

# News Archive

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*October 24, 2015 - The State*

## **Thousands of dams avoid state inspections in South Carolina**

**State has 10,000 to 20,000 unregulated dams  
Some failed during the historic storm this month  
Experts suggest putting some smaller dams under state regulation**

By [SAMMY FRETWELL](#)

"COLUMBIA, SC - Thousands of dams across South Carolina go uninspected by state regulators every year because the structures aren't considered significant enough to warrant government oversight.

But experts say some of these unregulated dams pose risks to people and property if they fail – particularly in urban areas like Columbia, where a massive rainstorm Oct. 4 broke numerous dams."

[Read more here...](#)

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*October 19, 2015 - The State*

## **Q&A: Understanding what a '1,000-year storm' means**

**Debate will swirl over when, how – or whether – to rebuild dams  
Weighing the safety of those who live downstream  
Use of taxpayer money for private dams, lakes is 'tricky,' legislator says**

By [Amy Clarke Burns](#) - *The Greenville News*

"Does a 1,000-year rain really happen every 1,000 years?"

In short: Not really. The 1,000-year – or 100-year or 500-year – terminology is really a shorthand way of talking about statistical probability and isn't related to how often a certain event is expected to happen."

[Read more here...](#)

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*October 17, 2015 - The State*

## **Will lakes be restored? Rebuilding dams will be costly**

**Debate will swirl over when, how – or whether – to rebuild dams  
Weighing the safety of those who live downstream  
Use of taxpayer money for private dams, lakes is 'tricky,' legislator says**

By [SAMMY FRETWELL](#)

"COLUMBIA, SC - The question of when, how – or whether – to rebuild dams has become a major point of discussion as the Columbia area continues to struggle with the effects of a flood so powerful that people fled their homes from the rapidly rising water."

[Read more here...](#)

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*October 16, 2015 - The State*

## **SC agency orders lake levels dropped behind 63 Midlands dams**

**Emergency order affects 63 lakes and ponds, including 28 in Richland County and four in Lexington County**

**Lakes affected include Forest Lake, Lake Katherine, Spring Lake, Hughes Pond, Upper Rockyford Lake, Windsor Lake and Wildwood Pond 2 in Richland County**

**Dams broken at some of the lakes ordered lowered**

By [SAMMY FRETWELL](#)

"COLUMBIA, SC - The S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control has ordered the owners of potentially dangerous dams to lower lake levels or drain their lakes completely by Tuesday, according to agency records released Friday night."

[Read more here...](#)

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*October 14, 2015 - The Free Times*

## **Land Buyouts Could Follow Flood**

By [Eva Moore](#)

"One of the lasting images from last week's storm was the Title Max and Liberty Tax building on Devine Street, nearly underwater, with a swollen Gills Creek flowing through its damaged walls.

The Title Max is one of many buildings that could face obstacles to rebuilding — either by federal flood regulation, or because local activists will be urging governments not to let people rebuild there."

[Read more here...](#)

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*October 10, 2015 - The State*

## **What Columbia can learn from Nashville's 2010 flood**

**Nashvillians say city's swift response, collaborative spirit drove recovery**

By [Jamie Self](#)

"In response to the flood, Nashville banned new commercial and residential development in areas highly prone to flooding. Those areas are closest to the water and, therefore, most susceptible to the most dangerous, fastest moving floodwaters.

The city also placed limits on property owners who wanted to rebuild in floodways. The new structure could not exceed its original size, and the first inhabitable level had to be four feet higher than federal flood standards.

City leaders say a home-buyout program was a huge help to flood victims. It also transformed flood-prone areas into green spaces."

[Read more here...](#)

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*October 10, 2015 - The State*

## **Aging dams spark questions in waterlogged Columbia**

**There are approximately 2,400 regulated dams in SC, most earthen and privately maintained**

**There are approximately 48,000 dams not regulated by anyone**

**5 dams on Gills Creek, which stretches from northeast Richland County to the Congaree River, failed**

By [SAMMY FRETWELL](#)

"COLUMBIA SC

One week ago today, after hours of intense rainfall, an obscure dam in northeast Richland County cracked and broke, blowing open a hole that sent muddy water through the earthen dike and down Jackson Creek.

What happened next contributed to the worst flooding many people have ever seen in Columbia, authorities say."

[Read more here...](#)

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*Posted: Oct 09, 2015 3:07 PM EDT - Updated: Oct 16, 2015 3:38 PM EDT - WIS TV*

## **What happened with Gills Creek during the historic rain?**

By *Jeremy Turnage - COLUMBIA, SC (WIS)*

As folks surrounding Gills Creek begin to build anew following this weekend's record-setting and devastating floods, we're getting a good idea just how the situation deteriorated so quickly. Mobile users, tap here to see photos of the historic flooding.

Members of the Gills Creek Watershed Association posted an update on their website, giving us the first timeline of events that lead to around 20 inches of rain causing massive flooding in the area.

[Read more...](#)

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*October 6, 2015 - The State*

## **Floods, rain expose SC's flawed dam safety program**

**Six Richland County dams broke, causing death and destruction in floods  
DHEC, in charge of dam safety, declines to comment Tuesday  
Not even a warning system in place**

By [SAMMY FRETWELL](#) and [John Monk](#)

" COLUMBIA, SC

Recent heavy rains and floods across South Carolina that broke multiple dams and destroyed hundreds — if not thousands — of homes have turned a spotlight on the state's dam safety program.

