

# Environmentalists, Anthony declare truce

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Developer Jim Anthony and Upstate Forever have declared a 45-day truce to discuss possibilities for a change in plans for the North Saluda River, said Brad Wyche, director of Upstate Forever.

Wyche said Tuesday they will use the time to come up with alternatives for discharging 5.25 million gallons of treated wastewater into the river and for building a golf course along 2.5 miles of the river's floodplain - plans that Upstate Forever opposes and that sparked a flood of protest letters to state and federal regulatory agencies recently.

As time goes on, and behind-the-scenes maneuvering continues over the latest Anthony project, questions and rumors in the environmental community have flourished.

Regulatory agencies, including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, have become closed-mouthed about the licensing process.

Corps spokesman Colt Bowles said on Monday his organization is "waiting on the 401 (certification) from DHEC. If they (DHEC) OK it, then we will, too. If not,



Charles Sowell/staff

**STREAM RESTORED:** Wes Cooler would like to see the North Saluda River get the same kind of stream restoration as Pickens County's Big Eastatoe did a few years ago.

then not."

Heather Preston, who is in charge of Clean Water Act Section 401 certifications for the state Department of Health and Environmental Control, said her agency has no plans for issuing or deny-

ing a 401 certification any time soon.

"We were flooded with protest letters on the Cliffs Mountain Park plan right before the close of the public comment period," she said. "We're going to have to deal with that first." >

> Wyche said he hoped the 45-day truce would lead to a more environmentally friendly plan from Anthony's group.

"I'd like to see this become more of a stream restoration project," he said.

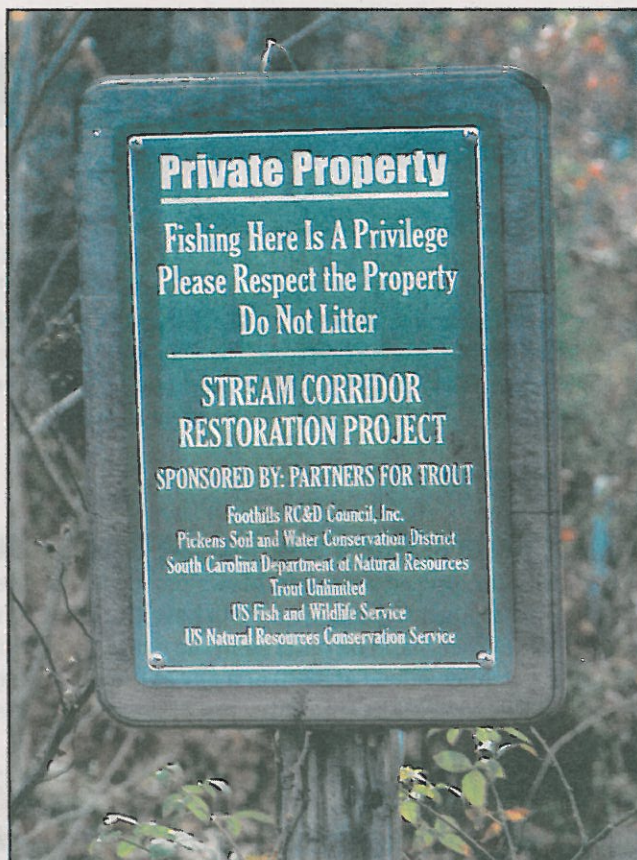
DHEC's standards for water quality in mountain streams not rated as trout water is notorious among environmental groups, says Ron Sobczak of the Bartram Group of the Sierra Club and Wes Cooler, a long-time environmental activist from Pickens County.

"Fact is, streams like the North Saluda are eminently salvageable for trout," Cooler said. "We've proved that with our stream restoration projects in Pickens and Oconee counties."

Dennis Chastain, another environmentalist from Pickens, sees the situation with the Cliffs

at Mountain Park as precedent-setting, and hopes to see changes in the proposals that do away with the wastewater discharge as well as major changes to the floodplain golf course plan.

Wyche said he's hopeful talks under



Michelle Mogavero/staff

**PUBLIC ACCESS:** A sign notes the Eastatoe's stream restoration access point.

less stressful circumstances will lead to breakthroughs.

Jim Anthony could not be reached for comment.

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