We are so happy to be able to preserve this beautiful land, a part of God's bounty. It will always remain natural- trees, river, fields, and forest. Funding from the South Carolina Conservation Bank helped make this possible.

Dianne Culbertson
LIFE ON THE REEDY — A rock wall built by Mitchell Pressley in the 1940s helped channel some of the Reedy River straight to his grist mill, which was used for decades to grind corn and grains from nearby farmers. The original mill was built by members of the Culbertson family in the 1800s. Now because of a conservation easement, the land is in a conservation trust and will remain undeveloped. The owner since 2014, Dianne Culbertson relied on help from Upstate Forever to get 108 acres preserved for the future.

Conservation easement celebrated

By Judith Brown

Staff Writer

There’s always truth in the proverb saying that nothing is permanent, but thanks to a land trust agreement and a conservation easement, a parcel of property on the Reedy River at Ekom Beach Road will remain pristine. Thanks to the work of a Gray Court and Owings committee, and to Dianne Culbertson, late owner of the property, the Hagood Mill area family will be able to keep their farms, or maintain the property near the old mill even if it were to be sold.

"Almost every time he’d go to Gray Court, Pressley would ask me if he was ready to sell it. Dianne said, laughing at the memory of Charlie’s desire to reclaim the property," Culbertson said. "It’s helped preserve life on the Reedy for future generations, and I know he would want this property into a conservation easement which protects the land from development and will remain pristine, thanks to the conservation easement and the land trust agreement. The land, which was used for decades to grind corn and grains from nearby farmers, is the only water-powered grist mill still in existence in Laurens County, and it was used to make a family farm more efficient. The land will remain pristine, thanks to the conservation easement which protects the land from development and will remain undeveloped.

When Pressley passed away, the family estate would be auctioned in August 2014 that the A. Mitchell Pressley family would be auctioned off. She and her son Chad knew they would try to purchase at least some of the property. From 1785 when Revolutionary War soldier Robert Culbertson purchased land in what is now the Headland Road and Ekom Community until the 1930s, Culbertson family land, Culbertson Mill was already a working mill by 1780, and the Reedy River was an integral part of the extended family. It was land that was highly appreciated by Dianne Culbertson, who passed away in 2005, and her son Chad, who also has a farm in the Gray Court area and appreciates the family land and history.

"Charles used to say you can’t low the taxes some so you can afford to keep your land," Culbertson said. "It’s a great way for family farms to make sure we keep some of it for the family farm owners." For anyone interested in obtaining more information about conservation easements or land bank properties, contact Upstate Forever at www.upstateforever.org or call 864-250-0500.

"Little Knob" area of Gray Court, home to the Hagood Mill, is on the right side of Ekom Beach Road and guarantee its protection through a conservation easement. "Almost every time he’d go to Gray Court, Pressley would ask me if he was ready to sell it. Dianne said, laughing at the memory of Charlie’s desire to reclaim the property," Culbertson said. "It’s helped preserve life on the Reedy for future generations, and I know he would want this property into a conservation easement which protects the land from development and will remain undeveloped.

Culbertsons preserve life on the Reedy for future generations

By Judith Brown

Staff Writer

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