Carol and John Kososki have spent their professional lives working for a healthier South Carolina and their free time enjoying it! After a career in state government, Carol now represents Richland County District 8 on the Richland County Conservation Commission. She is a founding member of the Friends of Congaree Swamp and a board member of Gills Creek Watershed Association. In 2005 she hosted the Common Agenda, which brings together 40 organizations representing thousands of citizens. Her volunteer action teams help design and run our campaigns. Please contact our office if you’d like to get involved.

“...We value the work of Conservation Voters and believe the luncheon is a great way to celebrate our environmental values. It raises awareness of the good work accomplished by our partnership with elected leaders and private sector partners. We do they contribute to the Green Tie Award Luncheon? Explains Carol, "We value the work of Conservation Voters and believe the luncheon is a great way to celebrate our environmental values. It raises awareness of the good work accomplished by our partnership with elected leaders and the public.”

**Events & Activities**

We owe our success to hundreds of you standing up for a clean, vibrant South Carolina.

How can you help? The summer and fall months provide a great opportunity to meet directly with your legislators in their home districts. Please contact our office if you’d like to join our in-district visits.

Interested in a clean energy future? How about protecting our air, land and water? Since 2007, we have hosted the Common Agenda, which brings together 40 organizations representing thousands of citizens. Our volunteer action teams help design and run our campaigns. Please contact our office if you’d like to get involved.

**Calendar**

**September 21**  
Our Third Annual Green Tie Award Luncheon! 11:30-1:30 p.m. at Historic 701 Whaley Building. Contact Suzie Sale for tickets: suzi@cvsc.org

**October 7**  
Come join us for our Common Agenda Fall Meeting! 10:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. the University of South Carolina Greens Quad.

**November 6-7**  
Our Eco-Leaders Retreat takes place each year at beautiful Camp St. Christopher on Scapebrook Island. Email Debbie Parker for details: debbie@cvsc.org

**Education. Accountability. Results.**

Let’s Renew Our Schools!

With generous support from the Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation, Conservation Voters of South Carolina Education Fund is pleased to announce the launch of a bold campaign to help green our schools.

When you consider that every day, one in five Americans goes to school – whether as a student, teacher, staff, or administrator – we have a great opportunity to create healthier futures for South Carolinians.

Students at Orchard Park Elementary in Fort Mill (York Four) have set up an ambitious recycling program, placing collection bins throughout the school. The project gained from the sale of items like used oil pans and printer cartridges go to help fund an energy efficiency pilot project at the school.

Some new schools in South Carolina are being built to Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards. Our own homeowners (and growing) Green Steps Program (www.greenstepschools.com) includes dozens of South Carolina schools conducting classroom projects promoting campus gardens, recycling, improved air quality, and habitat restoration.

Over the next two years we’ll be working with Green Steps and other allies to make our South Carolina schools – whatever their team colors – go green!

When did you know that South Carolina school districts paid an energy tab of over $138 million in 2008? Greening our schools is a win for taxpayers too.

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Hundreds gather in Columbia to lobby at the State House!

What makes South Carolina special? Who would have thought at the beginning of the legislative session that we would not only save the Conservation Bank, but help add another $2.2 million in funding? Governor Haley’s veto would not only have the Bank permanently, she would have broken the state’s word with South Carolinians who have already agreed to protect their land for future generations. Recognizing that no state agency does more to protect the precious cultural and natural landmarks that bring visitors to our state, the General Assembly overwhelmingly overrode her veto.

What work remains? The Bank is set to end or “sunset” in 2013. H.3083, which passed in the House, extends the Bank’s life to 2023. This bill now sits in the Senate Finance Committee. We will ask that our Senators pass this important bill early in the 2012 session.

Let’s Not Waste an Opportunity! Together with our allies in the business community, conservationists are ready to “deal the deal” to create thousands of jobs in recycling. Senator Ray Cleary’s Alcoholic Beverage Container (ABC) Bill helps guarantee a steady stream of materials for recycling companies and reduces the waste we send to landfills. The ABC Bill was passed out of the Senate in the last week of the session and has been assigned to the House Agriculture Committee. We hope the House moves quickly and supports this jobs-creating legislation!

