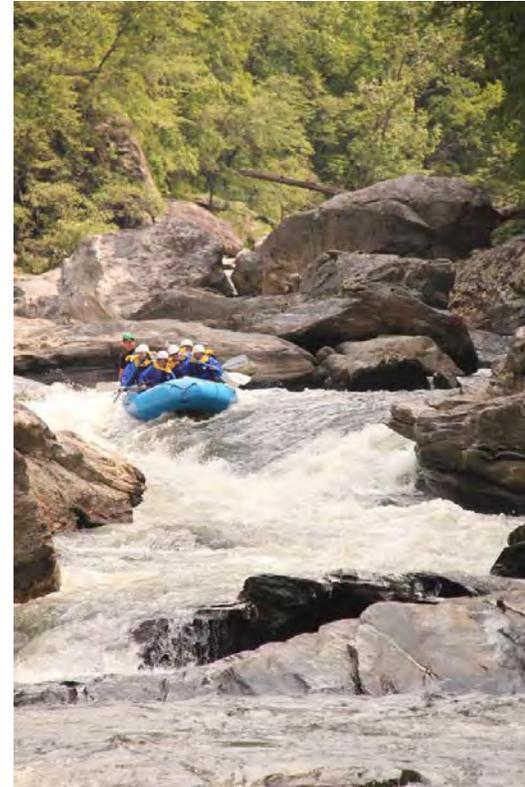
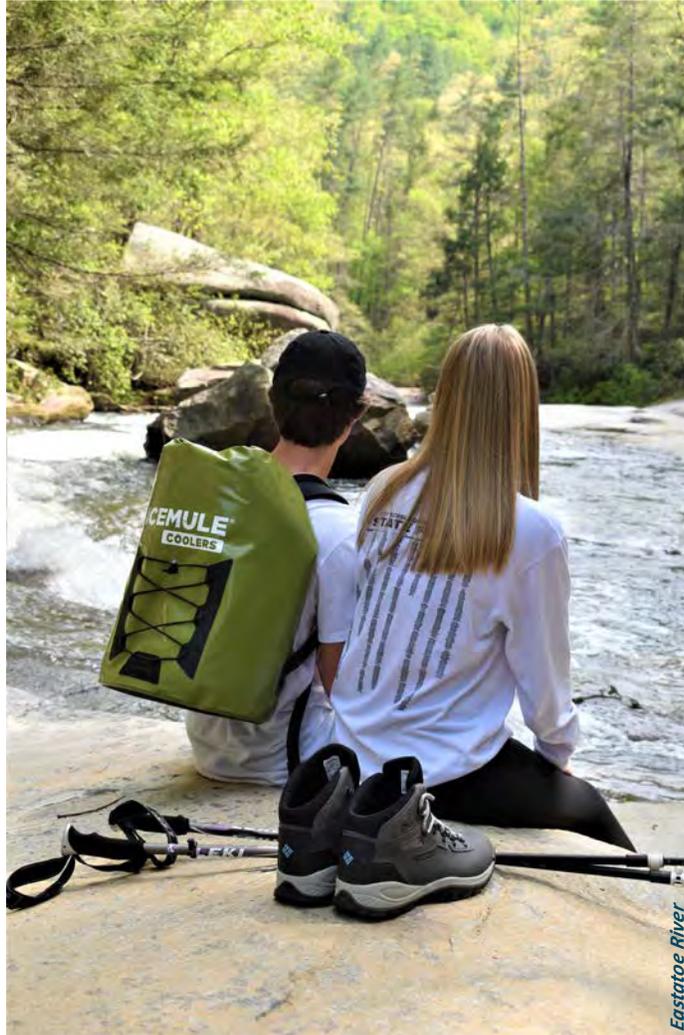


waters
of the **Carolina Crescent**

Words by

*Heather Nix (Clemson University Cooperative Extension)
Emerald Clark (Greenville Water) / Stacey Flax (Renewable Water Resources)*



The Blue Ridge ecoregion of the Carolinas has many spectacular water resources – from pristine rivers to beautiful lakes. With nearly endless miles of rivers and stream and numerous lakes to explore, there’s something for everyone. Considered the “Crown Jewel” by many, the Chattooga Wild & Scenic River is one of the longest free-flowing rivers in the Southeast and features trout fishing and world-class whitewater paddling, including the famous Five Falls stretch of rapids. Lesser-known rivers, such as the Chauga, Twelve Mile, and Eastatoe, also offer impressive paddling and trout fishing. These and additional river recreation opportunities are detailed on www.gopaddlesc.com.



Jocassee Gorge



The continued high quality of our waterways is due to efforts by many organizations and passionate individuals throughout our region's history. Local legend, Tommy Wyche, led efforts that protected land encompassing some of our most pristine waterways and resulted in creation of many of the region's public treasures, including Jones Gap State Park, Caesar's Head State Park, Jocassee Gorges Wilderness Area, and the Mountain Bridge Wilderness Area.

Some of our community's most vital protected lands surround two of our three primary drinking water sources, the Table Rock and North Saluda Reservoirs, both located in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains in northern Greenville County. These watersheds comprise approximately 30,000 acres of permanently protected lands through a conservation easement held by The Nature Conservancy and are managed according to a robust watershed plan that promotes sustainability, reliability, and resiliency of our water supply into 2100. A third reservoir at Lake Keowee provides another high-quality drinking water source to Greenville, and portions of Anderson, Laurens, and Pickens counties. Lake Keowee also supports vital energy production and offers tremendous recreational opportunities.

