

# Upstate Update

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

## 1. *Did You Hear the Governor??!*

We joined thousands of South Carolinians in listening to our new Governor's first "State of the State" address on last month. At the beginning he gave us a preview of what he would be talking about: the budget crisis and restructuring state government were expected, but the last topic—quality of life—was an unexpected surprise.

We waited anxiously for Governor Sanford to reach that topic. Not that the other topics aren't immensely important, but trying to protect and improve quality of life is what we do everyday at *Upstate Forever*. We especially wanted to hear what he had to say about this.

He spent no more than five minutes on the topic but his message was powerful and exciting. Governor Sanford reminded all of us of what a wonderful state we live in—few places in the world rival South Carolina's natural beauty. Keeping it that way is important not only for ecological reasons but also because it contributes mightily to tourism, now our state's number one industry.

The Governor expressed his strong support for the South Carolina Conservation Bank Act, which passed the General Assembly last year and will be funded next year. We can't help but think that the Governor's intent was to put a quick end to the talk about delaying funding or even repealing the law. The implicit message was: "Don't you dare."

The Governor next turned his attention to the absurd state regulation that requires all new schools to be built on large tracts of land. The rule undermines efforts to establish neighborhood schools and also causes sprawl. Yes, he used the "S-word"—the first Governor in the history of South Carolina to use that word in the State of the State! We have come a long way!

And there was more to come. Before his speech, Governor Sanford appointed a "Quality of Life" Task Force to consider these important issues and make recommendations on what needs to be done. It is a broad-based group of people from around the state, with almost every viewpoint represented. The task force delivered its report to the Governor on February 6. It provides an inspiring blueprint of how our state can accommodate the dramatic growth that is taking place

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

(every day South Carolina's population increases by 140 people, and every day 200 acres are developed), while protecting and improving the environment and quality of life for everyone. Here are some of the recommendations:

- Increase funding for the Conservation Bank Act
- Raise the per acre cap and maximum annual credit in the Conservation Incentives Act
- Support farmland protection initiatives
- Include the value of conserving South Carolina's natural resources in educational curriculum
- Eliminate the minimum acreage requirement for new schools
- Favor the restoration and construction of community-based small schools over the construction of new mega schools
- Require that major projects be consistent with local land use plans
- Designate "priority investment areas" for future growth
- "Public agencies should plan where they build and only build where they plan"
- Give precedence to maintaining existing highways over building new ones
- Integrate transportation planning with land use planning so public transit can make a comprehensive contribution to economic development and mobility
- Remove legal impediments to traditional neighborhood designs and provide incentives for such developments
- Provide incentives for infill development and redevelopment of brownfield sites
- Provide property owners and local governments the ability to resolve land use disputes through mediation and expedited judicial review. (Notably, the Task Force did not support the efforts of some "private property rights" groups to change the definition of what constitutes a "taking" under South Carolina law.)
- Adopt additional measures to protect isolated freshwater wetlands based on function and size
- Reform the state's annexation and condemnation laws
- Exercise more control over the flow of the state's waters to assure the protection of South Carolina citizens and industry.

WOW!!! What a terrific action plan for South Carolina! (For those who would like to read the entire report, we have posted it on our website at [http://www.upstateforever.org/QOL\\_TaskForceReport.pdf](http://www.upstateforever.org/QOL_TaskForceReport.pdf)).

We hope that Governor Sanford embraces the report from his Task Force and then provides the leadership that will be needed to make their recommendations a reality. Based on his State of the State, there is every reason to believe he will do so.

## 2. *Don't Miss Dan Burden!*

*Upstate Forever* is proud to be a co-presenter of "Creating Walkable Communities," a series of presentations to be held March 11-12 featuring Dan Burden, one of the nation's leading experts on pedestrian facilities and programs. His highly visual presentations will focus on ways to improve pedestrian accessibility and safety through innovative techniques and community design. He will discuss how pedestrian friendly developments can create more livable communities in the Upstate. His agenda also includes discussions about intersection, sidewalk, cross-walk and street designs that help reduce speed and make walking safer.

