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Nature park will be gem for Easley *Nalley Brown project is in early stages; fundraising to come soon*

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A new environmental education center is being planned for Easley, and residents could soon be able to help make the project a reality. Preliminary designs are done for the Nalley Brown Nature Park and a fundraising campaign will be started soon. It's a great opportunity for the community to help provide a highly desirable community amenity.

The park will be on 38 acres off Adger Road in Easley. The land, which was given to the city of Easley by members of the Nalley Brown family was recently annexed.

The planned nature park will feature an environmental education center with laboratories and classrooms. It also will include walking trails, overlooks, boardwalks, an American Indian exhibit and an early pioneer exhibit, according to a report in *The Greenville News*.

The park has been eight years in the making -- so far. And it will be another few years at least before it opens. Designers have finished a preliminary schematic for the park, and the final design will be drafted once enough funds have been raised to cover those costs. Once the final design is done, the fundraising will begin in earnest. A final fundraising goal has not yet been set.

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In a recent interview, Rick Huffman, of the landscape design firm Earth Design, said fundraising could include multiple facets such as a public campaign, private donations and grants. The project is being led by Upstate Forever.

In a recent report in *The Greenville News*, Huffman described the property that will be used for the nature park. "This place and its benefits will transcend our lifetime and bring environmental education to generations," he told the newspaper.

Easley's mayor also praised the project in the newspaper report, calling it a great educational opportunity. "Kids can learn. Adults can learn. There's so much history to be preserved here," Mayor Chris Christopherson said.

Projects such as these have multiple benefits. First, the Nalley Brown Nature Park will preserve 38 acres of beautiful natural land in an area that is sure to develop over time. Second, it will offer a place for the community's children to learn about nature and the things connected to it. Finally, it will offer a place for the community as a whole to enjoy the natural beauty of the Upstate.

Once done, this project will be an enjoyable addition to the Upstate. Though the call hasn't come yet for the public to offer its financial support, this effort will be well worth public involvement. The community should embrace Nalley Brown Nature Park for all the ways that it will improve the quality of life of the Easley area and all of the Upstate.
