

# Calhoun County Comprehensive Plan

## *Natural Resources*

JULY 20, 2023

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING



# Today's Meeting

- ▶ Natural Resources Overview
  - ▶ *Slide show*
- ▶ Resiliency and Disaster Recovery
  - ▶ *Handout and discussion*

# Comprehensive Plan Elements



## ▶ **Ten Elements**

- ▶ Population
- ▶ Housing
- ▶ Land Use
- ▶ **Natural Resources**
- ▶ Cultural Resources
- ▶ Community Facilities
- ▶ Transportation
- ▶ Economic Development
- ▶ **Resiliency (ability to survive, adapt, and grow despite “acute shocks” and “chronic stress”)**
- ▶ Priority Investment

# Natural Resources

- ▶ Land
- ▶ Water
- ▶ Wildlife and Plant Life
- ▶ Air
- ▶ Minerals



# Land Resources

## ▶ **Farmland**

- ▶ 480 Farms, 148,000 acres (231 square miles)
  - ▶ Farms are 54% crop land, 39% woodland, 3% pasture
  - ▶ Crop land is 31% of the county's land area
- ▶ Farm acreage increased 26% from 2012 to 2017
- ▶ 2022 Census of Agriculture will be released in 2024

# Land Resources

## ▶ **Farm Products**

- ▶ Farms produce \$81 million in sales per year
  - ▶ Crops 73%, livestock 27% of sales
  - ▶ Ranks 16<sup>th</sup> in the state in total farm production
  - ▶ Ranks 5<sup>th</sup> in the state in crop production
- ▶ Crops -- \$59 million
  - ▶ Cotton 36%, peanuts 21%, corn 15% of total crop land
- ▶ Livestock – \$22 million
  - ▶ 93% poultry and eggs
  - ▶ 925,000 birds, 3,600 cows, 4,700 hogs

# Land Resources

## ▶ **Forests**

- ▶ 171,454 acres, 66% of the county's land area
- ▶ South Carolina's forest products industry is a \$21 billion industry; county details not available
- ▶ SC Forestry Commission's Forest Action Plan provides great detail about the use, management and challenges of the state's forests
- ▶ Good forest management is critical for protecting water quality, and for wild life and plant life diversity

# Land Resources

## ▶ **Forest Management and Priorities**

- ▶ Threats to forest are pests, wildfire, development
  - ▶ Fragmentation and parcelization
- ▶ SC Forestry Commission Priorities
  - ▶ Conserving working forests
  - ▶ Protecting forests from harm
  - ▶ Enhancing Public Benefits from forests



# Tracts by acreage

**Legend**

**Road Type**

- ..... Private
- - - County Maint
- - - County Road
- State Road
- SC Highway
- US Route
- Frontage
- Interstate
- + + Railroad

