



COASTAL
CONSERVATION
LEAGUE

Seizing the Moment

THE LEGACY OF THE TIME IS NOW CAMPAIGN | 2007-2011



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All photos included in this report, unless otherwise noted, were taken by Dana Beach.



“*Give Us the Tools and
We Will Finish the Job.*”

– Winston Churchill

Five years ago, we sought your support for a campaign we called *The Time is Now*. Quoting Shakespeare and Churchill, we emphasized the grave threats to the coast, the urgency of the moment and the potential for progress. We promised to seize that moment, to stand with you in defense of what we love. The commitment we made was bold and ambitious – to help create a sustainable and prosperous future for the South Carolina Lowcountry.

Fortunately, you believed in what we were proposing and you made it possible with your generous financial support. We exceeded our \$10 million goal and have spent the last five years making good on our promises. What follows is an overview of our accomplishments during that period – a report card to which we hope you will assign a passing grade. But first, here’s a reminder of where we might be if we had allowed the moment to pass.



Without your help...

...the next generation of coal-fired power plants could already be under construction, led by a billion-dollar facility on the Pee Dee River. Already ranked the fourth least energy efficient state in the country when the campaign began, South Carolina might have slipped further over the intervening years, with rising levels of toxic mercury in coastal rivers and increasing concentrations of life-threatening air pollutants.

Without your help and the actions of a broad community coalition, I-526 might have begun to change

the rural landscape of Johns Island forever, replacing historic structures and bucolic roadways with suburban sprawl and rush hour traffic. I-73, a \$2.37 billion interstate we neither need nor can possibly afford, might have been under construction as well, fragmenting communities along its route and squandering taxpayer dollars desperately needed elsewhere.

Without your help, sprawl development might have begun on thousands of acres along the Ashley and Cooper Rivers, forever marring

the environment and the cultural landscape of these supremely historic areas. Thousands of suburban houses and hundreds of thousands of square feet of commercial sprawl might border the Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge and southern ACE Basin.

Without your help, fresh local food would have remained almost unobtainable. With declining opportunities and aggressive competition, fewer local farmers would have survived. Supporting local agriculture would have remained something that



happened in states like Vermont and Oregon, but not in South Carolina.

Without your help, thousands of new container trucks might be navigating I-26 every day on their way to and from a new container terminal in North Charleston with no rail connection. South Carolina would likely have no regulation or oversight of water withdrawn from our state's rivers and streams, and a national waste company may have begun importing waste from across the Eastern Seaboard to a massive landfill in Williamsburg County.

And on and on it goes.

In 2007, my daughter Nellie was 16 and ready to graduate from high school. Today, she is a junior in college. Nellie has a peculiar way of describing her recovery from a cold or sore throat that strikes me as applicable to our post-campaign condition – “almost completely better.”

We have not saved the coast, yet. But the circumstances today are dramatically different than they were when we started. Almost completely better, I think. Some of the changes are because of events beyond our

control, like the bursting of the real estate bubble. But many, I will proudly argue, are due to the work of our staff at the Coastal Conservation League and our partners in the conservation community.

Because you joined us in seizing the moment, I'm proud to report that we changed the course of history in the Lowcountry. Yet threats remain and powerful forces still work against our vision for the future. As you know, the time is always now. Our work is anything but over, but our campaign accomplishments

have laid the foundation for us to move forward even more boldly in the coming years. We are deeply grateful for your support for our vision of a better future for the South Carolina coast.

Dana Beach

LAND AND COMMUNITY

*Without your support for our
land and community program, the
Lowcountry would likely look very
different today than it did in 2007.*

*Our efforts, in conjunction with a
broad coalition of concerned citizens
and organizations, helped block
efforts to annex, drain, demolish, build,
pave and otherwise mar the face of
our priceless coastal community.
Here's how you made the difference.*



TRANSPORTATION REFORM

*S*outh Carolina's transportation planning and funding process is badly broken. We sowed the seeds for its reform in 2007 when we wrote and helped pass a transportation bill establishing an objective ranking system for new projects. This bill was a good first step in taking the politics out of road building, but it didn't go far enough. The next steps are to make the ranking system mandatory, not advisory, for all state projects, to ensure greater transparency in the process, and to reform the governance of the SC Department of Transportation (SCDOT), an agency that controls one of the largest budgets in the state. Reform legislation will be heavily debated in 2012 – using our 2007 legislation as a starting point – and we will again be leading the effort to insure bonafide improvements.

