

## **UPSTATE UPDATE NUMBER 14**

### **December 1, 2000**

In this Upstate Update, we are pleased to share with you some exciting news about our Land Trust Program. A lot of hard work throughout the year culminated in three notable accomplishments during the last month.

#### ***1. Conservation Easement Conference Was A Spectacular Success!!***

On November 14 at the Palmetto Expo Center in Greenville, Upstate Forever and the Foothills Resource Conservation and Development Council (the association of the county soil and water conservation districts in the Upstate) hosted the first in depth conference that has ever been held in our region on conservation easements. When we started planning the program earlier this year, our goal was to attract about 100 people to the conference. ***Nearly 300 attended!*** In fact, 42 people showed up that morning to register!

It was a great event, featuring an impressive group of speakers who explained what conservation easements are, how they work and their potential tax benefits. A conference book, which contains over 250 pages of information about easements, and Upstate Forever's Land Trust booklet were given to all of the attendees. The basic objective of the conference was to "spread the word" about conservation easements as an important method of protecting significant lands and resources in the Upstate. We believe we were successful!

If you were not able to attend the conference and would like the book, it is available at a charge of \$25.00. We also have a limited number of video tapes of the entire conference that can be purchased for \$20 each. Our Land Trust booklet is available at no charge. Please send us an e-mail if you would like to order either of these items.

#### ***2. Receipt of First Conservation Easement.***

Upstate Forever received its first conservation easement from Helen Sloan and her five

children on approximately 200 acres of land in southern Greenville County. The property, which Mrs. Sloan and her husband, the late John L. Sloan, acquired in the early 1960s, includes Huff Creek, a 25-acre lake, over 150 acres of woodlands, and rich wildlife habitat. The conservation easement reserves the right to maintain the family home and to build no more than three additional residences. No other development will be permitted.

The Sloan property supports a wide variety of wildlife, including owls, ducks, turkey and hawks. “Despite all of the growth around us,” Mrs. Sloan said, “it’s still a wonderful oasis with wildlife everywhere. In fact, more and more animals are seeking refuge on our property because so much of the habitat in this area is being lost.” The Greenville News, Nov. 28, 2000, p. 1B. She granted the conservation easement because “I love this land very much and couldn’t bear at my death losing it to housing development.”

To Mrs. Sloan and her children---Thank you for your confidence and trust in granting Upstate Forever its first conservation easement!!

**3. *Fairview Farms Property Acquired.*** One of Upstate Forever’s very first projects was working with a group of concerned citizens in acquiring and protecting Fairview Farms in northern Spartanburg County, which operated as a training center for race horses for many years. This is a magnificent 1,200-acre tract of land along the Pacolet River, one of the Upstate’s most important rivers. The property contains an old growth self-replicating forest which is visited regularly by college science classes. There are several rare plant species on the property, and significant stands of hardwoods are located along the river. From the tops of several hills on the property there are breathtaking views of the Blue Ridge Mountains just a few miles to the north.

Greenspace of Fariview, LLC, the entity created to pursue the project, obtained a six-month option on the property in late 1999 and then successfully completed a private securities offering where it raised sufficient funds from nine investors to acquire the property. Each investor in Greenspace will receive a tract of land ranging from 25 to 70 acres on which he or she can construct a single family residence not to exceed 6,000 square feet and two smaller ancillary buildings; no further development will be allowed. The rest of the property will be owned by Greenspace and remain as permanently protected open space. In addition, South Carolina’s

wonderful “Mountains to the Sea” hiking trail will be constructed through the property along the Pacolet River. The entire property will be placed under a conservation easement to be held by Upstate Forever. We will receive the easement some time next summer.

We are excited about the Fairview transaction not only because one of the special places in the Upstate has been protected but also because Fairview can serve as a model for similar “conservation developments” throughout the region. In this rapidly growing region, we do not believe it is realistic to expect many landowners to “lock up” their property and not allow any development. We need to seek “win-win” solutions where the landowner can realize some economic return on the property, while at the same time protecting its important resources and features. Fairview is an outstanding example of how this can be done.

#### *4. Quote of the Week.*

The following editorial appeared last Wednesday in the Tryon Daily Bulletin about the Fairview Farms transaction:

### **FAIRVIEW FOR ALL**

It was almost over the precipice. The pattern was too familiar. There sat Fairview Farms, 1,200 pristine acres just off an interstate highway, at a growing intersection, near a bustling town, in a prospering region of the country. Its heyday had passed. Its owners by inheritance lived elsewhere.

“Progress” was bound to rear its ugly head.

But the spirit of preservation runs strong in the Thermal Belt.

People want to *live* here.

They also want to work and shop here, but many of us are convinced that the working and shopping do not have to destroy the living—the beauty, the peacefulness, the scenery. We believe that, in fact, our working and shopping and living can all be enhanced by preservation.

Now those are fine sentiments. But when it comes to preserving scenery one doesn’t own, that’s all they are, sentiments.

Not this time. No one can say, “If you want to see Fairview Farms remain undeveloped, why don’t you just buy it!” A group of investors did just that and placed it under a conservation easement.

The effort was brought together under the leadership of Madelon and Herbert (Bud) Myers, working with Upstate Forever executive director Brad Wyche.

“Had Fairview Farms been acquired by a developer, this corner of the Upstate would have seen the 1,200 acres of beautiful pastures, hardwoods and lakes covered with everything from strip malls to condos,” Wallace and Myers said.

Wow, strip malls and condos. Chaa-ching!

A lot of money might have been made by someone, someone very likely who then would have sought out someplace to live with beautiful pastures, hardwoods and lakes.

Now, instead of hiking through just another wearying strip mall, people today and for all tomorrow will instead be able to hike along the Palmetto Trail, across the protected acreage of Fairview Farms.