

For Immediate Release

UPSTATE FOREVER ANNOUNCES ANNUAL AWARD WINNERS

Members of Upstate Forever Board of Directors Also Named

November 14, 2002

Upstate Forever is pleased to announce the winners of its Annual Awards for 2002:

Innovator of the Year: Scott Johnston with the Johnston Design Group in Greenville.

Public Servant of the Year: Stephanie Monroe, Director of the Laurens County Planning Department.

Environmental Advocate of the Year: Awarded jointly to Mary Lou Jones and Linda Sisson of Greenville.

Upstate Forever Volunteer of the Year: Jean Graves of Greenville.

Upstate Forever also presented an *Extraordinary Achievement Award* to Wes Cooler of Pickens.

Upstate Forever Board Chairman Dave Hargett said, "These awards represent our effort to recognize individuals who are making a real difference in improving the quality of life in the Upstate. It's our small way of saying thank you to some very special people."

Johnston won the *Innovator of the Year Award* for his outstanding leadership in demonstrating different and environmentally sensitive methods of construction or development in the Upstate. Johnston left a successful practice at a large architectural firm about two years ago to start his own firm devoted entirely to the emerging field of green design. He was retained by the Greenville County School District to draft "green standards" for the massive school construction project. One of Johnston's projects, the Rosewood House of Recovery, recently won EPA's National Energy Star Award. The new facility features several environmentally friendly and energy efficient systems, including super insulated windows, a radiant heat barrier beneath the roof, a highly efficient air conditioning system, and the use of an 8,000-gallon cistern to collect runoff from the roof for an irrigation system.

The *Public Servant of the Year Award* recognizes a government official or employee whose efforts to protect and improve the quality of life in the Upstate are truly “beyond the call of duty.” Stephanie Monroe received the award for her herculean efforts in connection with the referendum on countywide zoning in the county. The first director of planning in the history of Laurens County, Monroe drafted the proposed zoning ordinance and zoning map and then single handedly arranged and hosted a series of community meetings throughout the county to explain and answer questions about the ordinance. Although the referendum was defeated, the process was an extremely beneficial one, marking the first time that citizens in the county has ever had an extended discussion and debate about growth and land use.

The *Environmental Advocate of the Year Award* recognizes a citizen for persuasive and effective advocacy in protecting the environment, natural resources and beauty of the Upstate. Jones and Sisson shared the award for their tireless efforts in promoting passage of the parking lot landscaping ordinance in Greenville County. Jones is a former biology teacher who shares her love of nature with students at the Roper Mountain Science Center in Greenville. She currently serves as President of both the South Carolina Environmental Education Association and Friends of Paris Mountain State Park.

Sisson serves as President of the Mountainside Garden Club and as chair of the Greenville Council of Garden Club’s Urban Forestry committee. She has worked diligently to promote the preservation of trees in urban landscapes and coordinates an urban forestry program for Greenville County third graders that is in its third successful year.

Graves earned the *Volunteer of the Year Award* for her many hours of work in Upstate Forever’s office in Greenville. For the past three years, she has worked in the office at least one day a week and assists the organization on a variety of tasks, including keeping the membership records up to date and preparing all of the acknowledgment forms for contributions.

The *Extraordinary Achievement Award* was presented to Cooler for his dedicated work and accomplishments on a number of conservation and land use issues in the Upstate. In 1996, Cooler returned home to Pickens County after serving in the United States Army for 23 years, retiring with the rank of lieutenant colonel. He served as the Vice-Chairman and Chairman of the Pickens County Planning Commission and was primarily responsible for drafting the much needed revisions to the County’s Development Standards Ordinance. Cooler is the co-founder and chairman of the Foothills Resource Conservation & Development Council and spearheaded the successful “Partners for Trout” program that is protecting and restoring trout habitat in the Upstate. He stood up and fought against a plan to close a public highway in the county and make it part of a private gated community. Cooler has also served on the Upstate Forever Board of Directors since the organization was founded in 1998.

All of the awards were presented at Upstate Forever's Annual Meeting that was held on Saturday, November 9 at Table Rock State Park.

Also at the meeting the following persons were elected to serve on Upstate Forever's Board of Directors:

Amanda Bauknight of Pickens County

Wes Cooler of Pickens County

Dave Hargett of Greenville County

Russell Harris of Anderson County

John Lane of Spartanburg County

Keith Marrero of Greenville County

Carlton Owen of Greenville County

Leon Patterson of Laurens County

Mark Taylor of Greenville County

Neal Workman of Oconee County

Kris Yon of Anderson County

Brad Wyche, Upstate Forever's Executive Director, said, "We are honored and humbled to have such an outstanding group of people serving on our Board of Directors. With Mr. Workman joining the Board, we have now achieved our goal of having at least one representative from each of the six Upstate counties."

Upstate Forever also added two new members to its Advisory Council in 2002—Mike Nicklas, president of Innovative Design, Inc. in Raleigh and one of the nation's leading authorities on green development and design; and Gus Speth, a South Carolina native who is the Dean of the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.

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