



**SALUDA
GRADE
T R A I L**

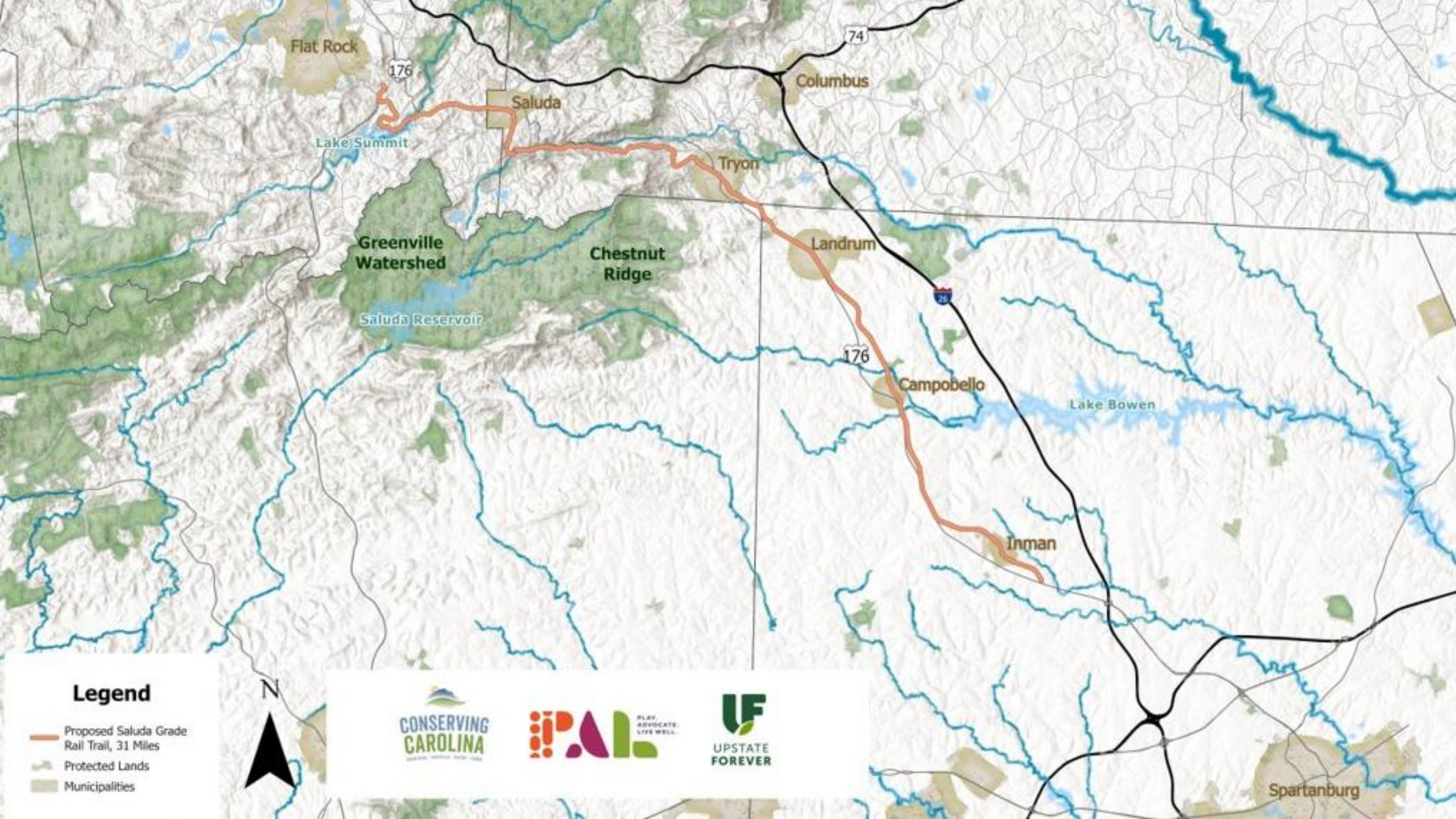
**CONNECTING THE SC UPSTATE
TO THE NC MOUNTAINS ALONG
31 MILES OF SCENIC RAIL TRAIL**



Presenters:

