

Chapter 5. Cultural Resources Element

Cultural resources include historic buildings and structures, unique residential and commercial areas, archeological sites, entertainment venues and events, museums, art galleries, educational and religious institutions, and related features that comprise the unique attributes and defining character of Oconee County and its communities. The Cultural Resources Element provides an overview of the historical development of the County, identifies significant historic and cultural resources, profiles local arts and cultural organizations, lists annual events and opportunities, and explores the current and potential economic impact of these resources in the community.

Preservation and enhancement of the County's abundant historic and cultural resources directly benefit the community through increased tourism activity and revenue, revitalization of core commercial and residential districts, higher property values, stronger community identity, and enhanced attractiveness to new employers and residents. The ability of Oconee County to attract and retain visitors, retirees, and professionals rests in large part on the quality of life offered by a rich historic and cultural resource base.

A. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

The history of Oconee County has been extensively documented through many publications including *Oconee County* (1998) by Piper Peters Aheron and *Historic Oconee in South Carolina* (1935) by Mary Cherry Doyle. The Oconee County Heritage Book Committee also compiled *The Heritage of Oconee County, 1868–1995* in 1995. The Oconee History Museum and the Oconee County Library maintain reference copies of most of these publications.

Oconee County is nestled in the northwest corner of South Carolina between the edge of the Blue Ridge Mountains and the Chattooga and Tugaloo rivers. Its name is rooted in the Cherokee word translated as “land beside the water.” Although the first inhabitants of the area were the Creek and Cherokee, early European settlement in the area began in the late-eighteenth century with the construction of a militia outpost at the colonial frontier. Named Oconee Station, the post served as a military compound and later as a trading post.

Through multiple treaties following the American Revolution, the Cherokee were displaced from most of the area. Oconee County was carved out of the western portion of the Pickens District in 1868. Walhalla, founded nearly two decades earlier by German settlers, was designated as the new County seat.

Agriculture was the dominant economic activity of the area until the westward expansion of rail service in the late nineteenth century. The new communities of Seneca, Westminster, and Newry were products of rail access to the region. The arrival of the railroad also facilitated the development of the textile industry that would remain a major employer well into the twentieth century.



Following the Second World War, major infrastructure projects prompted additional changes in the County's economy. The construction of the national Interstate system included a segment of Interstate 85 in the southeastern corner of the County, opening both industry and resident access to new opportunities in surrounding counties and neighboring states. A series of dam projects for power generation resulted in the creation of Lakes Hartwell, Keowee, and Jocassee. In addition to producing the energy to support growth in the region, these new lakes became valuable recreational assets.

B. HISTORIC RESOURCES

Small towns and rural communities with attractive cultural, scenic, and historical resources are among the fastest growing heritage tourism and retirement destinations. The historic and cultural resources of Oconee County and its communities contribute to the appeal of the area as a retirement destination, a desirable place to work and live, and a growing tourist destination. These local resources warrant special consideration in the comprehensive planning process to protect their unique character from development pressures and neglect. Protection of the County's historical and architectural resources requires an active partnership among public and private property owners, local governments, and State and Federal agencies.

1. National Register Listings

South Carolina has more than 1,400 listings in the National Register, with 160 historic districts statewide. The *National Register of Historic Places* is the nation's official list of historic and cultural resources formally deemed worthy of preservation. Authorized by the *Historic Preservation Act of 1966*, the National Register is the foundation of a national effort to identify, evaluate and protect irreplaceable architectural and archeological resources. Under the oversight of the National Park Service of the U.S. Department of the Interior, the Register listing includes buildings, structures, districts, sites and objects that qualify as significant in the context of American history, architecture, engineering, culture and archaeology. The benefits of National Register listing include wide recognition of a property's significance, consideration and review in the federally-assisted project planning process, eligibility for federal tax benefits for rehabilitation and easements, and eligibility for federal and state historic preservation grants.

National Register listings can be achieved for larger *historic districts* that contain broader areas of multiple historic properties that have collective significance, for *individual* properties that meet the criteria, and for *landmark* sites that represent historical significance at a level greater than local and regional interest.

Historic districts can be designated to protect larger areas of historic properties and landscapes from adverse impacts of development. National Register criteria for historic districts require that the majority of the components that comprise a district's historic character have integrity, though alone they may be individually undistinguished. There are currently four designated historic districts in Oconee County. Table 5-1 profiles these historic districts shown on Map 5-1.

Although each historic district has multiple contributing properties, there are also numerous individual National Register sites located outside of these districts. (Table 5-2 and Map 5-1).

Table 5-1. National Register Districts in Oconee County

| ID | District | Significance | Listed |
|----|--|--|---------------|
| D1 | Newry Historic District | Turn of the century textile mill village built between 1893 and 1910 in the Little River Valley. Contains 118 properties including the Courtenay Mill complex, mill office, company store, post office, village church, and workers residences. Located within a 250-acre area. A typical New England textile factory design attributed to W.B.S. Whaley. | 1982 |
| D2 | Oconee State Park District | Product of Great Depression era efforts of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) to protect natural areas through park construction while providing job opportunities for unemployed American men. Contains 63 contributing and 60 non-contributing resources arranged around a man-made lake. Includes vacation cabins, bathhouse, central administrative building, two residences and two picnic shelters. | 2004 |
| D3 | Ram Cat Alley Historic District (Seneca) | Example of architectural and commercial development around the growth of the railroad in a small South Carolina town. Intact public, commercial, and social center, consisting of 21 commercial buildings in downtown Seneca. Eighteen contributing buildings constructed from 1887 to 1930. | 2000 |
| D4 | Seneca Historic District (Seneca) | District is made up of two areas that include three churches and 20 homes in a variety of architectural designs which produce a cohesive and homogenous unit. Included are examples of late 19 th century domestic architecture, pre-World War I dwellings, mid-1920s houses, and church architecture of the first half of the 20 th century. Architectural styles include Victorian, Classical Revival, Bungalow, Tudor Revival, and Four-Square. | 1974 and 1987 |

Source: National Register of Historic Places, 2019

Table 5-2. National Register Sites in Oconee County

| ID | Property/Site | Significance | Listed |
|----|--------------------------------------|---|--------|
| S1 | Alexander-Cannon-Hill house (Seneca) | Provides an upcountry pioneer architectural link between the present and Old Pickens. Built in 1831 on a plantation at the edge of Old Pickens, the house was moved to its new location in 1972 to conform to Atomic Energy Commission regulations. Acquired by Duke Power in the 1960s. | 1972 |
| S2 | Ellicott Rock (Salem) | Inscribed in 1813 as part of survey to settle a state boundary dispute. Recognized as the fixed common corner of North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. Located on the east bank of the Chattooga River. | 1974 |
| S3 | Faith Cabin Library (Seneca) | Significant for its role in African American education and social history in South Carolina. Constructed in 1937 with support of Oberlin College, it is one of only two remaining free-standing Faith Cabin Libraries in the State and the only remaining building from the Seneca Junior College campus. | 2012 |
| S4 | Keil Farm (Walhalla) | Antebellum farm house (ca. 1850) symbolizing the role of a German immigrant family in the settlement and development of Walhalla and Oconee County. Consists of frame farm house and six outbuildings. | 1998 |
| S5 | Long Creek Academy (Long Creek) | Opened in 1914 by the Beaverdam Baptist Association as part of a system of mountain mission schools overseen by the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. | 1987 |

