

Upstate Forever

Promoting Sensible Growth and
Protecting Special Places in the Upstate



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Upstate Forever's Land Trust Earns National Recognition

Accreditation Awarded by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission

(Greenville, SC) – The Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance, announced last night that Upstate Forever has been awarded accredited status. Upstate Forever is the first accredited land trust in South Carolina and one of only four in the Southeast.

“Accredited land trusts meet national quality standards for protecting important natural places and working lands forever,” said Commission Executive Director Tammara Van Ryn. “The accreditation seal lets the public know that the accredited land trust has undergone an extensive, external review of the governance and management of its organization and the systems and policies it uses to protect land.”

"Upstate Forever's accredited status demonstrates our commitment to permanent land conservation," says Dana Leavitt, Upstate Forever Land Trust Program Director. "Our land trust is a stronger organization today having gone through this rigorous accreditation program."

Since 2000, Upstate Forever's Land Trust Program has assisted landowners to permanently protect their properties through conservation agreements. Today, Upstate Forever protects over 10,000 acres of farms, forest, and other significant lands throughout the Upstate. Across the nation, more than 1,600 land trusts have worked with willing landowners to conserve over 37 million acres of critical lands. Landowners and professionals are invited to attend Upstate Forever's conference on September 30 at the Carolina First Center to learn more about protecting private land through conservation agreements. For details, visit www.upstateforever.org or call (864) 250-0500.

A total of 39 land trusts were awarded accreditation at a special ceremony at The Land Trust Alliance's annual National Land Conservation Conference in Pittsburgh, PA on September 19. Accredited land trusts may display a seal indicating to the public that they meet national standards for excellence, uphold the public trust and ensure that conservation efforts are permanent. The seal is a mark of distinction in land conservation.

"We are proud to display the accreditation seal, which certifies that we are a land trust that landowners can truly trust," said Leavitt. "We will safeguard their heritage and fulfill their wishes for their properties in perpetuity."

*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 over 3,300 members, two offices, and a staff of 19. 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, an independent program of the **Land Trust Alliance** established in 2006, is governed by a volunteer board of diverse land conservation and nonprofit management experts from around the country. More information is available on the Commission's website, www.landtrustaccreditation.org.*