

SCDNR's Urban Outreach Program



Conservation at a Local Level



Anna Huckabee Smith

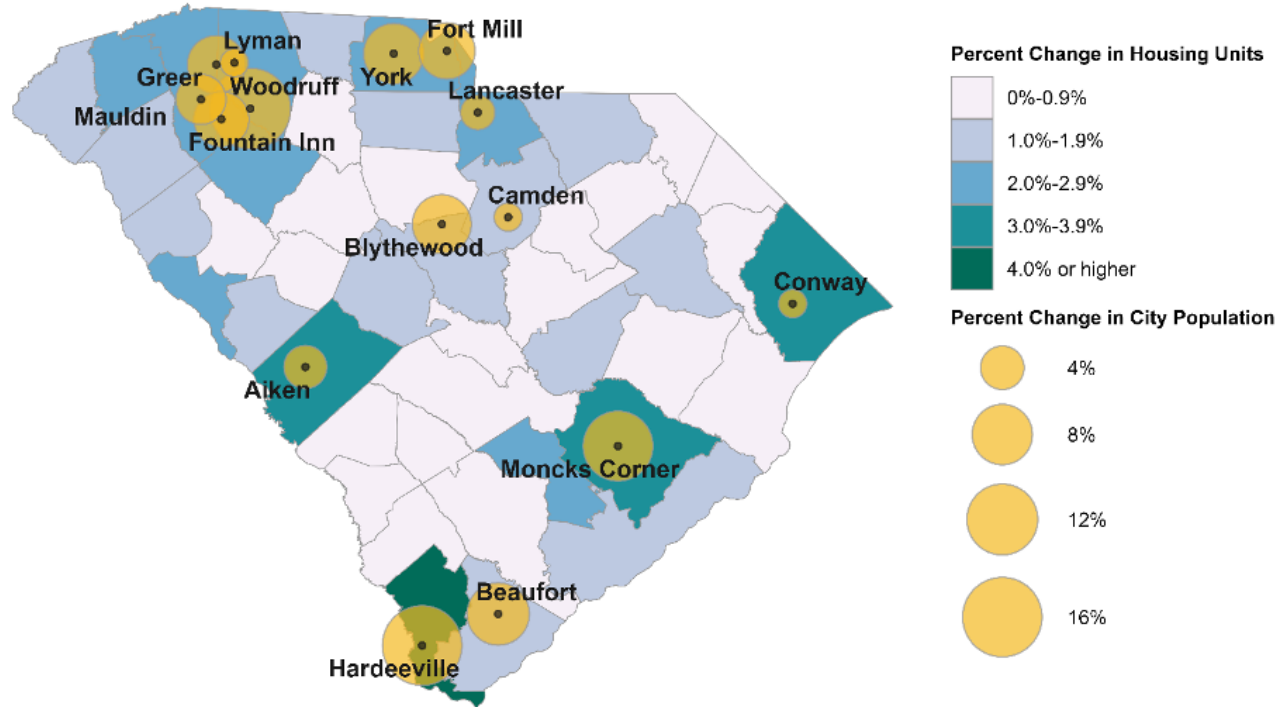
Director of Conservation Grants &
Strategic Outreach



"Fastest Growing State in the Nation"

Population and Housing Growth, July 2024 - July 2025

Housing development is strongest in the counties containing South Carolina's fastest growing municipalities.



