



GRANT AGREEMENT

BETWEEN

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

AND

Easley Combined Utilities

This Agreement by and between the South Carolina Department of Environmental Services (SCDES) and Easley Combined Utilities (Recipient) existing under the laws of South Carolina, is to provide for the distribution of funds \$2,200,000 (the Funds) appropriated in 2024 Act 226, Part IB, Section 118.20 (88)(c).

The parties agree as follows:

A. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

The purpose of the agreement is to provide funding to the Recipient, in support of Upper Saluda Stream Restoration and Source Program. This agreement furthers SCDES's statutory mission as authorized in South Carolina Code Section 118.20 (88)(c) and serves the public purpose of environmental protection and conservation.

B. SCOPE OF SERVICES:

The Recipient shall utilize the funds for the activities and services outlined and approved in supporting documents and the attached Exhibit 1 as completed with supporting documents, which will be incorporated into the Agreement upon acceptance under Paragraph D.

C. TERM:

This Agreement shall be effective upon signature, calendar year 2024 and shall terminate on June 30, 2025. Recipient's obligations under this Agreement shall survive termination.

D. PAYMENT:

1. Recipient shall submit a written request for payment not to exceed \$2,200,000 and shall include with the request the information on the attached Exhibit I, including the following as required by Proviso 118.20 and SCDES:

a. An accounting of how the Funds will be spent (Planned Expenditure Summary)

- b. Goals to be accomplished, and
  - c. Proposed measures to evaluate success in implementing and meeting goals.
2. Upon acceptance by SCDES, the request for payment will be incorporated into and made part of this Agreement.
  3. Recipient must register with SCEIS as a vendor and provide vendor information on the request for payment.
  4. Payment is contingent on SCDES receipt of Funds.
  5. Upon receipt and review and approval of the Planned Expenditure Summary, Funds Budget, and financial statements, SCDES will transmit the funds to Recipient by check delivered to:

Andy Sevic, General Manager  
P.O. Box 619  
Easley, SC, 29641-0619  
(864)859-4013  
asevic@easleyutilities.com

6. Source of Funds: State funds made available in the FY2025 Appropriations Act from 118.20 as a one-time distribution per legislative direction, effective July 1, 2024. SCDES's Point of Contact for financial information regarding payments made under this Agreement:

Chris Wimberly  
Finance & Operations  
SCDES  
2600 Bull Street  
Columbia, South Carolina, 29201

E. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

1. By June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025, Recipient shall submit to SCDES a report containing a detailed accounting of its use of the Funds, the services completed, and the outcome measures used to determine the success of the stated goals in sufficient detail for SCDES to determine Recipient's compliance with the Scope of Services set forth in Paragraph B above. See Exhibit II (Quarterly Expenditure Report) and expected completion date by which it anticipates all funds will be spent. Recipient shall also submit a final report with this information if the project is not completed or the Funds have not been spent by June 30, 2025, Recipient shall include in its report an explanation why the Funds have not been spent or the project is not complete and an expected completion date by which it anticipates all funds will have been spent. Recipient shall also submit a final report with this information within 90 days after project completion or exhaustion of Funds.

2. Recipient shall submit to SCDES by June 30, 2025, a detailed statement explaining the nature and function of its organization as well as a detailed statement explaining the use that was made of the funds using the attached template(s).

3. Recipient will allow the State Auditor to audit or cause to be audited to funds.

F. PREVENTING AND REPORTING FRAUD, WASTE AND ABUSE:

a. SCDES has procedures and policies concerning the prevention and reporting of fraud, waste and abuse (FWA) in agency-funded programs, including but not limited to those funded by federal grants. No agency employee, agent, or Recipient shall direct, participate in, approve, or tolerate any violation of federal or State laws regarding FWA in government programs.

b. Federal law prohibits any person or company from knowingly submitting false or fraudulent claims or statements to a federally funded program, including false claims for payment or conspiracy to get such a claim approved or paid. The False Claims Act, 31 U.S.C. §3729-3733, and other “whistleblower” statutes include remedies for employees who are retaliated against in their employment for reporting violations of the Act or for reporting fraud, waste, abuse, or violations of law in connection with federal grant agreements or grants, or danger to public health or safety. Under State law, persons may be criminally prosecuted for false claims made for insurance fraud, or for using a computer in a fraud scheme or to obtain money or services by false representations.

c. If Recipient or Recipient’s agents or employees have reason to suspect FWA in SCDES programs, this information should be reported in confidence to SCDES. A report may be made by writing to the Office of Internal Audits, SCDES, 2600 Bull Street, Columbia, SC 29201; or by calling the SCDES Fraud, Waste and Abuse Hotline at 803-898-7533 accessing the OIA Intranet Website, or sending an email to [fraud.hotline@des.sc.gov](mailto:fraud.hotline@des.sc.gov). Recipient is required to inform Recipient’s employees of the existence of SCDES’s policy prohibiting FWA and the procedures for reporting FWA to the agency. Recipient must also inform recipient’s employees, in writing, of their rights and remedies under 41 U.S.C. §4712 concerning reporting FWA or violations of law in connection with federal contracts or grants, or danger to public health or safety, in the predominant native language of the workforce.

