

From: SC News from SCIWAY <sciway-news@sc-news.net>
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Subject: Juneteenth, SC Festivals, and the Landsford Canal State Park

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{ SC's June Calendar + Our Featured SC Event }

Hilton Head Island, June 18, 2016 | This year's [June Calendar of Events](#) is brought to you by Hilton Head's annual [Juneteenth Celebration](#), featuring a special musical performance by American Idol winner Candice Glover. Families and friends are encouraged to make memories at any of the available event stations or while exploring the first freedmen's town in the United States through re-enactments of daily life in 1862. Authentic island food and specialty gifts will be available for sale.

[See all the other great South Carolina events coming up in June.](#)

{ June Blooms: Rocky Shoal Spider Lilies at Landsford Canal State Park }

School's out and summer is here at last. If you're in need of a day trip, look no further [Landsford Canal State Park](#) in Chester and Lancaster counties. This month, the rocky shoal spider lilies are in full bloom. This is the largest colony of the lilies in the world, and as amazing as these pictures are, they do the phenomenon justice. Use our [guide to Landsford](#), below, to learn about the park and plan your visit.

(Sue Caldwell Roberts of [Kershaw](#) © Do Not Use Without Written Consent)

At 448 acres, Landsford Canal State Park stretches across both [Chester](#) and [Lancaster](#) counties, brimming with cultural and natural history. Running parallel to the majestic [Catawba River](#) (see [our guide to the river](#)), the park includes [Native American](#) artifacts dating 10,000 years into the past, remnants of a gristmill, stone walls of former locks, a lockkeeper's house, a museum, walking trails, and a spectacular view of the river.

display of rocky shoal spider lilies (*Hymenocallis coronaria*).

(Jim Dollar of Indian Land, © Do Not Use Without Written Consent)

The land encompassing the park was granted to Thomas Land in 1754. The area abuts a section of river shallow enough to cross on foot or horse, lending to the name Land's Ford. It eventually became Landsford. During the [Revolutionary War](#), Land's Ford proved instrumental providing a safe place to cross the Catawba River for both the British and the Patriots. Lord Cornwallis and his men crossed the ford on their march from Charlotte, North Carolina to [Winnsboro](#), following the Battle of King's Mountain in October of 1780. A few months earlier, in August, [General Thomas Sumter](#) also crossed the river here and used the surrounding area as an encampment just days prior to the Battle of Hanging Rock.

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General Sumter fought alongside General William Richardson Davie, who later served as Governor of North Carolina and founded the University of North Carolina in the late eighteenth century. Davie retired from public service and established a plantation, [Tivoli](#), on this site in 1805, along with a gristmill. He died in 1820, and his plantation home was burned during the [Civil War](#). Remnants of the mill are visible in the park, as is a late-eighteenth century log cabin, built sometime between the Revolutionary War and Davie's occupancy of the land.

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The rocky shoals that made the Catawba River safe to cross also created an impediment to attempting to transport cotton and other goods from the upper part of the state. Thus, canal construction began on a canal running laterally to the river to create a navigable water route. The Landsford Canal was built as one of a series of four canals on the Catawba and Wateree river. The other three canals were part of a larger canal system of eight canals developed during that time which made all of the state's districts to be accessible by water, with the exception of [Greenville](#).

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Landsford Canal was designed by renowned architect [Robert Mills](#), State Architect and Engineer for the South Carolina Board of Public Works from 1820 through 1830. Together he and Robert L. Mills, an engineer, built this two-mile long canal consisting of five locks, or walled and gated channels. The locks allowed the raising and lowering of water vessels through control of the water level. The stone walls of lock walls are pictured above and below.

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The canal was completed in 1823, built by both [slaves](#) and white laborers and made of locally

blue granite. It was employed only briefly, however, and by 1840 the Landsford Canal was no use. Though the canal was considered an excellent example of engineering, problems arose when one of the canal's walls collapsed. By 1836 all of the canals along the Catawba and Wateree were suffering from structural problems, and boat traffic tapered off significantly. As railroads began to replace river shipping, canals such as this one became obsolete.

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The conditions of this section of the Catawba River – a clean, fast-flowing river of exposed rock – make it a great habitat for rocky shoal spider lilies, pictured above. In fact, the population of spider lilies here is the largest stand of the flower in the world. When the spider lilies are in bloom from mid-May to mid-June, people gather along the riverbanks or even in the river itself to absorb the breathtaking sight. Though dozens of other stands of rocky shoal spider lilies can be viewed throughout the state, including in the Broad River, most people agree that the abundance of blooming lilies within the Catawba River each spring is a sight like no other.

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The Duke Power Company, which owned this land for much of the twentieth century, donated 190 acres in Chester County – including the property encompassing the canal – to the state for use as a park. Nearly 20 years later the state acquired 44 more acres in a land swap. Finally, the state bought 1,000 acres in abutting Lancaster County in 1998. Today park guests may walk the one-and-a-half-mile Canal Trail, visit the former lock keeper's house, which is now a museum, and of course, enjoy fishing. Access for canoes and kayaks is available, and fishing is allowed with appropriate permits. Toilets and picnic grounds and its many ruins are available through both guided and self-guided walks.

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Landsford Canal is listed in the [National Register](#):

Historically, the Landsford Canal, completed about 1823, was an important transportation link between the Up Country and Charleston for fifteen years. The immediate area was involved in military movement from the Revolutionary War to the Civil War. The canal remains as the only canal existing in its entirety without encroachment by the state. The canal parallels a two-mile section of the Catawba River. As part of the inland waterway system from the Up Country to Charleston, a series of Catawba canals were begun in 1800 and completed several years later. Landsford Canal, the highest in the system, was built by engine. Within this section, the river falls thirty-four feet. The canal consists of three sets of locks, a miller's house, and a lockkeeper's house – all in various forms of decay and ruins. The tract, including an aboriginal ford, was granted to Thomas Land in 1754, thus the derivation of its name.

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