Over the past five years, the odds for the extension of I-526, the politically driven expressway that would devastate rural Johns Island while siphoning a half-billion dollars away from priority transportation needs, have gone from “done deal” to virtually nonexistent. Public support for the project has evaporated, largely due to our work with citizens in the region and their engagement in the transportation planning process.

Our “New Way to Work” concept demonstrated that far more affordable alternatives to address traffic congestion exist – alternatives to I-526 that would enhance, not degrade, the neighborhoods in which they are implemented. To illustrate this point, the League partnered with the City of Charleston and Charleston County to fund six months of planning and evaluation of one of our “New Way to Work” solutions. Thanks to League advocacy, planning and leadership, the Maybank Highway “Pitchfork” is currently in the design process. It is widely understood that, while keeping with the character of Johns Island, the “Pitchfork” will provide more relief to commuters than a formerly proposed widening.

Our efforts to block I-526 culminated with a vote by the Charleston County Council in May 2011 against the SCDOT's road design and in support of terminating the project.

However, the State Transportation Infrastructure Bank has committed \$420 million dollars to the project and is not backing off its completion. In 2011, the Infrastructure Bank board threatened Charleston County and reassigned the project to the authority of the SCDOT. Now the SCDOT must vote to assume this responsibility, which is neither a Charleston County nor state priority. The actions of both the Infrastructure Bank and the SCDOT further demonstrate the need for transportation reform. Building I-526 would mean putting



Henry Fair

politics first and the interests of South Carolina taxpayers and the environment second. The League will continue to mobilize against I-526 and to advocate for meaningful transportation reform.

Over the past few years, we have also dealt a severe blow to plans for I-73, the proposed \$2.4 billion dollar boondoggle from Rockingham, NC to Conway, SC, just west of Myrtle Beach. With the help of the Southern Environmental Law Center, we have made a compelling case that the same transportation functions I-73 is intended to serve could be achieved by improving existing roads at one-tenth of the cost and a fraction of the environmental damage of the new interstate. The Environmental Protection Agency has recently threatened to deny permits for the project on these grounds and the SCDOT Commission recently voted to delay the bond issue for the highway's first interchange.



John Moore

THREATENED LANDSCAPES

Binden Plantation borders the Pocotaligo River on the southern edge of the ACE basin. When the town of Yemassee annexed the 1000-acre tract and approved 1,300 houses and the equivalent of two-and-a-half Super Wal-Marts' worth of commercial space, we challenged the town and the developer in court. Today, six years of staff time and hundreds of thousands of dollars in attorneys' fees later, the owner is working on a plan that includes a perpetual conservation easement allowing 20 lots (as opposed to the former 1,300) with no strip commercial development. Because of our efforts, *Binden*, formerly the most threatened property in the ACE Basin, may be the next significant piece in the mosaic of permanently protected land in the Lowcountry.

The Ashley River District, between Charleston and Summerville, encompasses some of the most significant historic landscapes in the Southeast. Drayton Hall, Middleton Place and Magnolia Plantation are destinations for thousands of visitors every year, not only because of their rich history and beauty, but also because of the context in which they exist. That irreplaceable landscape could have been all but lost if the 5,000-acre Poplar Grove plantation and the 6,400-acre Watson Hill tract, both of which adjoin Middleton, had developed according to plans approved by Dorchester County and the City of North Charleston.

Poplar Grove would have had 4,500 houses and Watson Hill 5,000 houses and a Ritz Carlton Hotel, drowning Middleton, Magnolia and Drayton

Hall in a sea of sprawl and traffic congestion. Over the course of five years, working with our partner conservation groups, we analyzed, organized, litigated, negotiated and eventually raised the funds to protect not only most of Poplar Grove, but another 10,000 acres of land in the heart of the historic district.

While a core of more than 13,000 acres has been protected in the Ashley River District, without the continued work of the League the threat of development here would still exist. MeadWestvaco has plans to develop 72,000 acres surrounding the Ashley River District in the next few years. However, the League, has worked with MeadWestvaco in this planning process and they have pledged to maintain 75% of their property as rural land with farming and forestry land uses. We will continue to work with Charleston and Dorchester Counties and MeadWestvaco to secure additional easements and land protection, with the ultimate goal of permanently expanding the greenbelt between the ACE Basin and Charleston.

