

# **VALUES AND POLICIES OF UPSTATE FOREVER**

**Last amended by the Board of Directors  
May 14, 2008**

**OUR MISSION STATEMENT:** Promoting sensible growth and protecting special places in the Upstate region of South Carolina.

**OUR FOCUS AREA:** Greenville, Spartanburg, Pickens, Anderson, Laurens, Oconee, Greenwood, Cherokee, Union, and Abbeville Counties in Upstate South Carolina. (We occasionally work in those parts of North Carolina and Georgia which lie within the watersheds of major Upstate rivers)

**OUR BASIC VALUES AS AN ORGANIZATION:**

1. We adhere to the highest standards of ethics and fair dealing.
2. We do not endorse candidates for elected office, and we do not participate in partisan political campaigns in any way.
3. We respect property rights, both private and public.
4. We support voluntary, market-based programs and/or government initiatives to conserve resources and promote sustainable developments.
5. We believe that communities may pursue and adopt reasonable restrictions on private property in order to provide for orderly development, to conserve important resources that are held in trust for all, and/or to make government services more cost effective.
6. We support the use of best management practices when land and natural resources are disturbed, altered or developed.
7. We adhere to the 2007 Guiding Principles and Best Practices for South Carolina Nonprofits, established by the South Carolina Association of Nonprofit Organizations.

## **OUR BASIC PROGRAMS:**

- 1. Land Trust:** Protecting the Upstate's important lands and resources.
- 2. Clean Air and Water:** Protecting and improving the Upstate's air and water.
- 3. Sustainable Communities:** Promoting economically, socially, and environmentally sound growth in the Upstate.

## **GUIDELINES FOR ADVOCACY WORK**

### **I. LAND TRUST**

#### **A. UPSTATE FOREVER SUPPORTS FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL PROGRAMS FOR PROTECTING IMPORTANT LANDS AND NATURAL RESOURCES IN THE REGION THROUGH:**

##### **1. IDENTIFICATION OF AREAS THAT SHOULD BE HIGH PRIORITIES FOR CONSERVATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIES FOR THEIR PROTECTION**

*Plans are important, not only for developers and communities but also for conservationists. Some areas are better suited for development, while others should be left alone. It is critically important to be proactive by identifying the latter areas and then establishing strategies to achieve their protection.*

##### **2. CONTINUED AND INCREASED FUNDING OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA CONSERVATION BANK**

*The South Carolina Conservation Bank is a statewide program for protecting, either through acquisition of title or the purchase of conservation agreements, important lands and natural and historic resources in the State. It is funded entirely by diverting a small portion of the deed recording fee from the general fund to the Conservation Bank. It is a funding method widely used by other states and localities throughout the United States. Funding for the Conservation Bank should be continued and significantly increased.*

##### **3. ESTABLISHMENT OF COUNTY CONSERVATION BANKS MODELED ON THE STATE BANK**

*The counties in South Carolina also receive a portion of the deed recording fee. A portion of these funds should be used to establish local conservation banks modeled after the state one.*

**4. MAINTENANCE AND ENHANCEMENT OF TAX INCENTIVES THAT ENCOURAGE PRIVATE LANDOWNERS TO PROTECT THEIR PROPERTIES THROUGH CONSERVATION AGREEMENTS**

*We support legislation to enhance the tax incentives available for voluntarily protecting private lands through conservation agreements.*

**5. ADOPTION OF MARKET-BASED MECHANISMS FOR ACHIEVING LAND USE GOALS, SUCH AS TRANSFER OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS PROGRAMS.**

*Transfer of Development Rights” (TDR) is a voluntary, market-based program in which developers are given the incentive to purchase development rights in areas where growth is not desired (called “sending areas”) and to transfer those rights to areas where growth is desired and appropriate (called “receiving areas”). Landowners in the sending areas, if they wish to participate, are paid for their development rights and essentially sign conservation agreements agreeing that their properties will not be developed, and developers, in turn, are allowed to add more units to their project in the receiving areas. TDR is now used successfully in over 160 communities throughout the United States and holds great promise for several areas of the Upstate.*

