

Stumphouse park expansion opens

BY RILEY MORNINGSTAR
THE JOURNAL

WALHALLA — Phase two of the Stumphouse Mountain Bike Park is now open to the public.

Local officials and dignitaries gathered at the park on Tuesday afternoon to celebrate the 6-mile expansion, growing the park from 4 miles to 10.

Walhalla Mayor Danny Edwards cut the ceremonial ribbon at the event held in partnership with the Palmetto Conservation Foundation.

“Ten miles is going to bring a lot of more experienced riders, and it makes it a destination instead of just ‘Maybe I’ll go,’” Edwards

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SPECIAL TO THE JOURNAL

Walhalla Mayor Danny Edwards cuts the ribbon Tuesday celebrating a 7-mile expansion at the Stumphouse Mountain Bike Park.

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said. “I think this is just going to continue to build into something great. We’re fixing to start with Palmetto Conservation on the plan with the next 10 miles. This is just kind of getting things going.”

The first phase of the project opened in March 2018.

PCF interim executive director Mary Roe told The Journal the second phase will present more challenging elements for

experienced riders.

“The first part of Stumphouse is really for beginner to intermediate (riders), it’s something you go out with children to introduce to mountain biking. This phase two has a lot of elements and is going to be for those that really enjoy mountain biking,” Roe said. “It’s going to be a much more advanced kind of experience. There’s rock elements and bank elements and a lot of great mountain biking for that higher-end rider.

“It’s just adding a tremendous amount of outdoor recreation to the Walhalla community. Walhalla has embraced this because of the ability their residents have to come out and mountain bike and hike. We just saw a whole family head out into the woods, and it’s just a magnificent opportunity for this corridor of South Carolina.”

Roe said Oconee County

residents can expect to see more out-of-town tourists checking the trail out.

“You’re going to find the parking lot filled with license plates from North Carolina and Georgia,” she said. “People are going to travel to this. It’s a great experience for anyone who comes here and it is an economic driver for the community. Everyone recognizes that, and you have to appreciate that.”

S.C. Rep. Bill Whitmire, a former Walhalla mayor, said past city councils dreamed the Stumphouse area would grow into what it is today.

“This is the genesis of almost 25 years of work,” he said. “When I was on city council in Walhalla, we had the dream to open the tunnel back up. It’s just going to be a great boon not only for Walhalla, but all of Oconee County. I’m extremely excited. We can’t

wait to see what’s going to happen in the future.”

The trail addition offers “something for everybody,” State Sen. Thomas Alexander said.

“I think it’s great to celebrate this accomplishment and is a significant advancement of the trail. It provides another opportunity for people to come and enjoy Oconee County,” he said. “It’s vital to the people of Oconee County to have another outdoor experience for them to enjoy. ... I think the main thing is that it’s something for everybody.

The next phase of the trail doesn’t have a firm timeline, but will take the trail up to 20 miles.

Roe said phase two was funded through the South Carolina Recreation Trails Program and private funds.

She estimated the expansion to cost around \$130,000.