



## **"Blue Trail" to be created on the Waccamaw River**

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**By: American Rivers**

**American Rivers, Winyah Rivers Foundation's Waccamaw RIVERKEEPER®, and the Pee Dee Land Trust will collaborate on the project**

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**Thanks to a generous grant from the Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation, American Rivers, along with its partners, Winyah Rivers Foundation's Waccamaw RIVERKEEPER®, and the Pee Dee Land Trust, will begin work in Horry and Georgetown Counties to create a blue trail on the Waccamaw River. The goals of this three year project are to improve recreation opportunities as well as public support for the river to assure it remains healthy.**

**Collaboration with communities in Horry and Georgetown Counties to establish the Waccamaw River Blue Trail is essential to the project. Blue trails, the water equivalent to hiking trails, help facilitate recreation in and along rivers and are used by paddlers, anglers, hikers, picnickers, and those seeking a little solitude.**

**While the blue trail will improve recreational opportunities, it will also help to educate citizens, local governments and the elected officials about the importance of the river as a community asset, increase community involvement in the river, and support conservation.**

**"A healthy Waccamaw River that provides the community benefits of clean and flowing water, recreation and nature-based tourism will depend on the protection of this incredible resource" said Gerrit Jobsis, American Rivers' Southeast Regional Director.**

**The Waccamaw River is a signature natural feature of Horry and Georgetown Counties in South Carolina. The river provides multiple community benefits including scenic landscapes, diverse and significant fish and wildlife populations, drinking water supply, and recreation and it is an economic engine that serves this**

**growing region. However, as a consequence of unchecked development many rural woodlands and agricultural areas are being paved over. Protecting the natural character of the surrounding watershed is essential for a healthy Waccamaw River.**

**“The blue trail project will help us to engage local citizens in the stewardship of their watershed,” said Waccamaw Riverkeeper, Christine Ellis, who serves as the local voice for the Waccamaw River. “This project is among our top priorities for the watershed because of the benefits for the community and for the long-term health of the river.”**

**Jennie Williamson, the Executive Director of the Pee Dee Land Trust (PDLT) said, "This day in time, you can't just do nothing and expect natural areas to stay the same. As people look for more ways to protect the Waccamaw, PDLT can offer some of the tools that help take care of such a well-loved river."**

**This blue trail is part of a larger effort and it will serve as an innovative model for how to bring people back to their rivers through recreation and work to protect and restore these valuable assets. American Rivers also recently launched an ambitious network of blue trails on the Congaree and Wateree rivers in South Carolina and have published the Blue Trails Guide to help other communities who are interested in developing blue trails.**

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**American Rivers is the leading national organization standing up for healthy rivers so communities can thrive. American Rivers protects and restores America's rivers for the benefit of people, wildlife and nature. Founded in 1973, American Rivers has more than 65,000 members and supporters nationwide, with offices in Washington, DC and the Mid-Atlantic, Northeast, Midwest, Southeast, California and Northwest regions. Visit [www.AmericanRivers.org](http://www.AmericanRivers.org).**