

# Upstate update

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Upstate Forever's Monthly Bulletin on  
Important Issues and Events in the Upstate

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*Please include Upstate Forever on your holiday gift list! Give a gift membership, or make a special contribution for yourself or in honor of a friend or family member. We can't do our work without your support!*

[www.upstateforever.org/supportUs.html](http://www.upstateforever.org/supportUs.html)

Recruit at least 10 new members to *Upstate Forever* by January 27, and you'll be eligible to win a pair of tickets anywhere Southwest Airlines flies in our [Forever Friends Membership Contest](#)! See our website for details.

### 1. Tax Incentive for Conservation Needs Quick Action by Congress

Congress has only about one week left to provide extensions for a host of important conservation-related tax provisions that are slated to expire at the end of this year. One of these is the enhanced incentive for conservation agreements, which helps modest-income landowners—especially working family farmers and ranchers—protect their land. This incentive, originally enacted in 2006, has aided *Upstate Forever* and land trusts across the country in their work with willing landowners to protect productive agricultural lands and important natural areas.

There are two major elements of the enhanced incentive:

- An increase in the amount of the income tax deduction that can be taken in any year from 30% of adjusted gross income to 50%, with farmers and ranchers allowed to deduct up to 100%.
- An increase in the number of years over which the landowner can “carry forward” the deduction from 6 to 16 years.

According to the [Land Trust Alliance](#) (LTA), there are currently 274 co-sponsors of a bi-partisan bill to make the enhanced incentives permanent. South Carolina Reps. Joe Wilson and Jim Clyburn have already signed on as co-sponsors of H.R. 1964, and we thank them for their support. The LTA and other advocates are working to have 26 more House Republicans add their names to the bill, which would achieve a majority of the House as co-sponsors. On the list of these 26 are SC Reps. Jeff Duncan and Tim Scott.

**Promoting sensible growth and protecting special places in the Upstate**

Please contact Reps. Scott and Duncan's offices today and ask them to co-sponsor H.R. 1964. For a fact sheet about the bill, go to [www.landtrustalliance.org/policy/tax-matters/campaigns/how-you-can-help](http://www.landtrustalliance.org/policy/tax-matters/campaigns/how-you-can-help). For a sample letter you can personalize, go to [www.landtrustalliance.org/policy/tax-matters/advocacy-tips/write](http://www.landtrustalliance.org/policy/tax-matters/advocacy-tips/write).

Congressman Tim Scott  
202.225.3176  
Jennifer DeCasper, Legislative Director  
[jennifer.decasper@mail.house.gov](mailto:jennifer.decasper@mail.house.gov)

Congressman Jeff Duncan  
202.225.5301  
Joshua Gross, Legislative Director  
[joshua.gross@mail.house.gov](mailto:joshua.gross@mail.house.gov)

## 2. Proposed Medical Waste Facility A Bad Deal for Spartanburg County

The Cannon's Campground community in Spartanburg County is already reeling from the impacts of industrial pollution and groundwater contamination. The last thing they need is a medical waste treatment facility, but this is exactly what has been proposed for the area. The transporting, shredding, and handling of high volumes of biomedical waste, which range from needles to body parts, present significant public health and environmental risks to surrounding communities. *Upstate Forever* and other public and environmental health advocates have joined with residents in the Cannon's Campground community to oppose efforts by a company called TreatMed to build and operate its first North American facility near the community. A permit from the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) is required for the operation.

The proposed facility would truck in large amounts of waste, much of it from out-of-state, and present a risk of infection, contagion, and even hazardous chemical exposure to the community. This is yet another attempt to use Spartanburg County and South Carolina as the nation's dumping ground for waste (see "[Dumping the Landfill](#)," July 2006 *Upstate Advocate*), despite the fact that our state already has more than enough capacity to handle all of the waste (solid, medical and hazardous) that we generate.

One reason South Carolina has been targeted for these types of facilities is that so many areas of our state, such as Spartanburg County and most of the Upstate, lack effective land use policies. It would not be necessary to petition DHEC to deny the TreatMed permit application if land use policies were in place to protect the residents of communities such as Cannon's Campground. In fact, Spartanburg County has just amended its local land management ordinance to establish setback rules that would prevent the facility from being built at its proposed location; the amendment will likely be challenged by TreatMed in court. A more comprehensive and effective approach is to be proactive and establish policies for managing growth and development throughout Spartanburg County, including siting restrictions or even prohibitions of certain kinds of industries.