A Brighter Energy Future

We also made great strides with our allies in the solar business community. The Solar Tax Credit Bill H.3346, which passed overwhelmingly in the House, establishes a 35 percent state tax credit for both residential and commercial solar projects. Right now, both North Carolina and Georgia have more generous tax credits and consequently are creating thousands of new jobs in the solar industry. It’s now the Senate’s turn to promote a clean, energy independent future for South Carolina.

Protecting Clean Water

Two bills essential for preserving clean water got caught in a legislative lull on the last day of the session. H.3470, Representative Mike Pitts’ Phosphate Bill, prohibits the manufacture of phosphorous detergents containing phosphates, a harmful and unnecessary nutrient that kills fish and lowers lakewater transparency values. Similarly, H.3617 – the Chronic Sewage Polluter Bill – requires wastewater utility owners invest in their farming and forestry businesses.

Whether by promoting nature-based tourism, local food markets, or small business entrepreneurship, this coalition is dedicated to reversing a trend that has seen our natural resource wealth exported to other states and nations where goods are processed and then resold to South Carolinians. For example, South Carolinians currently spend at least $7 billion on food with less than 10 percent originating on South Carolina farms. Simply doubling the amount of produce and livestock we consume locally would generate millions in revenues and create thousands of jobs.

How do we get there? Building wealth from within means looking at the whole picture and thinking outside the box. It also means reaching across longstanding divisions to find common ground on an integrated, long-term approach to economic development. By examining what works – and what hasn’t – in rural communities, our coalition is offering a plan that builds the past and gives our rural communities a new and stable future.

Transitions at Conservation Voters

One of our state’s conservation leaders also happens to know something about building and real estate. Earlier this year, Charles Lane, who has helped conserve thousands of acres in the ACE river basin, told a gathering in Columbia, “Our three most prosperous urban counties are home to 46 percent of all bank deposits, totaling nearly $28 billion. By contrast, our 11 most distressed rural counties have less than four percent of all deposits, only $2.6 billion.”

Thus, when we think about poverty in South Carolina, what matters most is not the difference between South Carolina and other states, but the difference between urban and rural communities within South Carolina itself.

Now, a diverse group of South Carolinians has joined forces to reshape the way our state approaches rural economic development. This alliance includes leaders from affordable housing, agriculture, community economic development, conservation, forestry, and tourism. Despite a wide spectrum of expertise, group members are motivated by one simple question: What if we envisioned building wealth from within?

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Billions in revenues and create thousands of jobs.

Auer Excavating is a member of the South Carolina Environmental Law Project who fought to protect our cherished Carolina Bays and the right of citizens to intervene when polluters break the law.

Two questions remain: will DHEC enforce our environmental protections; and will the General Assembly respect the very laws they pass to promote a healthy future for our state?

If recent events are any indication, we have cause for concern. There has been a concerted effort in recent months to roll back our environmental protections under the false claim that “regulations” are hindering businesses.

To offer just one example, a DNR restructuring bill (H.3049) by Representative Alan Clemmons would have moved DNR to the Governor’s Cabinet and relegated the DNR Board to an advisory role. For over a century, DNR has successfully protected our natural resources for hunting, fishing, outdoor recreation and tourism. Turning DNR into a sinecure would have harmed the agency’s effectiveness and independence. Thankfully, the bill died in an Agricultural subcommittee and we thank Representatives Ted Vick and Kenneth Hodges for voting against it.

Needless to say, working to defeat bad bills is perhaps the least appealing aspect of the work we do. Our organization would much rather be collaborating with our legislators to promote good bills that protect our natural resources and create jobs. Too often public officials present citizens with a false choice, arguing we can either protect the environment or create jobs.

Considering the fact that our state’s natural resources are responsible for $54 billion in annual economic impact and over 400,000 jobs, we have a responsibility – and an opportunity – to manage these resources wisely. Doing so is vital not only to environment our children will inherit, but the economic future they will create.

A Better Tomorrow...