

Berry Mill Pond

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BY CHARLES SOWELL | STAFF

A PERFECT WINTER WALK for younger kids are the loop trails at the old Berry Mill Pond, a place where killdeer and beavers abound and where on a cold winter day there is a Lowcountry flavor in the ghosts of lily pads frozen on the surface.

None of the trails are more than a quarter mile, except for the out and back footpath that follows the edge of the lake north toward the headwaters; that one is about a half-mile overall.

The 58-acre site is owned by the SJWD Water District. They acquired the property from the decedents of Spartan Commodore Berry whose family has owned the property since the late 1800s.

Berry built a cotton gin, corn grist mill, and a lumber saw mill on the foundations of the Greenville District's first working textile mill, which was founded by textile pioneer John Weaver, from Rhode Island, in about 1820.

The 27-acre mill pond is about 100 years old and plays host to great flocks of waterfowl for much of the year. The trails are only open on Wednesday from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. and feature plaques explaining the flora on the site.

The signage creates opportunities for interactive learning that doesn't include a television monitor and the signs of beaver activity are plain on the southbound trail leading to several benches at overlooks leading to the dam.

When there's no ice on the lake it is possible to watch ducks feeding for considerable periods of time from the benches.

The old mill pond and surrounding acreage has provided a haven for wildlife in the area for decades and wild turkey can often be found feeding on the new grass at the entrance in the



Charles Sowell/Staff

Ice covers Berry Mill pond. The 27-acre mill pond is about 100 years old and plays host to great flocks of waterfowl for much of the year.

springtime.

The entrance to the site, located on Berry Mill Road just off state Route 14, is flat, wide and well tended; a great spot for family picnics.

The site is protected under a conservation easement with Upstate Forever reached after SJWD obtained the property. It is the second conservation easement by a government entity in the Upstate.

The pond is located on Beaverdam Creek, a tributary of the Middle Tyger River, a principle supplier of water to Western Spartanburg County.

The conservation easement helps protect the quality of water and preserves more than 20 acres of wetlands at the head of the pond. The northbound trail stops at the edge of the wetlands area.

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HOW TO GET THERE

From Greer take state Route 14 north for about six miles.

Berry Mill Road is on the left just past Beaver Dam Free Will Baptist Church.

Turn left onto Berry Mill. The parking area for the trails is on the right, after crossing over Beaverdam Creek.