**Flood Zone**

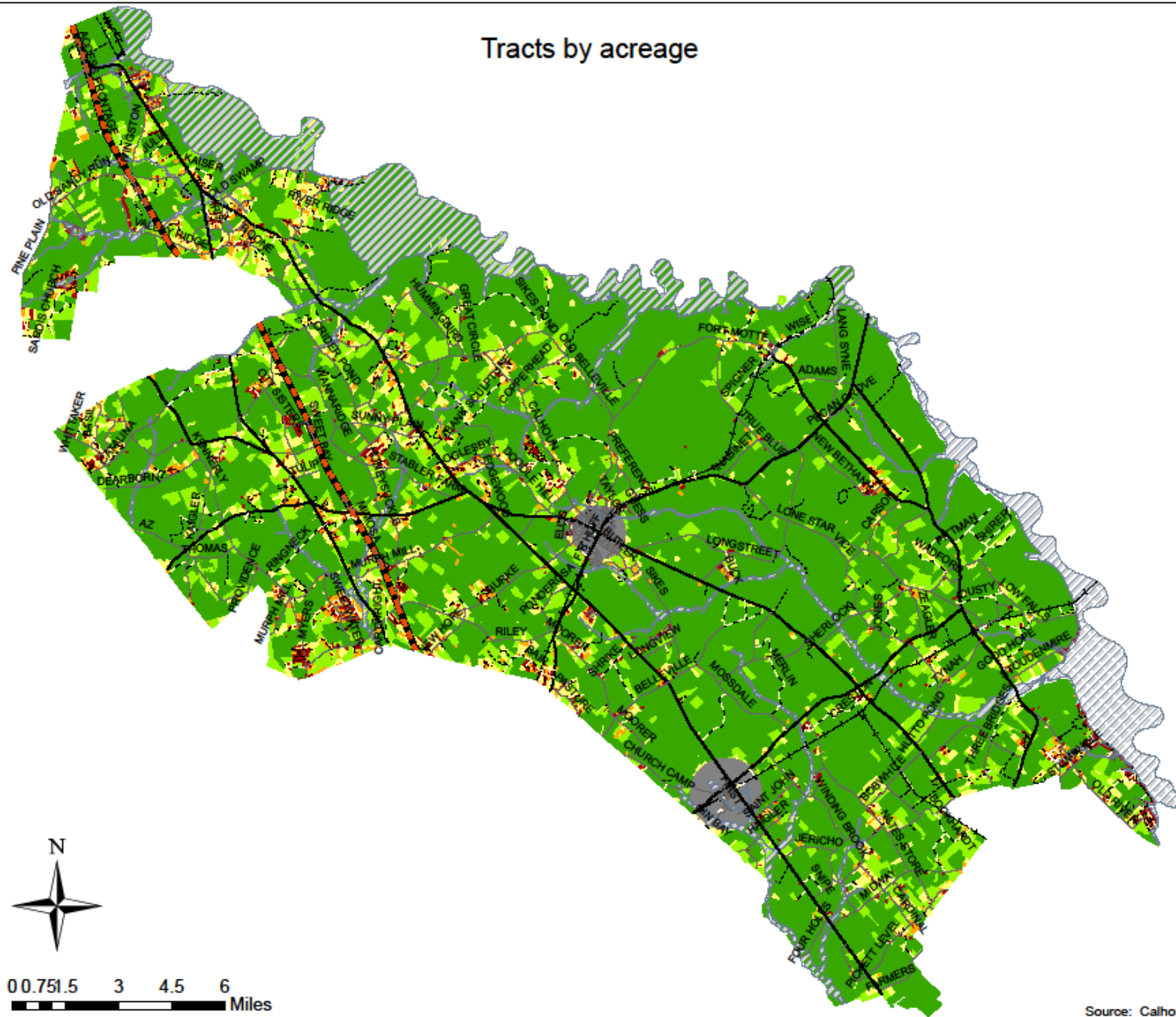
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