

For Immediate Release

January 3, 2005

**NATIONAL EXPERT ON PUBLIC PARKS AND OPEN SPACES TO SPEAK IN
UPSTATE**

Upstate Forever is pleased to announce that Will Abberger, a national expert on public parks, open spaces and natural areas, will be speaking in the Upstate on January 13 and 14, 2005. Abberger, the Associate Director of the Trust for Public Land's Conservation Finance Program, will speak on "The Benefits and Funding of Public Parks and Open Spaces" at Wofford College, McMillan Theater on Thursday, January 13, 2005 at 7:30 p.m. and at the Greenville-Spartanburg Airport Marriott on Friday, January 14 at 7:30 a.m. Both events are open to the public at no charge.

Founded in 1972, the Trust for Public Land (TPL) is the only national nonprofit organization that works exclusively to protect land for human use and enjoyment. TPL's legal and real estate specialists work with landowners, local government agencies, and community groups to:

- create urban parks, gardens, and greenways;
- conserve land for watershed protection, scenic beauty, and close-to-home recreation; and
- safeguard the character of communities by preserving historic landmarks and landscapes.

TPL has played a key role in the protection of more than 1.9 million acres in 45 states and has assisted 190 cities complete 420 park projects. Closer to home, TPL has been active in South Carolina for over 20 years, having transferred over 12,500 acres to public ownership, including lands in the Congaree National Park, the Chattooga River watershed, and the Waccamaw National Wildlife Refuge. Currently, TPL is working with Beaufort County in planning and implementing its \$40 million Rural and Critical Lands Program, a greenspace funding measure designed to protect the county's many natural assets. TPL has a small office in Charleston.

TPL's Conservation Finance Program, which Abberger heads, assists local communities, states, land trusts and other groups in creating and expanding sources of public funding for land conservation. Since 1996, TPL has helped communities pass 266 local and state ballot measures that have generated more than \$38 billion in new conservation-related funding, including \$20.6 billion for land acquisition and restoration.

Brad Wyche, Executive Director of Upstate Forever, said, “The Upstate is one of the fastest growing and most prosperous regions in the country, yet we have a woefully inadequate supply of public parks and open spaces for our citizens. We are excited that Mr. Abberger will be here to explain some of the options for correcting this problem.”

Abberger said, “One of the measures of a community’s greatness is its ability to provide recreation, natural beauty and signature open spaces for its people. Parks and open spaces build civic pride, boost the economy, and contribute to health and quality of life. But these amenities don’t happen by accident. They take planning, hard work, leadership, and funding. I look forward to my visit to the Upstate and sharing some of the successes TPL has had in creating and expanding parks and open spaces in similar areas.”

Upstate Forever is a nonprofit, membership-based organization that promotes sensible growth and protects special places in the Upstate region of South Carolina. It currently has over 1,600 members and a staff of ten. For more information, see www.upstateforever.org.

Naturaland Trust is a co-sponsor of both events, while the Palmetto Conservation Foundation and the Spartanburg Area Conservancy (SPACE) are co-sponsoring the Spartanburg speech.

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