Unlike the Ashley, where Sherman burned every antebellum house except for Drayton Hall, the *Cooper River* retains many of its historic structures. But like the Ashley, context in this area is everything. Sprawl had begun to threaten the Cooper River Historic District, potentially surrounding some of the oldest plantations in the country and degrading the ecology of the east and west branches of the Cooper.

The threat was embodied in a 4,000-acre property, appropriately called the Keystone tract,

which was sold in 2005 by International Paper to a speculator from Georgia. We worked with Berkeley County residents, landowners and elected officials to prevent the extension of sewer and water to the Keystone tract and to strengthen the zoning on the property. The developer's attorneys ultimately approached us about working out a compromise for the property. The result was a development agreement that reduced the number of houses that could be built on the property and, most importantly, prohibited the extension of sewer and water lines. Today, Keystone is still undeveloped and the Cooper River Historic District unspoiled.

A dozen miles away, bordering the Francis Marion National Forest and Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge, the *Town of Awendaw* has annexed thousands of acres of land zoned for rural uses by Charleston County, and increased the allowed density tenfold. The culmination of this

battle was the annexation by Awendaw of part of Fairlawn Plantation, an 8,000-acre property surrounded by the national forest. We appealed the annexation in 2008 and were counter-sued by the owners. The most recent ruling was a resounding victory, in which the judge described the town's annexations as "borderline fraudulent" and dismissed the owners' claim that we had no standing to challenge the actions of the town.

The Time is Now campaign funds have helped us secure the Lowcountry landscape and quality of life. With your help, the Coastal Conservation League was able to save some of the most threatened and defining areas of the Lowcountry. Our partnerships with local governments, landowners and residents are lasting and will help ensure that these landscapes remain protected for generations to come.



AIR, WATER, AND PUBLIC HEALTH

Without your support for our air, water and public health efforts, the fragile ecosystem that surrounds us would likely have been altered in significant and perhaps irrevocable ways. Moreover, the delicate balance of industry, tourism and community that characterizes our historic cities could have been irrevocably lost. Here's how you made the difference.



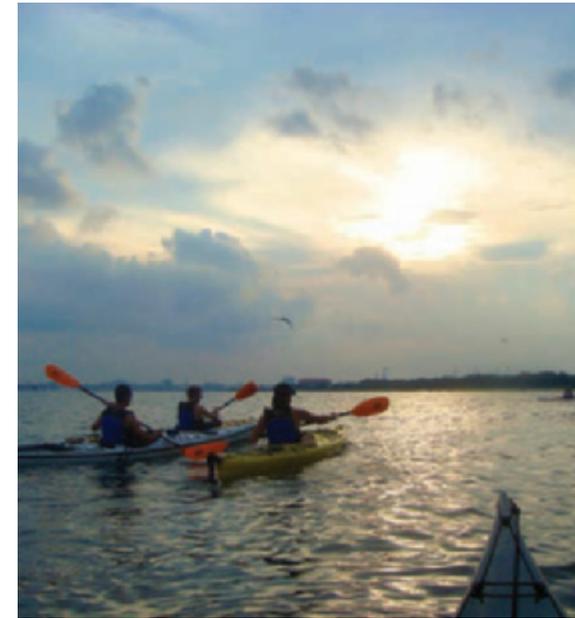
When we think about the negative impacts of maritime activity, water pollution is the first thing that comes to mind. Yet the air pollution from ships and from their associated landside activities is significant and potentially dangerous. In 2005, the State Ports Authority (SPA) announced that its proposed port terminal at the Charleston Navy Base in North Charleston would have no rail connection. Every container would leave the terminal on a truck, and virtually every truck would travel through or near vulnerable neighborhoods and onto a severely congested I-26. Represented by the Southern Environmental Law Center, the League challenged this plan.

We made three reasonable suggestions: clean up truck pollution, burn cleaner ship fuel while in port, and provide rail access for the terminal. The SPA rejected every one. In 2010, after five years of litigation, the SPA agreed to a settlement. They promised to develop a program to replace the dirtiest trucks servicing the port. They agreed to allow rail access. Finally, they agreed to monitor the air around port operations. As a result, commuters and industry operators will be far better served by the new terminal, which is scheduled to open in 2018. Equally important, the adjacent neighborhoods will have less exposure to harmful air pollution from port activities.