Kristin Cozza,
Conserving
Carolina

Teresa
Buckwalter,
McAdams



Legend

- Proposed Saluda Grade Rail Trail, 31 Miles
- Protected Lands
- Municipalities



Topics

Historical Context, Landscape + Communities

Buying a Railroad

Operationalizing the Idea: Feasibility

Rail Trails as Economic Drivers

Implementation





History



Connect Charleston to WNC and Beyond

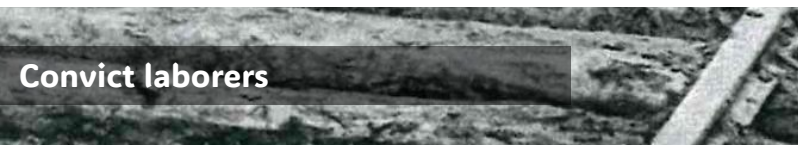
Opted for Shorter, Steeper Route

Challenging Construction



27 died; 13 escaped

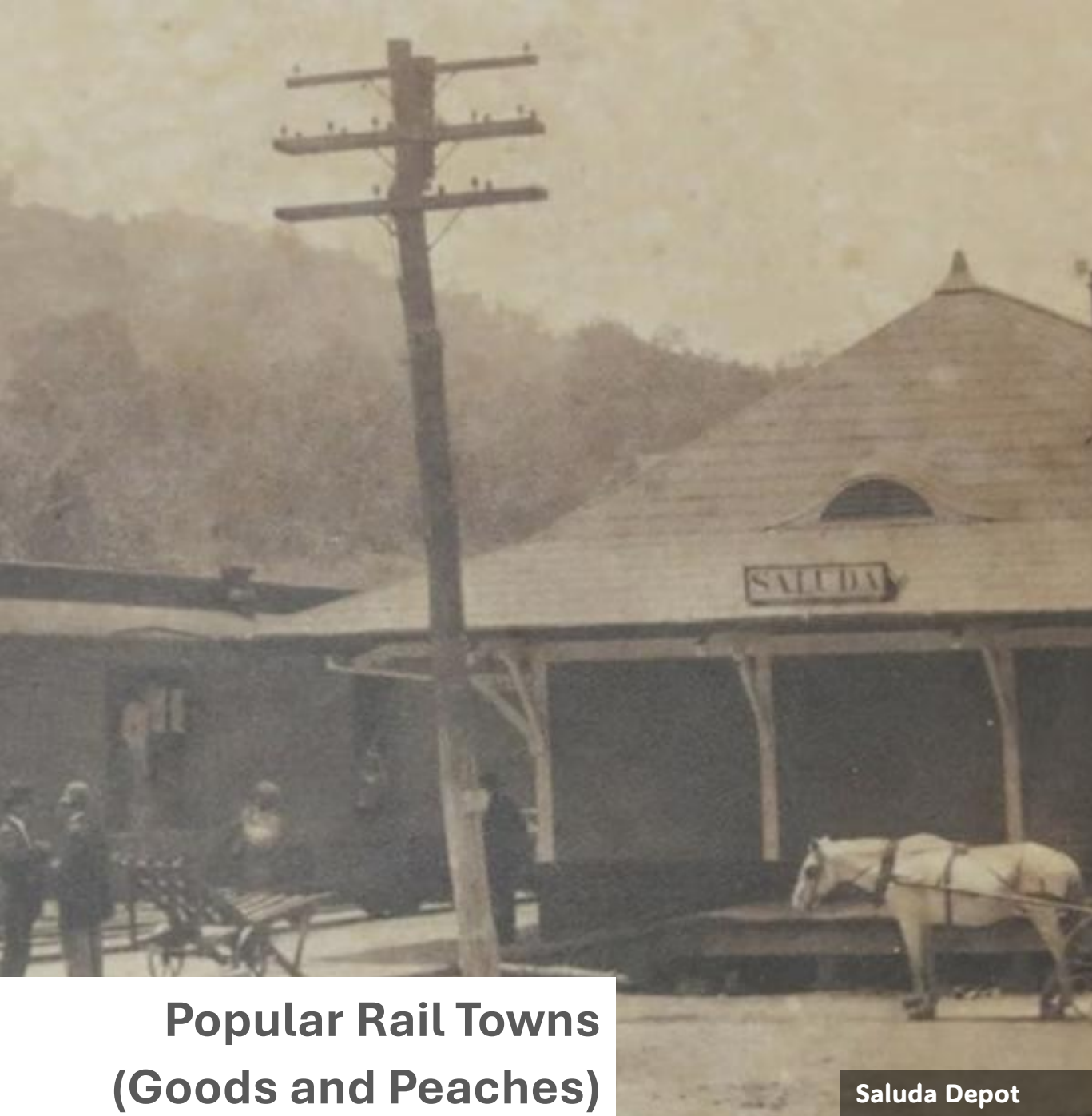
First Large-Scale Use of Convict Labor



Convict laborers

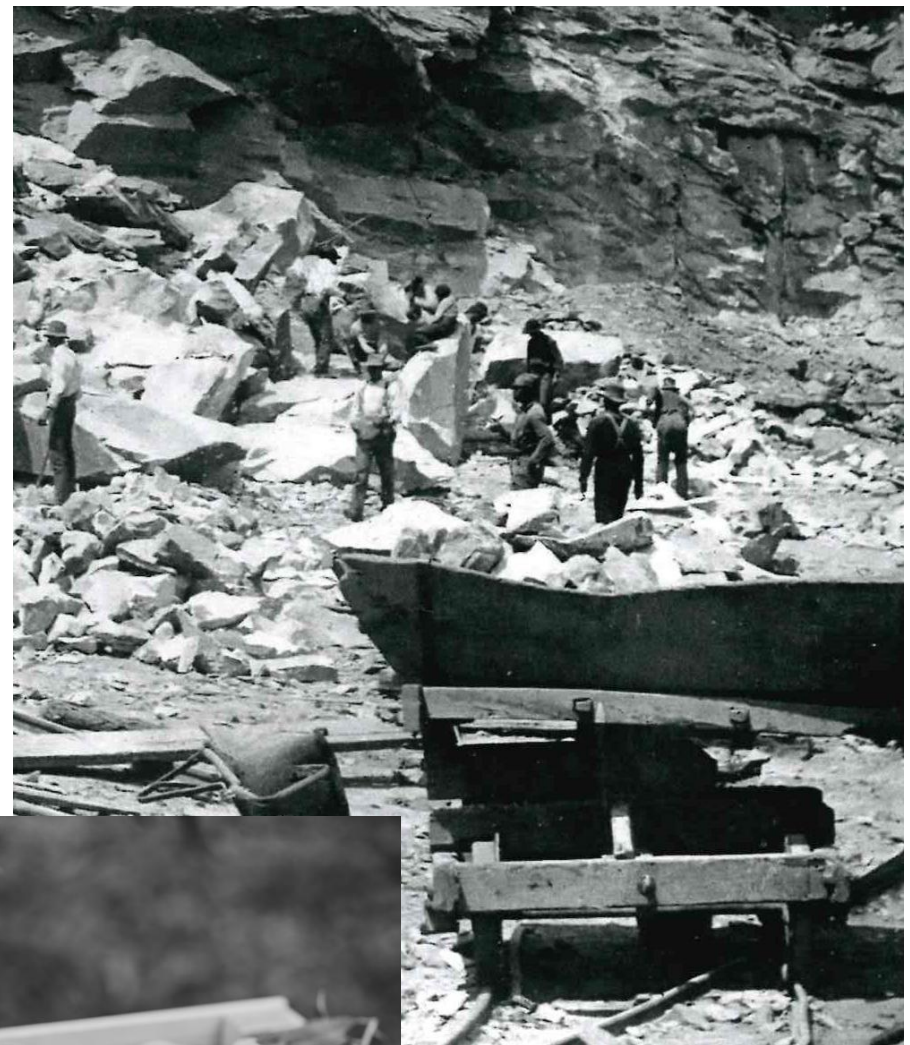


Train wreck off of runaway



**Popular Rail Towns
(Goods and Peaches)**

Saluda Depot



Melrose Quarry





