



Dear York County Property Owner:

Thank you for your interest in the York County Forever Commission (YCF). We are pleased for the opportunity to be a partner in addressing your land stewardship questions and needs. The attached material provides detailed information about the York County Forever program, the importance of resource conservation, the property types in which we are interested, the ways that YCF can assist you in preserving your property, and our conservation process.

If you have further questions after reviewing this material, please contact York County Planning Department staff at 803.909.7221 or Jacque Sorrentino, York County Open Space Planner at jacque.sorrentino@yorkcountygov.com or in writing at:

York County Forever Commission
Attn: Jacque Sorrentino, YCPD
1070 Heckle Boulevard, A-5
Rock Hill, SC 29732

We encourage you to consider joining us in preserving York County's past and protecting its future.

Sincerely,

Greg FitzGerald

Greg FitzGerald
YCF Chairman



WHAT IS THE YORK COUNTY FOREVER COMMISSION?

Over time, the loss of open space, population growth, and infringing development led to increasing citizen concern that York County's picturesque scenery and cherished way of life were vanishing. Faced with this need to manage growth responsibly, protect exceptional resources, and preserve unique character, York County Council created the York County Forever Commission (YCF) in 1998, to serve as the county's land conservation organization. YCF was charged with the mission of promoting and protecting significant natural, cultural, historic, and environmental resources.

The Commission is composed of nine members: a citizen appointed from each of the seven Council districts and non-voting representatives from Nation Ford Land Trust and Culture & Heritage Commission. YCF meetings are normally held at 4:30 p.m. on the fourth Monday of each month at the York County Office Complex in Rock Hill.

WHY SHOULD WE PRESERVE OUR RESOURCES?

Resource preservation is an investment that pays many dividends, to both the individual citizen and the community, whether **economic** (increasing property values, attracting business and industry, reducing the cost of services); **environmental** (controlling pollution, managing floodplains-stormwater, protecting wildlife and vegetation); or **social** (promoting a healthy life-style, providing low-cost recreation, managing development, improving quality of life). In partnership with other organizations, the Commission has helped to preserve over 8,800 acres of unique York County resources by 2010, including prime farmland, historic and cultural sites, endangered plant habitats, passive recreational areas, river corridors and watersheds, and scenic open space.

TYPES OF PROPERTY IN WHICH YCF IS INTERESTED

The Commission considers property that meets at least one of the following classifications:

Agricultural Resources: *The property is currently productive or easily adaptable to suitable and sustainable agricultural use; **or** the property has agricultural soils to support agricultural operation; **or** the property includes agricultural land of statewide or regional significance; **or** the size of tract supports an agricultural operation or farm community; **or** the property is currently under forest management and production; **or** the property's physical features support forest resource management.*

Historic or Cultural Resources: *The property includes a Nation Register of Historic Places (NR) site, or NR eligible or locally significant site or structure; **or** property is associated with a significant historical or cultural event; **or** structures on the property represent a unique or indicative style of architecture.*

Scenic/Open Space Resources: *The property provides or protects a scenic vista or backdrop or other significant resource; **or** the property is visibly prominent from or adjacent to one or more public lands, trails, or roads (e.g. Carolina Thread Trail, Western York County Scenic Byway, or other); **or** the property makes a significant contribution to the rural character of York County; **or** the property provides important open space for the community.*

Natural Resources: *The property includes a verified wetland as identified by the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources; **or** the property provides connectivity to or a habitat for threatened plant or animal species; **or** the property provides an opportunity for environmental education; **or** the property has frontage on a lake, pond, stream, or river of county significance; **or** the property is part of watershed or groundwater recharge area.*

Outdoor Recreational Resources: *The property is or will be used for passive outdoor sportsmen recreational activities (e.g., hunting, fishing, etc.); or the property is or will be used for greenways, hiking, or natural trails; or the property provides access to outdoor recreational or educational attraction or area; and the property will be reasonable accessible to the public.*

HOW CAN THE COMMISSION HELP YOU CONSERVE YOUR PROPERTY?

YCF works with conservation-minded owners whose property meets their project selection criteria by coordinating with local land trusts; assisting with appraisal, legal, and administrative costs; and contributing to the purchase of conservation easements and development rights. The Commission has a limited budget through an annual tax appropriation, but most projects involve joint funding partnerships with other public agencies or private individuals. Both income tax and estate tax benefits and credits can also provide incentives to make property conservation good economic sense for anyone. Some of the available conservation tools include easements, purchase of development rights, bargain sales, life estates, and fee simple donations. ***(Please note that the Commission does not provide legal, accounting, or other professional services.)***

WHAT IS THE PROCESS?

Anyone interested in working with the Commission to conserve their property should complete a *Landowner Conservation Statement of Interest (SOI)* form and submit to Commission staff at the address provided on the form. ***SOI forms are accepted from January through April for tentative project completion* in December of the same calendar year, and from July through October for tentative project completion* in June of the following calendar year.*** The review process for the first yearly project cycle (January – April) typically begins in May of the same calendar year. The review process for the second yearly project cycle (July - October) typically begins in November of the same calendar year. During this review, YCF will determine if the proposed project meets its program guidelines. If your property is considered to be ineligible, you will receive written notification of the reason(s). If your property is considered to be eligible, a meeting will be scheduled with you to discuss the property and your request in detail. Based on this information, the Commission will assess and rank your project based on our property criteria checklist. A presentation may then be made to York County Council with a request to authorize any negotiations necessary to complete the project. After a tentative agreement is reached, Council approval is required before any funding or documents can be finalized. All negotiations are confidential and property owners are free to withdraw their property from the process at any point. ***The review process for a successful project takes approximately eight months to a year from submission of SOI through project funding and document finalization.***

****Final funding and document recording dates subject to schedules of all project partners.***

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information about the YCF please contact Jacque Sorrentino, York County Open Space Planner, at 803.909.7221 or jacque.sorrentino@yorkcountygov.com.

For YCF Use Only

Project Tracking #: _____



**YORK COUNTY FOREVER COMMISSION
LANDOWNER CONSERVATION STATEMENT OF INTEREST**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number(s): _____

Email Address: _____

Description of property: (topography/water features/structures): _____

Size of property (in acres): _____

Location of Property: _____

Tax Map Number(s): _____

Unique Characteristics of property: _____

What is your vision for your property? _____

Please complete this form and mail to:

Jacque Sorrentino
York County Planning Department
1070 Heckle Blvd., A-5
Rock Hill, SC 29732
803.909.7221
jacque.sorrentino@yorkcountygov.com

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