South Carolina has for years had one of the nation's weakest dam safety programs, consistently ranking near the bottom of rankings in federal and state government reports."

[Read more here...](#)

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*October 6, 2015 - The State*

## **Rain made Gills Creek roaring river**

**Several stores, apartments and homes flooded  
Major roads blocked until water recedes  
Too many built too close to streams, group says**

By [Tim Flach](#)

"COLUMBIA SC

Record rainfall turned normally quiet Gills Creek into a roaring river on Sunday, flooding streets around Devine Street and Rosewood Drive, damaging dozens of businesses and homes, and forcing emergency crews to rescue apartment dwellers.

The water flooded businesses around the new Rosewood Crossing shopping center and submerged several cars. No injuries were reported."

[Read more here...](#)

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*October 5, 2015 - The State*

## **Gills Creek's quiet network of lakes and streams brings flood deaths**

**Two of Richland County's five known water-related deaths happened in low-lying Gills Creek area**

**At least 3 dams break along the 70-mile Gills Creek watershed network of lakes and streams**

By [John Monk](#)

"COLUMBIA, SC

The Gills Creek watershed's 70-mile winding network of normally calm lakes, dams and placid streams turned killer Sunday, when its rising waters trapped two Columbia motorists in their vehicles a mile apart and swept them to their deaths."

[Read more here:](#)

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2015-07-03 - *The Columbia Star*

## Development or Disaster?

### Residents in an uproar over H&M plans for former Carolina Children's Home property

By *Mimi M. Maddock*

"After being turned down February 17 and May 18 by the Forest Acres Planning Commission, Randy Jones, Mitch McGuert, and Henry Massey of H & M Real Estate Holdings LLC along with their attorney, Bobby Fuller, will take their plan for Belmont Place to the Forest Acres City Council meeting July 14 in hopes to have the property rezoned from P-1, a Public/ Semi-Public district which is primarily intended for public recreational uses, but does allow single family residential, to PDD (Planned Development District)."

[Read more here...](#)

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2015-06-06 - *The State*

## Richland County open house will offer details on flood risk areas

BY SARAH ELLIS [sellis@thestate.com](mailto:sellis@thestate.com)

"RICHLAND COUNTY, SC

If you live or have property in a high-flood risk area in Richland County, an upcoming open house will help you learn how you can protect yourselves and your property.

Flood hazard maps that are used to indicate parts of the county that are susceptible to damaging flooding have been updated this year to reflect recent changes in topography, land use and drainage patterns. That means some properties that used to be considered at risk no longer are, and other properties that used to be safe are now considered at risk.

The Flood Risk Open House from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. June 24 at 2020 Hampton St. Residents can learn whether a property is located in one of those high-flood areas. They can also get information about flood insurance, view flood maps and speak with flood risk officials."

[Read more here...](#)

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2014-10-03 - *The Columbia Star*

## **Members of CCN hear updates about the city, Gills Creek Watershed, and Columbia Metropolitan Airport**

*By Josh Cruse*

"City manager Teresa Wilson provided updates and answered questions at the Columbia Council of Neighborhoods meeting Thursday, September 25.

Erich Miarka, program coordinator of Gills Creek Watershed Association, gave a presentation. According to Miarka the 70-mile watershed stretches from Northeast Columbia to the Congaree River. Nearly 140,000 residents are affected by the watershed.

There are two major projects in the works for sections of the watershed."

[Read more here...](#)

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*2014-10-03 - The Columbia Star*

## **Residents affected by Gills Creek Watershed meet with experts**

*By Josh Cruse*

"In an attempt to address some of the concerns of the Gills Creek Watershed neighborhoods, Gills Creek Watershed Association's Erich Miarka conducted a lake summit meeting at the Cooper Branch Library Monday, September 29. John Poole, from DHEC, discussed some of the issues facing dam owners. Chris Page, with the Department of Natural Resources, gave a presentation about aquatic weeds and some management strategies. Will Dillard, from Belser and Belser, provided a legal perspective. Thom Bristol, with Geosyntec Consultants, talked about a reservoir model for lake management and flood control."

[Read more here...](#)

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*Wednesday, September 24, 2014 - The State*

## **Environmental impact of new Richland 2 school focus of Wednesday meeting**

*By CAROLYN CLICK*

"Richland 2 is moving ahead with plans for a new elementary school near the intersection of Decker Boulevard and Trenholm Road, although Gills Creek Watershed Association officials and nearby property owners say they will scrutinize carefully the district's plans to assure there is no environmental harm."

[Read more here...](#)

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*2014-09-12 - The Columbia Star*

## **Zorba's is gone; flooding risk reduced**

*Contributed by Richland County*

"Richland County Councilman Jim Manning announced September 3 the demolition work has begun at 2628 Decker Boulevard, fondly referred to as the Old Zorba's. Although this building has existed since 1960 and served as one of Columbia's most frequented family restaurants and subsequently a social and entertainment facility; over the years it has become one of the county's priority locations to reduce the risk of flooding."

[Read more here...](#)

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*Thursday, December 19, 2013 - The State*

## **Advocates of Gills Creek prepare trail plan in hopes of funding with transportation tax**

By [DAWN HINSHAW](#)

"The Gills Creek Watershed Association has finalized a conceptual plan for the first segment of a trail proposed along the urban creek in Columbia.