The Landscape + Communities



3 Ecoregions

2 North Carolina Natural Areas

Waterfall along N Pacolet River



Golden-winged warbler



Swallowtail shiner



SC Scenic Farmland & Small Towns

BUYING A RAILROAD

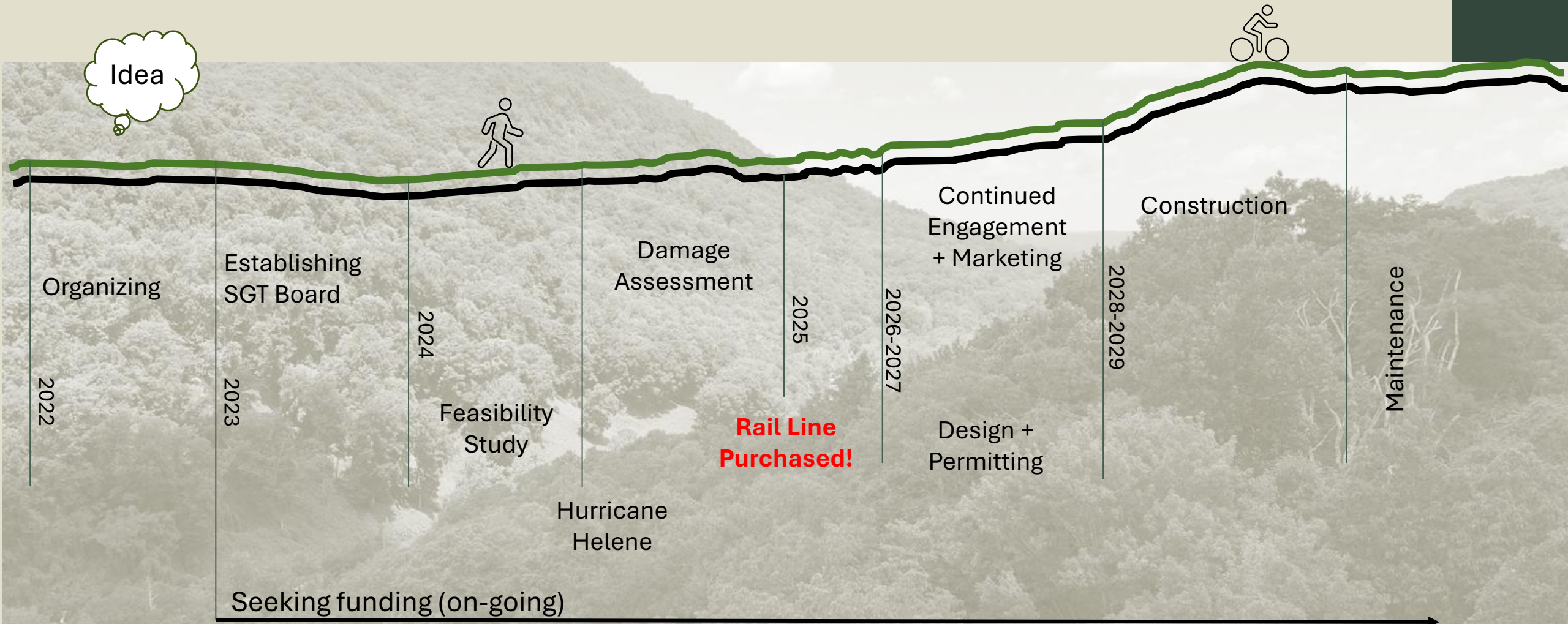
Partnerships

Funding

Ownership



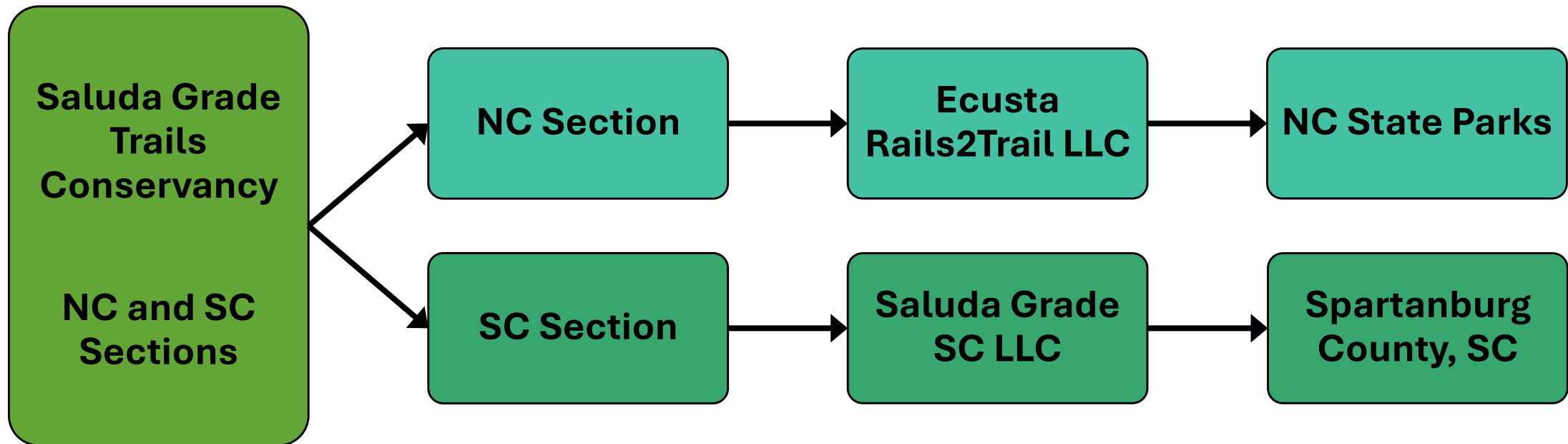
Buying a Railroad



Funding for Acquisition

Funding Source	Due Diligence		Corridor Purchase	
	Survey, Phase 1 ESA, Title Investigation		31 miles – 200 ft RWO Includes track	
State of NC	\$	277,792	\$	12,750,000
State of SC			\$	15,000,000
SC Conservation Bank			\$	750,000
Federal Highway Administration (SC only)	\$	161,881		
Appalachian Regional Commission ARISE	\$	70,910		
TOTAL	\$	510,583	\$	28,500,000
Cost Per Mile	\$	16,500	\$	919,350

