

# 'Just fantastic': Green Crescent Trail plans include expansion into Oconee

BY GREG OLIVER  
THE JOURNAL

WALHALLA — With Clemson, Central, Pendleton, Clemson University and Southern Wesleyan University already involved, Oconee County administrator Amanda Brock said recently that

plans are for the Green Crescent Trail to connect into the Golden Corner.

"Our request on the Oconee County side is approximately 7 miles coming from Clemson, and we did have two possible paths identified — one coming from Shiloh Road, which would connect

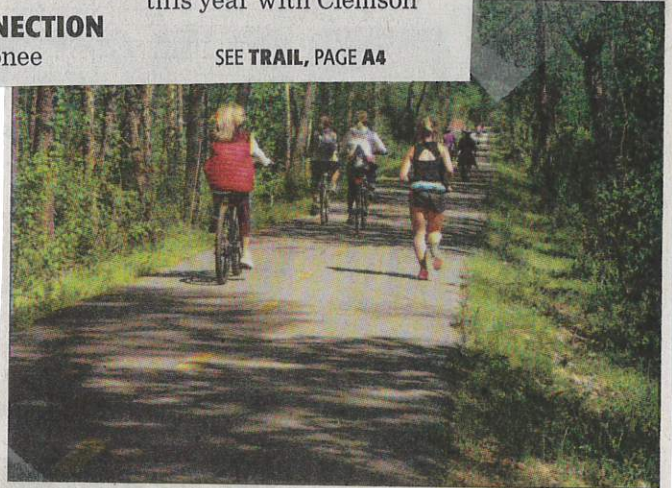
Clemson to Seneca, and another option being the secondary roadways off (U.S. Highway) 123," Brock said, adding the county is part of a federal economic development grant headed by the city of Clemson.

## CLEMSON CONNECTION

Brock said Oconee

County planning director James Coley is working with Clemson, and Oconee County Councilman Paul Cain is "a giant supporter." Cain and fellow Councilman Julian Davis met for lunch earlier this year with Clemson

SEE TRAIL, PAGE A4



An April 2019 photo of the Prisma Health Swamp Rabbit Trail in Greenville County.

SPECIAL TO THE JOURNAL

## TRAIL: 'Will pay dividends for decades'

FROM PAGE A1

Mayor Robert Halfacre and Friends of the Green Crescent Trail member Chad Carson to discuss Oconee's inclusion.

"The fact that it's getting broader to include Oconee County is just fantastic, because the biggest impact these kinds of trails have is when they're more regional," Cain said. "While we're still in the early stages, if we can have a partnership between counties — maybe including Anderson County as well — that would be a really big impact."

Carson said that while the Green Crescent Trail might be thought of as a Clemson project, the fact of the matter is "we're all connected."

"There's so many student developments, not only in Clemson, but also Oconee County, and one of the challenges Oconee

County is going to have and what residents in the city of Clemson are already complaining about is what does that do to traffic and infrastructure?" Carson said. "It could be a positive tax revenue and positive for growth, but that whole traffic infrastructure challenge needs to be focused across the lake to Oconee County, too, because there's going to be a mess of traffic as it keeps growing and growing."

### GRANT DETAILS AND VISIBLE EXAMPLES

Carson said the overall grant, due in late January, was originally estimated at \$600,000, but he feels it could be even bigger, depending on the overall miles of trails. The match is 80-20, with 80 percent federal, for a project deemed long-term of five to 10 years.

Cain said what's happened in Greenville Coun-

ty with the Swamp Rabbit Trail and Easley with the Doodle Trail are visible examples of the positive impact of trails.

"I know there's people who feel it's not the government's role to build things like this, but to that I would say if it is the government's role to continue in economic development and connecting communities, then this is certainly a role for the government that will pay dividends for decades and decades," Cain said. "Not everything can be measured in money, but in health outcomes. With this trail, which is going to be somewhat rural, they can get on this safely and walk around or bike or roller blade or whatever they do."

Cain said he is hopeful county council will approve funding for the planning and said council has already appropriated \$75,000 for a countywide greenway

feasibility study in the current fiscal year budget. He pointed to the Palmetto Trail that begins in Walhalla and Stumphouse Mountain Bike Park as examples of similar projects county council has given support to in recent years.

Cain said he is grateful Clemson and Clemson University reached out to Oconee County.

"They said, 'We want you at the table' and just working together, even on this project, is going to breed more collaboration in the future on other projects that may not even be related to transportation and greenways, but perhaps infrastructure," Cain said.

While acknowledging that the project is long-term, Carson said he hopes that by the end of 2022 or sometime in 2023, "there will be several pieces having been built at that point."