

WRITTEN BY LEE G. HEALY



Mountain Laurel blooms near the North Tyger River

Our 'special places'

GROUP FOCUSES AWARENESS ON SIX NATURAL AND HISTORICAL AREAS

Delicate mountain laurel blooms in the spring, sandy shoals and rocky outcrops shaped by the Tyger River — it's one of six truly special places identified in a new study of Spartanburg County lands.

The Spartanburg office of Upstate Forever, a nonprofit organization that promotes sensible growth and protection of special places in Upstate South Carolina, recently released its inventory of Conservation Focus Areas, or simply "special places," still largely tucked away from the hustle and bustle of urban development.

They're places with rich soils, flowing waters and towering tree canopies. They're where animal life abounds, where wildflowers bloom, where the ecosystem is still healthy and vibrant.

Shelley Robbins, project coordinator for Upstate Forever, said the study is about more than ecotourism. It's about raising awareness of these dwindling ecosystems vital to the long-term health of Spartanburg County.



Shelley Robbins

Until the recent economic downturn, 23 acres of land in Spartanburg County were being developed each day, according to the report. For every 10 percent the population increased, land development increased by 50 percent.

"If you live in a Conservation Focus Area, we want you to know what you have and to take steps to understand what your role is in taking care of it and what all of our roles are in taking care of it," Robbins said.

These six Conservation Focus Areas were discovered through a complex mathematical analysis and using GIS (Geographic Information System) technology.

Upstate Forever hired Lawson Revan, a student at Vermont Law School with an undergrad-

uate degree in environmental studies, to formulate the inventory last year. The process took about seven months of research and analysis to complete.

"From biodiversity and plant cover to areas protecting streams and rare plants, the computer model took into account the different reasons why we preserve nature," Revan explained. "It then prioritized those factors and showed us which lands have the most of them occurring all together."

The areas of Landrum and Campobello, north of Pacolet, Croft and southeast of Glenn Springs, Tyger River, Ferguson Creek and North Tyger and Enoree stood out, each with its own unique biological and historical attributes.

Upstate Forever leaders hope the study will be a helpful component in future land-use planning — to know Spartanburg's special places will still be special 100 years from now.

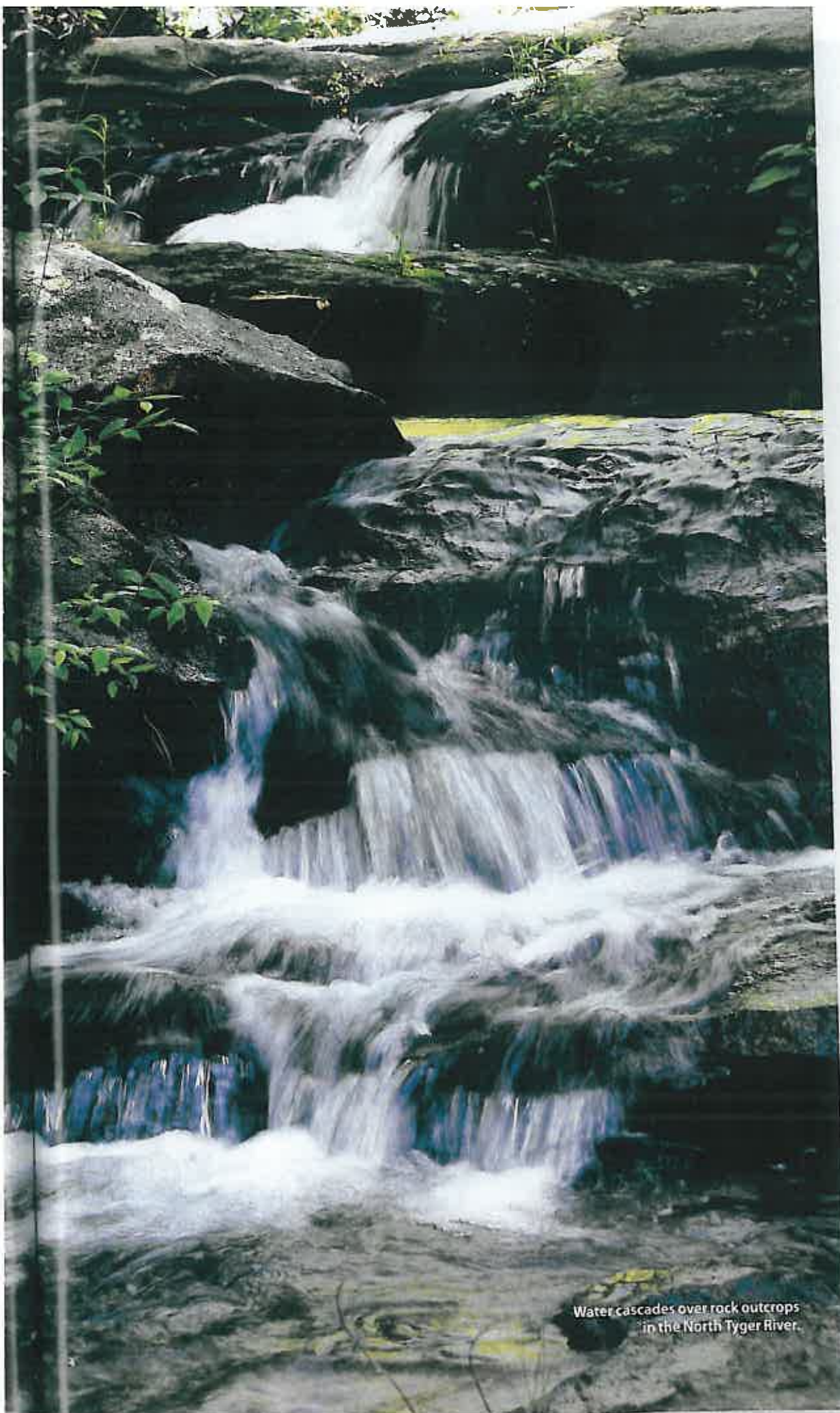
"We have to look at this map and think about what this county is going to look like in 150 years," Robbins said. "Is there any way these areas are going to exist? And if they don't, what is our quality of life going to be like?"