Corridor Ownership Progression



OPERATIONALIZING





Challenges of Rail Trails

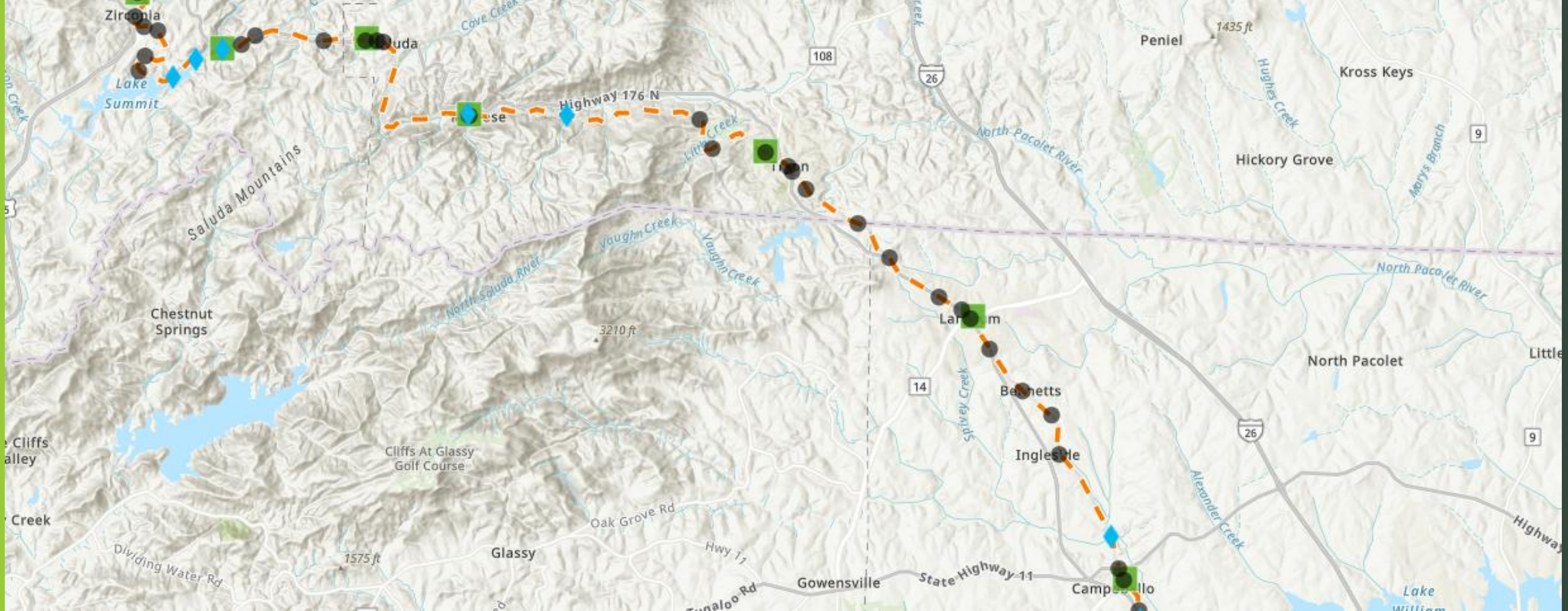
Wetlands along rail line

Invasive plants

