Keeping the GREEN in GREENville

Click here to complete the public survey and let the Committee know what you think about a tree ordinance

June 19 2006

MISSION OF THE COMMITTEE

To provide a forum for discussion of ideas, concepts, and methods to preserve trees and protect the tree canopy,

To make recommendations to County Council to encourage the preservation and replacement of trees which may be lost in the process of residential and commercial real estate development and to propose minimum standards for Council to consider, and

To provide educational and other useful information about historic and significant specimen trees and tree categories and to encourage people to preserve and nurture trees so classified.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Diane Eldridge
Conservation Planning Consultant

Sandra Hamann
Greenville Council of Garden Clubs

C. Doug Harper
Commercial Developer

David Holmes, Chair
Attorney

Kim Kauffman
Landscape Architect

Tom Keith
Landscape Architect

Dan Rawls
Greenville County Planning Commission

Gordon Seay
Greenville Association of Realtors

Coleman Shouse
Home Builders Association of Greenville

Steven Smith
Forester

Todd Ward
Furman Company

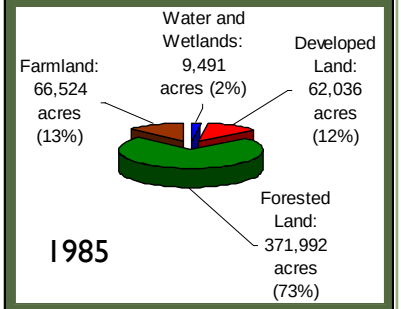
Jimmy Forbes
Director of Greenville County Planning Commission, non-voting facilitator

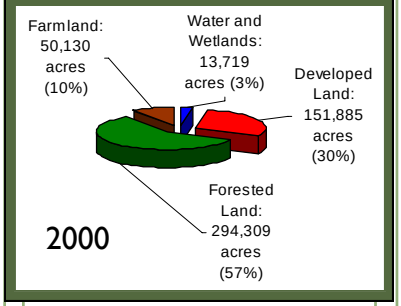
NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING
June 22 8:00 a.m.
Greenville County Square
Conference Room B

Greenville County Tree Policy Advisory Committee Continues its Work

The tenth regular meeting of the Committee was held on June 8. Three people spoke during the public comment period.

Dr. Jeff Allen, Research Coordinator at the Strom Thurmond Institute of Government and Public Affairs at Clemson University and Director of the South Carolina Water Resources Center, presented findings from a recent study of land use changes in Greenville County. Dr. Allen's research team used sophisticated remote sensing technology to analyze changes in forest cover and developed land in the eight Upstate counties that are partially included in the Saluda-Reedy watershed. (Only the Greenville County results were presented on June 8. Others will be released in the coming weeks.) The study revealed that during the 15 years from 1985 to 2000, the amount of developed land in Greenville County increased by 145 per cent, or by 89,849 acres, and the amount of forest cover decreased by 21 per cent (77,683 acres). This translates to approximately 14 acres of forest lost each day while approximately 16 acres of land were developed each day in Greenville County during that period. The net forest cover loss resulted from huge decreases in deciduous forest that were





partially offset by increases in mixed and evergreen forests. The study also documented changes in farmlands and water/wetlands throughout the county. The study was part of the Saluda-Reedy Watershed Consortium (SRWC) project. For more information about SRWC, visit www.saludareedy.org

Steve Mills addressed the Committee with concerns about the loss of large trees due to infill development in urban areas, such as his North Main neighborhood. He also recommended the use of native tree species when planting new trees.

Mary Lou Jones described the increase in flooding in the West Greenville area that resulted from the removal of trees and wetlands where Dreamland Forest once stood (now the site of Lowe's on Poinsett Highway). She also discussed the importance of protecting buffers along rivers and streams to reduce the impact of development on water quality and stream health.

Upstate Forever's Mary Bennett Greene stated that there is overwhelming support for a Grenville County tree ordinance among our members, evidenced by the large number of emails and phone calls she receives in her role as Membership Coordinator.

FINAL PUBLIC HEARING HELD JUNE 8

The approximately 70 people who attended the final public hearing June 8 at Greenvile County Square were overwhelmingly in favor of protecting the county's tree canopy by the adoption of countywide tree ordinance. Comments from the audience addressed various topics, such as the role of forested buffers in protecting rivers from sediment and heat, the importance of having shade trees in in neighborhoods where children play and in parking lots for heat reduction, the importance of forested trees near residences for noise abatement, shade and beauty, and the role that trees play in attracting new residents and businesses to Greenville County. One speaker, a residential realtor, stated that the majority of her clients are not interested in considering homes without trees in the yards. Another, a civil engineer with extensive experience working with tree ordinances throughout the southeast, said that growth and tree ordinances can live together and that many developers want to keep trees because they enhance property values. One speaker stated that she goes a long way out of her way to shop where trees shade parking lots, and another lamented that her young son asked if there would still be trees for him to walk among when he has children of his own.