The two-day series includes six presentations to Upstate policymakers, planners, transportation engineers, community leaders and the general public throughout the region. Public presentations will be held at Furman University on March 11, 2003, at 7:30 p.m. and Clemson University on March 12, 2003, at 4:00 p.m.

Reservations are required and admission is free. For more information call *Upstate Forever* at 250-0500.

The other co-presenters are HeartWise Spartanburg and the Greenville County Pedestrian Task Force. More than 20 other organizations, agencies and individuals are also supporting the event. (They are listed on our website.)

## 3. *Upstate Conservationists Win 11 of 14 State Awards!*

Upstate conservationists won almost all of the awards presented at the South Carolina Wildlife Federation's 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Conservation Awards Banquet in Clemson on January 25, 2003. Of the 14 awards given, 11 went to individuals and

organizations in the Upstate! We are especially proud of **Upstate Forever** board member Amanda Bauknight of Pickens County, who was the co-winner of the Outdoor Ethics Award. Tom Trantham of Pelzer shared the award with her. The other Upstate winners were:

**Education Award**

Hubert Cox, Seneca  
Marion St. Clair, Greenville

**Wildlife Award**

Partners for Trout, Greenville

**Water Award**

Keowee Key Utility Systems, Inc., Salem

**Industrial Award**

Michelin North America,  
Inc., Greenville

**Communications Award**

Larry J. Holbrooks, Westminster

**Youth Award**

Boy Scout Troop 235, Clemson

**Bootsie Manning Wildlife Habitat Award**

Lloyd G. Webb Natural  
Resources Office, Clemson

**Harry Hampton Journalism Award**

Palmetto Conservation Foundation,  
Spartanburg

The top award, "Conservationist of the Year," was given to Chip Campsen of Charleston for his outstanding leadership in sponsoring the South Carolina Conservation Bank Act as a member of the House of Representatives. This critically important legislation would never have become law without Chip's tireless and relentless efforts. Chip did not run for re-election and now serves as Governor Sanford's Senior Policy Advisor.

*We are honored to have so many involved partners working to protect our Upstate! Congratulations to all award winners!*

**4. Oconee County Releases Draft of Its First Ever Comprehensive Plan.**

At long last, Oconee County is taking a proactive look at managing its inevitable future growth by developing the county's first ever complete Comprehensive Plan.

The S. C. Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994

requires that all city and county planning commissions in the state develop a Comprehensive Plan as the first essential step in the planning process. Each plan must include the following seven elements: Population, Economic, Natural Resources, Cultural Resources, Community Facilities, Housing, and Land Use. Each element must include an inventory of existing conditions, a statement of needs and goals, and implementation strategies and time frames. Planning Director Tom Hendricks and his associate, Art Holbrooks, have worked for two years to complete six of the Plan's seven elements, and Economic Development Director Jim Alexander is completing the Economic element.

A first draft of the Plan was made public in November, 2002, and will be presented to the county's citizens in a series of public meetings beginning February 13 and ending March 6. The Planning Commission will consider the public comments, make appropriate revisions, and present the plan to County Council for approval. After the plan is approved, land use regulations, such as a development standards ordinance or zoning, can be implemented.

County leaders are to be commended for taking this first step in planning ahead for the changes that are sure to come. The Oconee region is truly one of the country's most breathtaking, with its stunning waterfalls, pristine rivers, spectacular mountain ranges, and pastoral countrysides. These wonderfully rich natural resources are a magnet for tourists, hikers, and outdoors lovers, and are attracting more and more retirement and vacation homes to the area. Population increased by 15.2 per cent between 1990 and 2000 in Oconee County, ranking its rate of growth 20th among the state's 46 counties. At this rate, there will be nearly 30,000 more people in the county by 2025.

This kind of growth, if managed properly, can be a tremendous economic boost to Oconee County. These 30,000 people will require approximately 1,100 new homes and 600,000 square feet of new retail space that will have 3,000 new parking spaces. They will bring with them approximately 2,000 automobiles that will generate about 24 million vehicle miles every year. They will need sewer and water service, new K-12 classrooms, roads, offices, medical care, fire protection, and so on. Many acres of Oconee County's landscape will have to be converted to development to accommodate this inevitable growth. The great challenge to the county is how and where that development will take place.