Maritime activities presented another threat to air quality when the SPA announced that the Union Pier terminal in downtown Charleston would become a homeport for Carnival Cruise Lines. The cruise business was growing rapidly in Charleston, predominantly the result of Carnival's new contract – 33 ships in 2009, 68 in 2010 and 89 in 2011. Since then, we have conducted extensive research on the effects of cruise ships on the environment and the quality of life in other major cruise destinations. We convened international experts at a conference in 2010 and worked with many local organizations, as well as organizations in other cruise ports, on recommendations to minimize the damage to air, water, quality of life and the economy. So far, Charleston's mayor and a majority of city council members have refused to consider any measures whatsoever to reduce the impacts.

Today, the cruise debate continues. The National Trust for Historic Preservation and the World Monuments Fund have both issued warnings about the damage an unregulated cruise industry could cause Charleston and its surroundings. National, and even international, media have covered Charleston's cruise ship debate. A new citizens' coalition has formed to promote reasonable limits on the industry. The public and many elected representatives are more aware than ever of the importance of "cruise control."

In an attempt to persuade the city to exercise its authority over cruise operations, the League,



along with the Historic Ansonborough Neighborhood Association, the Charlestowne Neighborhood Association, and the Preservation Society of Charleston, represented by the Southern Environmental Law Center, have filed suit against Carnival Cruise Lines for violating existing city and state statutes. We remain committed to translating this heightened awareness into enforceable standards.



WASTE MANAGEMENT

It has been said that waste flows toward poor, rural areas. Williamsburg County is both poor and rural (40th out of 46 SC counties in per capita income). It is also one of South Carolina's most beautiful and historic counties. Williamsburg residents have been battling one mega-dump after another, beginning in 2008, when citizens aligned with the League and the South Carolina Environmental Law Project to defeat a 2.4-million-ton facility in the tiny community of Nesmith.

The most recent landfill proposal would have permitted a half-million tons of waste to be brought into the county (which itself only generates 16,000 tons annually) from states as far away as New Jersey and Florida. We worked with the Coalition of Citizens for Williamsburg to overcome attempts by county council members to hide information and suppress public comments about the landfill. In October 2011, bowing to public pressure, the council voted to stop all activity on the landfill and withdraw the permit.

Reducing South Carolina's need for more landfill capacity will require a meaningful reduction of waste through recycling. Toward that goal, we have worked with our conservation partners and businesses statewide on legislation to increase recycling in South Carolina. In 2010, we were successful in passing a bill that requires electronic waste to be recycled and establishes a ban on electronic waste in landfills.

In addition, the Alcoholic Beverage Container Recycling Bill, which requires businesses with permits for on-site alcohol consumption to recycle their plastic, cardboard, aluminum and glass, passed the SC Senate in 2011. Since all of South Carolina's largest counties have residential recycling programs, the largest remaining stream of waste to be diverted from landfills toward productive purposes comes from commercial

establishments. Not only will this recycling legislation substantially reduce the need for landfill capacity, it will create an estimated 15,000 jobs in the recycling industry and generate a stream of base material for use by businesses throughout the state.

RIVERS AND STREAMS

Prior to *The Time is Now* campaign, South Carolina was one of only three states east of the Mississippi River without a water permitting system. As a result, many of our rivers were on the verge of being drained by the state's largest water users. At the same time, we were beginning to feel the effects of activities by our upstream neighbors in North Carolina and Georgia. But South Carolina had limited ability to seek protection through the court system or through negotiation because we had no comprehensive water management policy.

Recognizing the vulnerability of South Carolina's water resources, the League in 2004 began a campaign of grassroots organizing designed to convince residents, business owners, recreational water users, newspaper editors and, eventually, legislators that

a water permitting system was in the best interest of all South Carolinians. With resources made possible through the campaign, we strengthened our efforts around a specific bill, the South Carolina Surface Water Withdrawal Permitting, Use, and Reporting Act.

We conducted educational meetings around the state, met with editorial boards from the major newspapers, and produced action alerts, videos and print media to encourage passage of the bill. We generated hundreds of calls and emails to legislators and arranged dozens of in-person meetings with legislators so citizens could express their support face to face. Our efforts were successful and the bill was signed into law in June of 2010.

Along with our conservation partners, the League also succeeded in passing two bills that improve water quality and protect aquatic life. The Phosphate Ban Bill prohibits the sale, use, and manufacturing of high phosphate household detergents in South Carolina. Excessive phosphates in our waterways cause algal blooms and fish kills. The Chronic Sewage Polluter Bill requires that DHEC issue enforcement orders against waste water treatment operators who repeatedly spill untreated sewage into the

environment. (Amazingly, DHEC was not doing this already.)

