

LOCAL CONSERVATION GROUP HOSTS ITS ANNUAL MEETING

Mast General Store recognized as Best Friend of the Reedy River

(December 23, 2022 – Greenville, SC) Friends of the Reedy River (FoRR) recognized Mast General Store as one of the 2022 Best Friend of the Reedy River award recipients. This honors those whose support for protection and restoration of the Reedy has been exemplary. This year's Annual Meeting took place in the Hayne Hipp Community Room at Feed & Seed Co. in Judson Mill from 6 pm to 8 pm on Wednesday, November 30th and was open to all FoRR members.

Erica Pedone (General Manager) and Karin Esbenshade (Store Training Coordinator) of Greenville's Mast General Store accepted the award on behalf of their organization. Mast General Store chose FoRR as their Friends Day Partner on September 10, donating 10% of profits from the entire day, and gave their customers the opportunity to round their purchases up. They also supported Friends of the Reedy River during May RoundUp for a Cause. "They have consistently been one of FoRR's largest donors over the last eight years, and they also regularly invite the FoRR Watershed Scientist to speak to their staff about the importance of protecting and restoring the Reedy. "They truly respect and understand the critical task of maintaining a healthy watershed and how it affects the citizens and businesses of Greenville," said Scott Butler, president, board of directors FoRR. Other Best Friend award recipients were Joe Tomasello (Individual Financial Supporter), Liene Kukainis (Volunteer), and Summer Gagnon, Greenville's Litter Ends Here (Community Supporter).

Keynote speaker, Dorothy Dowe, Vice Mayor Pro Tem for Greenville City Council, discussed how the combined efforts of the City of Greenville and FoRR can make a real impact on the Reedy. The Keynote presentation highlighted some of the city's top priorities, which will lay the groundwork for a healthier Reedy River watershed and more equitable access for all of Greenville's citizens. The City wants to preserve as much as 35% of Greenville's remaining vacant land as open space or parkland, they are aiming for a range of mobility options to reduce car dependence, and Dowe said City officials want at least 10% of all new housing income-restricted for high-quality affordable housing.

Four new board members were elected for three-year terms: Brooks Dixon (Engineering Project Manager, City of Greenville), Laura Korte (Retired, Chemical Engineer), Angie Price (Operations Services Officer, Renewable Water Resources), and Ben Lord (Civil Engineer, RTI International). All of the 2023 Executive Committee positions will remain the same: Scott Butler (President), Phil Townsend (Vice President), Katherine Amidon (Secretary), Madeleine Bolick (Treasurer), and Katie Callahan (Immediate Past President).

FoRR certified 60 new water quality monitoring volunteers and hosted multiple workshops this year. They advocated for buffer ordinances along the Reedy and encouraged sustainable development decisions to help protect valuable wetlands. FoRR mobilized 150+ volunteers at each of the two major cleanups and removed over six tons of trash and 135 tires from the Reedy and its banks. They participated in several educational and outreach events such as The Nature Conservancy OktoberForest Fest, Subaru's "Share the Love," TD Saturday Market, Greenville Drive Earth Day, and Roper Mountain Science Center's Summer Adventure Series.

Founded in 1993, Friends of the Reedy River is a 501(c) (3) non-profit, volunteer-based, conservation organization dedicated to promoting, protecting, and restoring the Reedy River. They carry out their work through river cleanups, riverbank restoration, educational events, and water monitoring programs. Friends of the Reedy River is transforming the river through on-the-ground, grass-roots efforts. www.FriendsOfTheReedyRiver.org

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