For details of *Upstate Forever's* specific objections to TreatMed's application to DHEC for a permit, see [www.upstateforever.org/index\\_doc/TreatMedComments12-13-2011.pdf](http://www.upstateforever.org/index_doc/TreatMedComments12-13-2011.pdf).

### 3. *Upstate Forever Receives Grant to Weatherize Affordable Housing*

TD Bank, through the TD Charitable Foundation, has awarded \$100,000 each to 25 nonprofit organizations in 12 states and Washington, DC for local affordable housing initiatives. *Upstate Forever* is honored to be among the recipients. Our project, a partnership with Furman University and the City of Greenville, takes a unique approach to weatherizing and improving the energy efficiency for low-income homeowners in Greenville.

Through community outreach, *Upstate Forever* and our partners will secure homeowner participation in energy-efficiency improvements and building rehabilitation projects. We will work with Furman and the City of Greenville to complete these projects next year and enhance our partners' ongoing efforts. Using energy savings and cost data collected before, during, and after the improvement projects, we will assess the feasibility of creating a carbon offset bank that will provide a long-term sustainable income stream for retrofit projects throughout the Upstate. Funds for the bank would be generated by the sale of credits to individuals and businesses wishing to offset some or all of their greenhouse gas emissions. See [www.upstateforever.org/progCAW\\_regionalCarbonOffsetBank.html](http://www.upstateforever.org/progCAW_regionalCarbonOffsetBank.html) for more information about carbon offset banks.

We deeply appreciate the TD Charitable Foundation's generous support of this exciting and innovative program!

### 4. *Two More Properties Protected by Upstate Forever*

*Upstate Forever's* Land Trust recently signed two new conservation agreements, protecting over 250 acres of land:

The Cherokee Farms in Belton is a 182-acre tract of beautiful pastures and rolling hills in Anderson County. Owned by John and Robert Rainey, it also features significant hardwoods along tributaries to Cherokee Creek and around three small ponds, providing habitat for wildlife.

Don and Bettina George have protected their second property with *Upstate Forever* through a conservation agreement. The 72-acre Thrift Lake property in Oconee County adjoins Sumter National Forest and is the headwaters of Lick Log Falls and Pig Pen Falls which flow into the Chattooga River, a National Wild and Scenic River.

Our Land Trust now holds a total of 82 agreements preserving nearly 16,000 acres in the Upstate. For more information about land protection, visit [www.upstateforever.org/programs\\_landtrust.html](http://www.upstateforever.org/programs_landtrust.html).

### 5. *Waste Reduction and Recycling Work Gets Boost*

We are pleased to report that the JM Smith Foundation has granted \$15,000 to fund *Upstate Forever's* ongoing efforts to reduce waste and encourage recycling in Spartanburg County in 2012. Our work will focus on increasing recycling rates, broadening public participation in the annual Household Hazardous Materials (HHM) Collection Day, adding a prescription drug take-back component to the HHM collection event, and identifying opportunities for more efficient and improved waste and recycling collection in the county. Many thanks to the Foundation for its generous support!

## 6. Upcoming Upstate Forever Events

Thursday, January 26, 6:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Film: *Moving Beyond the Automobile*

Tyger River Campus of Spartanburg Community College, TRB Building Room 354B; 1875 East Main Street (Highway 290), Duncan, SC

Cost: Free

A series of documentary film shorts on transportation issues, *Moving Beyond the Automobile* examines American's dependence on cars and explores real-world solutions that encourage active living and effective multi-modal transportation. A short discussion period will follow the screening, and light refreshments will be provided. The film is the first event in *Upstate Forever's* 2012 Active Living Event Series in Spartanburg County, designed to encourage community dialogue about policies and infrastructure that promote physical activity to improve public health. For more information on the 2012 Active Living Event Series, contact Sherry Barrett at [sbarrett@upstateforever.org](mailto:sbarrett@upstateforever.org).

Monday, January 30, 1:30 - 6:30 p.m.

Upstate Food Hub 2012: A Connection Event for Upstate Food Buyers and Producers

The Culinary Institute of the Carolinas (CIC) at Greenville Technical College's Northwest Campus, 8109 White Horse Road, Greenville, SC

Cost: \$20

Get together, exchange business cards, plan for the year ahead and fuel the economic engine of our local food economy, keeping the dollars at home while supporting healthy, sustainable farming and food practices. *Edible Upcountry* magazine is launching an annual networking event, at the business-to-business level, for Upstate food producers and Upstate food buyers. The half-day meeting features panel discussions of food producers, food buyers, and adding value and making markets. Tickets are available at [www.upstatefoodhub2012.eventbrite.com](http://www.upstatefoodhub2012.eventbrite.com). The event is hosted in conjunction with sponsor AgSouth and programming partners the CFSA, *Upstate Forever* and Clemson Sustainable Ag. For more information, go to [www.edibleupcountry.com](http://www.edibleupcountry.com).