**II. CLEAN AIR AND WATER**

**B. UPSTATE FOREVER PROMOTES AND ADVOCATES FOR THE PROTECTION OF IMPORTANT LANDS AND NATURAL RESOURCES IN THE UPSTATE, INCLUDING:**

**1. MAINTAINING AND IMPROVING WATER QUALITY THROUGH:**

**(a) Compliance with Applicable Laws, Regulations and Ordinances.**

*In many cases, water quality problems result from the failure to comply with laws, regulations and ordinances that are already on the books.*

**(b) Protection of the Remaining Free-Flowing Stretches**

### **of the Region's Major Rivers and Streams.**

*There are dams on nearly every major river in the Upstate. In fact, some rivers, such as the Tugaloo, Seneca and Keowee, have been completely eliminated by dams. While lakes are important and serve many useful purposes in the region, a top priority now should be to maintain and protect the remaining free-flowing sections of our region's major rivers and streams.*

#### **(c) Adoption of Local Riparian Buffer Protection Programs and Ordinances.**

*One of the most effective ways of maintaining and improving water quality is to protect the lands along lakes, rivers and streams, known as riparian areas. These areas absorb runoff and pollutants, help maintain water temperatures, reduce erosion, and provide wildlife habitat.*

#### **(d) The Use of More Effective Strategies to Reduce and Manage Stormwater Runoff.**

*One of the greatest impacts on water quality in the Upstate (and elsewhere) results from runoff from roads, parking lots, rooftops and other impervious surfaces. The typical practice is to collect this runoff in pipes and drains and discharge it quickly to the nearest stream. We should encourage and promote different and more effective ways of managing stormwater that reduce water quality impacts and development-induced flash flooding.*

## **2. MAINTAINING AND IMPROVING AIR QUALITY THROUGH:**

#### **(a) Implementation of the Recommendations in the Upstate's Early Action Plan for "Cleaner Air Sooner."**

*Portions of the Upstate have been designated by EPA as a "nonattainment area" for compliance with the national air quality standard for ozone. These counties have signed an "Early Action Compact" with EPA and DHEC that provides for achieving compliance with the ozone standard three years earlier than would normally be required under the Clean Air Act. In consideration of this commitment, the regulatory agencies have agreed to defer imposing any of the sanctions for nonattainment. The Upstate counties have submitted a plan for "cleaner air sooner" that includes 23 specific recommendations for improved air quality in the region.*

#### **(b) Use of Alternative Methods of Transportation.**

*Upstate Forever recognizes that the car will continue to be the region's principal means of transportation. However, other methods of transportation, including walking, should be actively encouraged and promoted.*

### **III. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES**

#### **C. UPSTATE FOREVER PROMOTES AND ADVOCATES FOR SENSIBLE GROWTH BASED ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES, INCLUDING: \***

##### **1. MAKING EVERY REASONABLE EFFORT TO SITE NEW DEVELOPMENT WHERE SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE (ROADS, WATER, SEWER, SCHOOLS AND BROADBAND) ALREADY EXIST**

*Developers are understandably attracted to good infrastructure and services, especially water, sewer, and schools. Thus, one of the most effective ways to manage growth is to direct new development to areas where infrastructure and services already exist. This conserves both tax dollars and land.*

##### **2. RECOGNIZING THAT PROVIDING NEW, OR EXPANDING EXISTING, INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES WILL ATTRACT GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT.**

*Closely related to policy 1 above is the irrefutable point that providing new, or expanding existing, infrastructure and services will attract growth and development. Thus, another effective way to manage growth is to ensure that infrastructure and services are provided or extended only in areas where growth and development are desired.*

##### **3. SUPPORTING REGIONAL PLANNING INITIATIVES.**

*We must engage the public in planning for the future of the entire region. An outstanding model for the Upstate is the nationally acclaimed "Envision Utah" program for the Salt Lake region—a non-regulatory, information-based approach that provides resources and support to local communities and service providers throughout the region on growth and development issues. Through public workshops and extensive media campaigns, Envision Utah has shown citizens that they truly have a choice in the type of region they will become.*

\*“Sustainable development” means development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development must be economically viable, environmentally sound, and socially equitable.