G. USE OF FUNDS; AUDITS:

Recipient will not use, expend, or allow use or expenditure of the Funds for any purpose not authorized in and consistent with this Agreement. Unexpended funds distributed pursuant to this Agreement may be carried forward to succeeding fiscal years and expended for the same purposes. Recipient shall continue the reporting and monitoring required under this Agreement until all Funds are spent.

H. RETURN OF FUNDS: The State of South Carolina reserves the right to all remedies available to it under law for the enforcement of this Agreement including but not limited to the right to demand repayment of any Funds that remain unused at completion of the project or that were used for purposes not authorized in this Agreement.

I. NON-DISCRIMINATION:

No person shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination in relation to activities carried out under this Contract on the grounds of race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin, disability, veteran status, pregnancy, gender identity, sexual orientation, or any other basis prohibited by law. This includes the provision of language assistance services to individuals of limited English proficiency eligible for services provided by SCDES.

Recipients that administer or provide SCDES programs, activities, and services are required to adopt policies and procedures that ensure individuals with disabilities are provided with an equal opportunity to participate and equally effective communication when accessing any SCDES funded programs, activities, and services.

J. COMPLIANCE REPORTS: Recipient must provide quarterly compliance reports within fifteen days after the end of each quarter outlining the status of the project, compliance with the scope of services, and documentation of expenditures to the proper program area of SCDES. Recipient is subject to site visits from SCDES to monitor compliance.

K. RECORDKEEPING: Recipient shall create and maintain adequate records to document all matters covered by this Agreement. Recipient shall retain all such records for three (3) years or other longer period required by law after termination, cancellation, or expiration of the Agreement or after final expenditure of Funds, whichever is later, and make records available for inspection, copying, and audit by SCDES or other authorized agent of the State. If any litigation, claim, or audit has begun but is not completed or if audit findings have not been resolved at the end of the retention period, the records shall be retained until all litigation, claims, or audit findings involving the Funds have been resolved.

L. REVISIONS OF LAW: The provisions of the Agreement are subject to revision of state or federal statutes and regulations and requirements governing.

M. PUBLIC INFORMATION: All information relating to distribution and use of the Funds, including all reports and documentation submitted to SCDES under this Agreement, is subject to public disclosure under the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act and may be published on SCDES's internet web site.

N. ATTACHMENTS: Attachments to this Agreement are incorporated into and made part of this Agreement.

The parties to this Grant Agreement hereby agree to any and all provisions of the Grant Agreement as stated above.

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

BY:



Chris Wimberly  
Chief Financial Officer

DATE: 12/3/24

MAILING ADDRESS:

SCDES – Finance & Operations  
2600 Bull Street  
Columbia, SC 29201  
Phone: 803-898-1230

RECIPIENT NAME

BY:



Andy Sevic  
General Manager

DATE: 12/4/24

MAILING ADDRESS:

P.O. Box 619  
Easley, SC 29641-0619  
Phone: (864)859-4013  
Email: asevic@easleyutilities.com

REMITTANCE ADDRESS: (if applicable)

TAX/EMPLOYER ID # 57-6000249

TYPE OF ENTITY (check one):

- Corporation  
 LLC  
 Partnership  
 Nonprofit organization  
 Government agency or political subdivision – specify State if not SC:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other Governmental body (specify)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Individual/sole proprietor

Other (specify)  
\_\_\_\_\_

If a corporation or LLC:

State of incorporation/organization:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Registered agent and address in South Carolina:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

SCDLLR or other license #  
\_\_\_\_\_

THIS AGREEMENT IS NOT OFFICIAL AND BINDING UNTIL SIGNED BY THE SCDES CONTRACTS  
MANAGER.

*Francine Miller*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Francine Miller  
SCDES Contracts Manager

DATE: 12/17/2024  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Exhibit 1: Information Required for State Funding**

**Name of Organization:** Easley Combined Utilities

**Mailing Address of Organization:** PO Box 619 Easley, SC 29641-0619

**Phone:** (864)859-4013 Ext. 8105

**Email:** asevic@easleyutilities.com

**Remittance Address: (if applicable)**

**Tax/Employer ID#:** 57-6000249

**SCEIS Vendor ID#:** 7000030012

**Type of Entity:** Municipality

**Registered agent and address in South Carolina:**

110 Peachtree St.  
Easley, SC 29640

**Provide an accounting of how the state funds will be spent:**

These funds will be used for streambank restoration work in the Upper Saluda Watershed. These funds will be matched by a \$3.1M federal USDA RCPP grant solely for stream restoration work.

**What goals will be accomplished?**

The goal is to stabilize eroding streams and rivers, prevent land loss and protect rural land values in the Upper Saluda Watershed. The Saluda Lake is a public drinking water source that serves over 100,000 customers.