These facts are not lost on Tom Hendricks, who says that the Comprehensive Plan is a blueprint for accommodating the county's future growth while pro-

protecting its resources. The draft contains numerous references to the county's threatened water supplies and loss of farmland and cites the need to establish local controls to protect natural resources.

We couldn't agree more and hope the county's leadership will embrace the vision set forth by the Plan. However, without appropriate land use regulations, the Comprehensive Plan will remain just that - a vision. The Plan sets the policy, but regulations are needed to enforce it. Without the "teeth" that rigorous, yet flexible, regulations can provide, the Plan will do little more than gather dust on a shelf.

For example, in the Natural Resources portion of the Plan, one objective is to "preserve, protect and enhance Oconee's environmentally sensitive lands, unique scenic views, agrarian landscapes, and topographic features." One way to help achieve this goal is to establish a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) ordinance, where the development rights of a property owner in an environmentally sensitive area can be sold in the free market to a developer in an area where more density is logical and desired. This, however, can only happen by establishing an underlying ordinance that governs the trading system. For more information on TDR programs, see Rick Pruetz, *Saved by Development*, Arje Press, 1999.

An important recommendation of the Plan is to "establish planning districts throughout the county [to] achieve land use objectives for the future." According to Tom Hendricks, the citizens in each district would work together with county officials to address growth-related issues and develop future land use plans for their particular regions. *Upstate Forever* has long advocated for community-based land use planning that begins with a comprehensive public education program that examines all of the options for regulating future land use and then involves the citizens in the planning process. After all, it is the quality of their lives that will be affected by future growth in Oconee County.

Land use regulations can help guide Oconee County's future growth in a manner that protects its beauty, resources and high quality of life, but without them, the next 25 year's of growth can wreak havoc on what is now one of the state's, and the Upstate's, most precious assets.

All interested citizens should take the time to read the draft and share their thoughts with county officials at one of the public meetings. For a schedule of the public meetings, call Tom Hendricks at (864) 638-4218.

The county has placed a copy of the draft of the plan in all branches of the Oconee County Public Library. You can also download it from the county's website: [http://www.oconeesc.com/planning/default.htm#\\_Documents\\_of\\_Interest](http://www.oconeesc.com/planning/default.htm#_Documents_of_Interest)

## 5. *Land and Money Donated to Paris Mountain State Park!*

Paris Mountain State Park received two extraordinary Valentines this month.

First, the Greenville Water System donated 265 acres of adjacent land to the Park, filling the gap between two other sections of the park and providing the opportunity to connect existing trail networks. Rich in wildlife habitat, the new parkland is hilly and heavily forested, includes a 15-acre lake, and will be maintained primarily as a wilderness area with limited access for hiking, biking, and primitive camping.

Before the new section is opened to public use, Furman University will perform a plant and wildlife survey, and volunteers will map new trails that will connect to the Park's existing trail system. The addition of this piece increases the park's size to 1,540 acres.

The Park received another special Valentine when BMW donated \$100,000 to the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Department and earmarked it for renovations that will transform the bath house into a Park Center.

Major kudos go to Leadership Greenville Class 27 and Friends of Paris Mountain State Park - these achievements would never have happened without their hard work.

Long range plans for the park include a trail system that will connect it to a greenway leading to Furman University and downtown Greenville. How lucky we are here in the Upstate to have this magnificent resource right in our own back yard!

## 6. *Family Donates Green Space to City of Greenville.*

The grandchildren of Hessie Morrah have donated to the City of Greenville approximately one acre of undeveloped green space in the historic Overbrook

neighborhood. Prior to making the donation, the family members granted a conservation easement to *Upstate Forever* to ensure the permanent preservation of the land. The easement prohibits any development, subdivision or alteration of the property.

Hessie Morrah bought the property in the 1940's with the intent of protecting it as a green space and bird sanctuary within the city.