The \$2.6 million trail, running from Shady Lane to Rosewood Drive, would serve the 14,175 residents living within a mile of the creekside trail."

[Read more here...](#)

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*Saturday, December 14, 2013 - The State*

## **Richland purchases flood-prone property on Decker Boulevard**

By [DAWN HINSHAW](#)

"RICHLAND COUNTY, S.C. — A flood-threatened restaurant that has been vacant for two years will be demolished by Richland County under a federal program to remove structures built precariously close to waterways.

In the first project of its kind in Richland County, officials applied for and received federal money to cover 75 percent of the cost of returning the property "to what God made," as Councilman Jim Manning put it."

[Read more here...](#)

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*Thursday, December 5, 2013*

## **Green Non-Profit Award Awarded To The Gills Creek Watershed Association**

"The Midlands Green Awards were created to recognize individuals and businesses for their exceptional work in making the Midlands a cleaner, greener, more beautiful community. Keep the Midlands Beautiful wishes to recognize individuals, groups, and businesses for the wonderful example they set for all residents, and visitors."

[Read more here...](#)

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*Friday, November 1, 2013 - The Columbia Star*

## **Homeowners suffer from dam controversy**

*By Rosanna Winters Lomas*

For the past two years, 14 families, most elderly and in financial strife living along Arcadia Wood Lake (Coopers Pond), have been crippled by an emergency order instituted by Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) Bureau of Water to immediately empty their lake in an effort to prevent damage to life should there be a dam failure.

[Read more here...](#)

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*Tuesday, August 13, 2013 - The State*

## **Feds fining Columbia \$1.5 million for pollution**

*By SAMMY FRETWELL — [sfretwell@thestate.com](mailto:sfretwell@thestate.com)*

After more than four years of investigation, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency plans to hit Columbia with \$1.5 million in fines and cleanup costs for spilling sewage into rivers from the city's aging wastewater treatment system.

Federal officials plan to assess \$476,400 in fines against the city and require another \$1 million to address flooding and cleanse parts of three major streams that flow into Columbia's rivers: Rocky Branch, Gill's Creek and Smith Branch, according to a proposed consent agreement posted on the city's website.

[Read more here...](#)

[Read the consent degree ordinance...](#)

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*Spring 2013 - ArcUser Magazine*

## **Story Maps in the Classroom**

*By Sarah E. Battersby and Kevin C. Remington, University of South Carolina*

Incorporating Esri's story maps into the geography undergraduate senior seminar at the University of South Carolina helped students communicate results from their semester-long projects. The authors discuss the successes they had and the challenges they faced to help other instructors recognize the possibilities and minimize the limitations of using story maps in their

own classrooms.

For the fall 2012 semester, six groups of students were working on projects with three local agencies: the Gills Creek Watershed Association, Lexington County GIS, and Sustainable Midlands.

[Read more here...](#)

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*Sunday, Oct. 07, 2012 - The State - News - Local / Metro*

## **PENNY SALES TAX**

### **How Richland County's local sales tax would address recreation, safety**

By DAWN HINSHAW - [dhinshaw@thestate.com](mailto:dhinshaw@thestate.com)

Nearly 14 years ago, construction began on the first leg of walking trails along Columbia's wooded, largely hidden riverfront.

Since then, the Three Rivers Greenway has opened the river to businesses that rent inner tubes, created cachet for State Street coffee shops and attracted mansions with sunrise views.

Even before the county called for a sales tax referendum, the Gills Creek Watershed Association was working on a feasibility study for a greenway, funded with a \$15,000 grant from the Richland County Conservation Commission. Two sections of the creek are listed in the sales tax plan.

[Read more here...](#)

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*Monday, Aug. 27, 2012 - The State - News - Local / Metro*

### **Richland Co. devotes money to improve trails, drainage in Rosewood**

#### **\$50,000 requested by neighborhood leaders to formalize trails, add signage**

By DAWN HINSHAW - [dhinshaw@thestate.com](mailto:dhinshaw@thestate.com)

Richland County is working on a plan to improve trails through a wooded area in Rosewood where children play and couples walk shady footpaths.

The project at Owens Field Park, requested by neighborhood leaders, will formalize the system of well-worn trails and pay for signs identifying native plants and trees, community and county officials say.

Pete Mayers, 70, said the woods are one of the few quiet places around where people can walk and just let their thoughts wander.

[Read more...](#)

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*Saturday, Aug. 25, 2012 - The State - News - State & Regional*

## **SC wants owners to check dams before Isaac rains**

*The Associated Press*

COLUMBIA, S.C. - South Carolina environmental officials are asking dam owners and operators across the state to check the structures and begin lowering water levels if necessary.

The Department of Health and Environmental Control says heavy rains possible from Tropical Storm Isaac after it moved inland next week could stress out dams already dealing with recent rains.

The National Weather Service says up to 5 inches of rain could fall across South Carolina, with up to 8 inches possible in the Upstate.

[Read more...](#)

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*2012-07-06 / Education - The Columbia Star*

## **Hammond School student awarded Eagle Scout medal**

*Contributed by Barbara Luksik* Jacob Carter Luksik cleaned out a 1400 foot long section of 8 Mile Branch Creek (part of Gills Creek Watershed) that runs behind Timmerman School.

[Read more...](#)

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*2012-04-27 / Columbia Star*

## **Snapping turtle comes a knockin'**

*By Warner M. Montgomery*

Janie Stancik was startled when she opened the front door of her home to find a giant snapping turtle. So startled, in fact, that she called Rudy Mancke at ETV to ask him what to do about it. Rudy said, "Don't feed it and it will go away." She didn't, it did, and Rudy reported it on the radio.

