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Six groups have formed a coalition to challenge the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control's approval of a new golf course at the Cliffs' Mountain Park development in northern Greenville County.

The organizations include Save Our Saluda, Upstate Forever, Sierra Club, South Carolina Native Plant Society, Trout Unlimited and the South Carolina Wildlife Federation.

The proposed 18-hole golf course would be built along both sides of the North Saluda River for a distance of two and a half miles, almost the entire reach from U.S. 25 to state Route 11.

One of the conservation groups' main points relates to alternatives. Brad Wyche, executive director of Upstate Forever, said, "The Mountain Park development consists of 5,000 acres. There are plenty of other feasible sites for the golf course that would have no impact at all on the North Saluda. No one is saying that the Cliffs shouldn't have a golf course. It just shouldn't be built along the river."

A spokeswoman for the Cliffs said the appeal is completely unfounded because feasibility studies considering alternative locations within the 5,000 acres were done. Building on mountain slopes is not a workable alternative.

The Cliffs also said that "after working hand-in-hand with DHEC, DNR and U.S. Fish and Wildlife and incorporating their suggestions in our plans, they have no objections to the approved DHEC plan nor to the existing site."

They also said that under the approved plan, the buffer along the river will be increased and "we will be planting three trees for each tree removed."



Wyche