

Conestee group gets \$500,000 to buy land

An organization developing a park at Lake Conestee recently received some green to add to their greenspace.

Community Foundation of Greenville Inc. pledged \$500,000 to Conestee Foundation. The group will use the money to leverage additional donations as well as negotiate with landowners to expand Lake Conestee Nature Park.

"It's one of the largest grants we've ever made, but we think it's money well-spent," says Bob Morris, Community Foundation of Greenville president.

The park currently comprises 260 acres owned by Conestee Foundation, including 150 acres of wetlands. When finished, it will include areas for walking, paddling, viewing wildlife and hosting group activities.

"We look forward to the opening of the park in the summer," says Dana Leavitt, a Conestee Foundation member and land trust director for the local conservation group Upstate Forever.

Plans could expand the park to 800 acres.

"This could, quite honestly, be the size of Central Park in New York," says C. Dan Joyner, vice chairman of Community Foundation of Greenville and a local real estate executive.

In using the grant for land purchases, Leavitt says, attention will be paid to

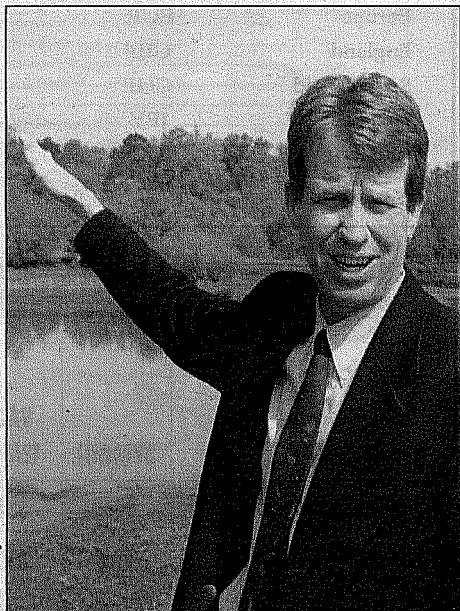


Photo by Richard Breen

Jeff Beacham of Conestee Foundation describes his group's plans for a park around Lake Conestee.

waterfront property, as well as property that connects with the hundreds of acres nearby that are owned by the city of Greenville and Western Carolina Regional Sewer Authority.

In its 50th year, Community Foundation of Greenville is a charity that focuses on quality-of-life issues.

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