#### **4. SUPPORTING COMMUNITY-BASED PLANNING INITIATIVES AND PROGRAMS.**

*The essence of good planning is engaging the public in candid and vigorous discussions about the future of their communities. Well organized, well funded “town hall meetings” would allow citizens to truly “design their destiny.” All local government entities, including special purpose districts, must be an integral part of this process.*

#### **5. COMMUNICATING AND COORDINATING MORE EFFECTIVELY AMONG SPECIAL PURPOSE DISTRICTS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND CONSOLIDATING SOME SERVICES.**

*There are hundreds of special purpose districts throughout the Upstate that provide water and sewer services and manage and operate public schools. Little is known about some of these districts—their budgets, plans, and operations, yet the decisions they make have enormous consequences for growth and development patterns in the Upstate. It is essential that these districts communicate regularly with one another and the general public and that expansion plans be carefully coordinated. Moreover, some services should be consolidated in order to allow for more effective planning and to reduce duplication of services and costs.*

#### **6. PROVIDING HOUSING THAT IS AFFORDABLE.**

*One of the most effective means of managing growth is to ensure that housing is affordable in urban areas where services and infrastructure already exist. Otherwise, many of our citizens will be forced to seek “cheap land” in rural areas.*

#### **7. PROMOTING AND ADOPTING STANDARDS FOR QUALITY DEVELOPMENT.**

##### **(a) Adopting Local Ordinances Based on Traditional Neighborhood Development Principles.**

*The Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) approach is based simply on the concept of building communities the way*

*we used to—with mixed uses, ample green space, streets on a grid, and pedestrian safety and comfort a top priority. Local ordinances should be changed to encourage—not impede—developments of this nature.*

**(b) Adopting and Strengthening Local Ordinances for Commercial Developments and Major Road Corridors.**

*“We drive up and down the gruesome, tragic boulevards of commerce and we’re overwhelmed at the fantastic, awesome, stupefying ugliness of absolutely everything in sight...as though the whole thing had been designed by some diabolical force bent on making human beings miserable.” This well-known statement from James Howard Kuntsler’s book, Road to Nowhere, accurately describes the condition of many of the major road corridors and commercial developments in the Upstate. One effective way to address this problem is through the enactment of standards that require high quality development, including, without limitation, standards for buildings, landscaping, parking lots, sidewalks, signage and lighting. As dramatically demonstrated by Greenville’s Main Street, local standards result in places that are both beautiful and economically prosperous. Another good example is the overlay district recently established for Pleasantburg Drive in Greenville. Within this district, all new development and redevelopment projects are subject to standards that will make the district more inviting and eventually more prosperous.*

**(c) Adopting Comprehensive Tree Protection Ordinances.**

*Comprehensive tree protection ordinances are needed to control the widespread development practice in the Upstate of removing all trees and vegetation from a site as the first step in the development process. The details of such ordinances will vary from community to community in the region, but the basic principle would require the protection of some of the existing tree cover at a site and the restoration of some of the cover lost during development.*

**(d) Promote and Encourage the Use of “Green Design and Development” Principles for Buildings and Structures.**

*The built environment has a profound impact on our natural environment, economy, health and productivity. Technologies are now available that significantly reduce this impact, such as natural daylighting, natural ventilation, radiant barriers for roofs, carbon dioxide monitors, low emission paints and*

*carpets, rainwater collection systems for irrigation and flushing toilets, use of solar, geothermal and wind energy, just to name a few. These technologies not only reduce impacts and conserve resources but also result in wonderful places where people enjoy working, performance improves, and absenteeism decreases. As the authors of Natural Capitalism eloquently write: “Green buildings do not poison the air with fumes nor the soul with artificiality. Instead, they create delight when entered, serenity and health when occupied, and regret when departed.”*