**Proposed measures to evaluate success in implementing and meeting the goals:**

Success may be viewed as of total river frontage that is protected and stabilized after the restoration work is complete.

**How will the proposed funds benefit the taxpayers of South Carolina?**

The Saluda Lake is a public drinking water source that serves over 100,000 customers. The restoration work will help protect run off into the Saluda Lake and .

**Provide a copy of the adopted budget for the current fiscal year.**

Attached (Specific project budgets are currently being developed)

**Provide a copy of the organization's most recent operating financial statement.**

Attached

**Exhibit II. Expenditure Report Due June 30<sup>th</sup>. If all funds are not spent by June 30, 2025, then quarterly reports with updated status are required until all funds are fully expended.**

Amount Received	Spent to Date	Status Summary	Project Goal	Measure(s)





**State of South Carolina Request for Contribution Distribution**

This form is designed to collect the information required by South Carolina in accordance with Proviso 117.21 of the appropriations act of 2022 and Executive Order 2022-19. This form must be submitted to the state agency that is providing the contribution for the designated organization. The state agency providing the contribution should use this form to collect information from the designated organization. The information must be collected from the designated organization before the funds can be disbursed.

Contribution Information		
Amount	State Agency Providing the Contribution	Purpose
\$2,200,000	Department of Environmental Services	Upper Saluda Watershed Restoration

Organization Information	
Entity Name	Easley Combined Utilities
Address	110 Peachtree St.
City/State/Zip	Easley, SC 29640
Website	www.easleyutilities.com
Tax ID#	57-6000249
Entity Type	Municipality

Organization Contact Information	
Contact Name	Andy Sevic
Position/Title	General Manager
Telephone	(864) 859-4013 Ext. 8105
Email	asevic@easleyutilities.com

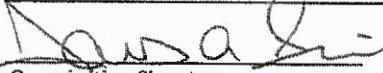
Plan/Accounting of how these funds will be spent:		
Description	Budget	Explanation
Upper Saluda Watershed Restoration	\$2,200,000	Funds will be utilized for stream restoration work in the Upper Saluda watershed.
Grand Total	\$2,200,000	

**Please explain how these funds will be used to provide a public benefit:**

These funds will be used for streambank restoration work in the Upper Saluda Watershed above the Saluda Lake. These funds will be matched by a \$3.1M federal USDA RCPP grant solely for stream restoration work to stabilize severely eroding streams and rivers in the Upper Saluda Watershed. The Saluda Lake is a public drinking water source that servers over 100,000 customers. This project also serves to prevent land loss and it protects rural land values. This project directly benefits the citizens of Pickens and Greenville Counties

**Organization Certifications**

- 1) Organization hereby gives assurance that no person shall, upon the grounds of race, creed, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefit of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity for which this organization is responsible.
- 2) Organization certifies that it will provide quarterly spending reports to the Agency Providing Contribution listed above.
- 3) Organization certifies that it will provide an accounting at the end of the fiscal year to the Agency Providing Contribution listed above.
- 4) Organization certifies that it will allow the State Auditor to audit or cause to be audited the contributed funds.

  
Organization Signature

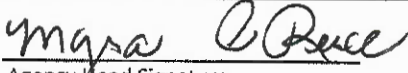
James A. Sevic  
Printed Name

General Manager  
Title

October 28, 2024  
Date

**Certifications of State Agency Providing Contribution**

- 1) State Agency certifies that the planned expenditure aligns with the Agency's mission and/or the purpose specified in the appropriations act of 2022.
- 2) State Agency certifies that the Organization has set forth a public purpose to be served through receipt of the expenditure.
- 3) State Agency certifies that it will make distributions directly to the organization.
- 4) State Agency certifies that it will provide the quarterly spending reports and accounting received from the organization to the Senate Finance Committee, House Ways and Means Committee, and the Executive Budget Office by June 30, 2023.
- 5) State Agency certifies that it will publish on their website any and all reports, accountings, forms, updates, communications, or other materials required by Proviso 117.21 of the appropriations act of 2022.
- 6) State Agency will certify to the Office of the Governor that it has complied with the requirements of Executive Order 2022-19 by June 30, 2023.

  
Agency Head Signature

Myra C. Reece  
Printed Name

11/6/2024  
Date



**House Member Appropriation Request Form**

**THIS DOCUMENT WILL BE PUBLIC**

Project/Event Name: Upper Saluda Stream Restoration and Source Water Protection Program

Requested Amount: \$ 3,000,000

Recipient Entity: Easley Combined Utilities

Is the entity a: \_\_\_\_\_ state agency, \_\_\_\_\_ local government, X non-profit, or \_\_\_\_\_ other?

