

Upstate Forever

Promoting Sensible Growth and
Protecting Special Places in the Upstate

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 21, 2007

Public Comments Sought in Upstate Forever's Land Trust Accreditation

Comments should be submitted by July 20

Upstate Forever's application for accreditation has been received by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission. As part of its application process, the Commission accepts signed, written comments from the public on pending applications.

Comments must relate to *Upstate Forever's* compliance with the accreditation indicator practices. These practices address the ethical and technical operation of a land trust. For the full list of indicator practices see www.lta.org/accreditation/practices.htm.

Upstate Forever is one of 22 land conservation organizations in the United States—and the only one in the Southeast—selected to participate in a pilot project for a new national accreditation program. The accreditation program will recognize land trust programs that meet national standards for excellence, uphold the public trust and ensure that conservation efforts are permanent.

Upstate Forever's Land Trust Program primarily uses voluntary conservation agreements, also known as conservation easements, to protect significant lands and resources in the Upstate, such as ecologically sensitive areas, working farms, scenic vistas, wildlife habitat, historic sites, and areas along rivers and streams. Under these agreements, the landowner continues to own and enjoy the property but places restrictions on how the property can be used in order to protect its conservation values. *Upstate Forever* currently has 39 conservation agreements protecting nearly 8,000 acres in the region, with more currently in progress. More information about the organization's efforts can be found at www.upstateforever.org/programs_landtrust.html.

To learn more about the accreditation program and to submit a comment, visit www.landtrustaccreditation.org. Comments may also be faxed or mailed to the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, Attn: Public Comments: (fax) 518-587-3183; (mail) 112 Spring St., Suite 204, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866. Comments on *Upstate Forever's* application will be most useful by July 20.

*Upstate Forever is a nonprofit, membership-based organization promoting sensible growth and the protection of special places in the Upstate region of South Carolina. Our three program areas are: Land Trust, Sustainable Communities, and Clean Air and Water. Founded in 1998, **Upstate Forever** now has nearly 1800 members, two offices, and a staff of fifteen. For more information, see www.upstateforever.org.*

The Land Trust Accreditation Commission awards the accreditation seal to community institutions that meet national quality standards for protecting important natural places and working lands forever. The Commission, established in 2006 as an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance, is governed by a volunteer board of diverse land conservation and nonprofit management experts from around the country. For more information see www.landtrustaccreditation.org.

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