County Councilwoman Jane Hall, who was elected to represent a portion of southern Spartanburg County that encompasses several of the focus areas, said she believes in a partnership between local government and groups like Upstate Forever, seeking to preserve the county's natural resources.

"We all know that one of the things that attract businesses and people to this area of South Carolina is its natural beauty," Hall said. "So we want to keep that and work together to accent the beauty, but also bring in those businesses."

The Spartanburg inventory followed a similar project conducted at the Greenville Upstate Forever office, and leaders hope the studies will eventually spread throughout the state. The process is fully documented in the inventory so that it can be replicated in other areas.





Water cascades over rock outcrops in the North Tyger River.



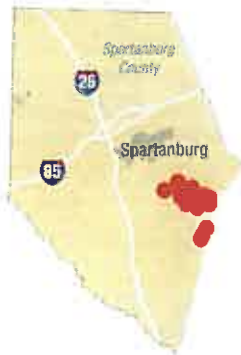
Ferguson Creek and North Tyger River

- ◆ Located near the Ferguson Creek and North Tyger River
- ◆ Various streams of water flow throughout this CFA, located near the North Tyger River, South Tyger River, Ferguson River, Little Ferguson Creek and Wards Creek. The river is fairly shallow and meanders through sandy shoals.
- ◆ The historical Price House is located here, as is the site of Fredonia, a home built in 1786 by Thomas Moore. It burned in 1977. Nearby Walnut Grove Plantation, also built by the Moore family, is situated just outside of the CFA.
- ◆ **Take a look:** The Spartanburg County Historical Association, with a conservation easement held by Spartanburg Areas Conservancy (SPACE), owns the Price House and its 94 surrounding acres. This historic home is open to the public. Hiking trails wind through the woods behind the Price House.



LAWSON REVAN PHOTO

Above, a small waterfall pours into Buffalo Creek. At right, a beaver pond sits near Fairforest Creek.



SHELLEY ROBBINS PHOTOS

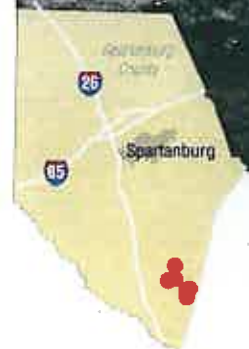
Croft and West Springs

◆ The Croft CFA is the largest of the six special places because of Croft State Park, the largest contiguous area of conservation in the county. These lands have diverse land covers with rare and endangered plant species, such as the greater yellow lady's slipper. Aside from thick forested areas, this CFA has many spring-fed streams. Fairforest Creek near the Union County line contains a large beaver pond that supports a variety of amphibians and waterfowl.

◆ **Take a look:** Spend a day in Croft State Park, biking, hiking, picnicking, camping, boating or fishing. A portion of the Palmetto Trail crosses through the park.



Camp Hill, a privately owned home built in 1836, is named for the hilltop campsite used by the Tories during the Revolutionary War.