**(e) Support Infill Development and the Redevelopment, Revitalization and Reuse of Abandoned or Neglected Areas.**

*In the urban areas of the Upstate, there are many vacant properties as well as developments that have been abandoned or have become neglected. A top priority should be given to developing these vacant tracts (known as “infill development”) and to redeveloping the abandoned and neglected properties.*

**(f) Promote and Encourage Active Living Throughout the Upstate.**

*Active living refers to a way of life that integrates physical activity into daily routines. Unfortunately, being physically active has become more difficult for many people because of our growing dependence on the automobile, increased television use, the way we design our communities and neighborhoods, and the lack of public parks and natural areas. This sedentary lifestyle has taken its toll on our health. Physical inactivity is now a primary risk factor for heart disease, stroke, diabetes, obesity, and many other illnesses.*

*Improving the health and wellness of citizens in the Upstate through increased physical activity requires, among other things, more walkable, mixed use neighborhoods; more areas for people to walk and cycle; more parks and natural areas; and more activity-friendly schools.*

**8. ADEQUATE FUNDING OF STATE AND LOCAL AGENCIES THAT ADMINISTER NATURAL RESOURCE, PARKS AND OPEN SPACE, AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS.**

*State and local agencies, such as the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism, the South Carolina Department of Health*

*and Environmental Control, and county and city parks and recreation departments in the Upstate, must receive sufficient funding to carry out their responsibilities under the law and to meet the needs of a growing population.*

**9. MAINTENANCE OF CURRENTLY DESIGNATED AREAS OF THE NATIONAL FORESTS AS “ROADLESS.”**

*The Sumter National Forest in the Upstate and the Midlands contains about 252,000 acres. Together with the Francis Marion National Forest on the coast, these two forests represent 3.2 per cent of the total land area in the state. As the result of decades of road-building in these forests, only about 8,100 acres qualify as “roadless” under the current policy of the National Forest Service, and 6,000 of these acres are located in the Andrew Pickens District of the Sumter National Forest in Oconee County. The current policy generally prohibits the construction of new roads (and thus logging) in these “roadless areas.” We support the continued protection of these areas.*

**10. OPPOSING THE SALE OR CLOSING OF ALL OR PART OF OUR PUBLIC PARKS AND NATURAL AREAS.**

*Federal and state budget difficulties have led to proposals to sell or close public parks and natural areas or sections thereof. This is not only an ill-advised and shortsighted way to address budget problems but also a betrayal of the public trust. With a rapidly expanding population, we need more parks and natural areas for public use and enjoyment.*

**11. SHORT TERM INCREASES IN TAXES AS A SOURCE OF FUNDING FOR PARKS AND OPEN SPACE PROGRAMS. (THE ADVOCACY FOR ANY OTHER TYPE OF TAX INCREASE MUST BE REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY THE UPSTATE FOREVER BOARD OF DIRECTORS AS A SEPARATE POLICY DECISION).**

*An effective method of funding local parks and open space programs is through short term increases in the local sales taxes. For example, we supported the “Penny for Parks” referendum in Greenville County that would have increased the sales tax by one cent for no more than one year to fund a parks and open space plan for the county.*

**12. SUPPORTING THE INCLUSION OF ADDITIONAL RIVERS AND STREAMS IN STATE AND NATIONAL PROTECTION PROGRAMS.**

*The Chattooga is the only Upstate river currently in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. There are, however, many other eligible rivers in our region, such as the Chauga and Cedar Creek in Oconee County. We support the inclusion of these and other eligible rivers in the system. We also support the inclusion of similar rivers in the state wild and scenic rivers system.*

**13. ADVOCACY FOR RESTORATION OF NATURAL SYSTEMS AND FUNCTIONS WHERE FEASIBLE.**

*Improper land management and development practices have adversely affected the integrity and functions of natural systems on private lands. In many cases, the benefits of restoring these systems far outweigh the costs. We support such restoration efforts.*