If **other**, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

Entity Contact: Melanie Ruhlman

Title/Position: Watershed Manager

Contact Phone Number: (864) 270-7629

Email Address: info@saveoursaluda.org

Entity Website: easleyutilities.com

County Location: Greenville and Pickens

Summary of Intended Use of the Funds: Stream restoration work to stabilize severely eroding streams and rivers in the Upper Saluda Watershed above Saluda Lake

**Justification of Request / Public Benefit:**

- ✓ Provides needed match for \$3.1M USDA RCPP grant for priority stream restoration work
- ✓ Protects a public drinking water source (Saluda Lake) that serves over 100,000 customers
- ✓ Prevents loss of land and protects rural land values
- ✓ Prevents sedimentation and flooding to downstream properties
- ✓ Protects and improves water quality
- ✓ Provides jobs
- ✓ Involves multiple partners including counties, utilities, and conservation organizations

Neal A. Collins

Neal A. Collins

Primary House Sponsor – Print Name

**Primary House Sponsor – Signature**

Additional Sponsors:

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



# EASLEY COMBINED UTILITIES

*A Community Tradition*

January 22, 2024

Representative Neal Collins  
418C Blatt Building  
Columbia 29201

Re: Funding Request for Upper Saluda Stream Restoration and Source Water Protection Program

Dear Representative Collins,


Easley Combined Utilities (ECU) requests \$3M from the State of South Carolina to secure a \$3.1M federal grant awarded through the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) for stream restoration in the Upper Saluda Watershed. The Upper Saluda Watershed includes parts of Greenville and Pickens Counties and drains to Easley's water supply - Saluda Lake. Landowners in the watershed and communities downstream can benefit from this voluntary program for repairing eroding streambanks.

Many streams and rivers in the Upper Saluda Watershed are experiencing major streambank failure. Streambank erosion is causing loss of land and excess sedimentation to downstream properties and to Saluda Lake. Excess sediment in waterways has a negative impact on water quality, reduces the storage capacity of downstream reservoirs, reduces flood resiliency, increases impacts from flooding, negatively impacts aquatic life, and diminishes recreational use.

Funding through the NRCS RCPP has been very successful in helping rural landowners address stream restoration needs. The RCPP award for the Upper Saluda Watershed would bring significant federal dollars to address this problem for the benefit of citizens in Greenville and Pickens Counties. Equivalent matching funds are required for implementation. The start date of the project is expected to be between July 1 and September 1, 2024. The federal end date is 9/30/2028. We anticipate utilizing the funds from the state between the start date and 9/30/2027.

Thank you for your consideration of this beneficial collaborative project to help further work towards achieving our goals for water quality and source water protection. Please see the attached documentation for additional project details.

Sincerely,



Andy Sevic  
General Manager, Easley Combined Utilities

Attachment 1 – Supporting Documentation  
Attachment 2 – Funds Verification Statement

## **Attachment 1 – Supporting Documentation**

### **Upper Saluda Stream Restoration and Source Water Protection Program**

#### ***Summary***

Project partners received notification in November 2023 of a \$3.1M federal grant awarded through the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) for the purpose of conducting stream restoration work in the Upper Saluda Watershed. Easley Combined Utilities (ECU) requests \$3M from the State of South Carolina to fulfill match requirements of the grant. This proposed project is referenced as the *Upper Saluda Stream Restoration and Source Water Protection Program*.

#### ***Introduction***

The Upper Saluda Watershed includes approximately 110,000 acres in northwest Greenville County and 80,000 acres in northeast Pickens County. Headwaters originate in the Blue Ridge Mountains and drain south to Saluda Lake. Saluda Lake and its contributing rivers are vital water resources for local communities. Headwaters of both the North and South Saluda Rivers feed reservoirs which supply water to the greater Greenville area. Watershed areas above these the two reservoirs are protected and provide some of the highest quality drinking water in the country. Downstream near Greenville, Saluda Lake supplies drinking water to Easley and surrounding communities, serving over 100,000 customers in a rapidly growing area of the Upstate. The dam at Saluda Lake supplies hydropower. Streams and rivers of the Upper Saluda Watershed support business and industry, provide recreational opportunities to thousands of Upstate residents and visitors, and generally support a rich diversity of aquatic life.

#### ***Statement of Problem***

- Excess sedimentation is a significant problem in Saluda Lake and in its contributing streams and rivers of the Upper Saluda Watershed.
- Most of the sediment is coming from streambank erosion in the watershed caused by:
  - Stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces and land disturbance,
  - Historic land use practices, including stream and river channelization,
  - Increase in frequency and magnitude of extreme storm events and flooding,
  - Insufficient riparian buffers, and
  - Streambank tree loss due to channel expansion.
- Upstream in the watershed, landowners are rapidly losing land due to unstable and severely eroding streambanks, and downstream properties are adversely impacted by sedimentation from upstream eroding reaches.
- Excess sediment in waterways negatively impacts water quality, reduces the storage capacity of Saluda Lake, reduces flood resiliency, increases impacts from flooding, negatively impacts aquatic life, and diminishes recreational use.
- In 2011 and 2012, ECU financed dredging operations in Saluda Lake that removed approximately 366,600 cubic yards of sediment at a cost of over \$8M to the utility. The

dredged area has since filled in again and the estimated cost to remove it exceeds \$10M. Besides cost, the disposition of such a large volume of sediment is a major barrier.