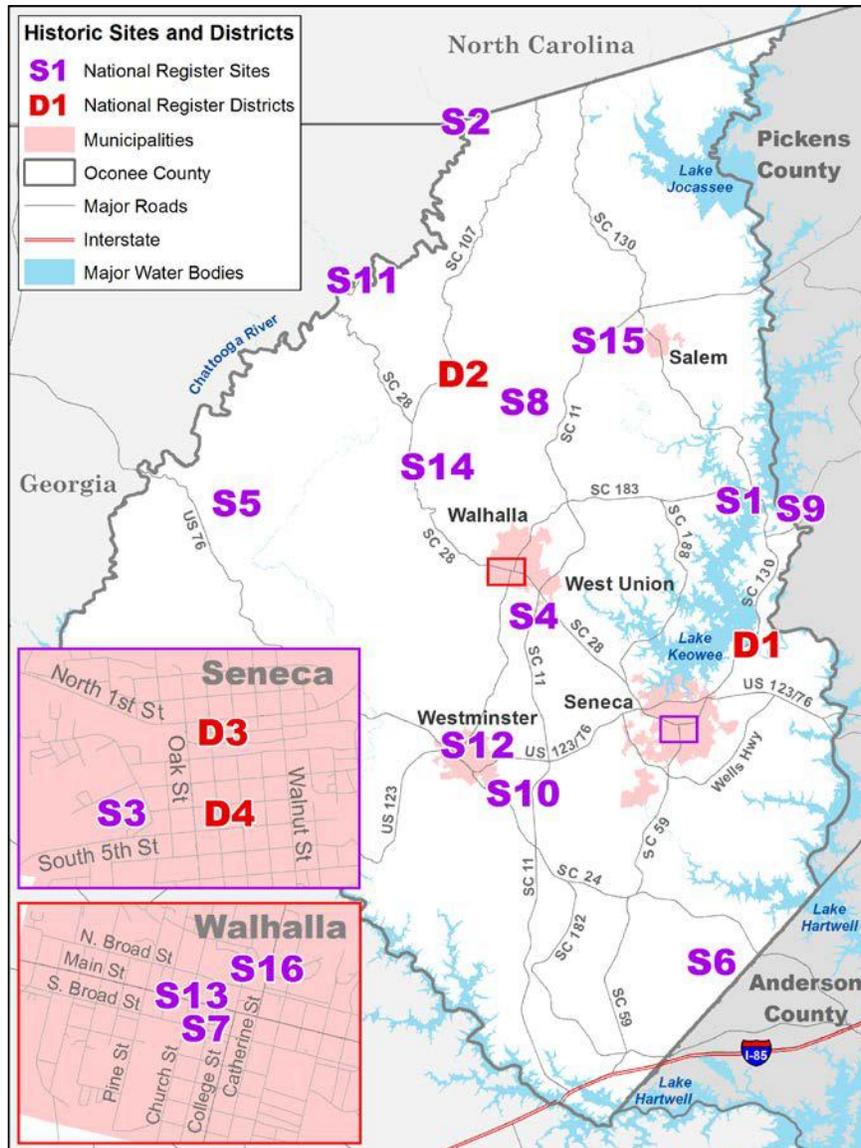
Table 5-2. National Register Sites in Oconee County, *Continued*

| ID | Property/Site | Significance | Listed |
|-----|---|--|--------|
| S6 | McPhail Angus Farm (Seneca) | Established in 1902, the farm complex illustrates 20 th century developments in South Carolina upcountry agriculture. Site includes eight contributing properties and more than 140 acres of terraced fields. | 2007 |
| S7 | Oconee County Cage (Walhalla) | One of several <i>Jails on Wheels</i> used in the early 20 th century as quarters for chain gang members at work sites. The small, metal cage on a wheeled chassis was constructed around 1900. | 1982 |
| S8 | Oconee Station (Salem) | Building marks the farthest point in South Carolina to which white settlers ventured before the Revolution. Erected before 1760 as a military outpost to protect settlers. Used by the Cherokee as a trading post in the early 1800s. Includes the adjacent Richards house, constructed in 1805. | 1971 |
| S9 | Old Pickens Presbyterian Church (Seneca) | Intact example of a mid-nineteenth century church built in the meeting house style and constructed of brick. Also significant for its association with the town of Pickens Court House (Old Pickens) and as the only remaining building from the old town site. A cemetery containing more than 200 marked graves is adjacent to the church. | 1996 |
| S10 | Retreat Rosenwald School (Westminster) | Significant for its association with African American public education during the first half of the 20 th century. Built in 1924 as one of ten Rosenwald Schools in Oconee County, serving as an important public educational and social center for rural blacks. | 2011 |
| S11 | Russell House & Farmstead (Mountain Rest) | Constructed after 1867 as a stage stop and inn. Although the house burned in 1988, the complex includes ten agricultural outbuildings representative of a small, turn of the century Appalachian farmstead. Outbuildings include log barn ruins, spring house, outhouse, garage, corn crib, and potato cellar. | 1988 |
| S12 | Westminster Depot (Westminster) | The Southern Railway passenger station (ca. 1885) is one of the town's oldest buildings. The station served as a community gathering place and activity center. | 1976 |
| S13 | St. John's Lutheran Church (Walhalla) | Constructed between 1859 and 1861 for the German Lutheran congregation of Walhalla. Significant both for its German vernacular church form and for its role in the religious and organizational history of Walhalla. The site includes a brick Sunday School building and a church cemetery with the earliest gravestone dating to 1851. | 1980 |
| S14 | Stumphouse Tunnel Complex (Walhalla) | Site includes 40 acres of land, two acres of water, Stumphouse Mountain Tunnel, Middle Tunnel, the 385-foot original railroad bed, picnic and camping areas, and a museum of railroad history. As part of the 1850s Blue Ridge Railroad project, the tunnels were planned as a final link in a shipping route from the Mississippi to the Atlantic seaboard. Stumphouse is also the site of the first successful attempt to age blue cheese in the South by Clemson University in the 1950s. | 1971 |
| S15 | Tamassee DAR School (Tamassee) | Associated with the history of education in the rural northwestern corner of South Carolina and as one of only two schools in the nation created by the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). Opened in 1919 for children of poor rural families, the site includes 44 contributing and 11 noncontributing buildings, sites, and structures dating from 1919 to 1960. | 2012 |
| S16 | Walhalla Graded School (Walhalla) | Example of an educational building in the Classical Revival style and significant for its role in the educational development of Oconee County. The facility is comprised of a 1902 graded school, a 1913-14 auditorium and east wing addition, and a 1950s classroom addition, built on the temporary site of Newberry College. | 1992 |
| | | | |

| | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------|--|------|
| Across from S13 | Oconee County Courthouse | The Oconee County Courthouse at 211 W. Main Street in Walhalla, is of significance due to its Architecture. Constructed in 1956, the Courthouse is an interesting and eclectic mix of periods within the Modern movement: steel enamel paneling, heavy limestone cornices and sills, and large glass paneling add characteristically midcentury ornament to a body otherwise reminiscent of the Stripped Classicism that is typically seen in buildings built several decades earlier. | 2016 |
|-----------------|--------------------------|--|------|

Source: National Register of Historic Places, 2019

Map 5-1. Oconee County National Register Districts and Sites



Source: Oconee County, 2019

2. Historical Markers

Historical markers give recognition to places, people, events, and structures that have historical significance at the local, state, or national level. The South Carolina Department of Archives and



History manages the *South Carolina Historical Marker* program. The program includes 1,500 markers statewide, with 19 in Oconee County (Table 5-3). These markers recognize diverse sites of historical significance throughout the County that include schools, churches, and Native American settlements. Although the Department must approve the content of all markers and their location must be coordinated with the S.C. Department of Transportation, there is no state funding for the signs. Markers must be sponsored and purchased by civic, church, historical, or educational organizations.

Information provided by Oconee Heritage Center staff indicates that there are additional locations in Oconee County that should be inventoried for historical purposes and possible inclusion in the official State Historical Marker program.

Table 5-3. State Historical Markers in Oconee County

| Marker ID | Marker Name |
|-----------|---|
| 37-1 | First Soil Conservation District Plan |
| 37-2 | St. John's Lutheran Church |
| 37-3 | The Cherokee Path |
| 37-4 | Seneca |
| 37-5 | Replaced by Marker 37-11 |
| 37-6 | Capt. Samuel Earle |
| 37-7 | Oconee County Training School |
| 37-8 | Seneca Institute |
| 37-9 | Newberry College |
| 37-10 | Stumphouse Tunnel |
| 37-11 | Keowee Town |
| 37-12 | Oconee Town |
| 37-13 | Cherokee Boundary (1777) |
| 37-14 | Jocassee Town |
| 37-15 | English School |
| 37-16 | Chattooga Town |
| 37-17 | Cross Roads Baptist Church/Cross Roads School |
| 37-18 | West Union Grammar School |
| 37-19 | Tamassee DAR School |
| 37-20 | Retreat Rosenwald School |
| * | Chauga Town |
| * | Cheohee Town |
| * | Tamassee Town |
| * | Beaverdam Baptist Church |

* Marker numbers not available

Sources: S.C. Historical Marker Program database, 2019; Oconee Heritage Center, 2019

4. Archaeological Resources

As defined by the S.C. Department of Archives and History, an archaeological site is an area yielding three or more historic or prehistoric artifacts within a 30-meter radius and/or an area with visible or historically recorded cultural features such as cemeteries, rock shelters, chimney



falls, brick walls, piers, and earthworks. Due to the sensitive nature and wealth of information that can be gained over time from careful study of these sites, locations are typically not publicly disclosed.

Such sites on federal or tribal lands or that are potentially impacted by federally funded projects are protected to a limited degree by the *Archeological Resources Protection Act of 1979*, the *Native American Graves and Repatriation Act of 1990*, *Executive Order 13007* of 1996, and the *Department of Transportation Act of 1966*. At the State level, multiple laws and regulations protect archeological resources including the *South Carolina Mining Act*, the *South Carolina Underwater Antiquities Act*, the *South Carolina Water Resources and Planning Act*, as well as various State codes related to abandoned cemeteries and burial grounds. The State has also developed *Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological Investigations* as an advisory framework for archaeological fieldwork and reporting in the state of South Carolina.

Archeological sites can be particularly fragile and vulnerable to development. Most sites are discovered during the land development process, especially road construction. The County and its municipalities should work to protect and preserve known sites, as well as identify and protect additional potential areas of archaeological significance.

Archaeological site excavations have been conducted on a number of sites in Oconee County including Fort Prince George, Tamassee Town, Chattooga Town, Chauga Mound, Tugaloo Mound, and Oconee Town. Relics from these excavations have been placed with various institutions throughout the southeast, but are available to be loaned to local museums.

5. Cemeteries

Cemeteries are a significant historical resource in every community and can be an important repository for social, religious, artistic, genealogical, and cultural heritage. There are nearly 100 cemeteries in Oconee County, ranging in size from small family plots to historic church cemeteries and memorial gardens. More than 70 cemeteries in Oconee County have been inventoried by the U.S. Geological Survey and included in the federal Geographic Names Information System (GNIS). Among these historic locations are the Mountain View, Oak Grove, and Lumpkin Street cemeteries in Seneca, the St. John's Lutheran Church cemetery in Walhalla, and the Old Pickens Presbyterian Church cemetery north of Seneca. The website of the Oconee County Cemetery GPS Mapping Project contains most cemetery information including aerial views, map coordinates and directions, and links to photos and tombstone texts. The Old Pendleton District Genealogical Society also maintains the *Oconee Cemetery Survey Books*. In recent years online resources such as findagrave.com have become useful resources to assist in keeping local cemetery listings up-to-date.

The South Carolina Department of Archives and History provides a reference guide for individuals and groups who are interested in the preservation and protection of historic cemeteries (*South Carolina's Historic Cemeteries: A Preservation Handbook, 2007*). Vandalism, development, and neglect are the biggest threats to these historic resources. Cemeteries are



protected by several State laws that address the preservation and protection of cemeteries (*S.C. Code 6-1-35*), access and relocation of cemeteries (*S.C. Code 27-43-10*), and destruction or desecration of remains (*S.C. Code 16-17-600*). However, enforcement of State laws pertaining to cemeteries rests with local law enforcement. The *National Historic Preservation Act of 1966* also provides some protection to cemeteries that are eligible for or listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

6. Unique Areas and Scenic Corridors

Numerous unique areas and corridors showcase the history, culture, and geography of Oconee County. In addition to scenic views, these routes feature historically and culturally significant sites and the unspoiled, diverse natural character of the County. The ***Cherokee Foothills Scenic Highway*** is also a ***National Scenic Byway*** that extends 112 miles along S.C. Highway 11, while the ***Savannah River Scenic Highway*** (S.C. Highway 24) forms part of the ***South Carolina National Heritage Corridor*** that extends 320 miles from the mountains of Oconee to Charleston. This Heritage Corridor offers a cross-section of the State's history, culture, and natural landscapes by showcasing the evolution of regional life, from plantations and farms to mill villages and urban centers. As a spur of the Falling Waters National Scenic Byway, the ***Oscar B. Wigington Scenic Highway*** (S.C. Highway 107) is only 20 miles long and offers spectacular mountain views from the North Carolina border to Oconee State Park. These corridors and other scenic areas are detailed in the *Natural Resources Element*.