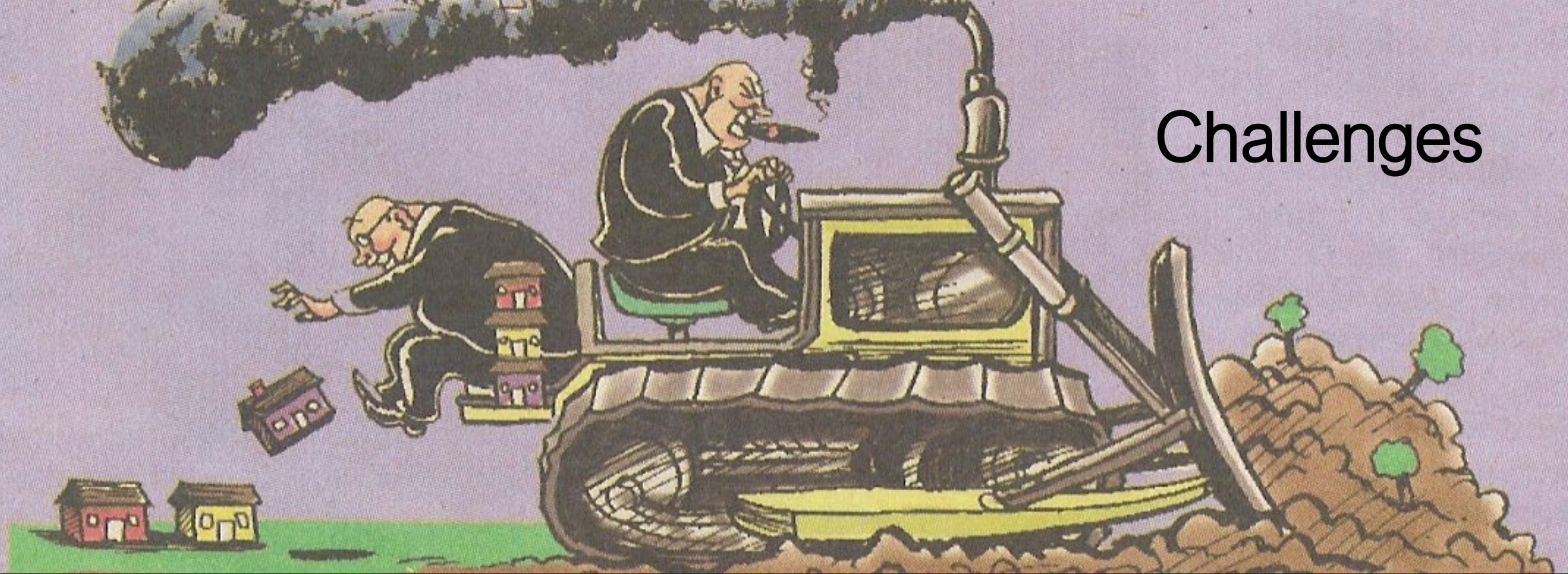
Source: U.S. Census Bureau



Slide graphic courtesy of Stewart, Hammer, and Radeloff (USDA & Univ. of Wisconsin, Madison)

POPULATION GROWTH & LAND CONVERSION

Challenges



- Poorly planned development resulting in habitat loss and/or fragmentation
- Water quality impacts from pollutants and siltation; flooded structures
- Spread of invasive species (purposeful planting or creep into natural areas)
- Marsh migration from sea level rise is halted by development



HERITAGE PRESERVE
Conway, SC



TUPELO FOREST
Mount Pleasant, SC



OAK FOREST VILLAGE
(and golf course)
Summerville, SC



Economic drivers in SC are natural resource-based!

- Forestry contributes \$23.2 B
- Agriculture contributes \$28.6 B
- Tourism contributes \$31 B



Scenic Rivers



Silviculture



Prothonotary Warbler
(SC's State Migratory Bird)



Scuba diving
SC's reefs



Boating & camping at
Capers Island HP



Hiking and birdwatching



Farming



Urban Outreach Program Mission



CONSERVE HIGH QUALITY LANDS – Identify existing high priority undeveloped areas within county jurisdictions and work with officials to conserve them to meet SCDNR's and the Governor's Initiative to protect wildlife habitat and culturally significant landscapes, adding to the State's portfolio of protected lands.



ENHANCE MUNICIPAL PLANNING DOCUMENTS – Work with municipal governments to enhance their required comprehensive plans, ordinances, and zoning to better reflect “smart growth” strategies and create green and blue space for wildlife, bridging gaps in the landscape for species dispersal.



PROVIDE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH ON URBAN WILDLIFE ISSUES – Provide proactive education and messaging on “living with wildlife” to citizen groups and municipal leaders on backyard habitat creation and other campaigns to provide urban/suburban habitat for wildlife and decrease “nuisance wildlife” issues.

