



The Lowcountry Conservation Loan Fund



The Lowcountry Conservation Loan Fund was started in 2002 by the Merck Family Fund and the Donnelly Foundation with an initial \$1 million investment. It was established as a revolving loan fund for organizations to tap into when they need bridge financing to close land deals for conservation, which is critical in the Lowcountry of South Carolina, where there is such a competitive real estate market.

Applications are accepted on an ongoing basis from organizations working to acquire land for conservation. Requests are considered as outstanding loans are repaid and funds become available.

IMPACT

The Fund provides affordable financing when land costs might otherwise prevent conservation, with lending at half the prime rate of interest. For example, when the Angel Oak property — the site of one of the oldest and most historic live oak trees in the region — was at risk of being developed on Johns Island, the groups working to conserve it were able to close on the purchase in 2013 and place it in an easement using funds from the Conservation Loan Fund.

\$8.4 million loaned

20 conservation projects supported

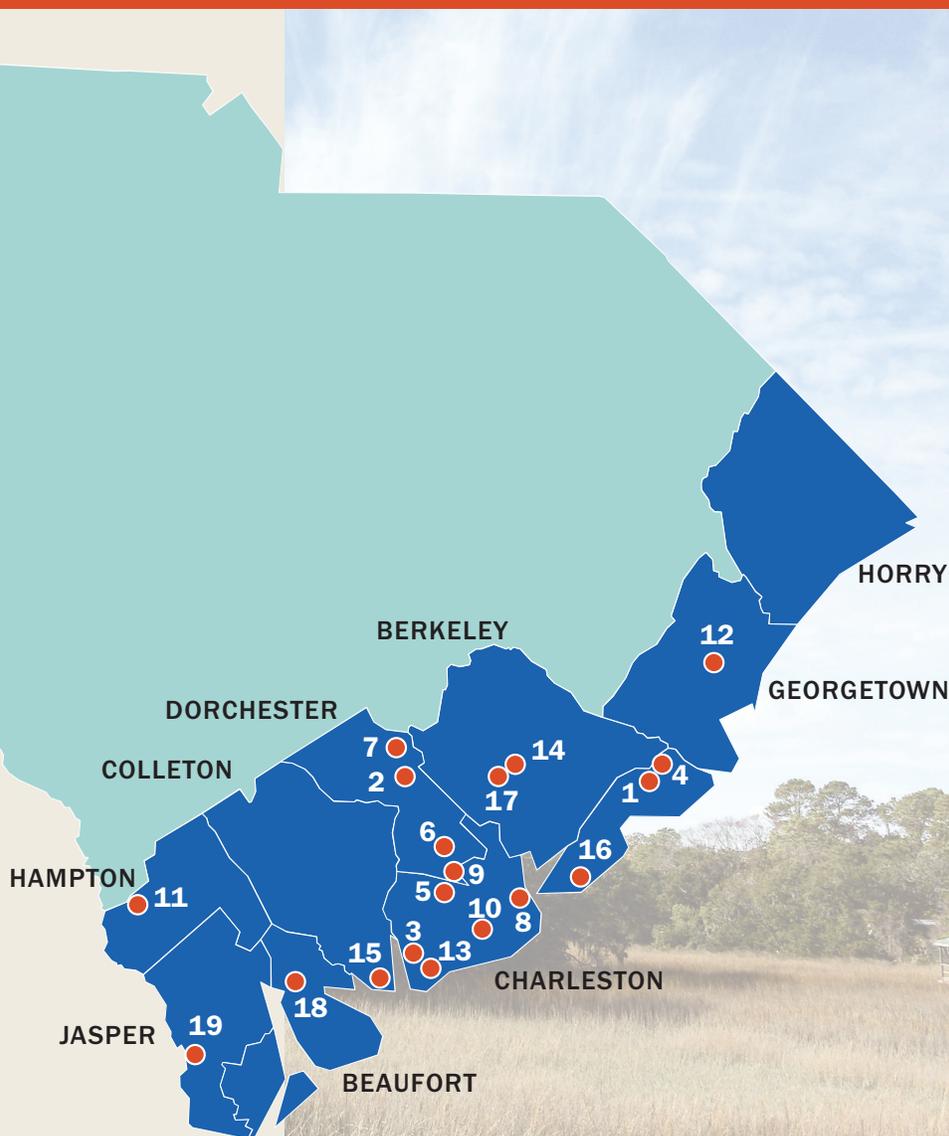
20,700+ acres of Lowcountry lands conserved, about the same size as the city of Greenville

Worth \$44.5 million in market value



The Lowcountry Conservation Loan Fund Projects

- 1. Flynn Tract**
28 acres, 2003 | The Nature Conservancy
- 2. Mizell Tract**
909 acres, 2004 | Audubon SC
- 3. Cedar Hall Tract**
24 acres, 2005 | Edisto Open Land Trust
- 4. Mead Tract**
100 acres, 2006 | The Nature Conservancy
- 5. Poplar Grove**
3,100 acres, 2007 | Ducks Unlimited, Inc.
- 6. Bacon's Bridge Tract**
63 acres, 2008 | Lowcountry Open Land Trust
- 7. Weeks Tract**
51 acres, 2010 | Audubon SC
- 8. GrowFood SC**
1 acre, 2011 | Coastal Conservation League
- 9. Middleton Easement**
2,023 acres, 2011 | The Conservation Fund
- 10. Angel Oak Preserve**
17 acres, 2013 | Lowcountry Open Land Trust
- 11. Westervelt Tracts**
12,418 acres, 2015 | The Nature Conservancy
- 12. Plantersville Scenic Byway**
1 acre, 2016 | Coastal Conservation League
- 13. Hutchinson House**
10 acres, 2016 | Edisto Open Land Trust
- 14. Fort Fair Lawn Preserve**
80 acres, 2016 | Lord Berkeley Conservation Trust
- 15. Fenwick Island**
6 acres, 2017 | Lacuna, Inc.
- 16. Crab Bank Island**
80 acres, 2018 | Lacuna, Inc.
- 17. Lewisfield Plantation**
597 acres, 2018 | Open Space Institute
- 18. Paragon Tract**
149 acres, 2020 | Lacuna, Inc.
- 19. Meyer Lake**
974 acres, 2020 | Lowcountry Open Land Trust



Get in touch

If you'd like to learn more about conservation loan funding, contact Tess Martin at tess@coastalcommunityfoundation.org.