7. Historic Preservation Organizations

State and local agencies and nonprofit organizations assist South Carolina communities in maintaining their local character by preserving historic and cultural landmarks. The ***South Carolina Department of Archives and History*** (SCDAH) preserves and promotes the documentary and cultural heritage of the Palmetto State through archives and records management, history education, and historic preservation. Housed in the SCDAH, the ***State Historic Preservation Office*** (SHPO) facilitates the responsible stewardship of South Carolina's irreplaceable historic and prehistoric places.

The ***South Carolina Institute for Archeology and Anthropology*** (SCIAA) maintains the official inventory of discovered archeological sites in the State.

The nonprofit ***Palmetto Conservation Foundation*** was founded in 1989 to conserve South Carolina's natural and cultural resources, preserve historic landmarks, and promote active outdoor recreation on the Palmetto Trail and other greenways. As detailed in the *Natural Resources Element*, three sections of the Palmetto Trail have been completed in Oconee County to date with the Stumphouse Passage, the Oconee Passage, and the Eastatoe Passage.

The ***Oconee County Arts & Historical Commission*** is a county supported organization that funds annual cultural and art events. The ***Oconee History Museum*** is a nonprofit organization focused



on the preservation and promotion of the history and cultural heritage of Oconee County through museums, programs, and historic sites.

8. Historic Preservation Planning

Land use, transportation, and zoning decisions can critically impact historic preservation efforts. Communities that plan ahead to preserve historic properties and districts have a greater likelihood of success. South Carolina law allows local jurisdictions to enact zoning provisions that preserve and protect the character of a community. These communities can enact historic preservation ordinances that contain specific procedures and standards for designating historic properties and districts, design guidelines, and a process for reviewing proposed changes to historic properties. The focus of such ordinances is on preserving the appearance, rather than the use, of identified historic properties. The City of Seneca adopted a design review ordinance and guidelines in 2000 to further its historic preservation goals.

9. Historic Resource Funding Opportunities

Incentive programs encourage the preservation and rehabilitation of historic buildings and the donation of conservation easements to protect historic sites. Although Federal and State resources to support historic preservation efforts have been limited in scope and funding, there are a few opportunities available to property owners and local governments for historic preservation efforts (Table 5-4).

Table 5-4. Summary of Federal and State Tax Incentives for Historic Preservation

| Incentive | Benefit Summary | Eligibility | Level |
|--|--|--|---------|
| 20% Federal Historic Rehabilitation Credit | Federal income tax credit equal to 20% of rehabilitation costs | Income-producing use such as offices, stores, or rental housing with individual or contributing National Register (NR) status | Federal |
| 10% State Historic Rehabilitation Credit | State income or license tax credit equal to 10% of rehabilitation costs | Same as federal credit above and does not require separate state application process | State |
| 10% Federal Rehabilitation Credit | Federal income tax credit equal to 10% of rehabilitation costs | Non-residential income-producing use for buildings in service before 1936 that do not have individual or contributing NR status | Federal |
| 25% State Historic Rehabilitation Credit | State income tax credit equal to 25% of allowable rehabilitation costs for exterior, structural systems, energy efficiency, HVAC, plumbing, electrical | Owner-occupied residence with individual NR status or as contributing to historic district or historic outbuilding associated with an eligible residence | State |
| Federal Income Tax Incentives for Easement Donations | Income and estate tax deductions | Owner-occupied residence or income-producing building with individual or contributing NR status | Federal |



| | | | |
|--|--|--|---------------|
| Tax Incentives for Rehabilitating Textile Mill Buildings | Credit against local property taxes or a State income tax credit equal to 25% of rehabilitation costs | Rehabilitation and reuse of former textile manufacturing facilities | State |
| Federal Income Tax Credit for Low Income Housing | Credit to rehabilitate historic buildings for low income housing and rental units | Low Income Housing Credits allocated by S.C. Housing Finance & Development Authority | Federal State |
| Local Property Tax Special Assessment | Property is assessed on the pre-rehabilitation fair market value for the length of the special assessment for up to 20 years | Income-producing real property and owner-occupied property are eligible for buildings designated as historic by NR or local government | Local |

Source: S.C. Dept. of Archives and History, 2019

Eligible projects can combine Federal, State, and local credits with one or more other local incentives resulting in even greater benefit. The *Bailey Bill* was passed by the State legislature to allow South Carolina cities and counties to provide property tax incentives for improvements to historic structures.

The SCDAH also offers two matching grant programs with funds from the National Park Service for *Survey and Planning* and *Stabilization Projects*. However, only Certified Local Governments (CLG) are eligible for grant consideration.

The *South Carolina National Heritage Corridor* provides technical support to communities throughout a fourteen-county region that extends from the Blue Ridge Mountains of Oconee County to the Atlantic Ocean at Charleston and Colleton Counties. Designated by Congress as a “national heritage area” in 1996, communities along the Heritage Corridor are eligible for funding from the National Park Service for projects that enhance their natural, cultural, and historic resources. Oconee County has received grants for historic preservation and destination way-finding signage through this program.

C. CULTURAL RESOURCES

Cultural resources envelop the broad spectrum of the heritage, traditions, religions, and arts of a community. Participation and awareness of the arts can significantly enrich the quality of life for residents. Partnerships among schools, libraries, arts and civic groups, churches, higher education, and local business and industry can leverage local cultural opportunities to increase exposure to the arts for residents of all ages and backgrounds.

1. Cultural Facilities

Cultural facilities are buildings and places where cultural programs are housed and provide public access points for the arts. Oconee County has a diversity of cultural venues for residents and tourists that include numerous museums, a library system with four locations, a fine arts center, a performing arts center, and a community theater.



a. Museums

Oconee County is home to many museums that carefully preserve the diverse cultural heritage of the County and its communities, as well as the contributions of its residents. These facilities are profiled in Table 5-5.