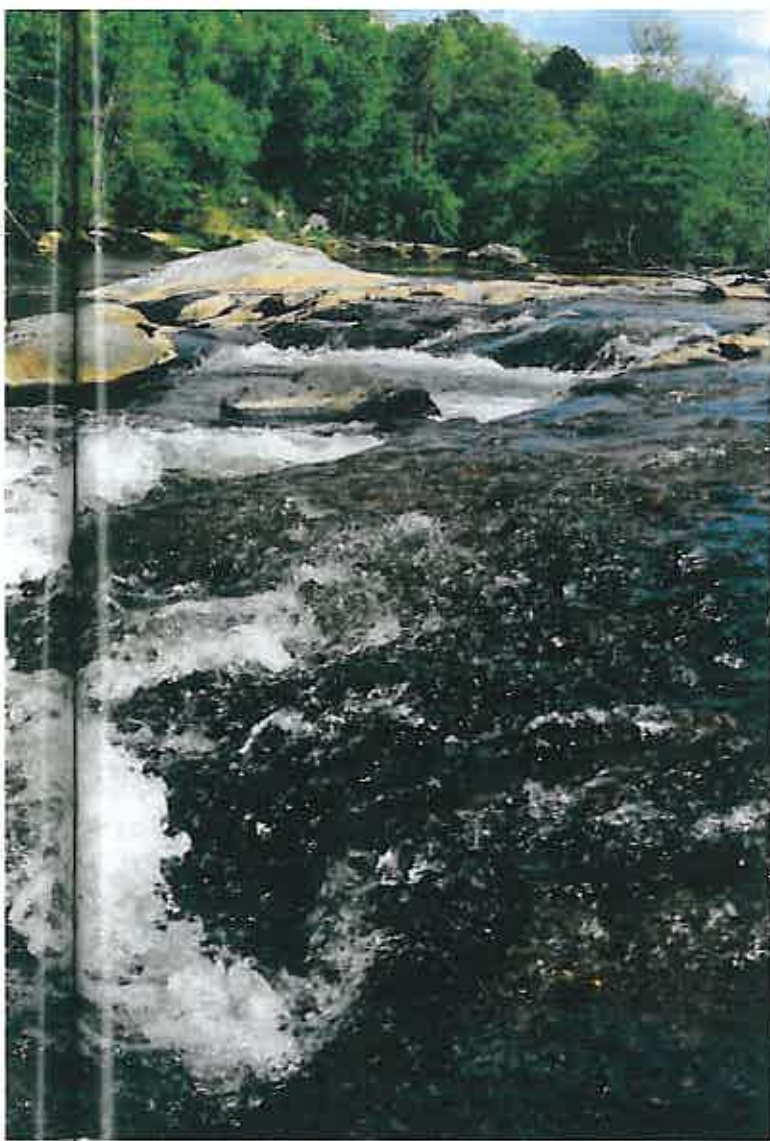


Tyger River

◆ The Tyger River runs through two CFAs. The environment in this area consists of dense wooded areas and a flourishing bird population.

◆ Historical sites in this area abound, from notable homes to farms, mills to factories.

◆ **Take a look:** Paddle the Tyger River, which flows through several of the focus areas. The Tyger River Foundation soon will make a new access point available at the intersection of the river and Walnut Grove Road.



SHELLEY ROBBINS PHOTOS



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Scenic view of Hogback Mountain near Fairview Farms



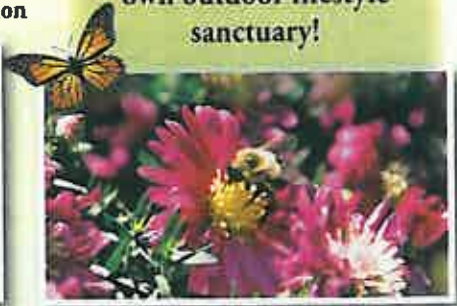
Wetlands in the Landrum and Campobello focus area

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Four Columns was built in 1777.

Landrum and Campobello

- ◆ This CFA proved to have some of the most ecologically diverse points in the county.
- ◆ These boast rich soils and unusual plant communities, including several threatened species. There is also emerging evidence that prehistoric civilizations passed through this area.
- ◆ **Take a look:** Enjoy a scenic drive or bike ride on a sunny afternoon along Highway 14 or Highway 11.



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To access the complete inventory of special places in Spartanburg County, visit www.upstateforever.org.

Marysville School had three classrooms for children of black Pacolet Mill workers.



SHELLEY ROBBINS PHOTO



North of Pacolet

- ◆ Located near the Pacolet River, this CFA has diverse plant and animal life. Canopy forests cover the majority of the land. Natural soapstone outcrops are scattered amidst thriving vegetation.
- ◆ This historic area is home to the Marysville School, a three-classroom school for the children of black Pacolet Mill workers. Historic homes in and around the mill village

- are reminders of the once-thriving mill culture in Pacolet.
- ◆ **Take a look:** Paddle the river or visit the 258 acres protected by the Pacolet River Heritage Trust Preserve near the confluence of the Pacolet River and Lawson's Fork. Dirt trails wind through forests and along the banks of the river, past ancient soap stone quarries, plant and animal life.

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Enoree

◆ This CFA is at the southern tip of the county, near the historic Musgrove Mill State Park. The river is shoaly and broad, offering a prime habitat for animal life.

◆ **Take a look:** Visit Musgrove Mill State Park, the site of the Battle of Musgrove Mill, fought on April 19, 1780. The park sits just outside of the CFA, but it represents one of several pivotal Revolutionary battles fought in the Spartanburg County area.



Rock shoals on the Enoree River

SHELLEY ROBBINS PHOTO

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