- Primary actions needed to address the excess sediment in the watershed are stream restoration, sediment reduction, and increased riparian forest cover within the watershed.
- There is a strong demand for stream restoration in the Upper Saluda Watershed; however, this work requires professional expertise, is expensive (~\$250-\$1,000+ per linear foot), and is cost prohibitive for most landowners.
- The proposed *Upper Saluda Stream Restoration and Source Water Protection Program* is needed to stabilize streambanks and restore the proper profile along priority reaches impacted by severe streambank erosion.

### ***Background***

Beginning in 2016, ECU and Save Our Saluda (SOS) began building a partnership of over twenty stakeholder organizations that share common goals for watershed and water quality protection and identified the need to reduce excess sediment in the stream corridor. Together we developed watershed plans for land areas that drain to Saluda Lake and began implementation of project work in 2019 (see References). Partnering organizations form the Upper Saluda Technical Advisory Stakeholder Committee (TASC) for the Upper Saluda Watershed Program for Sediment, and include federal and state agencies, water and wastewater utilities, county stormwater programs, agricultural agencies, universities, and nonprofit conservation groups. Focus meetings were held with agricultural, urban, and forestry stakeholders to discuss practices and landowner issues related to sediment runoff in watershed planning areas. Multiple workshops on cover crops, soil health, and streambank stabilization were held in the watershed and online surveys were conducted to gather public input.

Implementation projects completed in the Upper Saluda Watershed to date include cover crops, floodplain and riparian restoration, farm road stabilization, stream restoration, sediment basin construction, and drainage improvement and stabilization. Farm equipment was also purchased for lease to area farmers to help facilitate soil conservation practices.

Funding for the Upper Saluda Watershed Program for Sediment is provided in part by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) with funds from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act and through support from ECU, other partners, and contributions from landowners. Since 2017, ECU has provided over \$1.4M for watershed planning, restoration, and protection.

We have been extremely pleased with the success of the watershed planning effort and strategic approach to implementation that leverages federal and state grant funding with additional funding and in-kind support from partner organizations to provide incentivizing financial assistance for rural landowners and farmers for soil conservation work. This approach has led to the successful installation of effective best management practices, including stream restoration projects in cooperation with NRCS through their Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Our program has helped to create community and landowner awareness of the importance of soil conservation as it relates to water quality and source water protection.

Through this collaborative work we have developed an acute understanding of the widespread problem of destabilized and actively eroding stream and river channels throughout the watershed that are a significant source of downstream sediment loading. Together with our partners we have completed several stream restoration projects in priority watershed areas. The proposed *Upper Saluda Stream Restoration and Source Water Protection Program* offers the opportunity to build on existing program successes and significantly expand and expedite stream restoration work in the Upper Saluda Watershed for effective sediment loading reductions to Saluda Lake.

### ***Program Description***

Projects implemented through the proposed *Upper Saluda Stream Restoration and Source Water Protection Program* will stabilize severely eroding and unstable streams and rivers in the Upper Saluda Watershed that flow into Saluda Lake, the drinking water source for Easley and surrounding communities.

The Upper Saluda Program is innovative as it brings together a diversity of partners with resources, experience, and expertise to implement stream restoration projects. Partners include:

- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Resource Institute, Inc.
- Easley Combined Utilities
- Save Our Saluda
- Greenville County Soil and Water Conservation District
- Pickens Soil and Water Conservation District

Program partners have the experience, expertise, and capacity to:

- ✓ Conduct outreach to rural landowners and producers through an established local network cultivated over seven years of cooperative work;
- ✓ Develop and manage natural resource conservation projects and provide planning, design engineering, permitting, and construction oversight services; and to
- ✓ Leverage in-kind partner support for effective implementation of high-quality projects.

Experience includes restoration/enhancement of over 270 miles of streams, managing six RCPP projects, and implementing over \$150M in grant funding.

Natural Channel Design (NCD) is the widely accepted method for stream restoration (Rosgen, 2011). It is the application of fluvial geomorphology to create stable channels that do not aggrade or degrade over time and that maximize stream functions given site constraints. NCD applies the stream dimension, pattern, and profile features of a naturally functioning, stable, and healthy stream system (reference condition) to a degraded system with similar watershed features. Instead of stabilizing the streambanks with riprap or other hard armoring, NCD returns the degraded system to a naturally stable plan, cross-section, and profile. In some cases, NCD can be implemented to put the stream on a more rapid ecological succession to achieve equilibrium.

Designing and implementing stream channels with the proper dimension, pattern, and profile positively impacts sediment transport and reduces central bar formations within the stream corridor that increase the near bank stress that causes streambank erosion. Addressing this issue will reduce the amount of soil loss resulting from streambank erosion and reduce the excess sediment entering the region's surface waters.