- Conducting **listening sessions** with County Administrators, Council of Governments, Planning Departments, and Greenbelt Advisory Committees to check progress and needs
- Director meeting with **community leaders** (e.g. Rotary Clubs)
- **Sharing resources** (maps, data, decision support tools, links to services, etc.) for improved conservation planning; **connect mentors** to counties and municipalities
- Reviewing comprehensive / land use plans and **providing recommendations**; ordinance language; utilizing conservation subdivision design principles; **liaison** to other agencies
- Encouraging counties to seek conservation and **green growth funding options** (e.g. greenbelt tax initiatives, grants)
- Recognizing and **celebrating** successful conservation initiatives & acreage protected



Land Use
Planning



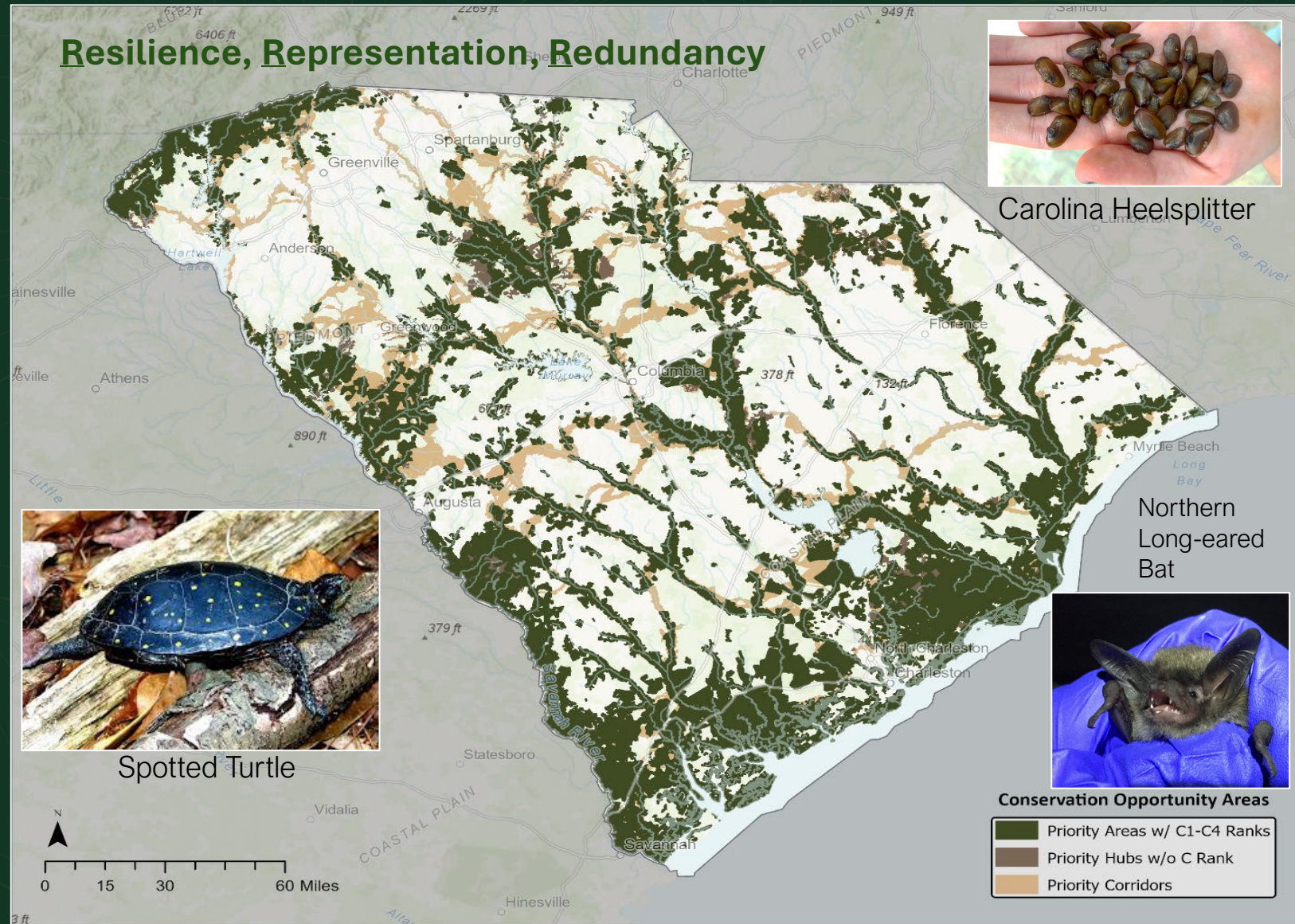
Passive Park
Planning

SC's State Wildlife Action Plan & Supplemental Volume

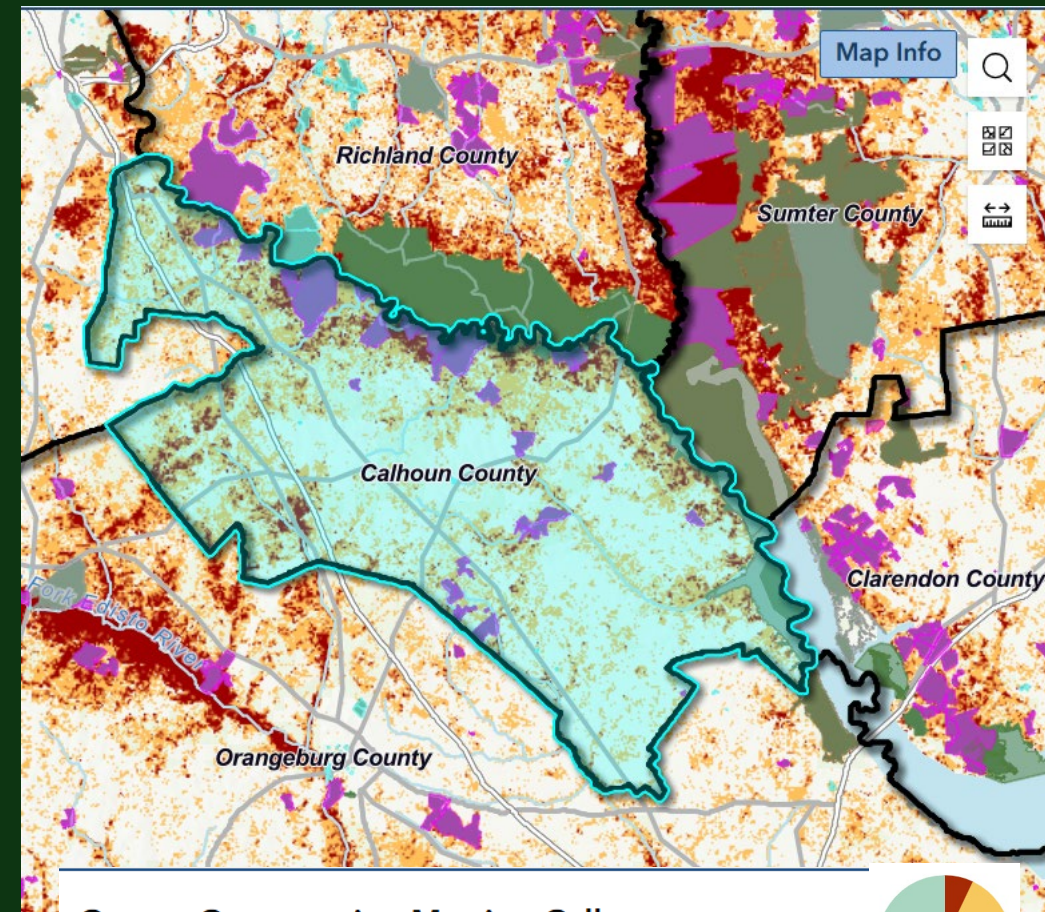
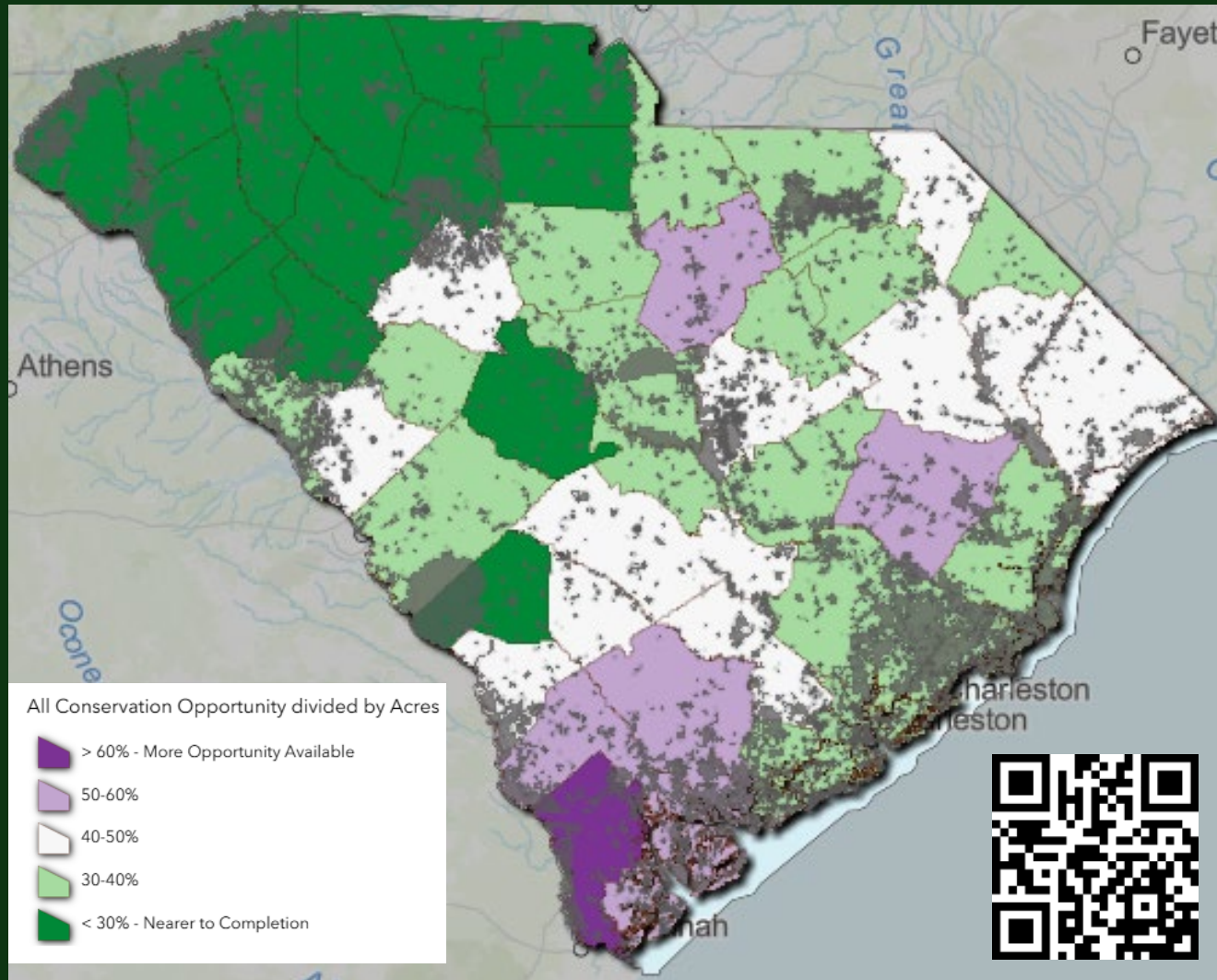
Conserving Biodiversity



