

South Carolina's healthiest rivers tell their story one fish at a time

SCDNR fisheries biologists conduct research on the SC7 Expedition trail

JONES GAP, SC, UNITED STATES, July 16, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- S.C. Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) fisheries biologists conducted an electrofishing demonstration on the Middle Saluda River at Jones Gap State Park, South Carolina, as part of the sixth-annual South Carolina 7 (SC7) Expedition, earlier this month: The demonstration highlighted the role of fisheries monitoring in assessing the health of mountain streams.

Using backpack electrofishing equipment, SCDNR staff temporarily and harmlessly stunned fish with a controlled electrical current, allowing biologists to safely collect, identify, measure and document native species before returning them unharmed to the stream. The survey revealed a variety of native mountain stream species, including minnows, sculpins and other fish adapted to the cold, oxygen-rich waters of the Blue Ridge region.

For SCDNR fisheries biologists, electrofishing is an important tool for evaluating aquatic ecosystems. Fish communities provide valuable information about stream conditions because many species are sensitive to changes in water quality, habitat availability and environmental conditions.



SCDNR fisheries biologists conduct research on the SC7 Expedition trail.



SCDNR fisheries biologists use data collected from streams across the state to support conservation strategies and maintain healthy aquatic ecosystems for future generations.

“Fish sampling gives us a snapshot of the overall condition of a stream,” said Dr. Tom Mullikin, SCDNR director and leader of the SC7 Expedition. “By documenting species diversity and population trends, our biologists can better understand the health of these systems and make informed decisions about conservation and management.”

During an electrofishing survey, biologists will use specialized equipment to temporarily immobilize fish in a defined area of a given stream. Each specimen is identified, measured and recorded as part of ongoing monitoring efforts. The data collected helps SCDNR track changes in aquatic communities and identify potential concerns before they become significant issues. Mountain streams such as the Middle Saluda River support a variety of native species and provide important ecological benefits throughout S.C. These waterways contribute to drinking water supplies, recreational opportunities, wildlife habitat and overall watershed health.

The Jones Gap State Park demonstration, July 9, allowed visitors to observe the scientific methods used by SCDNR biologists to study and conserve freshwater resources. Many of the species collected during the survey are rarely seen because they spend most of their lives beneath rocks and within the fast-moving waters of mountain streams.

SC7, from the mountains to the sea, is a monthlong statewide expedition showcasing South Carolina’s rich, diverse natural resources, conservation efforts and the people working to protect them. Through continued research and monitoring, SCDNR fisheries biologists use data collected from streams across the state to support conservation strategies and maintain healthy aquatic ecosystems for future generations.

– For more information about SC7, visit – <https://southcarolina7.com/>

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