



**\*\*MEDIA ADVISORY\*\***

## **SOUTH CAROLINA WILDLIFE AND WATERS AT RISK**

### **New report shows state's streams, rivers and wetlands endangered**

WASHINGTON – February 18, 2010 – A new report shows serious threats to South Carolina's wetlands and streams – and to its waterfowl, fish, and wildlife. Compiled with the support of the National Wildlife Federation, Ducks Unlimited, and Trout Unlimited, the report identifies two case studies where the loss of Clean Water Act protections has put South Carolina waters at risk of federally unregulated pollution, and destruction.

As a result of regulatory guidance resulting from two Supreme Court cases in 2001 and 2006, tens of millions of acres of wetlands and thousands of miles of streams across the nation have been put at risk of losing Clean Water Act protections.

“Protecting wetlands and streams in South Carolina is critical to maintaining the habitats that support South Carolina's wildlife and waterfowl,” said Jim Murphy, wetlands and water resources counsel, National Wildlife Federation. “Sportsmen are a major economic force in South Carolina, and losing these water resources threatens that benefit.”

This report provides an overview of the waters at risk in South Carolina and documents two specific cases in South Carolina where important waterways have lost basic federal pollution protections or been placed at risk because of the confused state of the law. Included among these are a large coastal wetland in the Murrells Inlet area in Horry County (known as the “Spectre Wetland”) and almost 500 acres of wetlands in the Black Tom Bay area in Berkeley County (known as the “Pine Hill Tract”) that eventually feed into Charleston Harbor. Protection of coastal and headwater wetlands such as those highlighted in the report will be particularly vital for the ability of people and wildlife to adapt to impacts from climate change such as rising sea levels and more intense precipitation events. It is almost certain that these waters would have been protected prior to the 2001 and 2006 Supreme Court decisions that weakened the Clean Water Act.

“The confusion and lack of clarity over what is and is not covered by the Clean Water Act threatens to undermine years of conservation efforts,” said Kim Diana Connolly, who helped compile the report. “These examples are indicative of the larger problem that this confusion is causing for America's waterways.”

“TU, DU, the South Carolina Wildlife Federation, and the National Wildlife Federation, devote thousands of hours of volunteer effort, and hundreds of thousands of dollars, each year to restoring and protecting South Carolina’s waters which are at risk from the harmful Supreme Court decisions,” said Steve Moyer, vice president of Government Affairs, Trout Unlimited. “These waters need the full protection of the Clean Water Act.”

-30-

**Aileo Weinmann**  
**Neil Shader**

**[weinmanna@nwf.org](mailto:weinmanna@nwf.org)**  
**[nshader@ducks.org](mailto:nshader@ducks.org)**

**202.797.6801**  
**202.347.1530**