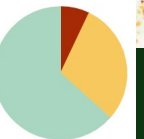
1,772 native species of conservation concern across 16 taxa groups



McMaster Land Conservation Plan



County Conservation Metrics: Calhoun



The South Carolina Conservation Bank has determined that **Calhoun** has approximately **17,779 acres** of high priority conservation areas, and **74,240 acres** of moderate priority conservation areas. (92,018 acres total)*

[Find out more about the model.](#)

This constitutes about **37%** of the county's land (7% high, 30% moderate).

Conserving these lands would bring the state **1.36 % closer** to the goal of preserving 10 million acres.

Suggestions Received



- Create a State agency **flowchart**
- Obtain a **list of all plans** and their revision timelines in preparation to review
- Create a **plan template** for all to use moving forward that covers all conservation requirements including resilience planning
- Create county- or municipality-specific **informational packets** with tools and resources
- Provide **technical input** to plans
- Provide **continuing education** to county and municipal planning staff – sharing and using the science
- Encourage the incorporation of **ambassador species** as catalysts for ecotourism and conservation messaging (e.g. Snappy Sync Fireflies)
- **Present/advertise** this urban initiative to SCAPA, SC Home Builders Assoc., SC Association of Counties, and others ; have a learning **booth**

“...ultimately, the future viability of every species depends on the extent, configuration, and quality of its habitat.” - Noss et al. 2021

Thank you.



Marbled Salamander