

CENTER FOR

Heirs' Property
PRESERVATION™

HEIRS'
PROPERTY

MATTERS

**Rooted
in Legacy,
Growing
for the
Future**

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The CEO Corner

Spring is a season of renewal, and at the Center for Heirs' Property Preservation®, it also signifies growth, transformation, and new opportunities to serve families across South Carolina and beyond. As we reflect on the past season, we celebrate the impact of our

programs, the dedication of our team, and the resilience of the landowners we serve.

This year is especially meaningful as we commemorate 20 years of empowering families to protect and preserve their heirs' property. Since our founding, we have remained steadfast in achieving our mission — providing legal education, sustainable forestry opportunities, and advocacy to help under-resourced families build generational wealth through their land.

From the launch of the East Texas Heirs' Property Initiative to our continued success in the Woodland Community Champions program, we are expanding our reach, deepening our partnerships, and ensuring that more families can turn their land into a legacy.

Thank you for being part of this journey. Your support, whether through participation, partnership, or advocacy, makes this work possible. As we move forward, we invite you to celebrate with us, engage in our programs, and help us continue building a future where family land is preserved and prosperity is shared across generations.

With deep gratitude,

CEO, Center for Heir's Property Preservation®

Our Mission

The Center for Heirs' Property Preservation® protects heirs' property and promotes the sustainable use of land to provide increased economic benefit to low wealth family landowners through our legal and forestry education and services.

Our Vision

All heirs' property owners and their communities will be educated on the issue of heirs' property and will have access to the resources to maximize the preservation and development of land. CHPP™ will be the trusted source on heirs' property related issues and will serve as a national model.

2025 Board Members

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The Center for Heirs' Property Preservation®

Celebrating 20 Years!

The Center for Heirs' Property Preservation® is celebrating two decades of impact, advocacy, and commitment to families across the South Carolina and beyond!

What started as a local initiative has grown into a powerful force for change — helping thousands of families secure their land, safeguard their heritage, and create pathways to generational wealth.

Through dedicated legal services and sustainable forestry programs, we remain steadfast in achieving our mission to protect heirs' property and ensure its value for future generations.

To commemorate this milestone, we invite you to an evening of reflection, recognition, and celebration at our **20th Anniversary Gala: Rooted in Legacy on Friday, June 20, 2025, at the Charleston Gaillard Center!**

Enjoy an inspiring keynote address from **Chuck Leavell**, longtime keyboardist and Musical Director for The Rolling Stones. Beyond his legendary music career, Chuck is also an award-winning tree farmer and the host of the PBS series *America's Forests with Chuck Leavell*. We're proud to share that CHPP™ was featured in Episode III of the series.

The evening will also feature a silent auction during the reception, followed by entertainment and dancing after the program——making it a celebration you won't want to miss!

This special event will bring together community leaders, supporters, and families to honor our shared achievements and look ahead to a promising future.

Tickets are available and can be purchased at www.heirsproperty.org/chpp20

For more details, please contact Brett Wadford at bwadford@heirsproperty.org or Nulani Bennett at nbennett@heirsproperty.org. Feel free to give us a call at [843] 745-7055.

Thank you for being a part of our journey! Here's to the next 20 years of impact!



The graphic is a rectangular invitation with rounded corners, featuring a decorative border at the top and bottom with a repeating pattern of red, blue, and green squares and circles. In the center, there is a logo for the 20th Anniversary, with the number '20' in a large, stylized font and 'th' and 'ANNIVERSARY' in smaller text. To the right of the logo, the text 'You Are Invited To:' is written in a simple font. Below this, the word 'Gala' is written in a large, elegant, cursive script. Underneath 'Gala', the phrase 'Rooted In Legacy' is written in a smaller, sans-serif font. The date and time are listed as 'Friday, June 20, 2025' and 'Reception 6:00 pm | Event 7:00 pm'. The location is given as 'Charleston Gaillard Center' and '95 Calhoun Street, Charleston, SC 29401'. At the bottom, the text 'Sponsored by' is followed by two logos: the Wells Fargo logo (a red square with 'WELLS FARGO' in white) and the Center for Heirs' Property Preservation logo (a green square with a tree and the text 'CENTER FOR Heirs' Property PRESERVATION').



