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Preserve ponders payoff

Heritage board seeking money for I-73 intrusion onto protected land

By Zane Wilson
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The state Heritage Trust Advisory Board will discuss compensation for the proposed Interstate 73 crossing of Little Pee Dee River Heritage Preserve when it meets today near Georgetown.

At its meeting in November, the board indicated it will not fight the road crossing, but instead will seek the full cost of damages, including extra management costs brought on by noise and pollution.

The board, which oversees Heritage Trust land and makes recommendations to the state Department of Natural Resources board, will hear from agency staff on what the damages will be when the planned highway takes some of the preserve land adjacent to S.C. 905 on the Horry-Marion county border.

The Natural Resources board will decide on the compensation to demand from the state Department of Transportation. Federal law requires compensation for loss of protected land.

At the November meeting, agency staff said the highway route will take 27.2 acres and affect 3.9 acres upstream from the bridge and 2.5 downstream.

The DOT plans to build an interstate bridge just south of the existing S.C. 905 bridge.

DNR staff suggested one type of compensation could be money for additional land that is bear habitat, because Horry County's bear population is under increasing pressure from growth.

Compensation for the Little Pee Dee River crossing must be settled before the DOT can get permits to start construction. The highway agency hoped to file for the permits this spring, but the Heritage Trust board said it will not be rushed to a decision.

Board members said in November they may not vote on a proposal at this month's meeting. The board meets quarterly.

If you go

Who | Heritage Trust Advisory Board

What | Interstate 73 crossing of Little Pee Dee River discussion

When | Meeting begins at 10 a.m. today; I-73 discussion expected to begin at 1 p.m.

Where | Santee Coastal Reserve, 270 Santee Gun Club Road, Georgetown

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