

The Post and Courier

Founded in 1803

PAMELA J. BROWNING, Publisher

MITCH PUGH, Executive Editor

CHARLES R. ROWE, Editorial Page Editor

FRANK WOOTEN, Assistant Editor

EDITORIALS

Heirs' treasure in the backyard

Property owners struggling to pay taxes on their land and to maintain it are particularly vulnerable these days to another challenge: developers.

As the economy has improved, builders are ramping up their business. And often the promise of some quick cash pushes land-poor property owners to make a sale that they don't want to make: land that has belonged in their family for generations.

It's a sale that conservationists lament as well — one more piece of rural property fallen to development.

The Center for Heirs' Property Preservation, in its mission to help families obtain clear title to their land, has seen the cycle too often.

Now the center is going one step further. Executive director Jennie L. Stephens explains today on our Commentary page that a new program helps qualifying property owners develop forestry plans that will produce income, making it possible for them to keep their land.

And, at the same time, good forestry management is good for promoting healthy forests.

The lineup of sponsors is an apt reflection of the goals of the Sustainable Forestry Program. The U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities, the USDA Forest Service and the USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Service all see merit in supporting efforts to help landowners (African American landowners in this case) hold on to their family land.

Clearly, the program is seen as benefiting forests in general.

And the Center for Heirs' Property Preservation for years has recognized the human value of families preserving their heritage.

Doing that can be complicated as land is passed down from generation to generation without clear title, leaving it at risk. The Heirs' Property center guides people through those legal steps.

And now the center is teaching some of those same families that their work to clear titles was a worthy thing to do.

The property isn't just a tie to the past, but a road to a more prosperous future.

And it's good for the environment, too.

SUNDAY, August 17, 2014

POSTANDCOURIER.COM

Charleston, North Charleston, S.C. ★ ★ \$2.00

THE SOUTH'S OLDEST DAILY NEWSPAPER • FOUNDED 1803

The Post and Courier