The turtle, disappointed because Janie's husband, Steve, a marine scientist, was not home, made it's way back to Gills Creek and disappeared.

[See the turtle...](#)

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*Posted: Apr 23, 2012 5:55 PM EDT*

## **Property owners look for fix to 'Devil's Ditch'**

*By Taylor Kearns - WIS-TV*

COLUMBIA, SC (WIS) - Just north of Columbia's Owens Airport is an urban stream that lives up to its name: Devil's Ditch. It carries storm water out of Shandon - and brings with it a host of headaches for residents.

The ditch has been a mess for quite a while, according to Charles Walter. He grew up on its banks and says the over growth is becoming a flooding hazard and haven for snakes.

[Read more and see the video...](#)

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*Issue #25.16 :: 04/17/2012 - 04/23/2012*

## **The 2012 Green Issue: 11 Treasures Worth Protecting**

*By FREE TIMES*

It's hard to care about something when it's abstract. Sure, there are lots of facts and figures out there about air quality, soil erosion, climate change and contaminated groundwater, but until an issue affects you in a personal way, it can be difficult to wrap your brain — and your heart — around it.

Herein lies the starting point for this year's Green Issue. Maybe you're getting bored of being told to compost your garbage and get your HVAC system serviced regularly. No doubt those things are still important — but first, you need to care about something.

[Read more...](#)

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*2012-03-30 / News - Columbia Star*

## **Gill's Creek Watershed Association Urban and Paddle Country Picnic**

*By Cathy Cobbs*

The Gills Creek Watershed Association's Urban Paddle and Country Picnic, despite weather-related obstacles, had a successful fundraiser on Sunday, March 25.

Plans to paddle a section of Gills Creek from 1-3 p. m. had to be scraped because of rising waters in the wake of Saturday's torrential weather. However, the sun broke through in time for a BBQ picnic at Millaree Hunt Club off Bluff Road later that day. Attendees enjoyed music, a nature walk led by "Cowasee Basin" author John Cely, along with good food and fellowship.

[Read more...](#)

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*Friday, Jan. 06, 2012 - The State Newspaper - Business - Shop Around*

## **Upscale restaurateur serving more basic fare at The Diner**

By Kristy Eppley Rupon - [krupon@thestate.com](mailto:krupon@thestate.com)

Fulvio Valsecchi passed by the little building at 4405 Fort Jackson Blvd. for years, always thinking he'd like to try a restaurant there. His timing couldn't have been better.

Shortly after Valsecchi – who also owns the upscale Ristorante Divino – started working on his new venture, The Diner, Edens development company announced it would redevelop a nearby vacant shopping center into a Whole Foods-anchored Cross Hill Market.

Meanwhile, Edens is holding a Food Truck Rodeo 4-9 p.m. Jan. 14 to announce the newest Cross Hill Market retailers to go along with Whole Foods. Entry is \$5 and includes live entertainment. Proceeds benefit the Gills Creek Watershed Association and The Jubilee Academy.

[Read more...](#)

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*Friday, Nov. 25, 2011 - The State Newspaper - News - Local / Metro*

## **Creek advocates using new technology to report spills**

By DAWN HINSHAW - [dhinshaw@thestate.com](mailto:dhinshaw@thestate.com)

A dozen volunteers are carrying cellphones allowing them to quickly report the exact location of sewer spills and other water contamination along Richland County's Gills Creek.

The program, announced last week, started in September through a grant with AT&T, said Jessica Artz, director of the Gills Creek Watershed Association.

Using smartphones, volunteers can photograph clogged storm drains, sewer-line breaks or illicit dumping. An application attaches directions to the problem site, using a global positioning system. The volunteer then emails the photo and location to both county and city stormwater departments, the county ombudsman's office and the watershed association.

[Read more...](#)

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*2011-11-18 / Government / Neighborhood - The Columbia Star*

### **RICHLAND COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING**

## **Three groups combine to reduce pollution and increase water quality**

*By Mike Cox*

A major step toward actually achieving success along the Gills Creek Watershed was announced by three groups who are combining efforts to reduce the pollution and increase the water quality of this urban waterway long identified as an example of urban water quality failure.

Carol Kososki, of the Conservation Commission, announced a joint venture between the Commission, the Gills Creek Watershed Association, and AT&T. The two conservation groups will donate \$8,500 each and AT&T executive Ted Creech presented an additional \$11,500 to the effort. AT&T will also be a link in the actual project. I-Phone apps will be available to volunteers to report any potential pollution sites along the creek and adjoining lakes. The apps will identify the exact location of the pollution, automatically notify area officials, and send information to the Gills Creek Watershed Association. The idea is to reduce the labor involved with volunteers trying to pinpoint trouble areas and notify the correct body to get results.

[Read more...](#)

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*Thursday, Nov. 10, 2011 - The State Newspaper Editorial*

## **Huguley: Let landfill close as planned**

*By MARK HUGULEY - Guest Columnist*

Abraham Lincoln said, "I walk slowly but I never walk backward." Richland County is in danger of "walking backward" as County Council members ponder the future of a landfill near Sumter County and the Wateree River.

