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Article published Apr 23, 2008

# Land protection group marks 10th anniversary

[By Lee Gray](#)

Published: Wednesday, April 23, 2008 | Updated: 3:12 pm

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Ten years ago Brad Wyche left his family's law firm to found Upstate Forever, never imagining what the fledgling organization would be able to accomplish. A decade later, he has high expectations for the years to come.

Upstate Forever celebrated its 10th anniversary Tuesday. The nonprofit promotes sensible growth and land protection in nine Upstate counties. It's all accomplished through three programs: Land Trust, Clean Air and Water and Sustainable Communities, which is headquartered in Spartanburg.

"If you had asked me in 1998 if we would have 3,300 members, 18 staff and two offices I would have said, 'No way,' " Wyche said during a Tuesday afternoon anniversary celebration at the downtown Spartanburg office.

Supporters and staff praised Upstate Forever for its accomplishments, including protecting more than 10,000 acres of Upstate land and bringing the energy-efficient EarthCraft program to the state. Open houses were held at two EarthCraft homes in Spartanburg on Sunday.

"It's a very exciting time to be in Spartanburg," said Angela Viney, director of the Upstate Forever Sustainable Communities Program. "We have played an integral role in what's moving and what's shaking here."

Wyche said that in the next 10 years he hopes Upstate Forever will have 10,000 members and at least two more offices and be able to say it has saved 100,000 acres of land. Long term, Wyche hopes to have

offices in each of the nine counties Upstate Forever serves: Anderson, Cherokee, Greenville, Greenwood, Laurens, Pickens, Oconee, Spartanburg and Union.

To celebrate the 10th anniversary, Upstate Forever plans several events through the fall centered around the number 10. A 10-site conservation easement property tour will be Oct. 11 and 18 with stops in Greenville, Pickens and Oconee counties. The public will have the opportunity to visit the 10 properties, many not ordinarily open to the public, that Upstate Forever has helped to protect in these counties. On Sept. 16 the organization will host a 10-course locally grown meal, and on Nov. 1 a 10K Swamp Rabbit Tram-Trail run/walk will be a chance for a scenic autumn outing.

Field trips to include a canoe trip down the Saluda River, hike on the Chattooga River Trail and fall photography hike are also scheduled. Anyone interested is encouraged to visit Upstate Forever's Web site at [upstateforever.com](http://upstateforever.com) for sign-up information.

The Upstate Forever office in Spartanburg is at 100 E. Main St.

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