Road crossings

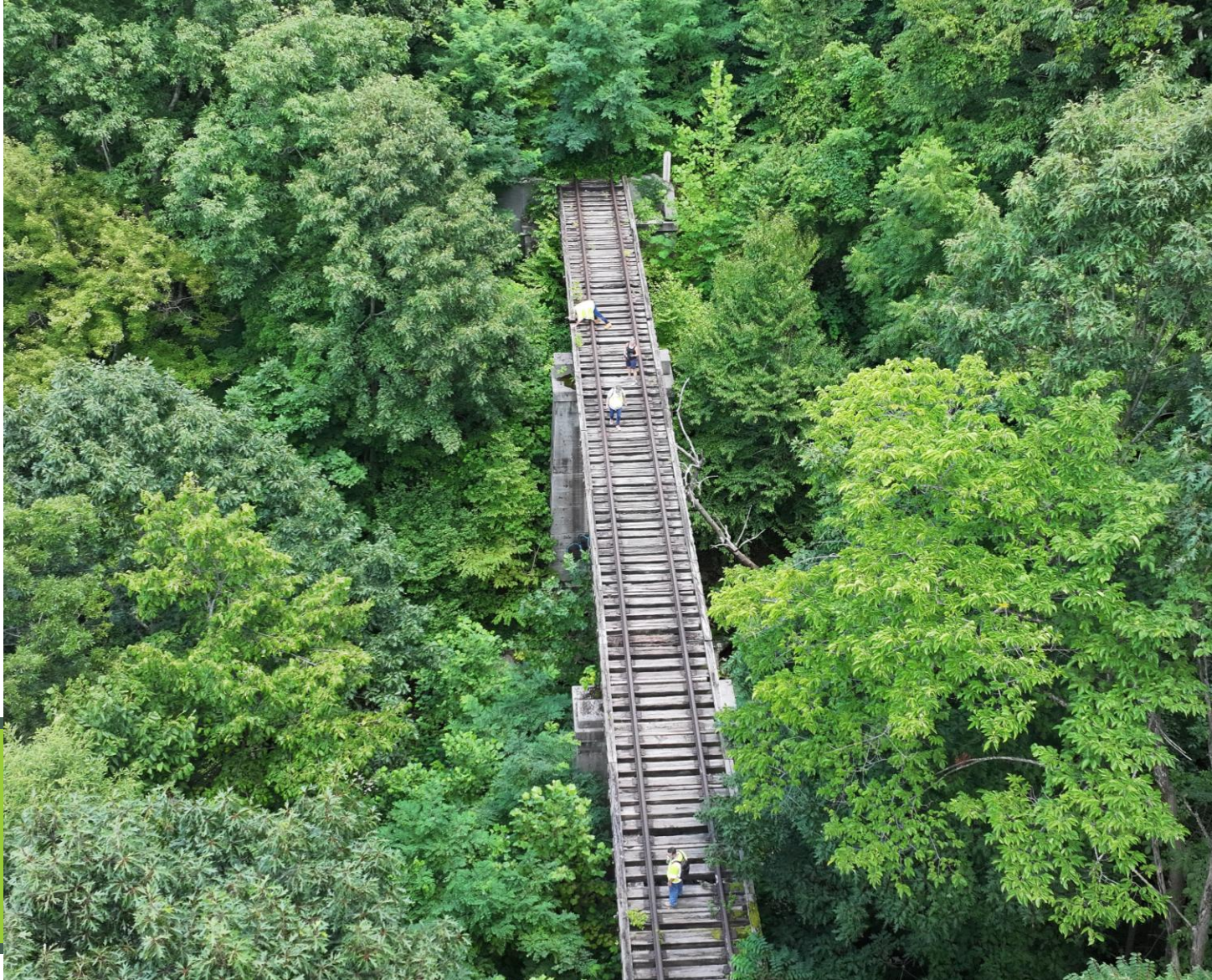
Potential contamination

Historic encroachment ROW



Mapping

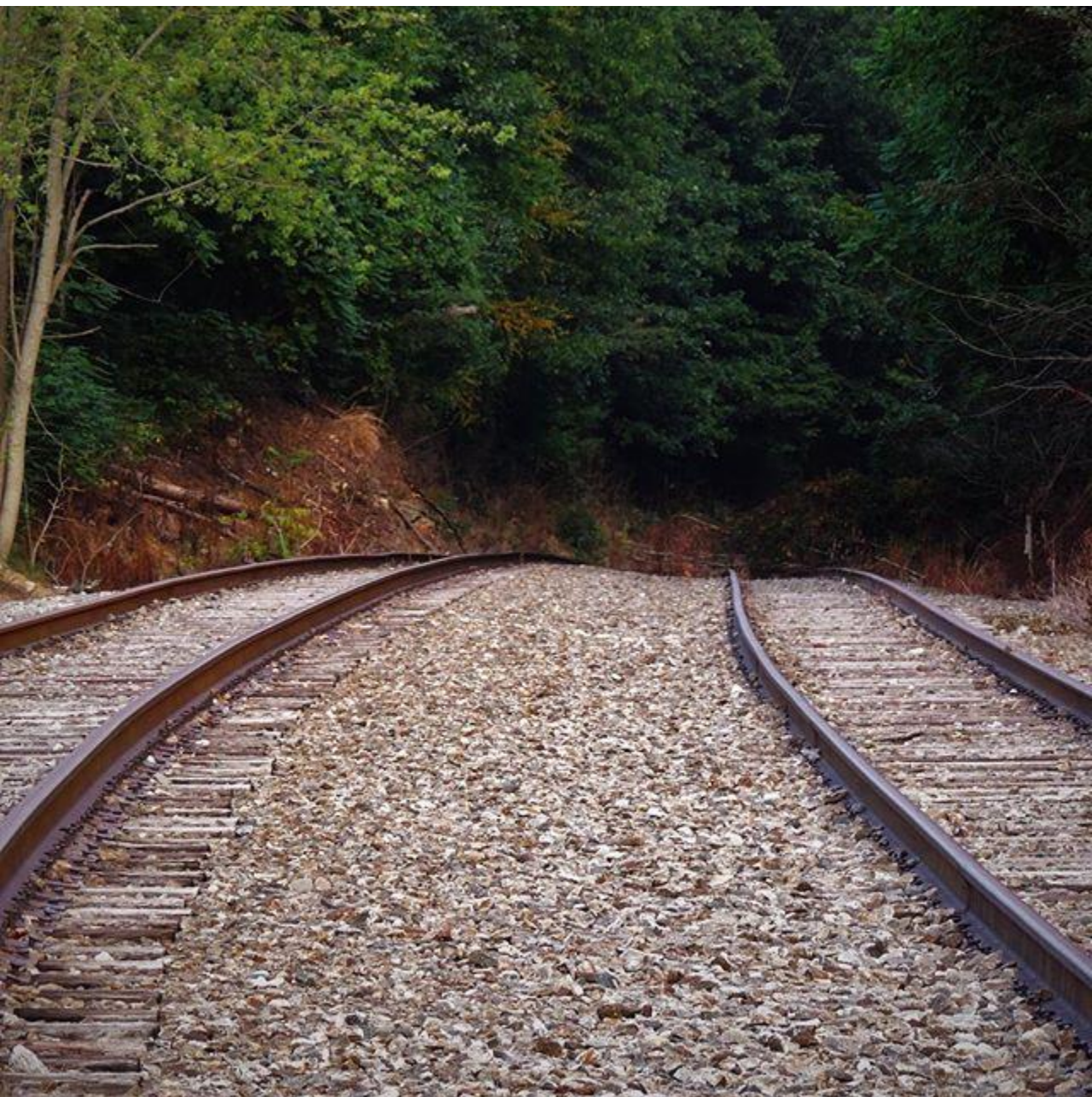
AGOLSGT



Bridges