County Council soon will decide whether to rescind its earlier policy limiting the life of the Northeast Landfill owned by Republic Services of Arizona. In doing so, it would void a 2007 agreement between Republic's predecessor and Richland County that restricts the life of the landfill to 2018.

In 2005, the county's solid waste management plan outlawed the expansion of existing landfills, and the landfill sued. According to Richland County administrative officials, the lawsuit ended in a 2007 settlement agreement that granted the landfill the authority to expand its Lower Richland facility but required it to close 10 years following the issuance of the DHEC permit. Additionally, Richland County would receive a host fee of \$1 per ton for all waste the landfill accepted from outside of the county.

Now, Republic proposes to increase the host fees paid to Richland County if the county agrees to allow operation until the landfill is full. Based on past use rates, this means the landfill would continue to operate until about 2040. The company also would start paying the host fee for in-county waste.

To further leverage its position, Republic implies it is willing to sell Richland County the environmentally important Cook's Mountain property, which it has an option to purchase and a stated desire to re-sell.

The right way for Richland County to address this proposal is to buy Cook's Mountain straight out with no link to a landfill that is possibly harmful to both the environment and people. Nearly the entire mountain is in a conservation easement that would prohibit its use as a landfill. Republic's proposal appears to be arm twisting.

[Read more...](#)

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*November 9, 2011 - The Free Times*

## **City Puts Brakes on Stadium Sale**

### **Walmart Development Slowed; Public Meetings to Follow**

*BY EVA MOORE - Free Times Issue #24.45 :: 11/09/2011 - 11/15/2011*

"The city slowed its move toward selling the Capital City Stadium to a developer who hopes to put a Walmart supercenter there.

City Council has already taken the required two votes to approve a contract with Bright-Meyers for the sale of the property, which borders the historic Olympia community and is in the Rocky Branch Creek floodplain. However, the city manager never signed the contract — and on Nov. 1, Council has told him to hold off signing it until the developer answers some questions about environmental and community impacts.

"We need to pause, need to reflect," said Councilwoman Belinda Gergel during a Nov. 1 council meeting at which Mayor Steve Benjamin announced Council's plan.

[Read more...](#)

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*Wednesday, Oct. 26, 2011 - The State Newspaper*

## **Re-energizing Decker Boulevard**

### **A vision of trails along Decker-area creeks**

#### **Richland County and landowners reach for a conservation plan**

*By DAWN HINSHAW - [dhinshaw@thestate.com](mailto:dhinshaw@thestate.com)*

Wooded wetlands could become shady walking trails if Richland County and landowners can agree on a conservation plan for Decker Boulevard.

Members of the county's planning staff have approached federal regulators with a concept to restore the polluted urban stream that runs behind strip malls on Decker Boulevard, developing a system of trails through the woods.

The project could gain traction because it appeals to an environmental base keenly interested in improving the Gills Creek Watershed. The watershed connects a chain of Richland County lakes that serve wildlife, provide recreation and are simply beautiful to the folks who live around them.

[Read more...](#)

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*Thursday, Jul. 14, 2011 - The State Newspaper*

## Let the clippings fall where they will

BY AMANDA MCNULTY - Associate Extension Agent, Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service, and co-host of ETV'S *Making It Grow* - [amcnult@clemson.edu](mailto:amcnult@clemson.edu)

"There is something essentially Southern about details that show you are nice.

Some of these obsessions signal that you have lots of labor to expend, be it from people hired or just a major case of can't sit stillness. If there were push mowers to use, cows to milk, or even flowers to cut and arrange, maybe we wouldn't be so obsessed with blowing our yards clean.

What isn't natural is the urban landscape with impervious paved streets engineered so rain water runoff and anything it carries is diverted to the storm drainage system. Grass clippings aren't very different from slow-release fertilizer, returning 4 percent nitrogen, 1 percent phosphorus, and 2 percent potassium to the environment as they decay. This is a wonderful recycling process if the clippings are left on the lawn to complete their cycle of renewal. When blown on the street or dumped at curbside from the mower's catcher, they end up in our streams and lakes."

[Read more...](#)

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*Monday, Jun. 13, 2011 - The State Newspaper*

## A watershed moment for Gills Creek fans

*Canoeists and kayakers come out Sunday to show support for water system*

BY JOHN MONK - [jmonk@thestate.com](mailto:jmonk@thestate.com)

"Watershed - what's a watershed?"

To raise public awareness of that question, members of the Gills Creek Watershed Association hosted perhaps the first public event ever on Lake Katharine, the crown jewel of the 70-mile Gills Creek stream and lake network. Members of the public were allowed in a normally private entrance to go kayaking or canoeing Sunday afternoon.

"Wherever you are on land, you're in a watershed," said Emily Jones, 49, a landscape architect who is president of the Gills Creek Watershed Association."

[Read more...](#)

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*Thursday, Apr. 14, 2011 - The State Newspaper*

## **Forest Acres bridge in limbo**

By DAWN HINSHAW - [dhinshaw@thestate.com](mailto:dhinshaw@thestate.com)

"An out-of-the-way bridge in Forest Acres has been closed to traffic, and whether it will be reopened is anyone's guess.

It's unclear who owns the small bridge over Gills Creek, barricaded in February after a state inspector found the wood pilings were wearing out.

The bridge, about the length of a long-bed pickup truck, could be owned by the city, the county, even a private landowner.

All residents want to know is who is going to fix it - and when."

