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Lake Conestee Nature Park News

The Conestee Foundation has been working hard over the past year to expand and improve Lake Conestee Nature Park! In addition to the 2.2 miles of natural trails that opened in October, the Foundation recently completed a 2/3-mile paved trail. This asphalt trail, funded by Greenville County and the SC Department of Transportation, connects the existing parking lot on Henderson Avenue to a new lot on Fork Shoals Road. The paved trail will later be expanded to form the southern portion of the Reedy River Greenway. The Greenway system will begin in Travelers Rest along the former "Swamp Rabbit" railway line, pass through Furman University and the City of Greenville, and end at Lake Conestee Nature Park.

The park and Greenway system will benefit from several grants recently awarded to the Conestee Foundation. Greenville Women Giving, a newly developed philanthropic organization in Greenville, donated \$29,453 to help expand the park's trail network. The SC Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism also donated \$100,000 through their Recreational Trails Program. Together these funds will be used to build a trail along the Reedy River on the Forrester Farm property and along the river bluff behind the Municipal Stadium. The funds will also allow for the construction of a bridge across the Reedy River to connect the new trail to the existing trail network. This trail will eventually connect to a main entrance for the park on Mauldin Road.

Another grant for \$99,800 was awarded by the SC Conservation Bank to purchase approximately 12 acres of land from the City of Greenville. The City will match the grant by donating an additional 69 acres of land, adjacent to the purchased land, along the Reedy River directly below Western Carolina Regional Sewer Authority. The City has also given the Foundation permission to utilize the capped Municipal Landfill, which is directly upstream of the Municipal Stadium, as part of LCNP. These additions will nearly double the size of the park, bringing it close to 600 acres. The proposed section of the Reedy River Greenway through LCNP would pass through Western Carolina Regional Sewer Authority and link the City property and capped landfill to the existing park boundaries.

The park itself is looking better than ever thanks to the hard work of nearly 200 volunteers who participated in Operation Clean Sweep in February. More than 8.5 tons of trash and 152 tires were removed from the trail system! A special thanks goes to our partners who made the event possible: Saluda Reedy Watershed Consortium, PalmettoPride, Michelin North America, Friends of the Reedy River, SC Water Resources Center, City of Greenville, Greenville County Recreation District, Greenville County Solid Waste Division, and Hands on Greenville. As the primary catch basin for the Reedy River as it leaves the City of Greenville, LCNP floods regularly and traps any trash and debris floating in the river. To manage this ongoing issue, the Conestee Foundation hopes to organize monthly work days to maintain the park's trails.

Thank you for your continued support of Lake Conestee Nature Park!