Unless development patterns change in southern Beaufort County, there will be a steady decline in the health of the May, Okatie and Colleton Rivers, including the closing of more oyster beds, fisheries and even human recreation opportunities.

Over the past two years, the League has worked with the Town of Bluffton staff, elected officials, and citizens to raise awareness about how using watershed-based planning can stop and, indeed, reverse further degradation.

We created the Bluffton Watershed Plan to showcase the science behind watershed-based planning and to provide a case study on the use of "transferable development rights" (TDRs) to move density away from highly sensitive headwaters to less sensitive areas. In 2010, the League joined forces with Dr. Fred Holland, retired director of NOAA's Hollings Marine Laboratory, to put the premise of our Watershed Plan to the scientific test. Through a series of detailed case studies, Dr. Holland predicts that we can significantly reduce pollutants in these rivers by transferring density to less sensitive areas.

In November 2010, the Bluffton



Town Council formally adopted a May River Watershed Action Plan, which incorporates a TDR and Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program as the central component for preventing further degradation of the river. We will be working with the town and developers to implement an effective TDR and PDR program.

All across the coast, *The Time is Now* contributions have helped ensure that the air and water that sustain us are kept clean. We can breathe easier knowing that the League's efforts successfully led to less pollution and an educated citizenry that is well prepared to fend off future proposals that would damage air and water quality.

ENERGY AND CLIMATE

Without your support for our energy and climate initiatives, South Carolina's dependence on costly, polluting energy sources would likely have continued unabated. Beyond the environmental impacts, our energy and climate work is tied directly to local job creation and sustainable economic development. Here's how you made the difference.



In 2007, with the support of funds from *The Time is Now* campaign, the Coastal Conservation League launched our Energy and Climate Program with the goal of changing South Carolina's energy future. Our first task was to stop a proposal by Santee Cooper, the state's public utility, to build a 1,600 megawatt coal-fired power plant on the banks of the Pee Dee River. Construction of the plant would have indefinitely tied South Carolina to a coal-based energy future, increasing our reliance on the world's dirtiest fuel, elevating already alarmingly high levels of mercury in our rivers, and expanding the release of toxic pollutants into the atmosphere.

In just two years, the League was able to take on this environmental issue and create a coalition of sixty groups, one of the most diverse coalitions the Palmetto State has ever seen. In 2009, Santee Cooper announced that the Pee Dee coal plant proposal was off the table, marking one of the most important victories in League history.

Additionally in 2007, Governor Sanford established the South Carolina Climate, Energy and Commerce Advisory Committee (CECAC). The Committee was composed of representatives from industry, environmental groups, government agencies, academic institutions, agriculture, forestry, real estate, tourism, banking, insurance and other sectors. League Executive Director, Dana Beach, served on the committee and League staff members participated in the many working groups that supported the committee's recommendations. The final CECAC Report, released in 2008, was the first of its kind in the Southeast and recommended 51 policy options for reducing our state's reliance on fossil fuels in favor of clean energy alternatives.

This process and the defeat of Santee Cooper's proposed Pee Dee coal plant in 2009 represent a turning point in energy policy for South Carolina.



Taylor Nelson

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

In 2009, the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy released a report indicating that South Carolina utilities could achieve an 18 percent reduction in electricity demand by 2025 if recommended measures were taken to make South Carolina more energy efficient. CharlestonWISE, a collaborative effort initiated by the League and the City of Charleston and fully developed and administered by the SC Sustainability Institute, is one such measure. By providing home and business owners direct access to contractors as well as incentives to invest in energy efficiency retrofits,

CharlestonWISE is paving the way for more efficient energy use in the Charleston area.

In addition to the CharlestonWISE program, the League continues to support energy efficiency programs at the state and local levels. With our help, a municipal financing bill for renewable energy and energy efficiency investments by commercial and industrial businesses was introduced into the SC House for the 2011-2012 legislative session. This legislation allows municipalities to bond money and offer low interest loans to businesses interested in investing in renewable energy equipment or energy efficiency upgrades.

At the local level, we have begun a

project in Georgetown with our partners at the SC Sustainability Institute. This project aims to provide homeowners an on-bill financing mechanism that allows them to access low interest capital for energy efficiency retrofits to their property. These loans will then be paid back on their electric bills.