[Read more...](#)

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*Friday, Apr. 01, 2011 - The State Newspaper*

## **Dams poorly regulated in S.C.**

*State dam safety programs rated last in effectiveness*

By SAMMY FRETWELL - [sfretwell@thestate.com](mailto:sfretwell@thestate.com)

"South Carolina has one of the nation's worst dam safety programs, spending less money than most states to protect citizens who live downstream from aging dams, statistics show.

The Palmetto State, which has more than 2,300 regulated dams, rated dead last in the latest federal flood insurance report on the effectiveness of state dam safety programs.

Several dams in the Gills Creek watershed, which runs through the heart of Columbia and Forest Acres, are high hazard dams, DHEC records show. Those include dams at Lake Katherine and Forest Lake, according to DHEC's 2010 dam inventory."

[Read more...](#)

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*Monday, Mar. 28, 2011 - The State Newspaper*

## **New facility at Cardinal site would make fuel from grease**

*In DHEC deal, Coastal Biodiesel would operate with limited cleanup, liability*

By SAMMY FRETWELL - [sfretwell@thestate.com](mailto:sfretwell@thestate.com)

"An Horry County business has bought a chunk of the abandoned Cardinal chemical plant on Columbia's South Beltline Boulevard, about 10 years after state environmental regulators shut down the notorious industrial site.

Coastal Biodiesel will use the Cardinal site to expand its company, which converts restaurant grease into fuel. The company plans to open a grease-processing facility on about six acres of the Cardinal site. It would employ about 25 people.

State regulators ordered Cardinal Cos. to close in 2000 after tin-based chemicals at the site were released into Columbia's wastewater system, threatening the Congaree River. Cardinal used a range of chemicals to make coatings for glass bottles and stabilizers for plastic pipe."

[Read more...](#)

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*Saturday, Mar. 26, 2011 - The State Newspaper*

## **Public notice of sewage spills often inadequate**

By JOEY HOLLEMAN - [jholleman@thestate.com](mailto:jholleman@thestate.com)

"Large sewage spills happen frequently in the Midlands. But the public often doesn't get the details about the spills from the utilities or the state's environmental protection agency for days, if at all.

Quick public notice is important to warn people who recreate in nearby waterways that could be polluted with fecal matter. But state legislation that would have required prompt public notice bogged down last year and hasn't been revived this year."

[Read more...](#)

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*Sunday, Mar. 13, 2011 - The State Newspaper*

*Editorial - Editorial Columns*

## **Huguley: We can't take clean water for granted**

By MARK HUGULEY - *Guest Columnist*

The plaintive lyrics "cool clear water," from an old ballad about a cowboy thinking of water while in the desert, are evocative because we all want and need clean, life-sustaining water.

South Carolina is blessed with water, but we do not have a limitless supply that we can take for granted. Recurring pollution incidents are harming the quality of available water and in turn may harm our health and the environment.

[Read more...](#)

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*Friday, Apr. 27, 2012 - The State Newspaper News - Local / Metro*

## Natural landscaping tips to be offered in May

*Dawn Hinshaw*

Homeowners looking for natural landscaping tips may come to two free sessions on backyard gardening next month.

The Gills Creek Watershed Association and Richland Countywide Stormwater Consortium are sponsoring workshops, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., May 8 and May 15 at Bayview Baptist Church, 5300 Two Notch Road.

Topics include selecting the best plants for your yard, native gardening, erosion control and rain gardens.

Registration is not required. For information, call the Clemson Extension Service at (803) 865-1216, ext. 122.

[Read more here:](#)

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*Thursday, Feb. 03, 2011 - The State Newspaper*

### Jim Wilson: Green space champion

*Appreciation for natural resources spurs Jim Wilson's desire for greenway system in Richland County*

*By DAWN HINSHAW - dhinshaw@thestate.com*

"Over the past five years, Jim Wilson helped persuade Richland County landowners to set aside more than 1,600 acres as open green space for generations to come.

Wilson, 63, has led the county's conservation program since 2006, capping off a 40-year career in natural resources. He retired Friday.

Following is more about what motivates him, conservation initiatives he'd like to see Richland County pursue, and why environmentalists and developers need to work together."

[Read more...](#)

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*Thursday, Feb. 03, 2011 - The State Newspaper*

### We all live downstream

*Gardening with Amanda McNulty*

"Stormwater runoff is a hot issue. For many years, construction sites have included detention basins. These "dry ponds" are designed to capture water that runs off the roofs of buildings, across parking lots, or closely mowed lawns and slowly release it into the drainage system. But if you've ever been in Five Points in Columbia or anywhere South of Broad in Charleston during a

thunder shower, you know what happens when the stormwater system gets overloaded. Now cities and counties are required to test this water and report on what they find. Yuck-o-la, all over!"

[Read more...](#)

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*Tuesday, December 14, 2010 - The State Newspaper*

## **Quarry planned near USC stadium, apartments**

*Neighbors plan meeting; some say 'hole in the ground' will hurt area*

*By SAMMY FRETWELL - sfretwell@thestate.com*

"A Columbia property owner wants to dig a rock quarry less than a half-mile from Williams-Brice Stadium in an area used increasingly for USC student housing and football tailgating activities.

"The quarry would cover parts of 300 acres between Bluff Road and the Congaree River, just below the old state Farmers Market property, according to plans filed with Richland County."

[Read more...](#)

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*Sunday, November 14, 2010 - The State Newspaper*

## **Family still fighting to protect ponds**

*By JOEY HOLLEMAN - holleman@thestate.com*

Janette Hollis Robinson did everything she could to protect her family's ponds from upstream development, and they still filled with silt.