Table 5-5. Oconee County Museums

| Museum | Significance | Location |
|--|--|----------------|
| Bertha Lee Strickland Cultural Museum | Focuses on the rich history, culture, and contributions of local African-Americans in Oconee County history. | Seneca |
| General Store Museum | Branch of the Oconee History Museum displaying a vast collection of artifacts from the historic England's General Merchandise store of Westminster, with local history exhibits, antique toys, clothes, glassware, medical equipment, photos and other items unique to the area. | Westminster |
| Lunney House Museum | Listed on the National Register, this California style bungalow was built in 1909 by Dr. and Mrs. W.J. Lunney and occupied continuously by the Lunney family until 1969. Offers distinctive arts and crafts architecture, along with a collection of Mission and Victorian furniture, period costumes, and Oconee County historic memorabilia. | Seneca |
| Museum of the Cherokee in South Carolina | Promotes the study of the history and legacy of the Cherokee in the Upstate of South Carolina. Housed in an historic building built in 1905, the museum seeks to create a stronger understanding of the rich history of the State in relation to the Cherokee and their interaction with non-native cultures. | Walhalla |
| Patriots Hall (Oconee Veterans Museum) | Tells the story of the contributions and sacrifices of Oconee County veterans for our country, the world, and our freedom. Built in 1933 by the Civilian Conservation Corps, the two-story museum honors the service of veterans through military artifacts, documents, photographs, and artwork supported by the personal stories of Oconee County veterans. The facility includes a "Walk of Honor" to recognize individuals and groups, along with a library and gift shop. | Walhalla |
| Oconee County History Museum | Explores the diverse history and cultural heritage of the County amid the influences of Native Americans, agriculture, railroads, immigration, New Deal programs, textile mills, and more. An exhibit hall offers a self-guided tour of local history with artifacts that include preserved dugout canoes, a walk-in Stumphouse Tunnel exhibit, and a Depression-era tenant farmer's house. The Louise Russell Alexander Children's Corner engages children in local culture and heritage. | Walhalla |
| Oconee Station | Originally a military compound and later a trading post, the site offers a unique look at 18 th and 19 th century South Carolina. The stone blockhouse and the William Richards House are the only two structures that remain on the site. | Oconee Station |



Table 5-5. Oconee County Museums (continued)

| Museum | Significance | Location |
|-----------------|---|------------------------|
| World of Energy | Operated by Duke Energy, the hands-on, self-guided facility on Lake Keowee portrays the electrical generation process. With interactive models, the high-tech center reveals how three reactors interact to generate electricity for the Upstate. The facility is also a popular venue for meetings and public activities. Opened in 1969, the center is the longest continually operating nuclear visitor's center in the world. | Oconee Nuclear Station |

b. Libraries

High quality library facilities, programs, and services can enhance, enrich, entertain, and educate residents of all ages, while presenting opportunities for life-long learning and fostering cultural understanding. The ***Oconee County Public Library*** was established in 1948 in Walhalla by County ordinance. The first branch locations were added in Westminster in 1950 and in Salem in 1952. The Seneca branch followed closely in 1953. The system also provides monthly bookmobile service to outlying rural areas that are more than 1.5 miles from a library. The Library system is managed and directed by a Board of Trustees consisting of nine members appointed by the County Council. The system had 44,959 registered patrons, with a circulation of 317,126 and 225,158 visitors in 2018.

The system plays a vital role in promoting genealogical research, computer and internet access, and early and adult literacy through programs such as preschool story time, adult book clubs, and summer reading programs. The local history and genealogy collection is housed in the Antoinette "Ann" Rogers Memorial Room of the main library in Walhalla. As part of the State Library's *Digitization in a Box Initiative*, the Oconee Library is digitizing books, pamphlets and other documents that relate to aspects of Oconee County history. Many of these are works by local authors, which were originally published in very small editions and are no longer available for sale in a print version. Access to e-books and downloadable audio is also available, along with online access to thousands of magazines, newspapers, and reference books. To encourage STEM (Science, Math, Engineering and Technology) learning opportunities for area teens, the library has introduced a telescope lending program and 3D modeling software and printing services. Other community events held at the libraries are family movie nights, children and teen craft workshops, and writing contests.

c. Fine and Performing Arts Centers and Related Community Facilities and Programs

Although Oconee County remains largely rural, it boasts a number of cultural resources that serve to both educate and enrich the lives of its residents and visitors. These resources provide an educational component that generally includes classes, workshops, field trips, and classroom outreach for persons of all ages.



The ***Walhalla Performing Arts Center*** strives to provide a world-class facility for performances, conferences, and special events to enhance the cultural and social life of Upstate South Carolina. The Arts Center is supported with funding from the South Carolina Arts Commission, the Oconee County Accommodations Tax (ATAX) Committee, the City of Walhalla, and private foundations and contributions. The Center is located in the historic Walhalla Civic Auditorium. The current facility is the result of a restoration effort launched in 1993 by the Walhalla Auditorium Restoration Committee. The auditorium was reopened with an inaugural performance in 2003. The facility features beautifully restored palladium windows, a decorative tin ceiling, and original hand planed woodwork and stair railings constructed by skilled German craftsmen.

The ***Westminster Music Centre*** is a non-profit, community focused music venue that hosts the region's finest musicians, artists, and performers in an intimate setting with a professionally designed sound system. In partnership with the City of Westminster, the Centre sponsors *Music on Main*, a live downtown music performance held on the first Friday of each month from April through September. The Centre is governed by the volunteer Westminster Music Association with the shared goal of fostering downtown awareness, tourism, and vitality by attracting local, regional, and out-of-town patrons to quality musical performances and events at the Music Centre.

The ***Gateway Arts Center*** of Westminster seeks to make a wide variety of art, history, and culture accessible to people of all ages and from every walk of life. The Center is an all-volunteer art exhibit and education organization that relies entirely on donations, grants, and fees. The community is engaged in the arts through public participation events that are offered free of charge alongside formal exhibits and classes.

The ***Oconee Community Theatre*** presents diverse plays and dramatic works to promote and encourage local interest in theatrical productions. Local actors are showcased in several productions each year. The Theatre is managed by a nonprofit organization created in 1971, operated with the hard work of dedicated volunteers, and is housed in the Utica School in Seneca.

The ***Upstate Heritage Quilt Trail*** (UHQT) preserves and promotes the history of the Upstate through the local tradition of quilt making and sharing the stories of those who made them. Oconee County was the first county in South Carolina to embrace the quilt trail concept. Today, there are more than 200 quilt blocks on display along the route that extends through Oconee, Anderson, and Pickens Counties. Through the display of quilt patterns on hand-painted panels, the region's homes, barns, churches, community buildings, and historic sites participate in showcasing the colorful stories and generations of craftsmanship that contribute to this County's rich quilt making history.

The ***Young Appalachian Musicians*** (YAM) program was launched in 2010 at the Oconee History Museum. The program is a subsidiary of ***Preserving Our Southern Appalachian Music*** (POSAM) based in neighboring Pickens County. A variety of classes are offered for area youth in



traditional Appalachian musical instruments including guitar, mandolin, banjo, clawhammer banjo, dulcimer, and fiddle. Students learn in a group setting with instruction in tablature and playing by ear.

