



SPECIAL TO THE JOURNAL

The South Carolina 7 team went rafting on the Chattooga River on Tuesday, Day 5 of the expedition.

'Dedicated to being the change'

SC7 kicks off monthlong expedition across state

BY LAUREN PIERCE
THE JOURNAL

MOUNTAIN REST —
A campaign from the South Carolina National Heritage Corridor will run throughout the month to get more people outside to gain an appreciation for the outdoors, leading them to actively do their part to protect the state's environment.

The movement is highlighting the state's seven

geographical wonders — with two of them in Oconee County — for its third consecutive year.

THE EXPEDITION

The South Carolina 7 (SC7) expedition team on Friday kicked off a 30-day adventure across the state from the mountains to the sea exploring natural wonders, while also raising awareness of floodwa-

SEE EXPEDITION, PAGE A5

EXPEDITION: Visiting state's '7 wonders'

FROM PAGE A1

ter prevention and resiliency.

The team began at Oconee State Park to hike the 3.7-mile Oconee Passage of the Palmetto Trail, making a stop at Yellow Branch Falls, then heading to the Eastatoo Passage and Sassafras Mountain, one of the seven wonders included in the expedition.

The Chattooga River and the Jocassee Gorges, both in Oconee, also made the wonders list on the adventure, which loosely follows the Palmetto Trail.

S.C. Floodwater Commission chairman Tom Mullikin is leading the expedition across the state using the some 380 finished miles of the Palmetto Trail as a "guiding pathway," according to the S.C. National Heritage Corridor.

"Our goal with each expedition is to promote the amazing natural wonders and outdoor recreation opportunities in our beautiful state and to raise awareness of the work happening almost daily to make our state more resilient," he said. "Our team is dedicated to being the change we wish to see in our world by living the message we preach."

The destinations are "seven geographic wonders unique to the Palmetto State," according to the S.C. National Heritage Corridor.

The other wonders are Congaree National Park, the Edisto River, the ACE Basin and Bull Island — all on the expedition's itinerary.

The team will boat, kayak, hike, bike, raft and dive across the state before ending July 30 at Patriots Point in Mount Pleasant, where



SPECIAL TO THE JOURNAL

The South Carolina 7 team hiked 6 miles on the Eastatoo Passage of the Palmetto Trail on Sunday, Day 3 of the expedition.

the team will then deploy smart reefs along the state's coast in the Atlantic Ocean.

"SC7 is a first-of-its-kind expedition to involve thousands of people in a spectacular event," expedition logistics officer and S.C. National Heritage Corridor president Michelle McCollum said. "I love being a part of this effort that highlights the work of our residents, communities and corporations to not only provide outdoor recreation, but also to protect our resources for future generations."

Mullikin has traveled all over the globe and calls the Palmetto State "one of the most beautiful places on Earth."

"I think I'm the only person in history that has climbed the seven summits and has dived in every

ocean, but I come home to South Carolina because it's the most beautiful place, and I want to share that with the rest of the world," he said.

A DIFFERENCE YEAR-ROUND

Participants are hiking from the mountains to the sea — "but that's just the tip of the iceberg," Mullikin said.

"During the rest of the year, we work with remarkable partners to pick up litter (about 3.5 tons annually), clean our waterways, plant 3.4 million trees, build artificial reefs off the coast, provide environmental education programs and more," he said.

JOINING THE FUN

While this is SC7's third annual expedition, it's the first time the public is encouraged to participate through "Adventure Out" events.

SC7 will help host a weekend full of outdoor adventure in Charleston during the last leg of the expedition, July 27-30. Participants will get to experience a variety of activities, including sunrise yoga, paddleboarding and a concert to celebrate the end of the expedition.

People can join alongside the expedition team on any day throughout the month or can tag along on key participation days on July 10, 16, 18 and 30. For more information, visit southcarolina7.com.

The community is also encouraged to plan their own expeditions to the seven wonders and their surrounding areas.