Now, years after winning a largely uncollected multimillion-dollar court judgment against the developer, another development has started upstream, and Robinson fears the process is starting all over.

The story - eight years of negotiation, agitation, litigation and frustration - illustrates the complicated balancing of rights and interests of longtime landowners and developers who buy land nearby. From 2020-2007, almost 13,000 acres a year in rural S.C. land was converted into developments. State regulations are designed to protect nearby landowners and wildlife downstream. But some runoff is unavoidable from the new construction sites.

[Read more...](#)

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*Wednesday, October 27, 2010 - The State Newspaper*

## **Conservation easement saves a pristine lake, tall pines**

*By DAWN HINSHAW - The State*

Today, Roseberry makes official his decision to leave his home place, just beyond Sesquicentennial State Park, to the deer and fox, the hawks and cranes. He's entering into a conservation easement with Richland County, a covenant that the secluded sanctuary will remain

undeveloped.

[Read more...](#)

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*Wednesday, October 06, 2010 - The State Newspaper*

## County approves sewer service for Lower Richland

By DAWN HINSHAW - [dhinshaw@thestate.com](mailto:dhinshaw@thestate.com)

Richland County has endorsed a long range plan to provide public sewage service to Lower Richland County, agreeing to partner with the city of Columbia to serve long-suffering developers near town.

The \$22 million plan gives the county five years to build a treatment system that could serve thousands of potential customers. If the county does not meet the deadline, it risks losing new customers to the city, which agreed to treat wastewater temporarily to get the project going.

[Read more...](#)

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## Watershed Revitalization Project Swings into Gear

by Jerome Collins - WLTX

Created: 9/19/2010 10:44:28 PM Updated: 9/20/2010 8:47:09 AM

"Richland County, SC (WLTX) - If you live along Gills Creek, you could be at risk for flooding because of trash and other pollutants in the waterway.

But now a partnership between county and city governments is trying to remedy a decades-old problem.

'We get out when the weather is nice and paddle around the lake and enjoy the wildlife viewing,' said Mark Huguley.

From the looks of things, it will be a while before Huguley and his Arcadia Lakes neighbors can get back on the water."

[Read more and see the video...](#)

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*Friday, September 17, 2010 - The State Newspaper*

## Project addresses silt, other pollution in Richland lake

By DAWN HINSHAW - *The State Newspaper*

"By this morning, the bed of Cary Lake should be completely exposed to stumps and trash. The mud that's washed there over the years will be starting to dry.

And in a few weeks, trucks will be able to drive on the lake bed without sinking.

Then, contractors will start to excavate 15 acres of the privately owned lake, 'highly polluted' with silt from nearby construction sites, fecal matter and toxic metals."

[Read more...](#)

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*Friday, August 27, 2010 - The State Newspaper*

## **Bug man collects data that signals better water in creeks**

*By DAWN HINSHAW - The State Newspaper*

"Dan Carnagey dished up a pan of murky water, let it settle and then poked among decomposing leaves and veiny roots with his tweezers, looking for signs of life in Crane Creek.

An aquatic entomologist, Carnagey quickly teased out beetles the size of fresh-ground pepper, dragonfly larvae no bigger than a piece of rice and wriggly brown worms."

[Read more...](#)

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*Thursday, July 15, 2010 - The State Newspaper*

*Opinion - Editorial Columns*

## **Invest in 'green' infrastructure**

*By GERRIT JOBSIS and STUART GREETER - Guest Columnists - The State Newspaper*

"By investing in our water infrastructure, Columbia is taking a major step toward protecting our clean water, creating jobs and promoting recreation and tourism.

Columbia's water system has had more sewage spills than any other utility in the state, with more than 200 incidents during the past 18 months. Our city's three rivers, the Saluda, Congaree and Broad, all have had sewage spills within the past year. This is a threat to public health and prevents us from realizing the full economic potential of our rivers as recreation and tourism assets."

[Read more...](#)

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*July 12, 2010 - The State Newspaper*

## **Arcadia Lakes lily pond settlement in works**

*By SAMMY FRETWELL - The State Newspaper*

"On a scorching day last week, a heron stepped gingerly through a muddy lake bed filled with drying flowers and baking muck along busy Trenholm Road.

The mud hole was, until a month ago, filled with water and topped by a sea of bright green lily pads - a pond so noticeable that many called it the gateway to Arcadia Lakes.

The scenic lily pond that provided a gateway to Arcadia Lakes is drying up and the pretty white flowers are turning brown as they bake in the mud. Residents are trying to fight a developer they say has drained the pond.

But since mid-May, water has drained slowly out of the pond as developers prepare to build a 204-unit apartment complex and turn the lake bed into a storm water basin."

[Read more...](#)

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*July 6, 2010 - The Free Times*

## **Drink Wine, Not Polluted Urban Stream Water - Free Times**

*BY TUG BAKER - Free Times Issue #23.27 :: 07/06/2010 - 07/12/2010*

"Remember that time when Jesus turned water into wine? Yeah, that was pretty cool. Well, the folks at the Gills Creek Watershed Association are trying to do the opposite at their 1st Annual Wine for Water fundraiser Sunday, July 18.