The **Blue Ridge Arts Center** is committed to "Bringing Art to the People and People to the Arts." Located in the historic district of Seneca and housed in a former church that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Center offers opportunities for artist exhibitions and gallery shows. Classroom studio space allows members and the community to participate in art classes, painting groups, artist demonstrations, events, and meetings. The Center also houses an art library with art reference books, videos, and instructional materials in various mediums. Outreach efforts to place art into the community have included public murals, park benches, and the Alley Cat "sCATenger Hunt" that features steel, laser-cut cats that have been painted by local artists and "hidden" throughout downtown Seneca for residents and visitors to discover. The Arts Center is maintained by the **Blue Ridge Arts Council**, a non-profit organization that works to expand understanding, awareness, and participation in the arts in Oconee County.

Additional public and private facilities are available for cultural programming throughout the County. These facilities host a variety of events including community performances, private functions, and productions.

2. Annual Festivals and Special Events

Local governments, cultural and civic organizations, and the private sector can play a valuable role in providing recreational, cultural, and entertainment opportunities that enhance the sense of community for residents, attract tourists, and boost activity in traditional downtown districts. Oconee County communities and organizations host numerous festivals and special events throughout the year for the enjoyment of residents and visitors. These festivals and entertainment events feature activities from music to bike rides that promote the heritage and scenic resources of the region (Table 5-6).

Table 5-6. Annual Festivals and Special Events in Oconee County

| Event | Location | Date | Activities |
|---------------------------|-------------|------------|---|
| Isaqueena's Last Ride | Various | April | Offers a challenging mountain ride through the Blue Ridge Mountains and S.C. Foothills with 100, 80, 60 and 30 mile route options |
| Jazz Fest | Seneca | April | Three-day music festival in Ram Cat Alley in downtown Seneca |
| Jazz on the Alley | Seneca | April -Oct | Thursday night live music and street party in Historic Ram Cat Alley |
| Wheels in Westminster | Westminster | April | Car show |
| Westminster Bluegrass Jam | Westminster | April | Live performances of Bluegrass musicians |
| Seneca Fest | Seneca | May | Memorial Day Weekend festival featuring music, movies, and food |



| | | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------|----------------|---|
| Rally in the Valley | Walhalla | May | Features bicycle rides of 30 or 60 miles through the scenic foothills of the Blue Ridge, with post-ride live music and barbecue |
| Cinco de Mayo Celebration | Seneca | May | Celebration of Mexican culture with food, piñatas, music, dancing, and shopping in Ram Cat Alley |
| Long Creek Music Festival | Long Creek | May | Three day music festival over Memorial Day weekend with music, crafts, and food vendors |
| Fun in the Sun | West Union | June | Live music, food, and vendors |
| Hillbilly Day | Mountain Rest | July 4 | Showcases traditional bluegrass music, clogging, fiddle and banjo competitions, greased pig chase, BBQ |
| Cruzin' on Main | Seneca | Summer | First Saturdays celebration offering music, food and classic car show |
| South Carolina Apple Festival | Westminster | Labor Day week | Celebrates the beginning of apple season in Oconee County, the State's largest apple producing area |
| Carolina Foothills Heritage Fair | Westminster | Sept | Concerts, livestock shows, rodeos, dance exhibitions, 4-H youth events, hands-on learning opportunities, and farm animal exhibits |
| Road Titans 300 | Oconee County | Oct | Three-day cycling challenge that offers a 150-mile and 300-mile route through scenic Oconee County. |
| Tour de Tugaloo | Tugaloo River | Oct | Offers 22, 42, 62 and 100 mile route options along the Tugaloo River Corridor, Lake Hartwell and the foothills of Western S.C. |
| Oktoberfest | Walhalla | Oct | Celebrates local German heritage with traditional food, music, dancing, craft vendors, and recreation |

Source: *Upcountry South Carolina; Oconee County Chamber of Commerce, 2019*

3. Arts and Cultural Organizations

Arts and culture play an important role in shaping community identity and civic pride, as well as providing economic opportunities for creative residents. Community members connect with art and one another when they attend and take part in music, dance, and theater performances, tour architectural sites and art exhibits, share works of literature, and engage and express themselves through electronic and digital media. Oconee County has a thriving creative sector that includes local writers, artisans, and musicians. The County has active arts groups in areas including drama, music, and folk arts such as quilting.

The arts are easily integrated into strategies that improve the community livability. A recent report on the economic impact of the arts in South Carolina reveals that the arts cluster supports 115,000 jobs statewide, generates \$269 million in tax revenue, and contributes more than \$9.7 billion to the State's economy (*South Carolina's Arts-Related Economic Cluster, 2018*). SCPRT reports that more people visit locations for cultural and heritage activities than for festivals or outdoor recreation.

4. Educational Institutions

Communities that promote a philosophy of lifelong learning among residents are better positioned to successfully compete in a global economy and benefit from a more engaged citizenry. Arts education and music programs are provided to more than 10,400 students each year through the *School District of Oconee County*. The School District supports a countywide arts education program that includes high school chorus, guitar and piano classes, orchestra/strings program, art exhibits, theatre, visual arts, music appreciation and theory classes, and symphonic, concert and marching bands.

The most recent Strategic Plan for the District incorporates the goal of expanding “arts awareness, appreciation and experiential programs, along with arts-infused instructional approaches.” Strategies to advance this goal include partnering with other community arts groups to expand the *Artists in Residency* and *Arts on the Green* programs, as well as the Young Appalachian Musicians program.

5. Related Venues

Oconee County has several agricultural tourism sites and facilities that strongly complement its historic, arts, and cultural resources. In addition to supporting the County’s agricultural economy, agritourism attractions showcase the cultural and historical traditions of the community. A number of local farms have looked beyond traditional markets to diversify their operations through agritourism, incorporating farm tours and field trips, dinners, on-site farm-to-table restaurants with markets, workshops, festivals, and u-pick operations. These operations are detailed in the *Agriculture Element*.

6. Religious Institutions

The faith community played an important role in the early development of Oconee County and its communities. The more than 200 churches and faith communities of various denominations in Oconee County are vital partners in broadening community access to cultural opportunities. These institutions continue to have a positive impact on the quality of life by holding events such as annual community concerts and reunions that preserve community and family histories, maintaining historic cemeteries, providing diverse youth activities and summer camps, and participating in festivals that showcase local food, talent, and crafts.

The faith community is also an essential partner in supporting the County’s benevolent efforts, providing financial and personnel support for a wide range of activities including food banks, daily meal service, a homeless shelter, and a ride to work program. Several churches have combined resources to address the issue of homelessness and provide an outreach effort in the Utica area. The faith community is also leading the renovation of the former detention center that will provide a host of benevolent activities. Churches also often provide day care, preschool, and faith-based private school options for many families.