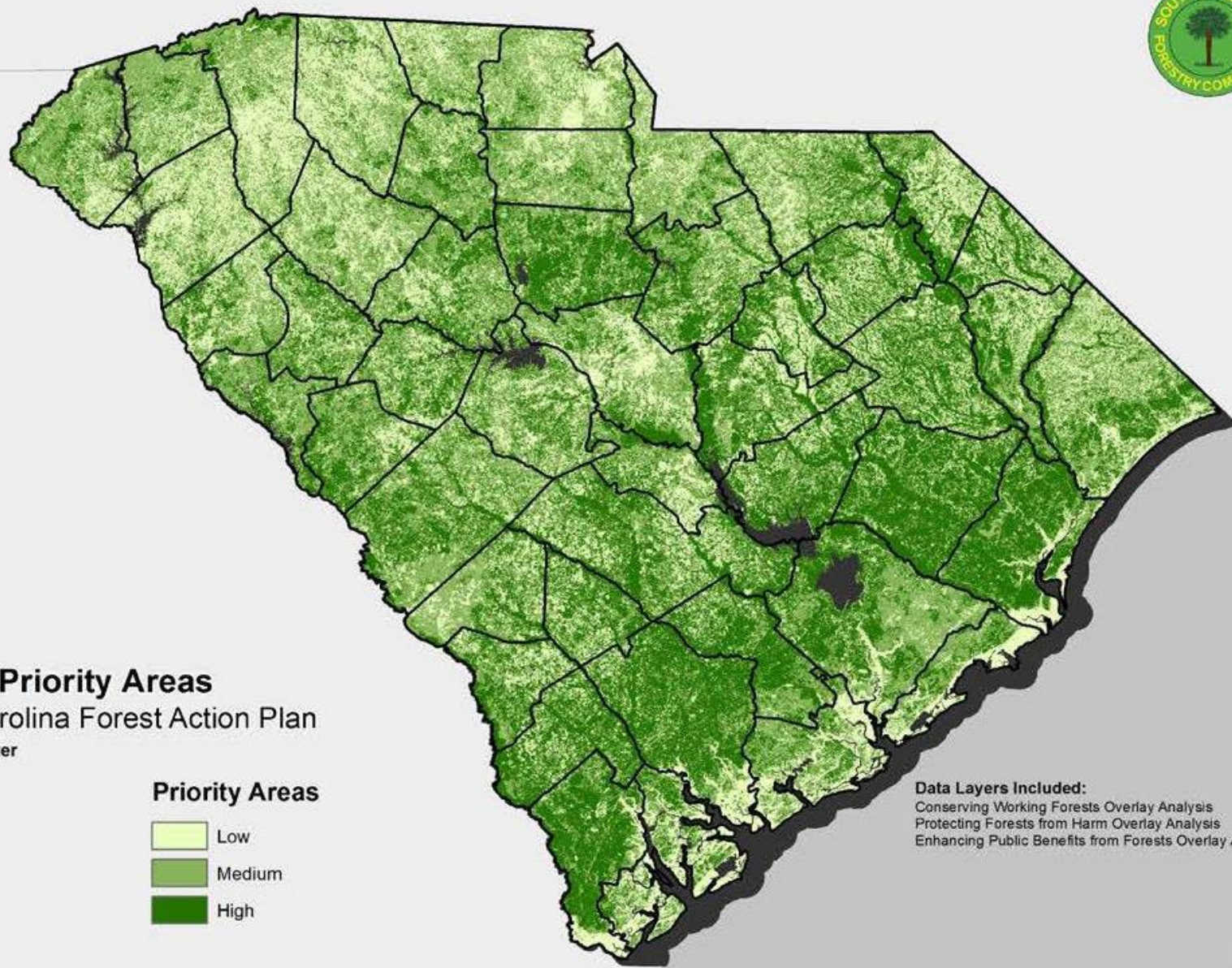
- ▨ A
- ▨ AE
- Municipal Boundary