Because the City of Georgetown operates its own municipal electric utility, it is an ideal candidate for implementing a successful on-bill financing program. From new heating, ventilation and air-conditioning systems to additional insulation and more efficient lighting, the project will reduce monthly utility costs for families while helping the City of Georgetown use less coal-fired electricity.

During the 2009 legislative session, the League organized broad support for updated building energy codes. The same session saw passage of a nationally recognized energy efficiency tax credit for manufactured housing. Successes continued to mount in the 2010 legislative session, as we provided critical support for on-bill financing legislation designed by the South Carolina Electric Cooperatives. This legislation has enabled the electric cooperatives to begin improving the efficiency of over 200,000 homes in



their rural service areas and will be a critical component of the Georgetown retrofit initiative.

In the regulatory arena, we have intervened successfully before the SC Public Service Commission to ensure adoption of aggressive energy efficiency programs by the state's investor-owned utilities: Duke Energy, Progress Energy and SCANA. A recent settlement by the League and our partners at the Southern Environmental Law Center, Southern Alliance for Clean Energy and the Environmental Defense Fund with Duke and Progress has resulted in an even greater commitment to maximizing energy efficiency investments for their service territories. The settlement also resulted in a commitment to retire more than 3,000 megawatts of capacity within their current fleet of fossil fuel plants.





OFFSHORE WIND

When new power generation is required to meet growing electricity demands, one opportunity is the substantial resource that blows just off our coast. Since 2009, offshore wind has become a focal point of both economic development and clean energy discussions in South Carolina. Recently, the Clemson University Restoration Institute in North Charleston received a \$48 million US Department of Energy grant as part of their proposed construction of a one-of-a-kind \$98 million drive train test facility designed to test the next generation of offshore wind turbines.

The wind test facility announcement came on the heels of strong recommendations from the SC Legislative Offshore Wind Study Committee, on which the League served, regarding policy changes necessary to capture the economic development opportunities available to the early adopters of offshore wind on the East Coast. During this time, state-owned electric utility Santee-Cooper, in partnership with Coastal Carolina University, also made significant progress on the studies necessary to support their 40 -megawatt Palmetto Wind Research Project, an initiative actively supported by a diverse group of stakeholders, including Clemson University, the SC Energy Office, Savannah River National Labs, and the League.

The combination of low-cost financing mechanisms available to entities like Santee Cooper, shallow coastal waters, coastal population centers, broad stakeholder engagement, and a substantial offshore wind resource make South Carolina an ideal location to advance offshore wind development along the East Coast.

As a result of *The Time is Now* campaign, South Carolina now stands poised at the threshold of a new energy economy that will benefit our citizens, our environment and our economy.

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

Without your support for our sustainable agriculture program, South Carolina growers, restaurants, markets and consumers would likely have remained captive to a culinary economy that favored imported, mass-produced goods. Today, this program is changing the face of food production and distribution in the Lowcountry. Here's how you made the difference.



South Carolina's rural areas need revitalization. Although many people agree that this change will involve a shift in our agricultural model, there is little agreement as to how it should occur. Ignoring decades of failed attempts, until recently the state's political leaders clung to the hope of big agriculture, with the dream of a panacea from national processing companies or export operations.

The current industrial model of agriculture, however, has failed to deliver prosperity to South Carolina's rural areas. These areas suffer from rapid rates of land conversion, high levels of poverty and unemployment, underfunded health care, and schools that rank among the worst in the nation. Between 2002 and 2007, South Carolina lost 43,416 acres of farmland and 1,326 farms to new development.



Wade Speers



Gayle Brooker

Recognizing the vital relationship between rural land conservation and a vigorous farming economy, the League expanded its programs to help strengthen the state's agricultural sector. Funds from *The Time is Now* campaign were used to create a new Sustainable Agriculture Program designed to transform South Carolina's food economy and lift up its rural communities.

The League's formal commitment to sustainable agriculture began as a partnership with Lowcountry Local First and has since expanded into a statewide array of partnerships that include the SC Department of Agriculture, Slow Food, Clemson Extension, the Natural Resource Conservation Service and the farm and restaurant communities.

GROWFOOD CAROLINA



Our premise was, and is, simple. Rural South Carolina can be prosperous if it is enabled to do what it does best – grow food. Demand for local agricultural products is on the rise. South Carolina consumers are begging farmers to provide more local products. Likewise, many of the farmers and stakeholders in the local food movement are concerned about the lack of distribution operations necessary to meet this demand. We are convinced that this demand can serve as the catalyst for change.