Historic

All 8 along corridor
recommended to keep



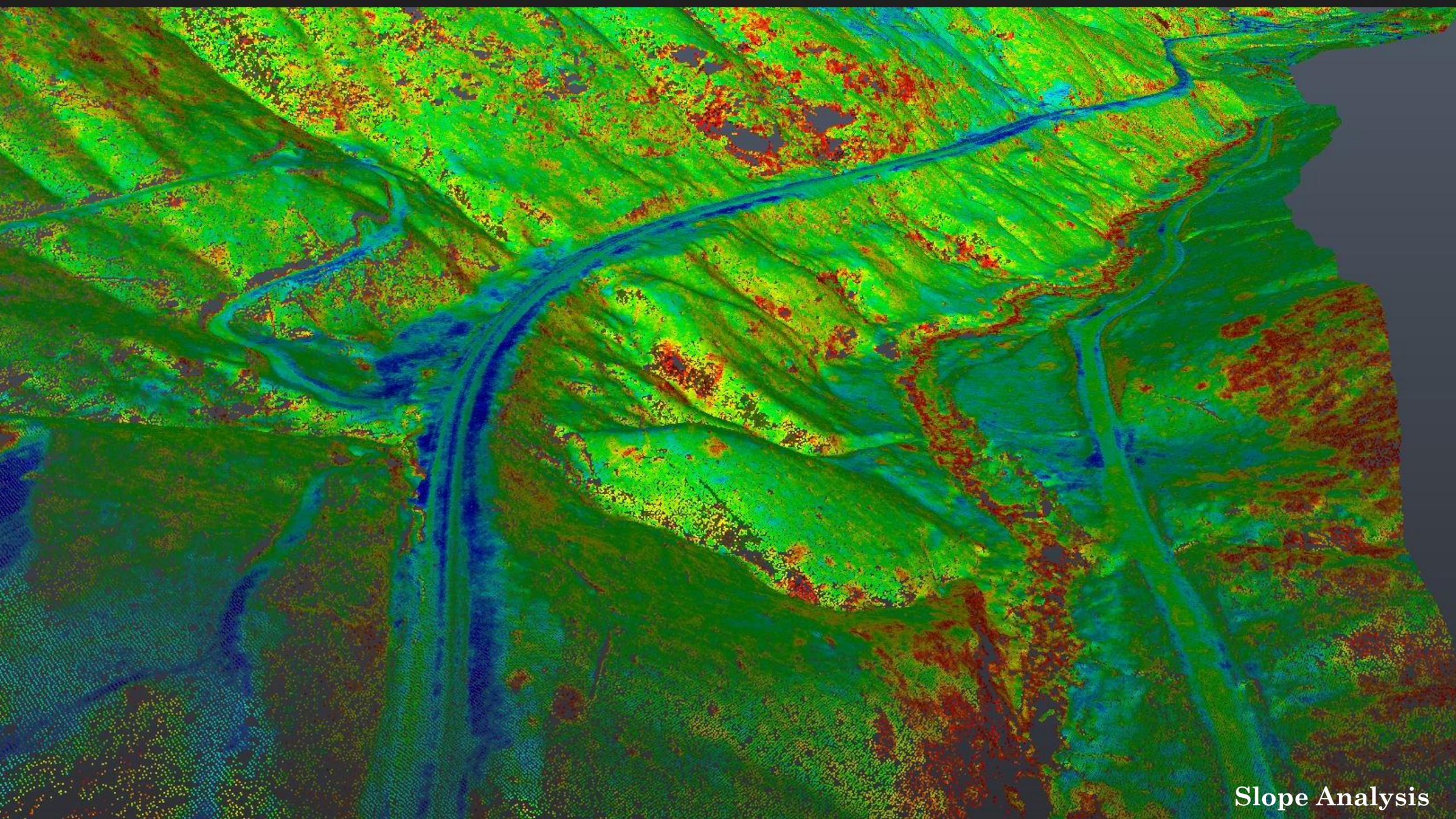
Slope Analysis

ADA Compliance

- + Must be 5% or less longitudinal slope.

