

THEY'RE ALL AROUND US:

Book shows off SC's "Beautiful Places"



Seventy-five years ago, South Carolina's first state parks were created, and a beautiful book, aptly titled *Beautiful Places*, has been published to commemorate this landmark in our history. End of subject, close the book.

But wait. There on page 71, an opalescent moon floats in a burnished sky in Lake Greenwood State Recreation Area. On page 65, a White-tailed deer blurs into Dreher Island State Recreation Area. And what about that starry sky on page 40, punctured by the historic lighthouse at Hunting Island State Park? Have you ever seen anything like it?

Maybe the better question is, have you ever experienced anything like it, and you probably have, if you're one who visits the parks. Unfortunately, not enough of us do, says Chad Prosser, director of the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation

and Tourism, which published the book. *Beautiful Places* is his agency's invitation to explore the state's 47 parks, pay tribute to those who built them, and raise money for their continued protection. "I fear the loss of these natural wonders," Prosser, the author, writes in the book's forward. "I fear the priorities of our time. This book is my argument against life lived too fast."

A 140-page coffee table book, *Beautiful Places* includes a history of the parks by Cal Harrison and a foreword by Rudy Mancke. But it's dominated by the photography of Jonathan O. Holloway, a Greenwood resident who's worked across the globe. Declaring that "the beauty of South Carolina is right outside your back door," Holloway proves his case with unexpected views and intriguing angles. Witness detailed close-ups of a Turkey vulture's feathers, burbling water from artesian springs, wisteria blossoms drifting into pinecones. In other words, these aren't ordinary photos.

"The book wasn't intended to be a catalog or literal representation of every park, though every park is represented," Prosser explains. "We were trying to convey what it is people take away from their experiences there. That's why we chose more of the impressionistic images."

Printed on Elemental Chorine Free paper, *Beautiful Places* is thoughtful in other ways. Quotes from authors, artists, poets and philosophers accompany photos; so do poems and facts about South Carolina's natural resources. Givhan's Ferry was named for a Huguenot refugee, for instance; a Union soldier described the Salkehatchie River as "indescribably ugly."

Proceeds from the book will fund the Beautiful Places Alliance, a not-for-profit foundation charged with making sure the parks remain inviolate. Enhancing programs, creating sustainable environmental initiatives and preserving natural and cultural assets are the BPA's goals.

"Unless we're good stewards, these special places will be lost—along with pieces of who we are as South Carolinians," State Parks Director Phil Gaines warns in the book. "Our generation will be judged on what we deem as important to pass on to the next generation." ●

For more information, call 803.734.1368 or visit beautifulplacesalliance.org.

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