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Cliffs developer dumps plan to discharge treated waste in North Saluda River

Environmentalists pleased; change would disperse wastewater over land

By Rudolph Bell
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An environmental group on Tuesday applauded changes developer Jim Anthony has made to his plans for handling wastewater at a 5,000-acre development in northern Greenville County.

Anthony's company, The Cliffs Communities Inc., had originally asked state environmental regulators for permission to discharge up to 175,000 gallons of treated wastewater a day into the North Saluda River.

After objections from environmentalists and a government agency, Cliffs Communities proposed treating the wastewater more thoroughly and dispersing it over land. It recently withdrew its application for the original plan, according to the state Department of Health and Environmental Control.

On Tuesday, after learning of the application withdrawal, local environmental group Upstate Forever applauded the change.

"A direct discharge of wastewater to the North Saluda would have been detrimental to the water quality of the river and would have set a dangerous precedent for other mountain rivers and streams, particularly those managed as trout fisheries," Upstate Forever said in a statement. The environmental group said it was seeking more information about the new plan and wants to carefully review it.

Anthony said Tuesday the new plan might involve dispersing the wastewater in an upland area instead of the flood plain. "We want to be good neighbors," he said.

Upstate Forever is part of a coalition that is fighting Anthony on another regulatory matter related to the developer's plans for The Cliffs at Mountain Park, a luxury real estate community near the intersection of State 11 and U.S. 25.

The coalition, which also includes the Sierra Club and Trout Unlimited and three other groups, has appealed a DHEC decision giving Cliffs Communities permission to build an 18-hole golf course along the North Saluda.