7. Media

Newspapers, magazines, television, and radio stations can be a key conduit of information about local cultural events and festivals. Although there are no network television stations located within Oconee County, local residents are served by major network affiliate stations based in the Greenville-Spartanburg area. One company publishes two newspapers in Oconee County. The Journal is published daily Tuesday through Sunday, and The Journal Limited is a free publication available weekly. Of the six radio stations based in the County, four are in Seneca, one is in Westminster, and one in Walhalla. Three of the stations broadcast country music, one contemporary religious programming, one adult contemporary music, and one urban contemporary.

8. Cultural Tourism

Tourism has grown to a \$22.6 billion industry in South Carolina, accounting for nearly three percent of the State GDP (*U.S. Travel Association, 2019*). Tourism now supports one in ten jobs statewide. Domestic travelers to the State spent more than \$12 billion on transportation, lodging, food, entertainment, recreation, and incidentals. Sector spending also generates \$1.7 billion in State and local tax revenue. This equates to a tax burden transfer from residents to tourists of \$895 per household.

State data also shows that Oconee County benefitted from more than \$64 million in travel and tourism related expenditures, with \$3.3 million in local tax revenues in 2017. Tourism generated nearly \$10 million in local payroll. This activity ranked Oconee among the top half of South Carolina counties in total travel expenditures. Oconee County received \$406,825 in total accommodations tax allocations for fiscal year 2017-2018, with \$200,070 of the total remaining with the County and \$186,798 going to the City of Seneca, \$7,070 to the City of Walhalla, \$5,496 to the City of Westminster, \$4,253 to the Town of Salem, and \$3,138 to the Town of West Union (*SCPRT, 2018*).

Cultural tourism in particular offers significant economic opportunities for local businesses and residents through the creation of new retail and service markets in the areas of arts and culture, historical tours and sites, genealogy resources, agribusiness, specialty foods, and related products. In addition to visiting historic places and museums during their trips, heritage visitors enjoy shopping, parks, cultural events and festivals, and outdoor recreation activities such as hiking, boating, or biking. Such tourism is an attractive economic development resource for Oconee County as it preserves community character, instills local pride, promotes community investment, improves the overall quality of life, and generates local employment and entrepreneurial opportunities. The continued cooperation of public and private interests in marketing, preservation and revitalization, and programming for cultural tourism will position the County and its municipalities to continue building upon local heritage tourism assets that include historic sites of state and national significance, cultural attractions, festivals, outdoor events, and diverse culinary and retail offerings.



The *South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism* (SCPRT) is a cabinet agency assigned to operate and manage South Carolina's State Parks, market the State as a preferred vacation destination, and provide assistance to local communities for development and promotion of parks, recreation and tourism. SCPRT offers annual grants to support local governments and nonprofits in developing marketing and generating visitors to the state (Table 5-7).

Table 5-7. Cultural and Heritage Tourism Support Opportunities

| Grant Program | Summary | Eligibility | Amount |
|--|--|---|--|
| Emerging Destination Marketing | Seeks to generate new visitation through select tourism advertising activities for highly-developed, emerging tourism destinations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 501(c) non-profit charged with marketing tourism for specific city or unincorporated area | \$100,000 to \$200,000 (2:1 cash match) |
| Destination-Specific Tourism Marketing | Supports destination specific advertising that generate a proven economic return for the State | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualified tourism partners | \$250,000+ (2:1 cash match) |
| Sports Tourism Advertising and Recruitment | Recruits new sporting events that enhance resident quality of life and generate significant economic impact to local communities through additional participant/visitor spending | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nonprofit tourism or sports-related organizations, applying through local governments | Up to \$50,000 (1:1 match) |
| Tourism Advertising | Expand economic benefits of tourism across the state by providing competitive, matching grant funds to qualified tourism marketing partners for direct tourism advertising expenditures in Festivals and Events, Attractions, and Destinations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SC tourism regions and organizations engaged in tourism marketing Local government/non-profits attracting out-of-market visitors to destination, event or attraction | Up to \$100,000 (1:1 and 2:1 match) |
| Undiscovered SC | Assists communities and nonprofits with development of <i>publicly owned</i> tourism products and attractions that encourage visitation to the State | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> County/municipal governments with ATAX distributions of \$550,000 or less | \$100,000 to \$200,000 (1:1 match) |

Source: S.C. Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism, 2019

The Oconee County Parks, Recreation & Tourism Commission serves as the *Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee*. The Committee advises Oconee County Council on the expenditures of revenue generated from accommodations tax. Grants are made to local organizations for promotion of tourism related arts and cultural events and the construction, maintenance, and operation of civic and cultural facilities.

Discover Upcountry Carolina Association is designated by the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism (SCPRT) as one of the State's eleven official regional tourism development and promotion agencies. Established in 1978, the Association serves Anderson, Cherokee, Greenville, Oconee, Pickens, and Spartanburg Counties. The goal of the Committee is to support efforts that attract tourists from outside the Oconee County area and that generate



overnight accommodations. Recent funding has been awarded to festivals, park improvements, and renovation and repair of historic structures.

Visit Oconee SC, formerly the Mountain Lakes Convention and Visitors Bureau, is the destination marketing organization focused on bringing visitors into Oconee County to visit, stay, dine, and shop. Local businesses, restaurants, lodging, arts and cultural events, and recreational opportunities throughout Oconee County are highlighted through newsletters, social media, and visitor guides.

D. GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Cultural resources, activities, and opportunities are prominent and essential elements of community life, contributing to the vibrancy, place, and identity of the County and the quality of life and well-being of its residents. Rural communities with attractive cultural, scenic, and historical resources are among the fastest growing heritage tourism destinations. A concerted effort to preserve and enhance the community's rich cultural resources base will continue to contribute to the appeal of Oconee County as a desirable place to work and live and as a tourism and retirement destination.

