

# Upstate Forever

Promoting Sensible Growth and  
Protecting Special Places in the Upstate

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 21, 2008

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## **Upstate Forever Honors Annual Award Winners**

### ***Stanbacks, Usher, Caston, Astles, and SOS receive awards at Annual Meeting***

(Greenville, SC) – At its Annual Meeting at the Piedmont Forestry Center on November 1, local conservation group Upstate Forever presented its 2008 Annual Awards to the following outstanding recipients:

#### **Land Conservation Champions: Alice and Fred Stanback**

Alice and Fred Stanback of Salisbury, North Carolina, have provided generous support for a stunning array of projects in the Southeast, including thousands of acres adjacent to the Blue Ridge Parkway and the Shining Rock Wilderness area, large unprotected tracts within many National Forests, and the acquisition and protection of Chimney Rock. The couple also established the Stanback Conservation Intern Program at Duke University, which has funded more than 400 student internships with conservation organizations.

Closer to the Upstate, Mr. and Mrs. Stanback recently provided key gifts for three spectacular projects: \$2.4 million for the Green River Preserve that connects DuPont State Forest to Jones Gap State Park; a challenge gift of \$300,000 for the Stumphouse Mountain project; and \$1.1 million for the recent acquisition of the Nine Times tract in Pickens County. None of these projects would have succeeded without them.

#### **Sustainable Communities Champion: Todd Usher, Addison Homes**

When Todd Usher founded Addison Homes, LLC in 2001, he bucked conventional wisdom with a commitment to build exclusively EarthCraft

House™ and ENERGY STAR® certified homes. Now, seven years later, Addison Homes is an industry leader. Usher shares his knowledge with others in the Upstate through free quarterly seminars, a bi-weekly e-mail newsletter, and numerous speaking engagements, all focused on green building and remodeling. He is a staunch advocate for green building in the affordable housing arena, giving his time and talents to supporting the commitments by Greenville Habitat for Humanity to build all their new homes to EarthCraft House™ standards and by the Greenville County Redevelopment Authority to meet ENERGY STAR® requirements. As current President of the Home Builders Association of Greenville, Usher has encouraged the formation of a green building task force to identify opportunities to educate and train builders and realtors about green construction. He was also recently appointed to serve on the Greenville County Planning Commission.

### **Clean Water Champion: Save Our Saluda**

Save Our Saluda (SOS) is a grassroots organization founded in early 2008 in response to serious threats facing the North Saluda River. SOS is now focused on the long-term protection and improvement of all rivers in the Saluda watershed. SOS has been a key ally in Upstate Forever's efforts to reduce the impact of the Cliffs at Mountain Park development on the North Saluda River. The organization was able to secure 2,300 signatures on a petition opposing the discharge of wastewater to the river and the construction of a golf course that would cause great harm to the river. SOS also led a letter writing campaign that resulted in over 800 letters to DHEC opposing these activities. In addition, the group has partnered with and several other conservation organizations to work with the Greenville Water System in reducing the impact of its proposed pipeline project on the South Saluda River, its tributaries and wetlands. SOS recently began to organize a grassroots effort to reclassify the North Saluda as a Trout Water and a portion of the South Saluda as a State Scenic River.

### **Outstanding Public Servant: Mike Caston, SJWD Water District**

Mike Caston is the Executive Director of the SJWD Water District, which supplies water to a 130 square-mile area in western Spartanburg County. Upstate Forever first worked with Caston on the Berry's Pond project at the boundary of Greenville and Spartanburg Counties, a site with great conservation and historic significance and located in the watershed of one of SJWD's reservoirs. Recognizing the importance of the property and the key link between land conservation and water quality, Caston devoted hundreds of hours over five years to the acquisition and protection of the property. The resulting conservation easement on Berry's Pond was only the second one ever granted by a public agency in the Upstate. Upstate Forever has continued to work closely with Caston

on initiatives aimed at protecting lands along the three branches of the Tyger River in Spartanburg County.

SJWD has been recognized as one of the best water utilities in the United States—an honor that is attributable to Caston’s vision and leadership. In addition to his responsibilities at SJWD, he has been involved in many state and national efforts aimed at promoting water conservation.

**Volunteers of the Year: Donna and Lou Astle**

Donna and Lou Astle became members of Upstate Forever in 2003 and since then have been two of the organization’s most loyal and dedicated volunteers. In fact, they are often confused for staff members because they are in the office so much, assisting with a myriad of tasks. Mr. and Mrs. Astle also attend Upstate Forever’s conferences, workshops and field trips, helping with whatever is needed. Even after they have put in many hours, they always ask, “What else can we do?”

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*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 20. For more information, see [www.upstateforever.org](http://www.upstateforever.org).*

Winners’ photos are attached