*View of Table Rock
from Caesar's Head State Park*



*Table Rock Reservoir
Courtesy of Greenville Water*



*Lake Keowee,
Courtesy of Greenville Water*



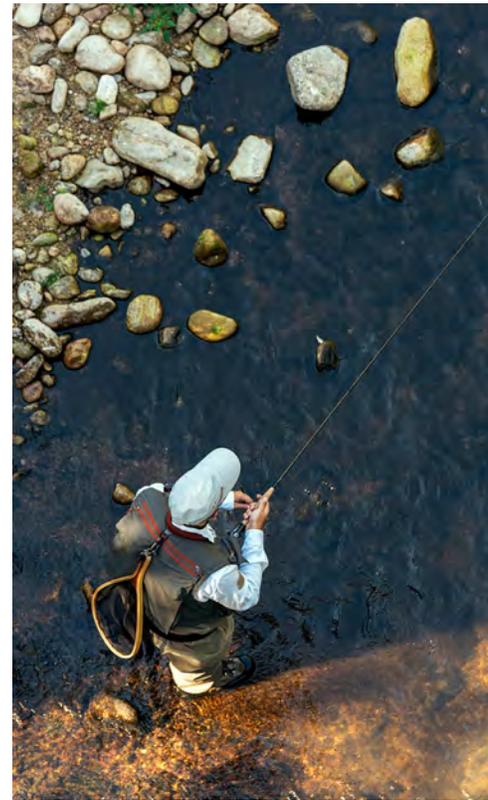
Collaborative efforts, such as the Lake Keowee Source Water Protection Team (LKSWPT), which Greenville Water co-founded, are accelerating water quality improvement efforts to mitigate issues from existing development and to improve protections moving forward. Ultimately, the LKSWPT provides a platform to promote conservation and environmental best practices so that a new generation better understands that water is the most critical natural resource for our community's continued economic vitality, welfare, growth, and longevity.

Beyond providing some of the best water in the world, Greenville Water is also working to enhance local rivers and expand recreational opportunities through projects such as the restoration along the North Saluda River that will improve ecological value and support a trout fishery that may rival that of the South Saluda River, which was previously restored by a consortium of natural resource agencies and organizations.

Our region has realized dramatic growth over the last 20 years, making the need to protect essential water resources even more critical. Significant additional efforts are continuing our community's legacy of improving and protecting our waterways.

Organizations like Upstate Forever have worked tirelessly to protect our quality of life by protecting priority lands, crafting policies that encourage sustainable growth, and assisting landowners with on-the-ground improvements that benefit water resources. Currently, Upstate Forever is leading efforts to protect drinking water sources along 3&20 Creek and the Tyger River.

Tyger River



*SC Adopt-A-Stream volunteers sample Long Creek.
Courtesy of Kaleigh Sims*

Educating and empowering citizens is another critical element of ensuring the long-term continued health of our waterways. Clemson University's SC Water Resources Center and Cooperative Extension were instrumental in launching and expanding the official SC Adopt-A-Stream program. This statewide volunteer water quality monitoring effort provides valuable insight into local stream conditions – and helps our community respond quickly to potentially harmful situations. Learn more or join our efforts by visiting scaas.app.clemson.edu.

Like many regions, we've faced challenges with accommodating our rapid population growth with aging wastewater infrastructure. Renewable Water Resources (ReWa) transforms wastewater into a renewable water resource and aligns community investments to provide this critical resource with efficient and cost-effective infrastructure solutions. A focus on implementing strategies to enhance local waterways supports the ultimate goal of providing the highest quality of life in our community. Clean water is essential to achieving this goal, and ReWa's team of forward-thinking individuals strategically plan for responsible, sustainable, and smart economic growth solutions to keep our water as clean as possible.

In fact, ReWa is nearing completion on Dig Greenville, their largest wastewater conveyance project, a 1.3-mile tunnel located 100 feet underground in downtown Greenville. This project provides new and improved infrastructure to match the growing capacity needs of our community and protects our waterways by preventing overflows during large storm events.

*Inside the Dig Greenville tunnel.
Courtesy of ReWa*





Aerial view of Reedy Falls Park in Downtown Greenville

The Reedy River is a centerpiece of downtown Greenville and a popular destination for recreation, especially along the Swamp Rabbit Greenway Trail, which is directly adjacent to the river for many miles. In the mid-2000's, Upstate Forever led the creation of a comprehensive watershed study that helped focus efforts on restoring the Reedy River and downstream waters including Boyd Mill Pond and Lake Greenwood.

ReWa took an important leadership role and helped establish the Reedy River Water Quality Group, an innovative collaborative effort to identify and implement water quality solutions most suited for our region. ReWa's collaborative efforts ensure that communities downstream receive clean, protected water resources to sustain their everyday life. Water from our area is recycled more than 10 times before it reaches the SC coastline – even more reasons to protect our greatest resource.

Conestee Nature Preserve

Conestee Nature Preserve is an unexpected gem along the Reedy River that was made possible by dedicated individuals and creative partnerships. Just minutes from downtown Greenville, visitors might feel a world away in this 406-acre wildlife preserve and birding hotspot that has been named an Important Bird Area of Global Significance.



What we enjoy most is held together and sustained by one element, our water. The Carolina Crescent area is fortunate to have numerous spectacular water resources – and many passionate stewards working together to improve and protect it. We hope you'll enjoy our waterways – and help us leave them a little better than you found them to ensure we have clean, plentiful water for future generations!