ADA Analysis

- + Most sections range from 3.5% to 4.5% with several sections approx. 5%
- + Therefore, trail should be able to follow existing grade of the railbed without requiring significant grading changes to comply



Slope Analysis

Road Crossings



Crossing Category/ Treatment

CATEGORY A



High Visibility Crossing

CATEGORY B



High Visibility Crossing with
Advanced Signage and Markings
(Plus Supplemental Left Side Signs)

CATEGORY C



Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon High
Visibility Crossing Including Advanced
Signage / Markings

CATEGORY D



Full Signal or Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon
(or Hawk Beacon) in addition to High
Visibility Crossing including Advanced
Signage/ Markings



Tropical Storm Helene



Initial Engagement

Property Owners: which ones?

Community Leaders

Public meetings in both states





ECUSTA TRAIL

Rail Trails as Economic Drivers

Economic Impact

- + Up to \$266M in Cumulative Output
- + **Over \$20M annually over 12-year period** (construction phase plus 1st 10 years of trail use.)

Clemson University

Regional Economic Analysis Laboratory

Return on Investment For EVERY MILE

For Every \$1.5M



Generates \$8M+

Most grants have 20% match, so locally that is more like \$300,000



Cumulative Compensation to Workers


(in construction, maintenance and spending by trail users)

+ \$62 Million - \$86 Million in Cumulative Compensation



NEWS

Landrum getting \$2 million carbon fiber bike manufacturer near Saluda Grade Rail Trail

 **Samantha Swann**
Spartanburg Herald-Journal

Published 8:00 p.m. ET April 26, 2024 | Updated 8:46 a.m. ET April 27, 2024



Another carbon fiber bicycle element manufacturer is headed for the Saluda Grade Rail Trail.

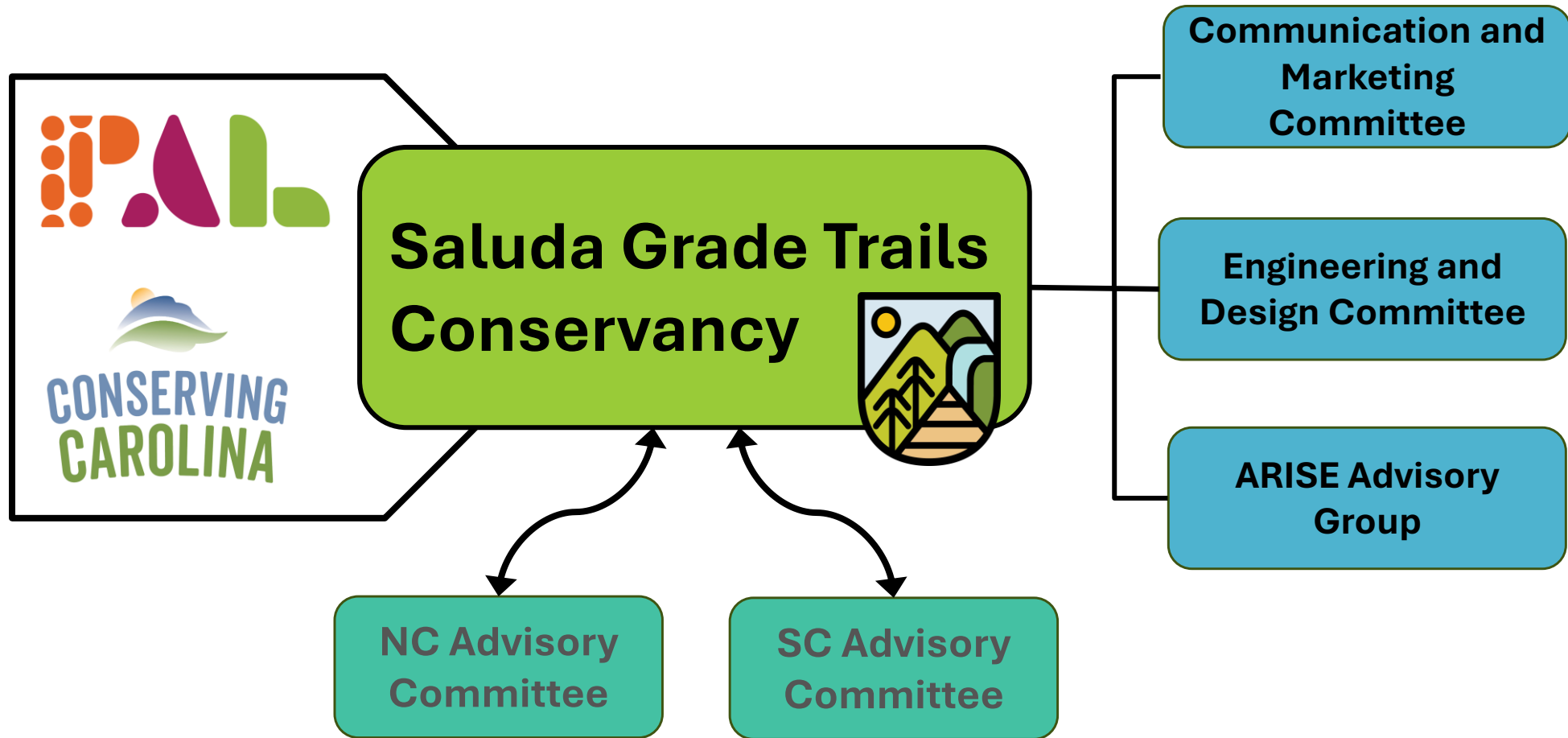
During the Criterium bike race on Friday, April 26, Boyd Cycling announced they would bring Munich Composites SC, a carbon fiber bicycle rim manufacturer, to Landrum.

Munich Composites SC, formerly Munich Composites GmbH, was acquired by a South Carolina-based ownership group that includes Greenville-based Boyd Cycling, a bicycle wheel manufacturing company owned by Boyd and Nicole Johnson, and Detroit, Michigan-based Cardinal Cycling Group, which owns Time Bicycles, as well as other investors.