In 2010, the League purchased a warehouse in downtown Charleston. Eighteen months later the League launched the state's first local food hub, GrowFood Carolina. GrowFood Carolina's mission is to link local farmers to local and regional markets by providing the infrastructure and coordination needed to seamlessly move fresh produce from farm to fork. Recognizing the need for a seasoned expert to lead the effort, in June 2011, the League hired Sara Clow to guide GrowFood Carolina. With a decade of local food distribution experience, Sara is working with more than 40 farmers, a local software developer, and numerous customers to plan and streamline the distribution of local food in the

Charleston region. Following the groundbreaking in early August 2011, full-scale operations began in late September.

By supporting local farmers with adequate infrastructure, GrowFood Carolina is helping secure the future of a regional food supply, the prosperity of South Carolina's rural communities and the conservation of hundreds of thousands of acres of farmland throughout the state. Moreover, GrowFood Carolina offers the potential to be replicated across the state and beyond. Agriculture can once again be the economic engine of rural South Carolina if

we enable local farmers to thrive. Market demand is strong and the ability to meet demand exists in hundreds of small communities across our state.

From the inception of *The Time is Now* campaign, the Coastal Conservation League has been committed to providing the infrastructure, coordination, education and policy changes needed to transform South Carolina's food economy into an engine of prosperity for our rural communities and their residents. With the opening of GrowFood Carolina, that vision has become a reality.





“It is said that the present is pregnant with the future.”

– Voltaire



The staff of the Coastal Conservation League

Despite its title, *The Time is Now* campaign was actually all about the future. Fighting for the threatened landscapes of the Lowcountry, reforming state transportation policies, reducing South Carolina’s reliance on imported, polluting sources of energy, passing legislation to protect the quality of the air we breathe and the water we swim in and launching new institutions to revitalize farming communities – these efforts have laid the foundation for a more prosperous future.

With your help, we seized the moment and created a very different future. We stood together

with partners, supporters and concerned citizens of all backgrounds to protect the priceless fabric of the coastal community we share.

Building on that foundation will be our task over the next decade. The emergence of a stronger, broader network of citizens and organizations that understand the potential for progress is just as important as the immediate successes of *The Time is Now* campaign. So we move forward with a new sense of optimism and gratitude for the allies we’ve gained. Most of all, we are inspired by our supporters, without whom not one iota of this work would have been possible.

**TIME IS NOW
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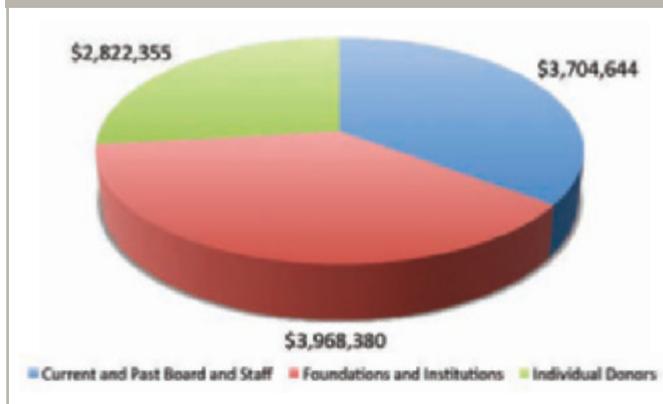
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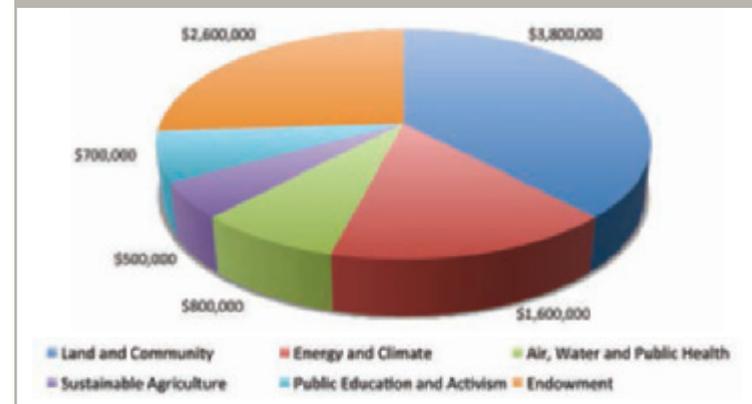
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the quality of life of our communities
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