The goals, objectives and strategies for implementation (GOIS) table summarizes the actions that will be undertaken in the coming decade to achieve the goals and objectives identified in the *Cultural Element*.

| Goals/Objectives/Strategies | Accountable Agencies | Time Frame for Evaluation |
|--|---|---------------------------|
| Goal 5.1. Protect the historic and cultural heritage of Oconee County, as embodied and reflected in its historic structures, sites, and districts. | | |
| Objective 5.1.1. Emphasize the importance of historic and cultural resources in the policies, plans, and ordinances of local governments to ensure that the unique character of the County is preserved and enhanced. | | |
| Strategy 5.1.1.1. Identify and address the protection of historical and cultural resources through County and municipal land use plans and regulations. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oconee County • Municipalities | 2025 |
| Strategy 5.1.1.2. Enhance the visual and aesthetic character of the County and its municipalities using codes enforcement, architectural review boards, and other measures as appropriate. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oconee County • Municipalities | 2021 |
| Strategy 5.1.1.3. Survey, list, and record the County's archaeological and historical assets, and inventory and add potential sites within the County that have historical and cultural significance. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oconee County • Municipalities • SC Archives and History • Property Owners | 2020 |



| Goals/Objectives/Strategies | Accountable Agencies | Time Frame for Evaluation |
|---|---|---------------------------|
| Objective 5.1.2. Protect local sites, structures and districts which represent or reflect elements of cultural, social, economic, political, and architectural history at the community, County, regional and state levels. | | |
| <u>Strategy 5.1.2.1.</u> Promote the on-going improvement and maintenance of property condition and appearance of historic structures and districts. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oconee County • Municipalities • Nonprofits • Property Owners/ Businesses • Neighborhood Associations | 2021 |
| <u>Strategy 5.1.2.2.</u> Encourage the adaptive reuse of historic or architecturally significant buildings that connect the County and its communities with their histories. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oconee County • Municipalities • Property Owners | 2025 |
| <u>Strategy 5.1.2.3.</u> Explore the purchase and adaptive reuse of the Utica Mill site. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oconee County • City of Seneca • Private Businesses/ Nonprofits | 2021 |
| <u>Strategy 5.1.2.4.</u> Educate the public and businesses on the economic and cultural benefits of historic preservation and available incentives. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oconee County • Municipalities | 2025 |
| <u>Strategy 5.1.2.5.</u> Work with the School District of Oconee County School and private schools to establish and deliver programs on historic preservation and community history. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School District of Oconee County (SDOC) • Private and Home Schools | 2030 |
| Goal 5.2. Strengthen countywide access, involvement, and appreciation of the arts. | | |
| Objective 5.2.1. Strengthen the creative capacity of the community by providing all County residents with diverse opportunities for arts participation. | | |
| <u>Strategy 5.2.1.1.</u> Encourage residents to connect with one another and their communities through a strong awareness of and commitment to local history and historic places, as well as a deep appreciation for the arts. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oconee County • SDOC • Museums and Historic Sites | On-Going |
| <u>Strategy 5.2.1.2.</u> Increase the awareness of Oconee County residents of all ages and income levels in visual, performing, and literary arts, and cultural programming. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fine/Performing Arts Centers • SDOC • Other Cultural and Arts Groups | On-Going |
| <u>Strategy 5.2.1.3.</u> Support the School District of Oconee County and community arts groups in maintaining a comprehensive arts program in local schools, including the Arts-in-Education programs to expose students to a lifetime of visual and performing arts, music, and creative writing. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDOC • Oconee County • Artists and Arts Groups • Employers | 2025 |



| Goals/Objectives/Strategies | Accountable Agencies | Time Frame for Evaluation |
|--|--|---------------------------|
| Strategy 5.2.1.4. Enable residents of all ages to acquire knowledge and skills in the arts by supporting arts projects that address lifelong learning. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDOC • Cultural and Arts Groups | On-Going |
| Strategy 5.2.1.5. Promote opportunities for volunteerism and sponsorships of tourism, cultural, and recreational offerings. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oconee County • Municipalities • Cultural Organizations • Businesses/Employers | On-Going |
| Objective 5.2.2. Strengthen the creative and operational capacity of existing community arts and cultural organizations. | | |
| Strategy 5.2.2.1. Increase local arts funding by supporting arts organizations in federal and state grants applications, as well as corporate and private funding. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oconee County • Municipalities • Private Businesses/ Nonprofits | 2030 |
| Strategy 5.2.2.2. Maximize funding from sources including the National Endowment for the Arts, the S.C. Arts Commission, the S.C. Humanities Council and the S.C. Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oconee County • Cultural and Arts Groups | 2030 |
| Strategy 5.2.2.3. Continue to support cultural and arts venues through annual appropriation of accommodations tax revenues. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oconee County • Municipalities | 2030 |
| Strategy 5.2.2.4. Encourage volunteer involvement in cultural programming, organizations and events by community, faith-based, and civic groups, as well as businesses. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural and Arts Groups • Faith-based Organizations • SDOC • Civic and Community groups | On-Going |
| Goal 5.3. Leverage the County's historic and cultural assets as an economic development resource. | | |
| Objective 5.3.1. Integrate the County's heritage into the overall economic development process, especially as it relates to building a cultural tourism industry. | | |
| Strategy 5.3.1.1. Maintain and communicate a shared vision and guiding principles for tourism and recreation development in Oconee County among the public and private sectors. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oconee County • Municipalities • Museums/Arts Organizations • Business Owners • Oconee Chamber of Commerce | 2021 |



| Goals/Objectives/Strategies | Accountable Agencies | Time Frame for Evaluation |
|---|--|---------------------------|
| <p><u>Strategy 5.3.1.2.</u> Increase awareness of the rich genealogical resources in Oconee County as a means to attract additional heritage tourists.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oconee County Museums | <p>2030</p> |
| <p><u>Strategy 5.3.1.3.</u> Ensure the County’s visibility in the regional tourism market to support sustainable tourism development and make the County a destination for cultural enrichment, leisure, entertainment, and the arts.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upcountry SC Tourism Association • Visit Oconee SC • Oconee Chamber of Commerce • Oconee County | <p>On-Going</p> |
| <p><u>Strategy 5.3.1.4.</u> Recognize, build upon and promote the County’s historic and cultural assets with agricultural, Colonial and Civil War, African-American, Native American (Cherokee), and Appalachian themes through local historical and arts institutions and programming.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oconee County • Municipalities • Museums/Arts Organizations • Business Owners • Upcountry SC/Visit Oconee SC | <p>2025</p> |
| <p>Objective 5.3.2. Support employers engaged in the cultural and heritage tourism, agritourism, and nature-based tourism sectors.</p> | | |
| <p><u>Strategy 5.3.2.1.</u> Pursue additional SCPRT and other grants for local governments and non-profits to supplement promotional efforts in tourism marketing for festivals, attractions, and events.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipalities • Oconee County • Cultural Organizations | <p>2030</p> |
| <p><u>Strategy 5.3.2.2.</u> Launch hospitality and tourism sector training and workforce development to support excellence in quality of services.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDOC • TCTC • Oconee Chamber of Commerce • Employers | <p>2025</p> |
| <p><u>Strategy 5.3.2.3.</u> Collaborate with the private sector to expand local shopping, dining, and lodging amenities as an important means of capturing tourist dollars.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oconee Chamber of Commerce • Oconee County • Municipalities • Business Owners | <p>2021</p> |
| <p><u>Strategy 5.3.2.4.</u> Preserve the culture and identity tied to agriculture and the landscape of the County’s rural communities.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oconee County • Farms and Agribusinesses • Land Conservation Groups | <p>2023</p> |

