



MITIGATION STRATEGY CASE STUDY

The Volvo Victory



How environmental mitigation secured a \$5 billion manufacturing investment.

When Volvo set out to build a 1.5 million-square-foot manufacturing facility in the Southeastern U.S., South Carolina and several surrounding states, competed for the massive \$5 billion investment. The project promised significant economic benefits, including thousands of jobs and long-term business growth.

South Carolina first proposed a site that had already made substantial progress in permitting,

making it an early contender. But when Volvo overlaid its design and future buildout plans onto the site, it became clear the site was too small to accommodate the full vision.

Around the same time, a competing site in Georgia happened to match Volvo's needs perfectly. Although Volvo was considering the Georgia site, South Carolina still had a chance to win the investment – if it could propose an alternative site large enough that wouldn't delay the project timeline.

Enter the Camp Hall site in Berkeley County, SC. Strategically located and adequately sized, it was ideal for Volvo's long-term vision. Time was running out. Volvo needed to complete permitting quickly to meet its internal deadlines and proceed with the project.

RES provides a path forward

Recognizing the urgency of Volvo's timeline, the

State of South Carolina and the Department of Commerce partnered with RES to deliver a fast, scalable mitigation solution. RES leveraged its deep experience in permittee-responsible mitigation (PRM) to meet environmental compliance requirements without delay. Instead of relying on a single site, RES executed a landscape-scale restoration strategy across multiple properties, restoring and preserving critical resources while aligning with regulatory timelines. The result: environmental approvals secured, project timelines protected, and a major win for the state.

This approach provided a watershed-scale solution that offset the Volvo facility's environmental impacts and strengthened South Carolina's conservation network.

Key elements of the plan included:

- **Strategic land conservation:** RES secured and preserved six key tracts of land totaling just

under 2,500 acres, strategically expanding the region's protected areas and preventing unchecked development.

- **Wetland and stream restoration:** The plan enhanced 860 acres and preserved 965 acres of wetlands and over 76,000 feet of coastal region streams, enhancing water quality and ecosystem resilience.
- **Native longleaf pine restoration:** Previously degraded timberland was transformed, replacing commercial loblolly pine monoculture with native longleaf pine savannas, restoring vital fire-adapted ecosystems.
- **Habitat connectivity & greenbelt expansion:** By linking conservation easements with existing protected lands (Francis Marion National Forest, ACE Basin, and Audubon Swamp), the project reinforced a greenbelt around the Charleston region, ensuring the protection of critical habitats from the unintended consequences of urban sprawl.
- **Prescribed fire & ecological uplift:** Controlled burns reintroduced natural fire cycles, allowing the native fire-adapted plant and animal species to thrive.
- **Local partnerships & long-term stewardship:** RES incorporated local expertise by engaging subconsultants to assist with permitting, design, monitoring, and maintenance activities. The conservation easements held by a trusted local organization, the Lowcountry Land Trust, and two major properties were transitioned into long-term conservation stewardship. The Dean Swamp property was donated to Audubon, while the Bannister tract is being deeded to the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources



Image courtesy of Volvo

By implementing these measures, RES eliminated the uncertainty that had initially pushed Volvo toward Georgia, ensuring that South Carolina remained an attractive, environmentally responsible choice for the automaker.

The winning outcome

With a clear and executable mitigation plan in place, South Carolina successfully won Volvo's investment. The project moved forward, and today, the Volvo manufacturing plant operates outside Charleston, SC, along Interstate 26.

Key takeaways for large-scale developers

- **Mitigation can make or break a project:** Environmental permitting challenges can derail even the most promising opportunities. A strong mitigation strategy keeps projects viable and timelines intact.
- **Early engagement with experts is critical:** If South Carolina had delayed its work with RES, Volvo may

have chosen another location. Early alignment on mitigation ensures momentum and reduces risk.

- **PRM solutions offer flexibility for large-scale projects:** When off-the-shelf mitigation options fall short, a custom permittee-responsible mitigation (PRM) approach can deliver scale, compliance, and speed.

Conclusion

This project demonstrates how environmental mitigation can be a strategic advantage. By partnering with RES, South Carolina transformed a regulatory challenge into a successful outcome, proving that the right mitigation strategy, backed by long-term stewardship and local partnerships, can help any large-scale project stay on track.

Reach out to RES today. A proactive mitigation plan could be the key to winning your next big project. datacenters@res.us