
U.S. Representative

John Spratt

South Carolina ■ 5th District

News Release

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**New Law Will Expand Palmetto
Trail in Western Sumter County**

WASHINGTON — U.S. Rep. John Spratt (D-SC) announced today that President Clinton has signed a bill with a provision Spratt authored to expand the Palmetto Trail in western Sumter County.

The legislation, H.R. 4788, authorizes a land swap between the South Carolina Forestry Commission and the Anne Marie Carton Boardman Trust. The land swap will create a needed buffer strip for the Palmetto Trail along the north boundary of Manchester State Forest as it crosses the Wateree River Swamp.

Spratt hailed enactment of the bill. "This law," he said, "takes us one step closer to the day this trail from the mountains to the sea will be a reality."

Under the law, the Forestry Commission will grant Boardman Trust 73 acres of land in Manchester State Forest, which has limited public use and difficult access, in return for a narrow 62-acre strip of Boardman property running from the upper edge of the Wateree River Swamp to the actual river bank.

In 1995, Norfolk Southern Railroad, Inc., gave the Forestry Commission title to an abandoned rail line in western Sumter County. The line passes through a portion of Manchester State Forest and also runs along the north boundary of the forest as it crosses the Wateree River Swamp.

The Forestry Commission's desire to use the right-of-way as a hiking trail came to fruition when the Palmetto Conservation Foundation announced it would use the right-of-way as part of the Palmetto Trail. When complete, the trail will extend from the coast, near McCellanville, to the western corner of the state.

A buffer strip along the north boundary was needed to develop the right-of-way for the Palmetto Trail, and the Boardman Trust property proved to be the solution.

"This land swap," said Spratt, "will allow for the study and enjoyment of the river swamp by the public and environmental professionals. It will mean a larger undisturbed area, offering greater protection to the public. It will be a plus for our state, and I was proud to see the legislation through Congress." # # #