Thursday, February 2, 11:30 a.m.

ForeverGreen Annual Awards Luncheon

Embassy Suites, 670 Verdae Blvd., Greenville

Cost: \$50

*Upstate Forever's* third annual ForeverGreen Awards Luncheon will celebrate individuals and organizations for significant contributions to the fields of land conservation, water quality, air quality, sustainable development, public service and volunteer work. Awards to be presented include the Tommy Wyche Land Conservation Champion, Sustainable Communities Champion, Clean Water Champion, Clear Skies Champion, Public Servant of the Year and Volunteer of the Year. Our keynote speaker, Eric Larsen, is one of the world's greatest explorers – the only person to have ever reached the North and South Poles and climbed Mt. Everest in one year. In his riveting presentation, Eric will relate his experiences from these expeditions to real world issues and challenges. For tickets or information on tables and sponsorships, contact August Darnell at (864) 232-2302 or [august@crawfordstrategy.com](mailto:august@crawfordstrategy.com).

Every Thursday in February, 5:30 p.m.

Every Sunday in February, 3:00 p.m.

Flicks for Thought Film Series

Upcountry History Museum, 540 Buncombe Street, Greenville, SC

Cost: \$5 (included with museum admission)

The Flicks for Thought independent film series is a partnership between Greenville Organic Foods Organization (GOFO) and Upstate Forever. Film screenings and a light reception catered by Whole Foods will be held every Thursday evening and Sunday afternoon in February. The schedule includes Forks Over Knives, Ghost Bird, Farmageddon, and The Last Mountain. Seating is limited to 65 patrons per film, so advance purchases are encouraged! For details on the films and a link to purchase advance tickets, go to <http://flicksforthought.com>.

Every Tuesday, February 28-April 17, 7:00 p.m.

Green Screen Film Series

Hub-Bub Showroom, 149 S. Daniel Morgan Avenue, Spartanburg, SC

Cost: Free

The Green Screen film series returns for 2012 with eight great films, followed by discussions, at the Hub-Bub Showroom. The schedule includes *The Economics of Happiness*, *Ghostbird*, *Grow!*, *Urbanized*, *The Last Mountain*, *Mad City Chickens*, *With My Own Two Wheels*, and *Waste Land*. Visit our website for descriptions and details.

## 7. Lots o' Links

[Military Bases Provide Unlikely Refuge for South's Longleaf Pine](#). The expanses of longleaf pine forest that once covered the southeastern United States have been whittled away to just three percent of their original range. But as scientists are discovering, this threatened forest ecosystem has found a sanctuary in an unexpected place – U.S. military installations.

[Thought Traps of Environmental Thinking](#). Frances Moore Lappé, author of *Diet for a Small Planet*, is interviewed about her new book, [EcoMind: Changing the Way We Think to Get the World We Want](#). She defines seven thought traps, and they'll sound familiar to most of us: over-consumption is the problem, we need to end growth, people hate rules, we've lost touch with nature. Lappé declares these all false, and then sets out to defeat them with examples from around the world and her own self-declared "cockeyed possibilism."

[The New Story of Stuff: Can We Consume Less?](#) A new study finds that Britons are consuming less than they did a decade ago, with similar patterns being seen across Europe. Could this be the beginning of a trend in developed countries? Might we be reaching "peak stuff"?

## 8. Quote of the Month

"It's not going to help this county down the road to be the dumping ground for infectious waste."

—Spartanburg County Council Member O'Neal Mintz, on the plans for a medical waste treatment facility, quoted in the Spartanburg Herald-Journal, 12/7/11

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## *The Upstate Update is Going Electronic in 2012*

The *Upstate Update* is getting an update! To better keep our members current and to conserve resources, we will be shifting in 2012 to electronic-only distribution of this newsletter. If you currently receive a hard copy of the *Upstate Update* in the mail, please go to our website ([www.upstateforever.org](http://www.upstateforever.org)) and enter your email address in the box below the words “Join Our Email List” in the left-hand column. You will be taken to a confirmation page where you can select which publications to receive. If you do not have an email account, plan to visit our website, friend us on Facebook, or follow us on Twitter to receive updates. You will also continue to receive the *Upstate Advocate* in the mail.

And if you’re not already a member of *Upstate Forever*, from our home page please also click the “Support Us Today!” button and make your contribution to support our vital work. Look forward to shorter, timelier updates in your in-box soon!

