

Spartanburg County Blueways Project

Imagine finishing up Sunday lunch, throwing the kayaks or tubes in the truck, and heading to your local river for a lazy afternoon float with the kids. Envision a guys' (or girls') weekend of canoeing, fishing, and camping at paddle-in campsites in a Piedmont wilderness setting. Perhaps an after work stop by the local fishing dock is more your speed. An assortment of local organizations, including Spartanburg County Parks Department, is working together to create a blueways system right here in Spartanburg County so that all of these dreams will become reality.

What are blueways? A blueway is simply the latest, hippest term for a route along lakes and streams that are accessible to the public for various recreational activities. Other names for a blueway include water trail, paddle trail, canoe trail, kayak trail, river trail, etc. Typical features of blueways include points of interest, access locations, portage paths, day-use sites, and camping areas.

Spartanburg County is blessed with bountiful water resources. The two main features are the Tyger River and Pacolet River drainage systems. Both rivers are tributaries of the Broad River and contain reservoirs as well as free-flowing whitewater and calm river sections. Each system harbors the potential for activities such as kayaking, canoeing, tubing, motor boating, fishing, camping, nature viewing, environmental education, service, and more.

Unfortunately, public access to these community assets has been highly restricted in Spartanburg County. Many residents often travel outside of the county in order to enjoy more easily accessible blueways (see links below for regional blueways examples). Therefore, the primary aim of the blueways effort is to provide recreational, active living opportunities for county residents right in our own back yard. The *Spartanburg County Comprehensive Plan* and the *SPATS Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan*, both of which have been adopted by County Council, call for greater utilization of our water resources for recreation. According to the *Spartanburg County Tourism Action Plan*, the creation of a quality blueways system will attract recreational and eco-tourists from outside county lines as well.

Development of a blueways system is important to improving quality of life for county residents – recreational, educational, economic, and stewardship benefits flow from blueways. Your support is greatly appreciated. For updates, information about volunteer opportunities, and questions about the Spartanburg County Blueways project, please contact Eric Davis at Eric.Davis@spartanburgparks.org or (864) 804-5816.