

Upstate Forever announces protection of Rose Hill Farms

Independent Mail

Upstate Forever, the family of John Ivester and the South Carolina Conservation Bank have worked together to conserve the first phase of Rose Hill Farms, a 336-acre parcel that borders Oconee Station State Park and Sumter National Forest in the Upstate.

Rose Hill Farms includes seven tributaries of Oconee Creek along with access to the 50-foot high Lee Falls in Sumter National Forest, according to an Upstate Forever news release. The privately owned tract, which the governing board of the conservation bank approved in June 2008 to receive money, is a scenic buffer and wildlife corridor that consists of rolling hills, steep ravines, hayfields and pastures.

"Rose Hill Farms is one of those 'top-priority' properties, and the protection of this land is really a reason to celebrate," said Dana Leavitt, Upstate Forever land trust director, according to the release.

Initially, Ivester intended to sell the farm. After working closely with Upstate Forever and the South Car-

olina Conservation Bank, however, he decided keeping it for his heirs with a conservation agreement was a better choice, according to the release. The conservation agreement, also called conservation easement, will ensure future generations can enjoy the property.

Ivester said, according to the release, "The state conservation bank program was essential to our decision to protect this land so we can continue grazing cattle and managing for wildlife. I hope this program receives increased support so other landowners have the opportunity to participate in conserving their land."

Upstate Forever is a non-profit organization based in South Carolina. The conservation bank is a state program involved in conserving natural resource lands, wetlands, historical properties and archaeological sites.

Visit www.upstateforever.org and <http://sc-cbank.sc.gov> for more information about Upstate Forever and the South Carolina conservation bank.