CHPP™ 20th Anniversary Celebration at the Opportunity Center



The weather may have delayed our celebration, but our mission and gratitude remain stronger than ever! On February 21, 2025, we proudly honored 20 years of service at the Center for Heirs' Property Preservation®. For two decades, we have worked to protect family land, empower communities, and build generational wealth — ensuring that heirs' property remains a valuable asset for families today and for generations to come.

We want to extend our heartfelt thanks to our supporters, partners, staff, and community for standing with us on this journey. Your dedication and belief in our mission have made this milestone possible.

You can view our 20th anniversary video on our YouTube channel:

@centerforheirspropertypres4512.

East Texas Heirs' Property Initiative Launch (ETHPi)

The Center for Heirs' Property Preservation® [CHPP™] is excited to announce the official launch of the East Texas Heirs' Property Initiative [ETHPi]! This initiative will provide direct technical assistance to families in Angelina, Houston, Jasper, Nacogdoches, Newton, Polk, Sabine, San Augustine, Shelby, San Jacinto, Trinity, and Tyler counties — helping landowners secure their property, preserve their legacy, and build generational wealth.

A huge thank you to everyone who joined us for our launch event on January 30th! Your energy and support made this an incredible and

meaningful moment as we continue working to protect family land and strengthen communities.

Learn more about ETHPi, visit www.heirsproperty.org/ethpi.





Holding On: One Man's Story of Land, Legacy, and a \$2 Bill

Back in October of the early 1960s, Peter Smith Sr. returned home to South Carolina from Bridgeport, Connecticut. Like many young men in the South, he had gone North in search of better wages, far more than the small amount he earned picking cotton in the Southern fields. But as the oldest child in a large family, Peter had responsibilities. Every summer, he traveled north to work, making sure he had enough money to buy schoolbooks and clothes for himself and his siblings.

Peter and his four brothers were well known across Dorchester, Charleston, Orangeburg, and Berkeley Counties for their skill in picking cotton, beans, cucumbers, and more. By the age of 12, Peter was already working across four counties. However, every fall, he returned home, missing the first semester of high school to help support his family. In late September 1962, as he settled back in South Carolina, a lady who was a local sharecropper approached him for help. Her cotton fields needed picking, and she had no one to do the work.

Peter initially refused. He had gone to Connecticut precisely to avoid picking cotton. But she begged him, and feeling compassion for her, Peter and his brothers agreed to help. After school that day, Peter accomplished a feat unheard of — he picked 400 pounds of cotton in a single afternoon, a task that usually took others an entire day.

When it was time for payment, she ran out of money. However, she told Peter that he would receive \$2 more than everyone else. The only money she had left was a \$2 bill, a bill she had kept for good luck. Reluctantly, she gave it to Peter but tore off the top right-hand corner, telling him to keep it for luck.

Peter had planned to buy himself a Pepsi Cola and some street rolls, but when he reached the store, he changed his mind. Something about that \$2 bill made him hold onto it. Now, 63 years later, he still has it carefully preserved in a frame. That bill traveled with him to Vietnam and across the world — a constant reminder of where he came from and the journey he had taken.

In 1987, Peter came full circle, purchasing the 20 acres of land where he once picked cotton. Determined to create a better life for his family, he built a self-sufficient farm, complete with a pond, recreation area, and an abundance of fruits and vegetables. Everything he once struggled for, he now has on his land. Today, Peter can sit back, relax, and enjoy the life he worked so hard to build.

His favorite memory remains that \$2 bill — a symbol of his perseverance, sacrifice, and success. But what matters most to him now is protecting the land he worked so hard to own and ensuring it remains in the family for generations to come. “That’s why my family works with the CHPP™,” Mr. Peter Smith states, “to make sure everything is clearly documented in wills.” They’ve seen just how important it is to plan ahead. Thanks to the CHPP’s™ guidance, the family has peace of mind knowing their property is protected and their legacy secured for the next generation.

Peter’s legacy is more than land—it’s a life shaped by resilience, service, and family. As his story continues through the generations, Mr. Peter Smith simply says, “May the work he’s done speak for him.”

Woodland Community Champions Newsletter

The Center for Heirs' Property Preservation® Community Engagement Team is excited to launch the very first edition of the Woodland Community Champions [WCC] Newsletter!