You may be wondering why in the world you should care about some watershed youve probably never heard of, but this complex system of streams and lakes affects Columbians from Spring Valley, Arcadia Lakes, Fort Jackson, Forest Acres, Olympia, Rosewood and more. Its the states largest impaired urban watershed, and urbanization is causing it lots of water quality problems, including excessive sedimentation. The Gills Creek Watershed Association is raising money for projects aimed at keeping this local aquatic habitat alive and thriving, such as decreasing pollution in the watershed and building creek trails."

[Read more...](#)

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*Saturday, July 3, 2010 - The State Newspaper*

## **Watershed Association plans first fundraiser - The State Newspaper**

*Bertram Rantin*

"Gills Creek Watershed Association has scheduled its first fundraiser on July 18 at Cooks Mountain in Eastover. The event will run from 4:30 to 8:30 p.m. and will include a wine tasting, hors doeuvres, games for children and educational information about the Gills Creek Watershed. Yancey McLeod, owner of Cooks Mountain property and a Gills Creek Watershed Association board member, will lead two 35- minute nature hikes through his property.

Tickets are \$25 a person in advance or \$35 at the door. Children are admitted free.

For more information or to buy tickets contact Jessica Artz at (803) 727-8326 or email [jartz@environ.sc.edu](mailto:jartz@environ.sc.edu).

[Read original article...](#)

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*May 15, 2010 - The State Newspaper*

## **[Water levels down at scenic lily pond](#) - The State Newspaper**

"Water levels are dropping at a well-known lily pond on Trenholm Road - and neighbors want to know why.

People who live near Roper Pond gathered Saturday to examine the small lake. They pointed out sections of exposed mud beneath the green and white lily pads. The water appeared to be at least a foot below the lip of the pond.

Roper Pond is a highly visible lake that's an unofficial gateway to the town of Arcadia Lakes. Thousands of motorists whiz past each day on Trenholm Road near Decker Boulevard."

[Read more...](#)

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*February 28, 2010*

## **Meet four more Green Queens - The State Newspaper**

"These women are working in the trenches of local government to help residents recycle, improve air quality and clean up the water flowing through the Midlands.

JESSICA ARTZ

Job: After researching the water-quality trends of Gills Creek for a master's degree, Artz was hired to lead the newly formed Gills Creek Watershed Association last year."

[Read more...](#)

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*December 2, 2009*

## **Response to waterline break criticized - Watchdogs say delay in repair led to sewage dumping into Gills Creek - The State Newspaper**

"Water spewing from a broken Columbia utility line severely eroded the bank of a tributary of Gills Creek last week, and workers alerted to the problem early in the night allowed the leak to flow until the next morning.

Before the leak was fixed, the water undermined a once-buried sewage line, which spilled untreated sewage into the creek.

The incident last week near Two Notch Road could have been worse if not for the action of two members of the Gills Creek Watershed Association, who noticed Eight-Mile Branch was turning white and then located the problem in a wooded area on a rainy night." "

[Read more...](#)

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*August 11, 2009*

## **Forest Acres considers urban trail. Walkers would follow Gills Creek - The State Newspaper**

"Forest Acres will host a public hearing on a proposed walking trail along Gills Creek that advocates say would provide the first public access to the mostly hidden creek. The \$775,000 greenway would extend for about a half-mile behind Trenholm Plaza, hugging the bank of the

creek through woods parallel to Trenholm Road."

[Read more...](#)

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*August 7, 2009*

## **Facts about Gills Creek Watershed- The Columbia Star**

"What is a watershed? The region draining into a river, river system, or other body of water. It's South Carolina's largest impaired urban watershed. It contains over 70 miles of streams. It covers over 47,000 acres of land. The population is 140,000. It is represented by multiple jurisdictions. It includes parts of Columbia, Forest Acres, Fort Jackson, and Arcadia Lakes. Urbanization is causing negative impacts to water quality, including excessive sedimentation. The headwaters start above Sesquicentennial State Park and flow into the Congaree River below Columbia."

[Read more...](#)

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*July 6, 2009*

## **The Gills Creek Cleanup - The State Newspaper**

"A citizen-led effort to restore a polluted system of lakes and creeks that meanders through Richland County is making headway. Cleaning up the silt, trash and pollution in Gills Creek is a monumental and expensive task, one that has been batted around for years."

[Read more...](#)

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*April 22, 2009*

## **April 30, 2009 - Public Meeting Announcemnt**

The Gills Creek Watershed Association is hosting a public meeting on Thursday April 30, 2009

[Read more...](#)

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*December 21, 2007*

## **Gills Creek is in danger of flooding**

2007-12-21 / Government/Neighborhood - The Columbia Star By Benjamin Higginsb2@ya  
Hhoigo.gcionms The Gills Creek Watershed Association held a meeting in the Richland County Council Chambers Thursday, December 6, 2007, to introduce the association to the citizens of Richland County and enlist their help in protecting the Gills Creek Watershed.

[Read more...](#)

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*December 5, 2007*

## **Group Works to Restore Gills Creek Watershed - The Free Times**

*BY JULIE JAREMA*

"The Gills Creek Watershed in Richland County is polluted with everything from lead to gas, even raw sewage, but mostly with sand from development. The pollution is a major concern for Columbia, Forest Acres and other local municipalities. However, efforts are being made to restore Gills Creek Watershed and preserve wildlife and human life from flooding and other problems like disease-causing organisms."

[Read more...](#)

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## **December 6, 2007 - Meeting Press Release**

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## **December 6, 2007 - Meeting Notice**