Sassafras Mountain project delayed

Weather to blame for construction setback

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A 360 degree view from atop South Carolina's tallest peak will not be available until 2017.

South Carolina Department of Natural Resources spokesman Greg Lucas said construction on the Sassafras Mountain tower is not likely to begin until the spring.

Natural Resources Department officials had hoped construction might start in September or October this year, but paperwork delays and the arrival of cold weather at the top of the 3,553-foot peak pushed the construction into 2017.

"It's looking like it will be early 2017 before it gets underway," Lucas said. "Concrete can't be poured up there once it gets cold, so realistically, it's looking like it will be spring 2017."

Private funding for the first phase of construction on the 15-foot tower was acquired in June. The first phase is scheduled to include the observation tower at the pinnacle of the mountain and restrooms.

The present wood platform, built less than 300 feet from the parking lot three years ago by Clemson University architectural students, will remain in place as an auxiliary deck. It provides a 120-degree view to the west, looking into North Carolina.

The 360-degree tower is expected to offer views of mountains in North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia.

Phase II of the project, which will require additional funding, is scheduled to include a picnic area, accessory trails, informational kiosks, educational pavilions, and improvements to the parking lot.

Sassafras Mountain sits on the South Carolina and North Carolina border, about 20 miles north of Pickens. It can be accessed by vehicle from the F. Van Clayton Highway in Sunset, and through the Foothills Trail, a 77-mile footpath between Table Rock and Oconee state parks.

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until spring



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Sassafras Mountain sits on the South Carolina and North Carolina border.