

Resolution 2022-01

Whereas The Town of Kingstree and other regional partners including Georgetown County, Williamsburg, Town of Kingstree, the SC Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism (SC PRT) and numerous non-profit organizations, residents and stakeholders have established the Black River Park Initiative to increase rural economic development, access to recreation, flood resilience, and habitat protection in the Black River Watershed of South Carolina;

Whereas, the Black River has long been considered a priceless ecological and cultural resource to the state of South Carolina. It is a critically important asset for advancing rural economic progress and flood protection in an underserved region in South Carolina;

Whereas, the Black River Park Initiative will combine rural economic, conservation and flood resilience opportunities to enhance public access, recreation, education, training, and land conservation;

Whereas, the Black River is part of the Winyah Bay watershed, which drains much of the eastern part of South Carolina and has experienced repetitive catastrophic flooding in recent years. Permanently protected natural floodplains with capacity for sequestering floodwaters can result in reduced maximum flood water crests and reduced flood insurance costs through the Federal Emergency Management Agency's CRS program, avoided costs for emergency services to communities and avoided damage to public and private property;

Whereas outdoor recreation and natural resource-based tourism in South Carolina generates significant revenue and has proven economically transformative for the many South Carolina communities;

Whereas, the Black River Park Initiative is an expansive, multi-parcel network along 75 miles of river, including State Park, local government and county ownership, more than 8,000 acres will be owned and managed by public and private entities for public access and recreation as South Carolina's first multi-partner riverine park network and water trail;

Whereas, the rural economic, educational, health and social benefits of the park network range from new jobs in construction, hospitality, and tourism to increased outdoor recreation opportunities to increased property values, industry recruitment and higher revenues for local governments;

Whereas, over the last two years, through grassroots collaboration SCPRT, Clemson University, and conservation partners have assembled a 30- member stakeholder committee including

landowners, residents, nonprofit organizations, local leaders, land trusts, tribal leaders, and state park and natural resource agencies to lead and inform the creation and design of a network of parks and a water trail along the Black River;

Whereas now is the time to take advantage of the resources, energy and momentum that have been built around the Black River over the past few years. The state of South Carolina can provide resources that will be magnified by the work and investment that has already been done in the area;

Whereas significant investment by the state of South Carolina is required to fund the next phase of the Black River Initiative which includes funding local, county and state park infrastructure including but not limited to trails, bathrooms, boat launches and other park facilities, job-training, and additional flood-abatement measures;

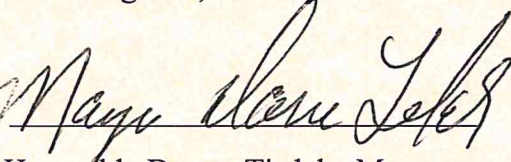
Whereas, the Town of Kingstree has invested \$347,299.71 in basic infrastructure, the purchase of property and the demolitions of four structurally unsafe buildings.

Whereas, According to preliminary engineering reports prepared by Hybrid Engineering, the Town of Kingstree will need \$3,379,656.00 to complete our portion of the Black River project.

Be it resolved that the Town of Kingstree supports the Black River Park Initiative and enthusiastically supports the allocation of state funding, including but not limited to funding through the ARPA Act, to the Black River Initiative in order to fully realize the significant rural economic, quality of life, and flood abatement benefits that the Initiative will bring to rural Kingstree and all of South Carolina.

SIGNED, SEALED AND ADOPTED BY Kingstree Town Council this 22nd day of February 2022.

Town of Kingstree, South Carolina

By: 
Honorable Darren Tisdale, Mayor