

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
OCTOBER 12, 2000**

**UPSTATE FOREVER AND FoothILLS RC&D COUNCIL
ANNOUNCE MAJOR CONFERENCE ON
CONSERVATION EASEMENTS**

Upstate Forever and the Foothills Resource Conservation & Development Council (the association of the Soil and Water Conservation Districts for Greenville, Spartanburg, Pickens, Anderson and Oconee Counties) will host a major conference on conservation easements on Tuesday, November 14, 2000 at the Palmetto Expo Center in Greenville.

A conservation easement is basically a voluntary agreement by the landowner to relinquish some or all of the rights to develop the property, for which the owner can realize significant income, estate, and property tax benefits. Granting a conservation easement does not affect the ownership of the property and in most cases does not allow any public use of the land.

The all-day conference will be devoted entirely to discussing and analyzing conservation easements. The standard provisions in easements, their tax benefits and how they are appraised will be explained by experts in the field, and there will be a panel of property owners who have actually granted conservation easements. It is the first in-depth conference that has ever been held in the Upstate on conservation easements.

Brad Wyche, Executive Director of Upstate Forever, said that the conservation easement "is a wonderfully flexible agreement that can be tailor-made to meet the needs and desires of the property owner, while protecting significant lands and resources. Many landowners don't want to see their property turned into strip malls and parking lots. The conservation easement can give them the ability to control what happens to their land."

Wyche noted that the Upstate is one of the fastest growing areas in the country. He is hopeful that "the conservation easement will become

one of the key tools used to protect the natural beauty and outstanding resources of our region.”

Dave Demarest, the Foothills RC&D Council Coordinator, said that the main objective of the conference is to educate landowners and the public about conservation easements. “There’s a lot of confusion and misunderstanding about conservation easements so we’ve assembled an impressive group of experts to explain exactly what they are and how they work.”

The fee for the conference, which includes lunch, is \$20 per person if the registration is received by November 3 and \$25 per person after that date. For more information or to register for the conference, please call Upstate Forever at 864-250-0500 or e-mail at info@upstateforever.org.

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Enclosure: Conference Brochure