

# The Nalley Brown Nature Park

As the Upstate of South Carolina becomes increasingly urbanized and its wild lands become smaller and less biologically intact, it compels us to have the foresight and wisdom to actively conserve and restore our natural heritage. In doing so, these lands will become keystones of our communities, offering green sanctuaries from our hectic, urbanized lives while providing an educational resource for future generations. Nalley Brown Nature Park is poised to become the green oasis for the city of Easley, as well as Pickens County, by providing opportunities for retreat, discovery, wonder, and education. The vision as set forth by Catherine Ladnier and the Nalley Brown Nature Park Advisory Board is for this nature park to serve the citizens and children of the community as a place where nature, education, and people come together in a unique and shared manner. Through this master plan, the art and science of ecology and ecological restoration shall be brought forth in such a manner as to ensure that future generations have that special place within the urban footprint.

Nalley Brown Nature Park, at the junction of SC Highway 135 and Adger Road in Easley, South Carolina, exhibits topography typical of the Piedmont of South Carolina with rolling hills, meandering streams, clay soils, and bad examples of past agricultural practices. At Nalley Brown Nature Park, we are presented with a landscape that consists of degraded areas, as well as areas where time and natural processes have healed old scars. Historically, the Piedmont region prior to European settlements consisted of mixed hardwood and pine forests interspersed by open savannas and prairie meadows. Fire was a major component in maintaining the open character of the Piedmont landscape due to frequent lightning strikes and Native Americans burning to flush game. As Europeans settled the region fire played less of a role in maintaining the open character of the landscape and fire dependent plant communities began to decline. The advent of cotton farming coupled with poor agricultural practices, led to increased erosion, a decline in soil health and ultimately the degraded landscape visible today. At Nalley Brown Nature Park a unique opportunity exists to showcase the plant communities indigenous to the region such as Piedmont prairies, granitic outcrops and mature forest with climax species. The combination of conservation and ecological restoration shall provide a glimpse back in time, as well as an opportunity to develop and study Piedmont eco-types.

A conservation easement held by Upstate Forever directs and protects any future development on the site. The design concept for Nalley Brown Nature Park, as guided by the conservation easement, is based upon the premise of providing the finest quality habitats for education and recreation in a natural, safe, and sustainable setting. As thus the master plan for all facilities and grounds shall meet or exceed LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) requirements. Important criteria of sustainable site design include the use of pervious paving materials for walk and drive surfaces, bog gardens and rain gardens to mitigate stormwater runoff and cisterns to harvest and store rainwater. The education center shall be a sustainable, state-of-the-art facility that complies with LEED criteria. The design elements are intended not only make Nalley Brown Nature Park functional within the environment but also to provide an educational experience as well.

The visions and design concepts as set forth in this master plan follow the premise that Nalley Brown Nature Park a unique opportunity to create a legacy of stewardship. The purpose of this master plan is greater than just the pretty picture; its true purpose and intent serve to lay the foundations for building a relationship with the land, to build upon an understanding that we are biological citizens of this world, and that which we leave behind for future generations matters and matters now.