



country must have a

November.

Tony Connor
Greenville

Development will mar majestic Jones Gap

I was concerned to see in the Aug. 12 *Greenville News* that one of our most beautiful trails in the Upstate has been affected by the sale of land owned by the parent company of WSPA-TV. So much for corporate responsibility!

All too often, people with the means to purchase such lands erect "monument" homes that **fail to** blend naturally into their environment. Jones Gap State **Park is a** "wilderness jewel" that **belongs to us** all. Having homes visible from the park is the local equivalent to homes overlooking the Grand Canyon.

Ironically, private ownership can be excellent way to protect and conserve ecologically significant **areas**. Conservation easements allow for a landowner to protect his farm, orchard or natural habitat without giving up ownership of the property or his rights to enjoy the property for farming, hunting, etc. Such arrangements often provide tax benefits to **the owner** that offset the loss of "development value."

I would appeal to any owner of ecologically valuable properties such as woodlands, farms and orchards to adopt conservation as a core strategy for the stewardship of their land. Organizations such as Upstate Forever can provide information on conservation easements. What greater legacy can we leave than to be personally responsible for preserving and protecting even a small piece of our dwindling natural environment?

On a national level, the Bush administration allows developers to drain additional thousands of acres of wetlands. Once lost, these ecosystems **can** never be re-created. Consider this when casting your vote in November.

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Travelers Rest