

## LOCAL NEWS

# Cliffs plans still displease some

Groups say revisions to proposed golf course on N. Saluda not up to par

By Nan Lundeen

STAFF WRITER

nlundeen@greenvillenews.com

Revised plans presented Monday night at a northern Greenville County community meeting for a Gary Player-designed golf course on the North Saluda River fell short of expectations for five conservation groups, according to Dianne Anastos, who chairs the citizens' group Save Our Saluda.

"The conservation community has concluded these revised plans on this project presented do not meet the state-of-the-art conservation standards to which the Cliffs had previ-

ously said they would commit to, and this project will not protect the trout fisheries and the ecological integrity of the North Saluda River," Anastos said after the meeting.

An environmental engineering consultant and a vice president of Cliffs at Mountain Park presented plans that would increase the linear feet of buffer along the river, add native shrubs and reduce the number of pedestrian or golf cart bridges from 17 to 16.

The meeting addressed the issue of an Army Corps of Engineers permit on which the state Depart-

ment of Environmental Control must make a decision about within three months.

It didn't address a wastewater discharge permit, which DHEC officials said is on hold.

Some of the more than 100 people attending the meeting at North Greenville University asked questions and expressed concerns.

To demands that DHEC require the Cliffs to test water quality before, during and after construction of the golf course, DHEC's Heather Preston, director of the water quality division, said the agency itself has monitoring stations, and it doesn't typically require a development to test.

Preston said DHEC would take under consideration a suggestion to require native plantings in the buffers be native to the Blue Ridge Piedmont, specifically, and would take a "hard look" at the number of trees to be cut and replaced.

Cliffs vice president Don Nickell and Lyle Graham of Environmental Permitting Consultants Inc. handed out booklets with maps which state buffers along the river would be 25 feet wide or more. Upstate Forever has called for a 40-foot-wide forested buffer to minimize sediment and provide shade to maintain the cool, clear stream needed by trout.

Graham said the 25-foot-wide woody shrub buffer would provide roots

that would filter groundwater and provide a habitat for wildlife. Vegetation would be added to stretches of river that don't have it now, he said.

Anastos said the plans "will cause severe degradation to the natural streamside buffer and restrict public access." She said, "Decisions in this permitting process will set the precedent for how we allow development to occur in this unique region along our pristine mountain streams."

She said SOS, Upstate Forever, the Sierra Club, the S.C. Native Plant Society and the American Whitewater Group, representing 11,000 residents, object to the plans.

■ Nan Lundeen can be reached at 298-4316.