

The York County Forever Commission has the powers and duties assigned by Chapter 32: *Boards, Committees and Commission*, to promote the preservation of open spaces by coordinating with property owners interested in the conservation of the County's natural, cultural, and historical resources. For FY 21/22, the Commission received funding in the amount of ¼ mil, or approximately \$350,000. This funding primarily covers stewardship and administrative fees used to monitor, defend, and enforce conservation easements. This was an active year, with the Commission considering six projects and permanently preserving three properties for a total of just over 200 acres.

2021 Projects



Van Every Property

Funding Awarded: \$39,200

Council District: 2

This 83-acre property includes wooded areas, two ponds, fields and former pastures, a horse stable, and assorted accessory buildings. The property also includes the home built in 1975 for the family of Stephen Heywood Van Every, who was the grandson of Philip Lance, founder of the snack company, Lance, Inc. The property was purchased by the Bethel-Lake Wylie Land Acquisition and Preservation Parks District with assistance from a SC State Conservation Bank Grant. The property is in the planning stages to be improved and used for publicly accessible outdoor recreation activities.



Lazenby Property

Funding Awarded: \$20,125

Council District: 3

This 70.40 acre property was historically used for agricultural production (beef cattle/hay fields/pasture). After years of overgrowth, the current owners are in the process of reclaiming the pastures to establish a 16-acre prairie to provide habitat for pollinator insects, butterflies, bobwhite quail, and a variety of songbirds. The property will remain private, but the land owners are considering guided access to the site for school trips or University-based research.



Thistle One

Funding Awarded: \$24,625

Council District: 2

This 46.81 acre property includes fields and wooded areas thick with pines and hardwoods, which provide habitat desirable to deer, turkey, quail, and songbirds. There is a 6.9-acre pond, classified as a wetland, which could be managed and used for recreational fishing. The property was purchased by the Bethel-Lake Wylie Land Acquisition and Preservation Parks District and is also in the planning stages to be opened to the public for outdoor recreation activities.

Pending Preservation Projects. The Commission received Statement of Interest applications for three additional projects, but the property owners have yet to move forward to complete the preservation process. All were considered favorably by the Commission.

Meeting Attendance

In 2021 the York County Forever Commission held seven regular scheduled meetings and one special called meeting. According to Section 32.56(D), any commission member who is absent from 50% or more of the meetings of the commission during any calendar year shall be deemed to have forfeited membership on the commission. Unfortunately, one commissioner was unable to meet the attendance requirement in 2021.

Commissioner	Meeting Attendance
District 1 – Nichol Druckemiller	7 of 8
District 2 – Vacant	-
District 3 – Donny Mitchell	5 of 8
District 4 – Ryan Murray	0 of 7
District 5 – Johnny Walker	7 of 8
District 6 – Lindsay Walker	8 of 8
District 7 – Creighton Hayes	8 of 8
Ex Officio (YCHC) – Carey Tilley	8 of 8
Ex Officio (NFLT) – Steve Hamilton	8 of 8



Long-serving chairman Lindsay Walker was recognized at the October meeting by the commission members and staff for his dedicated service to the people of York County. Pictured left to right, Carey Tilley (ex-officio), Steve Hamilton (ex-officio), Nichol Druckemiller (District 1), Ron Parks (District 6 – elect), Lindsay Walker (District 6), Diane Dil (York County Planning Manager), Johnny Walker (District 7), Creighton Hayes (District 7), Trish DeHond (York County Open Space Planner, YCF staff liaison). *Photo credit: Linda Y. Walker*

Looking Forward

2021 was a very active year for York County Forever. A few of the projects started in 2021 will reach completion in 2022. With the establishment and efforts of the Bethel-Lake Wylie Land Acquisition and Preservation Parks District, we anticipate even more successes in 2022.

The Commission and staff plan to develop and implement an ambitious branding and marketing plan, which may include a new logo, a resurrected newsletter, and a public-speaking series. With a change in leadership and many new members, it will be very important to encourage an actively participating Commission membership.

Cover photo: With the assistance of the York County Forever Commission, Cotton Hills Farm was placed in a conservation easement in 2007 by the Abell and Wilson families, which will play an important role in keeping it a farm forever.