A WCC is an ambassador of CHPP™, bringing awareness to our mission and empowering communities with valuable knowledge. The program has new opportunities for learning, engagement, and connection.

This newsletter is a go-to source for WCCs to stay up to date with CHPP's updates, stories, events, and more that highlight our collective efforts to protect land, empower families, and preserve generational legacies.

If you are interested in becoming a WCC, please contact Esther Adams at eadams@heirsproperty.org or [803] 447-1232.



SAVE THE DATE

10th Annual

**South Carolina Rural
and
Limited Resource
Landowner Symposium**

"Rooted In Legacy"

Friday, November 7, 2025

Lowcountry Conference Center
406 Sigma Drive,
Summerville, SC 29486

Stay Tuned for More Information

8570 Rivers Ave. Suite 170,
North Charleston, SC 29406 | (843) 745-7055 | heirsproperty.org | info@heirsproperty.org

Save the Date: 10th Annual South Carolina Rural and Limited Resource Landowner Symposium

We are pleased to announce the 10th Annual South Carolina Rural and Limited Resource Landowner Symposium, taking place on Friday, November 7, 2025, at the Lowcountry Conference Center.

This year's theme, "**Rooted in Legacy**," honors a decade of progress, collaboration, and commitment to protecting and preserving family land across South Carolina. The symposium brings together landowners, families, advocates, and professionals to share vital knowledge and resources that support sustainable landownership and generational wealth.

Whether you've joined us in the past or are attending for the first time, we invite you to be part of this milestone event.

Mark your calendar and stay tuned for more details.

Let's continue to grow together—while honoring the legacy that unites us.



CHPP™ Announces National Partnership with Farm Credit Council

Did you know that April is National Financial Literacy Month? On April 29, Farm Credit Council held

a briefing on heirs' property rights in Washington D.C. titled, "*Preserve Your Roots, Grow Your Future.*" At the event, they announced a new partnership with the Center for Heirs' Property Preservation to support the launch of the National Heirs' Property Alliance..

Heirs' property remains a pressing challenge for many rural and agricultural families. This partnership reflects a shared commitment to preserving family land, promoting financial literacy, and strengthening rural economies.

"The creation of the National Heirs' Property Alliance in partnership with Farm Credit Council will increase the tools available to empower families to retain and

productively use their land to benefit local rural economies, agriculture, and future generations," said Dr. Jennie L. Stephens, CEO of CHPP™.

The event featured bipartisan remarks from Rep. James E. Clyburn [SC-6] and Rep. Julia Letlow [LA-5], alongside a panel discussion that included perspectives from landowners, ag lenders, and advocates. Dr. Stephens was joined by CHPP™ Implementation Partner Dr. Betsy Taylor [LiKEN], Yvonne Knight-Carter [landowner and former CHPP™ board chair], Vance Dalton [AgSouth], and moderator Christy Seyfert [Farm Credit Council].

Farm Credit Council will provide financial support to CHPP™ as they build out the National Heirs' Property Alliance, expanding realized success in South Carolina into new regions. The Alliance aims to empower landowners in rural communities across the country to secure clear title and stabilize land ownership.

This partnership marks a meaningful step forward in addressing heirs' property and advancing economic opportunity for rural communities.



CENTER FOR HEIRS' PROPERTY PRESERVATION®

HEADQUARTERS

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www.heirsproperty.org



Follow Us On:



Alfonso Riley



Ashley Walker

Welcome!

Please welcome our two new employees to CHPP™

Left, Alfonso Riley,
Community Engagement Specialist
and Right Ashley Walker
Forestry Project Coordinator.

Other Ways to Give to CHPP™!



Did you know that CHPP™ has an Endowment Fund?

When you give to our endowment fund beyond your regular giving, you help build an organization that lasts. Since only a portion of the fund is used each year, what you give grows. And what grows sustains our mission as a permanent source of support. To learn more, contact Brett Wadford at bwadford@heirsproperty.org or [843] 745-7055.



- 1) Text CHPP to 50155 to donate to the Center for Heirs' Property Preservation®.
- 2) Follow the prompts.
- 3) Register your credit or debit card (first time only)

You can also donate on the CHPP's™ website at www.heirsproperty.org.