

Upstate Forever

For Immediate Release

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UPSTATE FOREVER NAMES ANNUAL AWARD WINNERS

Upstate Forever is pleased to announce the following winners of its Annual Awards for 2007:

Concerned Citizens for Conservation: Land Conservation Champion. Concerned Citizens for Conservation (CCC), a dedicated grassroots group from Oconee County, is largely responsible for the preservation of historic Stumphouse Mountain. In early 2007, the City of Walhalla entered into negotiations with a developer for the 440-acre Walhalla Watershed property, which included the mountain and the popular recreational destination Issaqueena Falls. The CCC quickly mobilized to save Stumphouse Mountain, energizing the public about the project and swaying the minds of the City Council members. Eventually the City submitted an application to the SC Conservation Bank for funding to purchase a conservation easement on the property. The project grew to include an adjacent 510 acres purchased with \$4.3 million in contributions from more than 1,000 donors.

For unwavering passion to the cause of preserving Stumphouse Mountain, Concerned Citizens for Conservation was named *Upstate Forever's* 2007 Land Conservation Champion.

Johnson Development: Sustainable Communities Champion. Johnson Development Associates, Inc. is undertaking several mixed-use projects in the central business district of Spartanburg. The Haven at Easton (on the former Lan Yair golf course) is a model for their development program throughout the Southeast. They also place significant emphasis on providing natural amenities in their

communities, including walking trails, open green spaces and intimate landscaped settings. For these efforts and their continued dedication to encouraging sustainable lifestyles, Johnson Development was named ***Upstate Forever's*** 2007 Sustainable Communities Champion.

Bill Brown: Clean Water Champion. Bill Brown has worked in floodplain mapping and management, watershed planning, and stormwater management for some of the most rapidly-growing counties in the country. Brown came to the Upstate last year to run the City of Greenville's stormwater program and has already ushered in great improvements. For his work rewriting the City's stormwater ordinance from scratch and building support for its passage, Brown has been named ***Upstate Forever's*** 2007 Clean Water Champion.

Gene Smith: Public Servant of the Year. As Director of the Greenville County Recreation District, Gene Smith developed a plan to obtain funding for new and improved county parks. His strategy involved assembling a broad-based coalition of supporters that became known as the Tourism, Recreation and Athletic Coalition (TRAC), basing funding on a hospitality tax, and meeting one-on-one with each County Council member. The hospitality tax was approved by a vote of 10 to 2 and will generate approximately \$7 million per year for parks throughout Greenville County. Smith's vision, determination, and leadership made him a clear choice for ***Upstate Forever's*** 2007 Public Servant of the Year award.

Frank Holleman: Volunteer of the Year. Frank Holleman played a key role in the preservation of two key Upstate properties this year. When a dispute erupted over the Camp Spearhead property in northern Greenville County, Holleman brokered a deal to place it under permanent protection. The Oconee County native then led the huge effort to save Stumphouse Mountain and Issaqueena Falls in Walhalla. The talented attorney, passionate conservationist, and superb writer and speaker soon became known as "Mr. Stumphouse." These two amazing success stories could not have been

written without Frank Holleman, **Upstate Forever's** 2007 Volunteer of the Year.

Billy Campbell: Extraordinary Achievement. Dr. Billy Campbell has received national recognition for his pioneering leadership of the green burial movement. In a green burial, bodies are literally allowed to return to the earth – “dust to dust.” Plain wooden or cardboard caskets or cloth shrouds are used. Vaults and embalming are not allowed, and the grave is marked by a small, natural marker. In 1998, Memorial Ecosystems, a company founded by Campbell and his wife, Kimberley, established a green burial site in Oconee County called the Ramsey Creek preserve. This year, Campbell ensured the permanent protection of this property; his conservation agreement with **Upstate Forever** is the nation's first conservation agreement on a green burial site. For his leadership in the green burial movement, Dr. Campbell has received **Upstate Forever's** 2007 Extraordinary Achievement Award.

The awards were presented at **Upstate Forever's** Annual Meeting on November 10 at Camp Spearhead. The meeting included a presentation about the organization's major accomplishments in the past year, the Annual Awards ceremony, a delicious lunch catered by Saffron's, and an afternoon of hiking. Over 170 people attended.

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Please call Mr. Wyche if you would like contact information for the Award Winners.