"Traditionally, all bicycle rims and bicycle components have been made overseas, usually in Asia," Boyd Johnson said. "Last year, we on-shored our aluminum rim production, this year, we'll be on-shoring our carbon fiber rim production and we'll be doing it in the same building as Time Bicycles, who announced last year at this

Implementation





Organizational Structure



Track to Trail Work in Progress

- NEPA Environmental Review
- Design and Permitting – SC Section
- Fundraising for NC design/permitting and NC & SC trail construction
- Pacolet River Gorge Landslide Assessment
- Remove/salvage track and equipment
- Resolve ROW Encroachments



ARC ARISE Planning Grant

- Strategic plans for:
 - community engagement
 - economic development
 - destination marketing
- Trail corridor governance framework
- Branding and wayfinding templates
- Stakeholder Advisory Group
- Partnering with Blue Ion, Tourism Impact Services and JustTrails



Ongoing Community Engagement

- **On-line Survey – assessing community sentiment and values**
- **Themed Round Tables exploring specific topics**
- **One on One Interviews with key community leaders**
- **Public Forums - gathering broad input**
- **Community Site Walks**

Shape The Future of the



WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH THE TRAIL?

The current phase of the Saluda Grade Trail is focused on ensuring this historic 31-mile stretch of rail corridor reflects local values, supports local economies, and strengthens community connections along the trail.



STAY CONNECTED
saludagradetrail.org/engage



Open Oct.20 - Dec. 1



TAKE THE SURVEY
Share your thoughts online.

Nov. 18, 4:30-6:30PM



RSVP TO THE FALL FORUM
Share your thoughts in person.



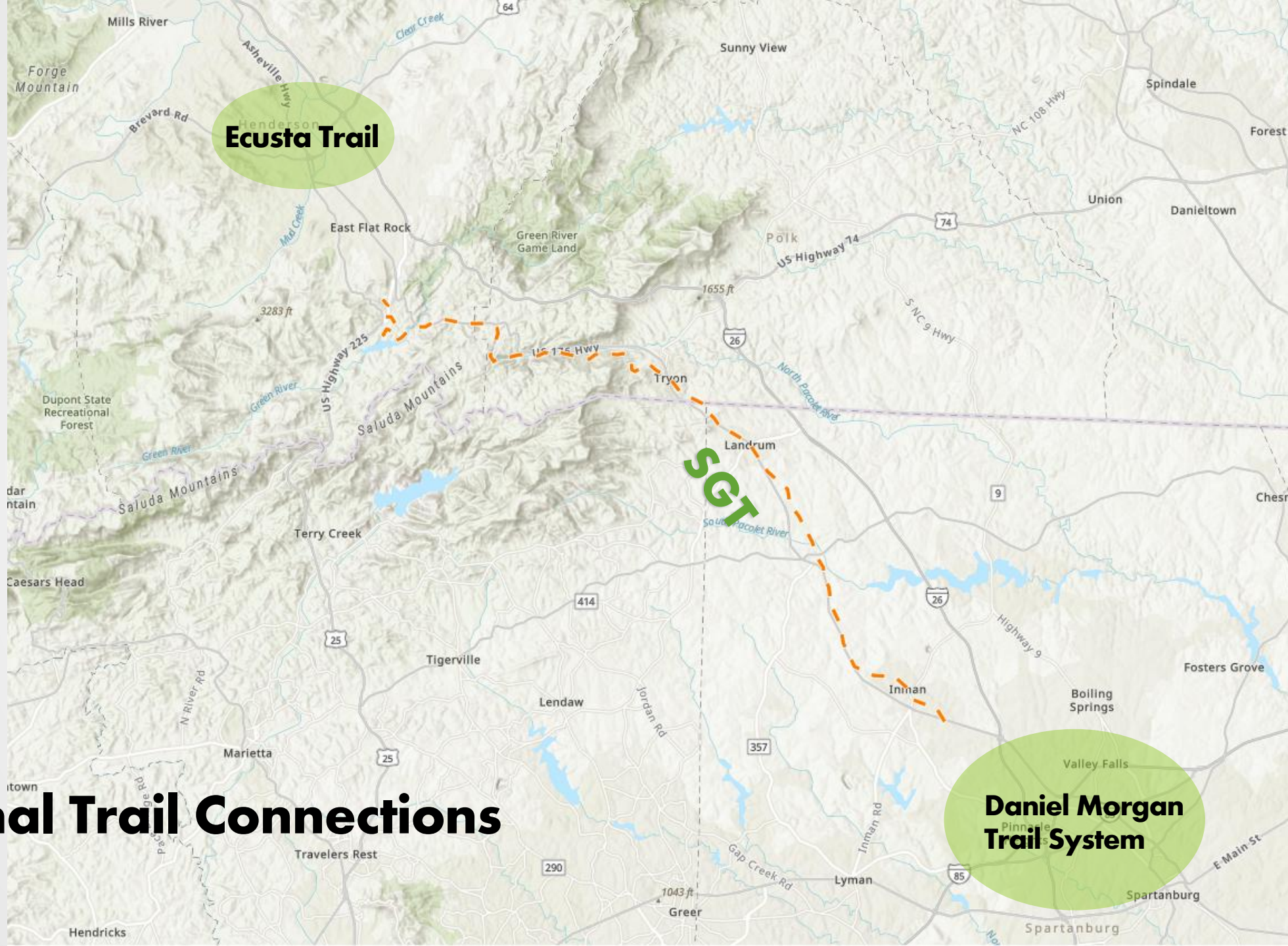
Trailside Master Plans

Ecusta Trail

SGT

**Daniel Morgan
Trail System**

Regional Trail Connections





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THANK YOU

Sign up for email updates @
www.saludagraderail.org