**Tax Parcels**

**Acres**

- 0.01 - 2.0
- 2.01 - 5.0
- 5.01 - 15.0
- 15.01 - 40.0
- 40.01 - 2918.7





**Overall Priority Areas**  
South Carolina Forest Action Plan  
Excluding Water

**Priority Areas**



**Data Layers Included:**  
Conserving Working Forests Overlay Analysis  
Protecting Forests from Harm Overlay Analysis  
Enhancing Public Benefits from Forests Overlay Analysis

DISCLAIMER: This is a product of the South Carolina Forestry Commission GIS Department. Reasonable efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy of this map. The SCFC expressly disclaims responsibility for damages or liability that may arise from the use of this map.



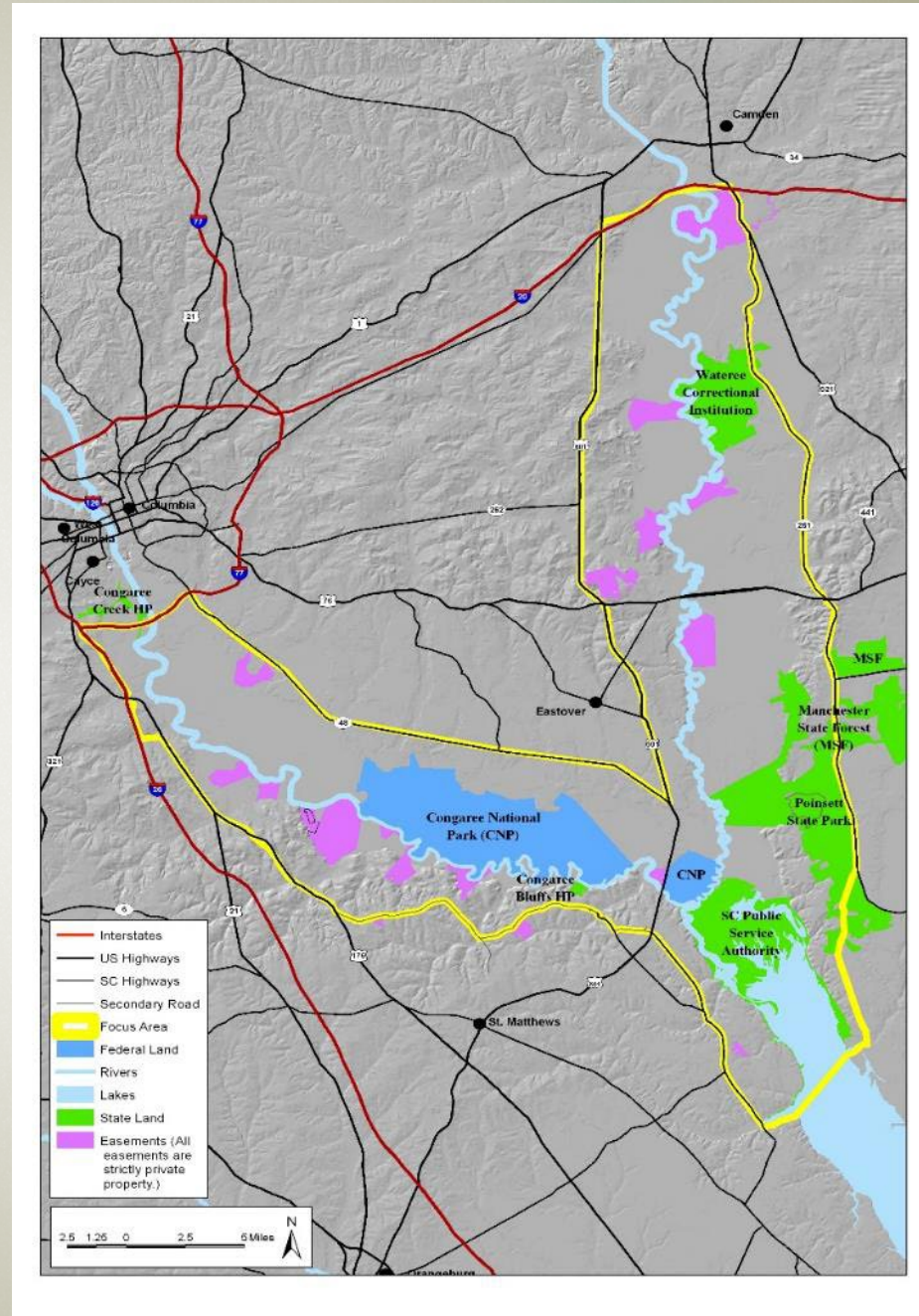
# Land Resources

## ▶ **Forest Management Initiatives**

- ▶ Restoration of Longleaf Pine forest and Longleaf Pine Savannas
  - ▶ Prescribed burning
  - ▶ Thinning
  - ▶ Restoring native grasses and forbs
- ▶ Protection of bottomland hardwood forests
- ▶ Early successional forests
  - ▶ Manage and promote critical habitat
  - ▶ “Indicator species” like bobwhite quail