NCD is a sustainable and cost-effective solution to stream instability that can reduce the need for regulatory involvement by improving water quality, halting loss of land caused by erosion, and improving habitat diversity. The NCD approach is supported by federal and state agencies that review permits for working in and around waters in South Carolina. Using this design approach will help farmland producers meet the expectations of these regulatory agencies.

Project partners will use the NCD approach to accomplish the following goals and objectives:

1. Stabilize streambanks to significantly reduce the amount of sediment entering streams and rivers that discharge to Saluda Lake,
2. Restore the proper stream dimension, pattern, and profile along reaches impacted by streambank erosion,
3. Create/enhance riparian buffers by increasing riparian corridor width and quality through increased native species diversity,
4. Improve aquatic habitat through reduced soil erosion and enhancement of habitat features to provide cover for fish, macroinvertebrates, and other aquatic species,
5. Improve sediment transport to allow fish spawning areas to return,
6. Reduce stored sediment in the stream corridor to decrease flooding and positively impact watershed resiliency and recovery following storm events, and
7. Increase economic, recreational, and educational opportunities.

Initial program activities will include coordination with partners to identify potential project sites; circulation of informational fliers (print and electronic media) and public service announcements with local media for program advertising; and outreach and communications with landowners.

Projects will include the planning and implementation of conservation practices with eligible participants on eligible land and in accordance with the NRCS ranking process of RCPP-EQIP<sup>1</sup> applications and priority areas outlined in approved watershed plans (see References). Program participation is voluntary.

Conservation plans will be generated to outline design specifications and operations schedules for approved priority applications. Project activities will include the planning and implementation of the following NRCS land management/land improvement/restoration practices:

- ⇒ 395 - Stream Habitat Improvement,
- ⇒ 580 - Streambank and Shoreline Protection,
- ⇒ 584 - Channel Bed Stabilization,
- ⇒ 391 - Riparian Forest Buffer,
- ⇒ 342 - Critical Area Planting,
- ⇒ 612 - Tree/Shrub Establishment, and
- ⇒ 396 - Aquatic Organism Passage.

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<sup>1</sup> RCPP – Regional Conservation Partnership Program, EQIP – Environmental Quality Incentives Program



This project will help landowners with stream stabilization to avoid regulatory conflicts associated with attempting short-term fixes on their own. The result of this project for the client is a healthy, sustainable stream system with minimal regulatory burden.

### ***Program Budget***

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service is matching local funds and in-kind contributions through their Regional Conservation Partnership Program for the proposed Upper Saluda Stream Restoration and Source Water Protection Program. Total project funding is \$6,229,757 (including the in-kind contributions).

Approximately 85% of the total project funds will be used for engineering services, permitting, and construction to implement approved projects vetted through a priority ranking process.

#### **Federal Funds (\$3,109,756)**

- \$2,450,000 (Project Implementation for NRCS conservation practices related to the restoration/stabilization projects)
- \$659,756 (Technical Assistance for project needs specific to NRCS requirements - Engineering Reports, NRCS specific forms to certify practices, semi-annual budget reporting, and annual reporting)

#### **Partner Match Funds (\$3,000,000)**

- \$1,200,000 (Project Implementation - construction needs for restoration/stabilization of design projects)
- \$1,800,000 (Engineering Assistance - survey/assessment for project design, permitting, final design plans, as-built plans, construction oversight and project management)

#### **Partner In-Kind Match Contributions (\$120,000)**

- \$120,000 provided by non-profit partners for landowner (EQIP participants) coordination and planning during the NRCS RCPP program application phase and initial assessment for conceptual designs for NRCS ranking purposes.

### ***Program and Project Benefits***

The project team realizes the importance of “keeping working lands working,” especially in places like Upstate, South Carolina where agriculture is extremely important to the rural economy and farmland is at great risk of conversion to residential development. This project will provide landowners with the financial and technical resources they need to improve the sustainability and profitability of their operations while at the same time providing downstream water quality and source water protection.

Program benefits include:

- ✓ Addresses the sediment problem at the source through proactive restoration measures,
- ✓ Protects rural land values and prevents loss of land,
- ✓ Prevents sedimentation and flooding to downstream properties,

- ✓ Provides jobs (e.g. design engineers, planners, heavy equipment operators, construction oversight, other technical service providers, local businesses that provide materials),
- ✓ Protects a public drinking water source, Saluda Lake, that serves over 100,000 customers,
- ✓ Protects and improves water quality in streams, rivers, and Saluda Lake,
- ✓ Reconnects streams to floodplains and restores associated wetland habitat,
- ✓ Involves multiple partners including Greenville and Pickens Counties, water and wastewater utilities, local and state agencies, universities, conservation organizations, and landowners, and
- ✓ Provides public education and volunteer opportunities.

