

Upstate rivers study gets boost

\$1.5 million in grants to help guide watershed development

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Grants totaling \$1.5 million were awarded Friday to study the Saluda-Reedy watershed, providing information that could affect Upstate development for years to come.

The funds, awarded to the Saluda-Reedy Watershed Consortium, will be used to study water quality, land use and the links between the two in the hopes they can be translated into economic terms, said Robert Becker, director of

Clemson University's Strom Thurmond Institute, a member of the consortium.

With that information, he said, guidance can be provided to ensure effective development without degrading the environment.

A \$1 million grant was awarded by the V. Kann Rasmussen Foundation, while another \$500,000 was provided by Fuji Photo Film. A \$500,000 grant had been previously awarded by the Department of Agriculture to launch the study, Becker said. The entire

project will cost \$4 million, he said.

Brad Wyche, executive director of Upstate Forever, another member of the consortium, said there is no doubt that the Saluda-Reedy watershed will continue to experience dramatic growth and change.

"Nor is there any doubt about the urgent need to plan for this growth to ensure that our water resources are protected to meet all of the demands of this increasing population for drinking water, tourism, recreation, economic and waste treatment," he said.

Wastewater discharges into the Reedy River, for example, are projected to increase from 34 million

gallons per day to 51 million gallons a day by 2015, Wyche said, while the Saluda is expected to see an increase from 13 million gallons to 31 million gallons a day in that time frame.

The consortium was formed to provide assistance, support and science-based information about the challenges that confront the watershed.

Other members are Pinnacle Consulting Group, the South Carolina Water Resources Center, the state Department of Natural Resources, the Conestee Foundation, Friends of the Reedy River, SpectroTech Inc., Upper Savannah Land Trust, Furman University's departments of economics and business and earth and

environmental sciences, Lander University's department of biological sciences, and the Jim Self Center on the Future and the Institute of Environmental Toxicology at Clemson University.

"We're excited about this," said Becker. "It's cutting-edge science right in our back yard."

Established in 1991, the Rasmussen Foundation funds environmental and medical research. It derives its funds from the Velux group of companies, with its main U.S. manufacturing plant and offices in Greenwood. Fuji opened its North American manufacturing and research headquarters in Greenwood in 1988.