'Crown of the Carolinas' highlights all that's good here

By Charles Sowell
Contributor

Ever wondered just what it is about this corner of South Carolina that makes it so special, but can't find a way to describe it? The DVD "Crown of the Carolinas" takes care of that with some original bluegrass thrown in that is as haunting as the visuals.

From the Enchanted Tree, where lovers met and proposed marriage in the 1800s, at present-day Falls Park in downtown Greenville to the splendor of the Jocassee Gorges, one of the 50 top environmental stops on the National Geographic's bucket list, the places and the people of the region are celebrated in visuals and song.

There is some amazing footage of peregrine falcons cavorting at Jumping Off Rock, stunning views of waterfalls in all seasons and stories told by Dennis Chastain, a naturalist and author, and Patrick McMillian, the Emmy Award-winning host of "Expeditions With Patrick McMillian."



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Former studio songwriter Bobby Holliday, 62, started on the project in 1998 as a way of answering folks who always thought of the coast when he told them he was from South Carolina. "When I would tell people I was from South Carolina, they would immediately think of Myrtle Beach, Hilton Head or Charleston. They would only associate the mountains with North Carolina, but this mountain goodness goes on beyond the borderlines. It seemed that the mountains of South Carolina were a very well-kept secret," he said.

The first stage was a tight body of music released on CD in 2005 that went on to become the theme song for the first six seasons of "Expeditions."

During the first promotional interview for the CD on the South Carolina public radio show "Your Day," the show's producer, Bob McAnally, heard about Holliday's desire to create a DVD to complement this collection of music. McAnally offered his services, and filming began in 2006.

"He talks about the places that I go hiking and backpacking," McAnally said. "His style of music is very laid-back, his love of the area is evident, and some of the stories that he had to tell are wonderful. I decided to do more with him and to document these areas from a video standpoint, and use it more as a teaching tool."

The video will be used in various way to promote Pickens and Oconee County tourism over the next few years, Holliday said. It is also for sale at various locations around the Upstate.

For more information and for places where the DVD is for sale, see crownofthecarolinas.org.