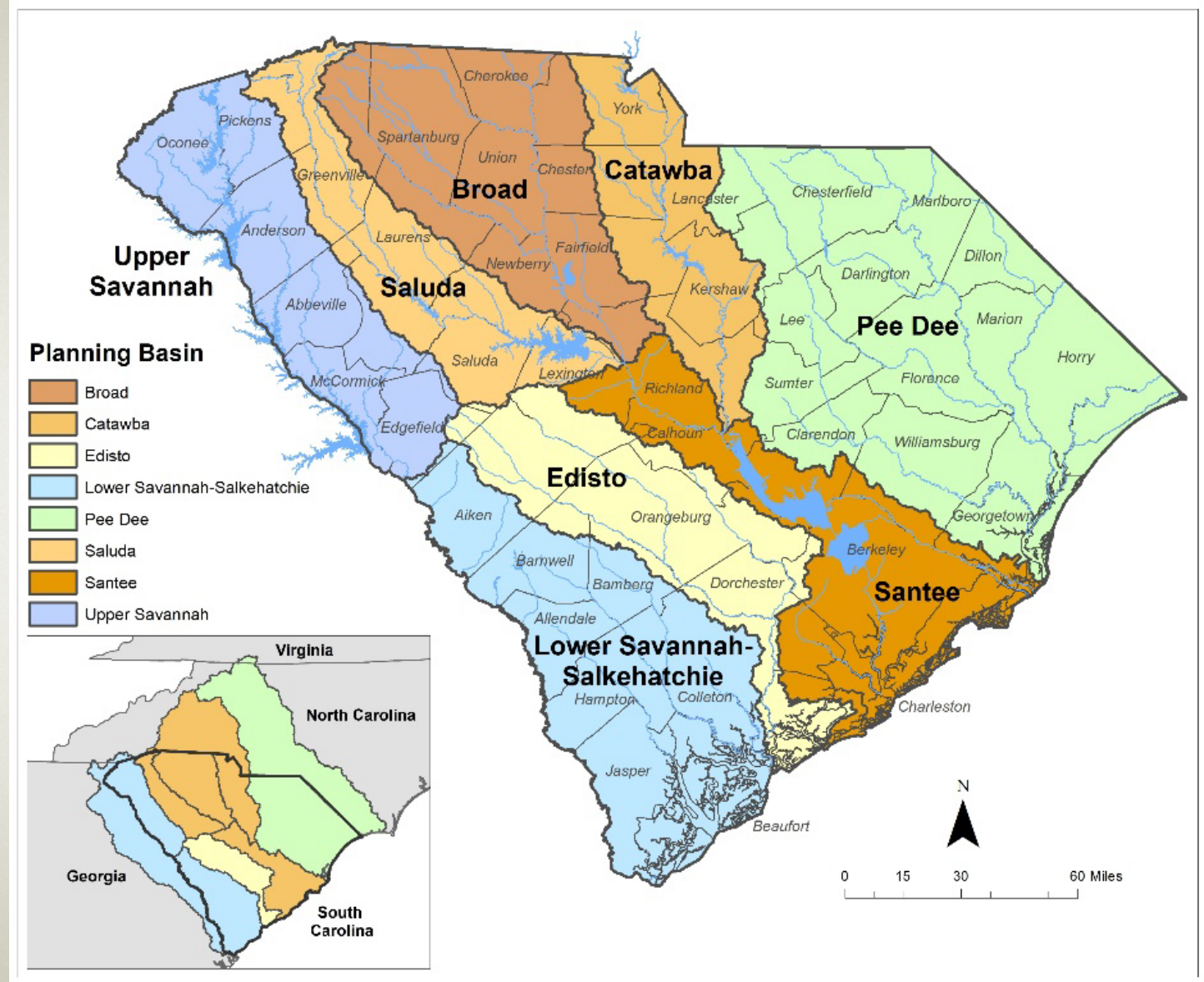
# Water Resources

- ▶ “Cowasee Basin” of the Congaree, Wateree, and upper Santee Rivers
- ▶ Wildlife and plant diversity
- ▶ Existing protected areas
- ▶ Congaree National Park



