

This is a printer friendly version of an article from the **The Greenville News**  
To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

[Back](#)

---

**\$1.42 million needed by August to protect historic sites**  
*The sites represent 951 acres in Oconee County*

Published: Tuesday, June 19, 2007 - 2:00 am

By Paul Alongi  
STAFF WRITER  
[palongi@greenvillenews.com](mailto:palongi@greenvillenews.com)

WALHALLA -- A popular waterfall and some of the Upstates's most significant historic sites could be protected from development forever, if conservationists and government leaders can finish raising \$4.3 million, they say.

Mark Robertson, director of The Nature Conservancy's state chapter, said Monday that the partnership is facing an Aug. 29 deadline to come up with the last \$1.42 million in private funds.

If successful, the group would ensure that 951 acres in Oconee County, including Issaqueena Falls and Stumphouse Mountain, would forever remain open to the public, he said.

"As of today the campaign to save Stumphouse Mountain has begun," Robertson said to a crowd of supporters at Oconee Heritage Center.

### Advertisement

Supporters included Walhalla-area elected officials, Greenville attorney Frank Holleman and representatives from Upstate Forever, Naturaland Trust and the Chattooga Conservancy.

The project involves two parcels.

A privately held 511-acre tract includes the falls, pre-Civil War-era tunnels and sites important to Cherokee history. If the partnership misses its deadline, the family that owns the property will have the option of selling to someone else, Robertson said.

Next door are 440 acres that a Georgia developer, Tri-State Assets Group, sought to buy from the city of Walhalla. The developer withdrew its plans to build houses and a hotel in February after opponents circulated a petition and packed City Council chambers.


Rhonda Burrell, a Cherokee, said she was relieved to hear of the plan to preserve Stumphouse Mountain. Her ancestors made villages on the mountain, she said, and some people still use plants at the site to make medicine.

"We had constant prayers," she said.

If the conservancy's plans work out, Issaqueena Falls would be publicly owned for the first time, Holleman said. The city of Walhalla now operates a park at the 100-foot cascade, but the land is privately held and leased to the city, he said.

The project also calls for hiking trails, Stumphouse Mountain Tunnel and two other tunnels to be protected. The Stumphouse tunnel, now owned by Clemson University, is part of an uncompleted railway that was supposed to link the Midwest to the South.

The state Department of Natural Resources has committed \$1.5 million to the project. The Graham Foundation,

**STORYCHAT** 

What's your view?  
[Click here](#) to add  
your comment to  
this story.

based in Greenville, has given \$180,000.

Walhalla and Upstate Forever have applied for \$1.22 million from the publicly funded South Carolina Conservation Bank. The bank meets in Greenville on Wednesday to decide which applicants get funding.

---