Projects implemented through the *Upper Saluda Stream Restoration and Source Water Protection Program* will deliver multiple measurable ecological, economic, and social outcomes:

1. Restore and/or enhance 12,000 linear feet of stream,
2. Reduce stream sediment from an estimated 700 tons/year to less than 17 tons/year,
3. Reduce streambank heights from a 1.8:1 to a 1:1 ratio or less,
4. Improve aquatic habitat by 50% by restoring proper stream dimension, pattern, and profile,
5. Increase riparian buffer zones by 300 – 400%,
6. Improve riparian buffer diversity by planting a native species mix that includes herbaceous and woody species and by removing exotic invasive species prior to planting,
7. Enhance riparian buffer zones to lower stream temperatures by 4 to 12 degrees Fahrenheit,
8. Offset carbon emissions to the atmosphere by planting riparian buffers with native trees and other vegetation, and
9. The project team will use accepted methods to assess economic outcomes of stream restoration projects by estimating benefits resulting from spending at local businesses (e.g. surveying, engineering, construction, and nurseries), benefits to the local economy generated by having a restored stream (e.g. urban recreation opportunities, increased tourism, and increased property values), and "Costs Avoided" benefits that accrue from halting or reversing degradation trends (e.g., lower water treatment and health care costs and reduced soil loss, flooding, and sedimentation to streams, rivers, and wetlands in the Upper Saluda Watershed downstream to Saluda Lake), (Collins, et al., 2005).

Contracting and reporting requirements will include:

- ⇒ Semi-annual budget reporting and annual reporting.
- ⇒ Partners will contract with NRCS approved Technical Service Providers (TSPs).
- ⇒ Partners will be transparent with budget, deliverables, and reports associated with the NRCS agreement for RCPP and match funding for the project.
- ⇒ The team will ensure effective project implementation using deliverables tracking tools.
- ⇒ Conservation practices must be certified and approved by NRCS and/or TSPs.
- ⇒ Partners welcome the opportunity to brief local leaders on progress and will provide opportunities to visit project sites.

## *References*

[Collins, A., R. Rosenberger, and J. Fletcher \(2005\). The economic value of stream restoration, Water Resources Research, 41, W02017, doi:10.1029/2004WR003353](#)

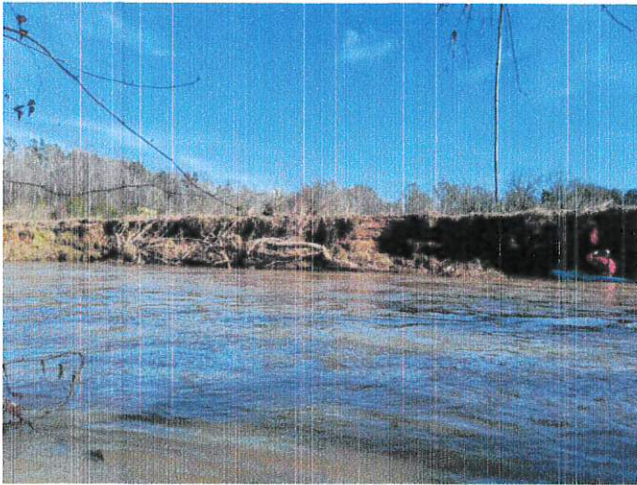
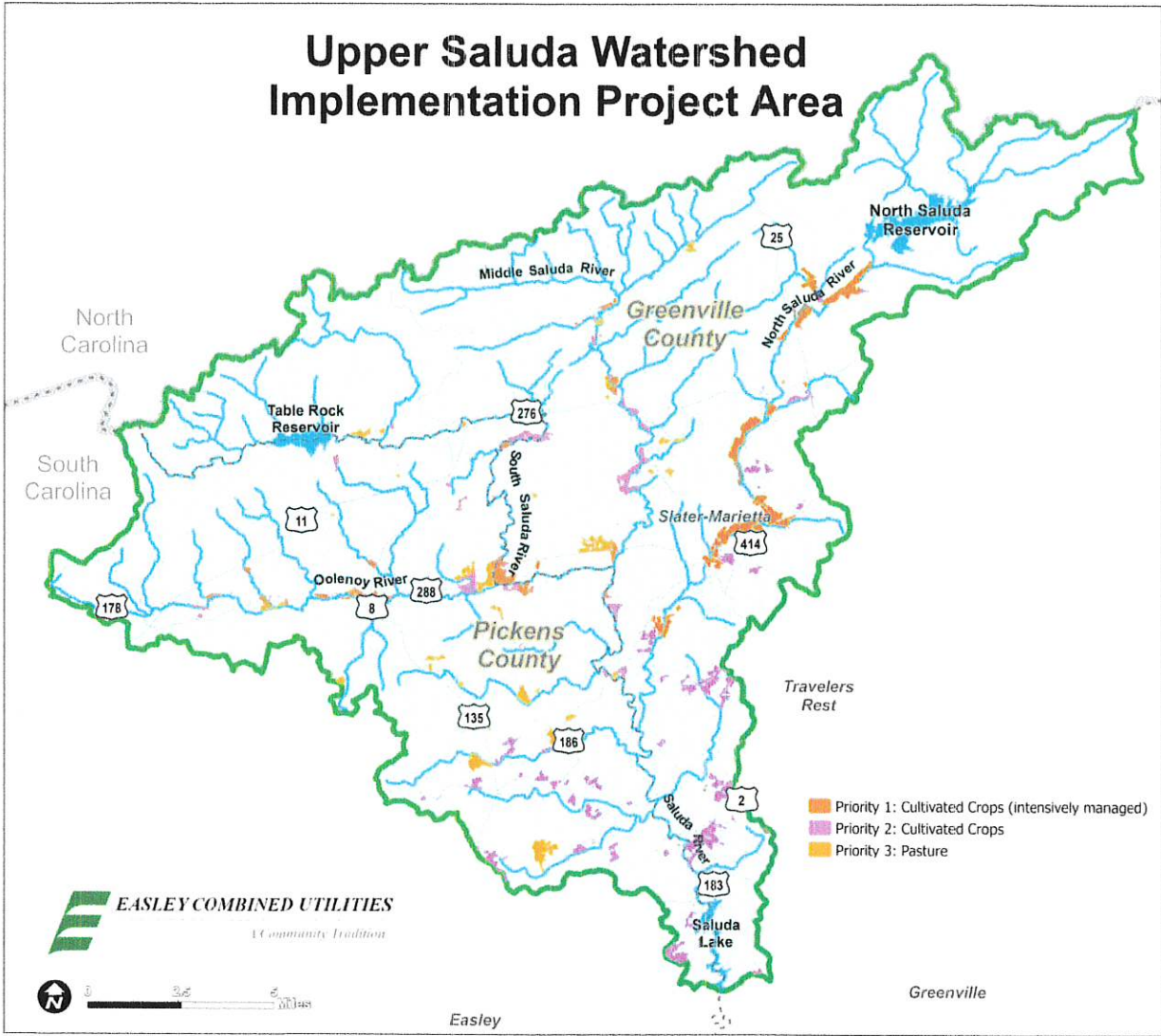
[Rosgen, D.L. \(2011\). Natural Channel Design: Fundamental Concepts, Assumptions, and Methods. In A. Simon, S.J. Bennett, & J.M. Castro \(Eds.\), Stream Restoration in Dynamic Fluvial Systems: Scientific Approaches, Analyses, and Tools, Geophysical Monograph](#)

[NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program in South Carolina](#)

[Upper Saluda Watershed Program for Sediment:](#)

- In 2018, the [Watershed Plan for Sediment in the North Saluda River and Saluda Lake](#) was completed and approved by SCDHEC.
- In 2019, the *North Saluda River and Saluda and Saluda Lake Watershed Implementation Project for Sediment Runoff* was awarded by SCDHEC and was completed in 2021.
- In 2020, the [Watershed Plan for Sediment in the South Saluda River](#) was completed and approved by SCDHEC.
- In 2021, the *Upper Saluda Watershed Implementation Project for Sediment* was awarded by SCDHEC and is nearly complete.

# Upper Saluda Watershed Implementation Project Area

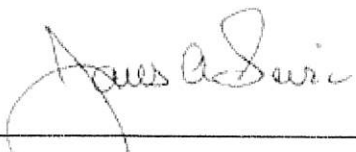


Upper Saluda Watershed Stream Restoration Site Examples



## Attachment 2 – Funds Verification Statement

I hereby verify that all funds provided for the *Upper Saluda Stream Restoration and Source Water Protection Program* will be spent in South Carolina and for the benefit of South Carolinians.



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Andy Sevic  
General Manager



## Control Objects Data: Annual Values

<b>FM Area</b>	SC01 (USD)	<b>Grant</b>	NOT RELEVANT
<b>Fiscal Year</b>	2025	<b>Fund</b>	10050025
<b>Control Ledger</b>	9H	<b>Funds Center</b>	P500X02507
		<b>Commitment Item</b>	561000
		<b>Functional Area</b>	P500X2507
		<b>Funded Program</b>	9813.650000X000



Hierarchy of Control Objects - Budget Addresses - Posting ...	Consumable ...	Consumed Amt	Available Amt
▶ 9813.650000X000	2,200,000.00	0.00	2,200,000.00

- (88) **P500** - Department of Environmental Services
- (a) Clarendon County - Newman Branch Swamp Clearing \$ 950,000;
  - (b) Daufuskie Marsh Tacky Society - Land Improvement and Infrastructure \$ 20,000;
  - (c) **Easley Combined Utilities - Upper Saluda Watershed Restoration \$ 2,200,000;**
  - (d) Grand Strand Humane Society \$ 2,000,000;
  - (e) James Island Public Service District - Environmental Mitigation \$ 500,000;
  - (f) Kind Keeper - No-Kill Animal Shelter \$ 300,000;
  - (g) Pawmetto Lifeline - Veterinary Services \$ 250,000;
  - (h) PFAS Pilot Program \$ 900,000;