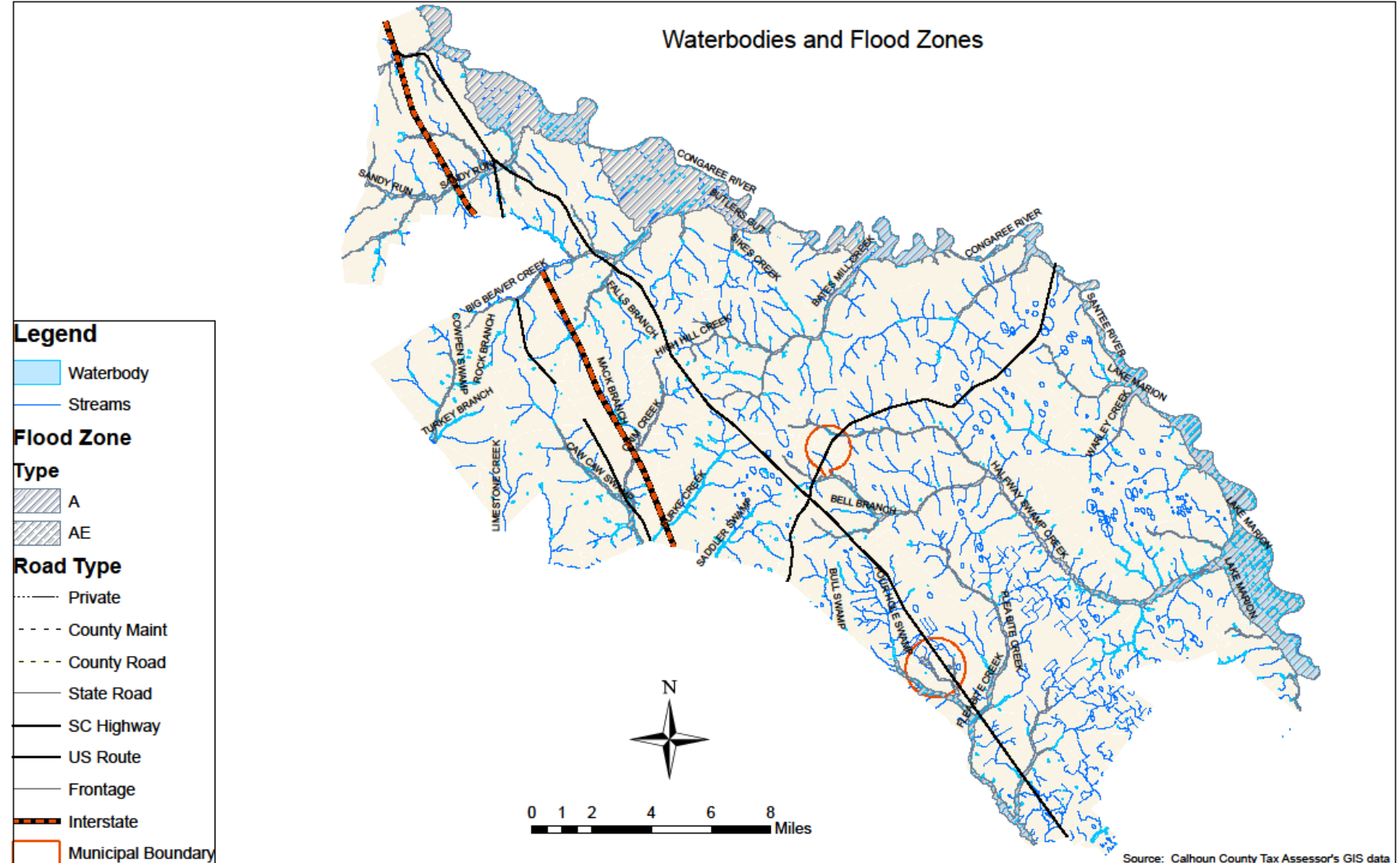
# Water Resources

- ▶ River Basins
  - ▶ Edisto
  - ▶ Santee
- ▶ SCDNR Edisto River Basin Plan completed
- ▶ Santee River Basin Plan -- future



# Water Resources

- ▶ Rivers
- ▶ Creeks
- ▶ Lakes
- ▶ Floodplains
- ▶ Wetlands
- ▶ Aquifers



# Wildlife and Plant Life

- ▶ SCDNR “tracks” 82 species in Calhoun County
  - ▶ Six are Endangered, Threatened or At-Risk
  - ▶ Six are covered by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act
  - ▶ 70 are “Indicator” species of habitat conditions

# Endangered

- ▶ Shortnose Sturgeon
- ▶ Red Cockaded Woodpecker
- ▶ Wood Stork (state endangered, federally threatened)
- ▶ Tri-colored Bat (proposed federally endangered)





# Threatened or At-Risk



- ▶ Bald Eagle (state threatened)
- ▶ Chamberlain's Dwarf Salamander



# Migratory Bird Treaty Act

- ▶ Anhinga
- ▶ Great Egret
- ▶ Great Blue Heron
- ▶ Snowy Egret
- ▶ Black and White Warbler
- ▶ Painted Bunting



# Conservation Initiatives

- ▶ Congaree Biosphere
  - ▶ Focused around Congaree National Park
  - ▶ Voluntary, cooperative effort
- ▶ Congaree Land Trust, Ducks Unlimited, USDA Wetlands Reserve Program
  - ▶ Voluntary conservation easements by private land owners
- ▶ SCDNR Cowasee Basin
  - ▶ Collaboration with private landowners to protect the basin

# Issues

- ▶ Balancing farmland and working forest preservation with property rights and economic development
  - ▶ Suburban development
  - ▶ Solar installations
- ▶ Groundwater conservation and protection
  - ▶ SCDNR water models indicate future risk of low water levels in Crouch Branch Aquifer in central Calhoun County
  - ▶ Collaborate with state agencies to protect wellheads and aquifer recharge areas
- ▶ Stewardship
  - ▶ Forest management
  - ▶ Habitat management
  - ▶ Ecotourism and Agritourism development

# Comments, Questions and Discussion

- ▶ John Gardner, Gardner Planning Services
- ▶ [Johngardner.1962@gmail.com](mailto:Johngardner.1962@gmail.com)
- ▶ Richard Hall, Deputy County Administrator
- ▶ [rhall@calhouncounty.sc.gov](mailto:rhall@calhouncounty.sc.gov)