"Our family believed that it was absolutely the right thing to do, especially after seeing the enormous loss of trees and green space from the I-385 construction project," said Irene Morrah, one of the grandchildren. "It makes my grandmother's vision more pertinent than ever. As her grandchildren, we want to carry out her dream of providing green space in the city. 'Keep Greenville Beautiful' was always her motto. It will be a peaceful and beautiful place for both people and wildlife to use and enjoy for years to come."

City Council member Chandra Dillard, whose district includes the Overbrook area, said, "The City deeply appreciates the generosity of the Morrah family in providing this wonderful oasis of green space for our community. This is yet another great example of the city and the private sector working together to improve Greenville's quality of life."

## 7. Mark Your Calendars!

**Trees and Parking Lots Living Together: Innovative Design and Construction.** A one-day workshop to be held on February 28 at Gwinnett Technical College in Lawrenceville, Georgia.

<http://www.gufc.org/>

[Parking%20Lot%20Workshop%20Registration%20Form%20\(05Dec02\).pdf](http://www.gufc.org/Parking%20Lot%20Workshop%20Registration%20Form%20(05Dec02).pdf)

**"Creating Walkable Communities."** National pedestrian expert Dan Burden will be in the Upstate March 11-12 to discuss ways to improve pedestrian accessibility and safety in existing and new communities. His presentations at Furman University at 7:30 p.m. on March 11 and at Clemson University at 4:00 p.m. on March 12 are free and open to the public. Space is limited and reservations are required. Please call *Upstate Forever* at 250-0500 to reserve your space at one of these events. (See Item 2 above for more information.)

**Paris Mountain State Park.** A public meeting will be held on March 13 at Meadors Sandwich Company on Main Street in Greenville to present information about a \$200,000 trails grant proposed for the park. The presentations will begin at 6:00 p.m. and will be repeated every half hour until 9:00 p.m. The next day, to complement its trail plans, the Park will officially open a new trail at noon. This shared-use trail is for hikers and bikers, the first of its kind in the South Carolina State Park Service. The trail will rotate users on a daily basis. Meet at the new trailhead at the top of the park road. For more information, call Paris Mountain State Park at 244-5565.

## 8. Lots O' Links.

**Land Vote 2002.** This report by the Trust for Public Land tracks the results of conservation ballot measures across the country in 2002. [http://www.tpl.org/content\\_documents/landvote2002.pdf](http://www.tpl.org/content_documents/landvote2002.pdf)

**Grappling With Growth - The Search for Solutions.** This series of excellent articles from the Detroit News examines the costs and quandaries of the latest suburban boom. <http://www.detnews.com/2002/specialreport/0212/22/a01-41943.htm>

**Is It Time to Replace Zoning?** Old-fashioned zoning codes are discouraging mixed-use development. Are "form-based" codes the future? <http://www.postwritersgroup.com/archives/peir0127.htm>

**Th!nk.** Th!nk, Ford Motor Company's New Neighborhood Electric Vehicles, are smart cars that produce no harmful emissions. Just plug them in, charge them up, and go. They'll recharge your batteries, too! <http://thinkmobility.com/homeUS.asp?TID=1026368>

**Will "Lifestyle Centers" Replace Regional Malls?** These open air malls that have specialty shopping and restaurants aren't sprouting up because developers have become acolytes of New Urbanism. They are being built because they make money. <http://governing.com/2assess.htm>

**Average House Size Mushroomed Since 1970.** According to the 2000 Census, the average American home is now more than 2,200 square feet, up approximately 50 per cent from 1970's average of 1,500 square feet. <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/02/01/national/01CENS.html?ex=1045302280&ei=1&en>

# Upstate Update

**Top Ten Planning Issues of 2002.** According to Planetizen, smart growth, the creative class, pedestrians, and SUVs are among the most important issues facing planners in 2002. For the entire list and summaries, visit <http://www.planetizen.com/oped/item.php?id=80>

## 9. *Quote of the Month*

“In a real sense, we are stewards of the land, not owners. It will be here when we are gone. We owe it to those who follow to make sure we preserve the quality of life in the physical use of the land we enjoy.”

Jeff Horton, Chairman, Spartanburg County Council  
Spartanburg Herald-Journal, January 26, 2003