A Brief History

The history behind Lynch's Woods Park is almost as diverse, complex, and rich as the land within it. If you were to visit the park today, you wouldn't see the park of yesteryear; but, in your very presence there, you'd be reestablishing what once was: a place to commune with neighbors and with nature.

Lynch's Woods was once part of a larger tract of 700 acres with fairgrounds, a racetrack, and an American Legion Hall. Our earliest records show that the land was owned by a Rev. Elijah Lynch (or Linch) in the 1840's, hence the name, Lynch's Woods, and was deeded to Job Johnson in 1849.

Throughout the 1940's and 1950's sporadic improvements were made, such as the introduction of electricity to the property, due to the efforts of the Girl Scouts who also ran a camp there, and the Exchange Club. From 1978-1980 however, Lynch's Woods was closed. Natural stresses on the land at the time necessitated some logging to be done, and though the forest was aided, the road became impassable. In the early 1980's, the Saluda National Guard was called upon to repair the road, but the park remained closed to the public. In the mid-1980's, the city deeded their half of the property to the county. Then, just when things were beginning to look up, for the park, flood waters from a storm in 1986 washed out one of the larger bridges, and again made the road impassable. This time, the Newberry Soil and Water Conservation District (NSWCD) consulted with the East Piedmont Rural Conservation and Development Council, and the two agencies were able to secure funding from the US Forest Service for a laminated, free span, timber bridge–another unique aspect of the park. The NSWCD, having kept up with the sporadic improvements and hindrances, felt that they too could make some valuable contributions to enhance and safeguard the property, and offered their assistance in managing the resources there. When the county disbanded the Park Commission in 1991, the NSWCD agreed to develop, control, and maintain the land in conjunction with county administration.

From 1991 until the present, the Newberry Conservation District has spearheaded the development and management of the park, obtaining approximately $140,000 in grant funding, and partnering with various organizations to bring Lynch's Woods back into our everyday vocabulary. Negotiations in the early 1990's have resulted in the park being incorporated into the Palmetto Trail as the Gateway to the Upstate.

It is a miracle that Lynch's Woods has survived through all these years, particularly with the more recent urban expansion, but the miracle workers here are all of those people that fought to protect its natural integrity for the re-opening of Lynch's Woods to be a success, it has to be more than a recreational park, and more than a place to commune with nature. It has to be an illustration of how diverse, complex, and rich, as the land within it.