaining momentum, said Juan Brown with the Rocky River Conservancy.

Brown will speak to the Anderson University Board of Visitors on Wednesday about the conservancy and their work with the university to develop the area.

"I've been working on this for about seven or eight years," Brown said. "The conservancy has been able to do more in two years than I was able to do alone in the six before it."

The conservancy is working with Anderson University to preserve about 400 acres of land adjacent to the university. Plans include providing walking trails through the wetlands of the area, creating a nature park and preserving the natural habitats within the area.

Similar to the Swamp Rabbit Trail in Greenville, the goal is to turn the area into a natural destination point within the city limits. As the group envisions it, the area could link several cities together with walking/hiking trails and other recreational activities.

"You can kayak from there all the way down to Lake Secession," Brown said. "If you leave the swamp and get on Cox's Creek walkway all the way up to AnMed and to the Civic Center. There's an abandoned railroad that



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Dr. Juan Brown of Anderson is involved in helping develop the Rocky River Swamp area into a place available for walking and horseback riding near the Anderson University Athletic Campus.

## ON THE WEB



Photos and video of the swamp area that could be turned into a preserve are at [www.independentmail.com](http://www.independentmail.com).

goes through there that goes all the way to Belton. It's possible, when this is finished, to go to Belton, follow the trail up to Greenville and potentially, you could leave the Rocky River swamp and end up in Travelers Rest."

Dean Woods, Anderson University vice president for institutional advancement, said the conservancy is working on its vision.

"We have things that we envision doing," Woods said. "We have things that we would like to do. Are we shovel ready to do anything? No. I think we are still in a phase where we are vision casting."

Woods said the university is working with the con-

servancy to work on the area. The university owns more than 120 acres of the land and uses it as an outdoor classroom.

Dana Leavitt, with Upstate Forever, which also works with the conservancy, said the land is full of natural trails and wildlife.

"One of the functions we are looking at is restoring some of that wetland hydrology," Leavitt said. "That would have a remarkable effect in enhancement of the habitat. You'll find that area full of beavers, otters, muskrat, frogs and an abundance of birds."

The conservancy is working on securing grants and other sources of money to begin some of the work that needs to be done.

"It's certainly much bigger than our board, and it will certainly take time," Woods said. "But we do hope the coming year that we can at least begin to do some initial steps in trail development."