

Annual Open House at the Parks Mill Rocky Shoals Spiderlily Preserve

INFORMATION SHEET



Dates are set for the annual Open House at **Parks Mill Rocky Shoals Spiderlily Preserve** during peak bloom season again. We will be hosting **guided visits on Saturday, May 10 and Saturday May 17** this year.

This is the peak bloom period for the spiderlilies. This spectacular native lily thrives in rapids in shoaly areas of lower piedmont streams. The Preserve is near the town of Plum Branch, and consists of 15 acres of woodland, a large population of shoals spider lilies in Stevens Creek, and an historic turbine-powered grist mill. This site has been protected through the joint efforts of the **SC Native Plant Society, Naturaland Trust in Greenville, and the Upper Savannah Land Trust in Greenwood.**

About the Site

The creek is home to a large and prosperous population of rocky shoals spiderlily (*Hymenocallis coronaria*), a 2.5-foot-tall lily with large

(4-inch diameter) white flowers that appear in profusion in early May through mid-June every year, with peak bloom during the middle 2 weeks of May.

The spiderlily is the major reason for protecting the site, but there is also an active aquatic animal community in the creek, including American gar, Bartram's bass, and other fish species, with an accompanying predator community, including ospreys, herons, kingfishers, raccoons, and river otters.



The Mill building is being meticulously restored by a Native Plant Society team. The mill machinery is largely intact but non-functional. In working to restore the mill building, we have uncovered evidence that, in addition to a grain milling facility, there was a sawmill and a cotton gin on the site.

There is a dam and mill-pond on the neighboring up-stream property, with a millrace canal that conveyed water about 200 yards to a penstock and two turbines that generated the torque that operated the mill machinery.

We are actively working (and fund-raising) to restore the mill building to a sustainable condition.

To Register

This site is protected, and access is available only by appointment, and with a responsible member of the Preserve Protection team present. We ask that you register via e-mail to bstrngr@outlook.com in advance to visit the site during a morning (10:00 am till noon) or afternoon period (1:00 pm till 3:00 pm) on May 10 or May 17. So save the dates the dates in your calendar!



Directions

Plum Branch, SC is at the intersection of SC Hwy 28 and SC Hwy 283, in McCormick County, and is probably recognized on your smart phone Maps app.

On your cell-phone Maps app, find Plum Branch, then follow SC 283 eastward a little over 2 miles to where William Self Rd joins SC 283 on

the left (it is just before you reach the bridge over Stevens Creek). This is the location of the entrance to the Parks Mill site and will be clearly indicated with signage.

If you need them, the GPS coordinates for the entrance are: 33.8533 degrees by -82.2301 degrees.

- DO NOT PARK in the entrance road, as we need to maintain open access to the Mill and the lilies. There is parking at the Site in the small grassy area at the intersection, and the road shoulder alongside William Self Road (S-33-202

Precautions

Parks Mill is a rustic site with limited amenities beyond a bathroom with lavatory and toilet. There will be litter barrels present and littering of the site may discourage future open house opportunities.

1. Wear sturdy footwear and consider bringing a hiking stick or walker, because the edge of the Creek is a bit rough, so walk along the edge of the Creek at your own risk! There is a cleared and marked trail located a few feet from the Creek edge from which the lilies can be photographed.
2. May is well into the tick (ugh!) season, so wear long pants, and be prepared to cuff your pants into sturdy socks. Wear a cap and treat it with insect repellent. Likewise for your shirt collar and sleeves. And avoid walking in areas of tall vegetation. We will have insect repellent spray on site. Check yourself for ticks at your earliest opportunity!
3. Do not wade into the Creek, for two reasons: 1. The rocks are very slick, and we are not responsible for "butt plants" and 2; The lilies are protected, and we don't want them to experience human foot traffic. **Please ensure any children in your party honor these precautions as well.**

4. The Mill building is a construction site, and some spaces may be off-limits to exploration.

Note

All visitors will be required to sign a waiver form that holds The South Carolina Native Plant Society, Naturaland Trust, and Upper Savannah Land Trust all blameless in case of injury during these events.

In case of questions or concerns, e-mail Bill Stringer at bstringer@outlook.com.