

# Upstate Update

NUMBER 52

MARCH  
2004

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

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## 1. Legislative Update

### Conservation Bank Act

As the 2004 legislative session began, supporters of the Conservation Bank knew that nothing could be taken for granted. They rallied against a bill that would defer funding for yet another year, while strongly supporting the inclusion of \$10 million of funding in the Governor's budget. A very positive signal was the overwhelming vote by the House Ways and Means Committee to fund the program at \$10 million.

But then the full House made the shocking decision on March 12 to transfer \$2.5 million of the Bank's funds to the Medicaid budget and \$5 million for beach renourishment, leaving the Bank with only a pitiful \$2.5 million in funding.

The budget approved by the House has now been sent to the Senate so we urge **Upstate Forever** members and interested citizens to contact their Senators immediately. Please ask them to honor the commitment made in 2002 to **fully fund** the South Carolina Conservation Bank this year.

#### Upstate Forever's position:

- ✓ Support full funding of Conservation Bank beginning 2004.
- × Oppose any attempts to reduce or delay funding.

*For more information about the Conservation Bank, see item 3 below.*

Promoting sensible growth and protecting special places in the Upstate

## South Carolina Infrastructure Priority Investment Act

This bill, which would require that local governments with comprehensive land use plans coordinate with infrastructure and service providers to plan ahead where new infrastructure would be built, passed the House and is now in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

### Upstate Forever's position:

✓ Support.

Please contact your legislators and express your support or opposition to the above bills. You can find their contact information by typing your address in the form on the following website: <http://congress.org/congressorg/state/main/?state=SC&view=myofficials#0>

## 2. Exciting News!! Upstate Forever Receives Major Grant To Open Spartanburg Office!!

We have some wonderful news! The Mary Black Foundation recently awarded **Upstate Forever** a five-year, \$743,000 grant that will enable us to open an office in Spartanburg! This is a dream come true for us---having an office in Spartanburg has been in our long range plan since the very beginning! We will be able to hire two full-time professionals and a part-time administrative assistant and to add another professional in the third year.

The office will be focusing primarily on implementing certain of the strategies and goals set forth in the Mary Black Foundation's "Active Living" program. Specifically, **Upstate Forever** will be working on an assessment of the ordinances in the City and County of Spartanburg to identify those provisions that impede active living; a "Big Box Initiative" that will promote better standards for new big box stores and strategies for dealing with the abandoned ones; a "Parks and Open Space Initiative" aimed at establishing a regular and significant source of funding for more parks and open spaces in Spartanburg County; and joining in the efforts that are already underway to improve pedestrian accessibility in the downtown area. For more information, please visit the Mary Black Foundation's website: [www.maryblackfoundation.org/physicalactivity.org](http://www.maryblackfoundation.org/physicalactivity.org).

Over the last several years, considerable progress has been made by local governments, nonprofit organizations, business leaders and interested citizens toward improving active living opportunities and conditions in Spartanburg, such as revitalizing the downtown area, constructing the Palmetto Trail and other greenways, promoting "walk to school" activities, and establishing safer pedestrian crossings. Through our office in Spartanburg, **Upstate Forever** hopes to support, reinforce and expand these exciting efforts.

We are now searching for a director of the office. Our plan is to hire the director first, and he or she will be closely involved in hiring the rest of the staff. The job notice is posted on the home page of our website, [www.upstateforever.org](http://www.upstateforever.org).

We are deeply humbled and honored by the generous support provided by the Mary Black Foundation, and we appreciate the support that our members and other funders continue to provide. We look forward to opening our Spartanburg office!

### 3. The Conservation Bank Should Be Given A Chance To Work!

The following article was written by *Upstate Forever* Executive Director Brad Wyche for the Spartanburg Herald-Journal and will be published soon. It is presented here with the Herald-Journal's permission.

"You never know what will happen in the legislative process, but what a shock it was to watch the South Carolina House of Representatives last week eliminate nearly 80 per cent of the funding for the Conservation Bank. Unbelievable!

In 2001 and 2002, business leaders, realtors, developers, conservationists, and interested citizens from across South Carolina joined forces to support passage of the Conservation Bank Act. Several members of the General Assembly told me that in all their years of service, they had never seen a more diverse group of people and organizations working together in favor of a particular bill.

The hard work paid off, and the legislation was signed into law in April of 2002, but funding of the Bank was deferred until this July. Over the last 18 months, considerable effort has been devoted to ensuring that the Bank will be ready for business when the funding begins in July. The members of the Conservation Bank Board have been appointed and with a generous grant from the Conservation Fund, a full time Executive Director has been hired. A website has been established, and application forms for grants and loans from the Bank have been prepared and are now available. Several applications have already been submitted.

The Conservation Bank provides a dedicated source of revenue to acquire, or protect through conservation easements, a broad range of resources in our state—environmentally sensitive areas, farmlands, forests, historic sites, and so forth. The Bank also can be used to acquire lands for parks, hunting and fishing areas, greenways and open spaces for public use and enjoyment.

It is funded entirely by a small portion of the real estate transfer fee that is collected every time land is sold in the state. It is an eminently sensible source of funding that is widely used by many other states and localities in the country. No tax increase is involved, and all transactions are between willing sellers and buyers.

The law is a huge step in the right direction toward a better balance between development and conservation in our state. Although one of the smallest states, South Carolina currently ranks tenth in the country in the total amount of land that is being developed. To put that in perspective, our rate of development is the equivalent of three brand new WestGate Malls every day!

Of course, we need growth and development to provide jobs for our citizens and to keep our economy strong. But for both environmental and economic reasons and to improve the quality of life for all of our citizens, we need more public parks and we need to protect and preserve some of our state's important resources and special places.

The fact that tourism is now South Carolina's leading industry is due in large part to the beauty and quality of our natural resources. People come here (and many end up never leaving) because South Carolina is such a wonderful place. The Conservation Bank will help keep it that way.

The Bank can also be used to protect South Carolina's working farms and forests, which today account for one out of every five jobs in our state. Total cash receipts for crops and livestock average \$1.5 billion every year, and South Carolina ranks near the top in the nation for several products, such as peaches and tomatoes. Timber is the number one product in 35 of South Carolina's 46 counties. Many farmers and forest owners in our state are struggling to make ends meet but do not want to give up. The Conservation Bank could well mean the difference between the land staying in production or becoming a parking lot.

***The bottom line is that the Conservation Bank will protect and improve both the environment and the economy of South Carolina.***

The Conservation Bank is projected to raise about \$10 million per year—far less than comparable conservation programs in other Southeastern states and communities (Florida: \$300 million per year; Georgia: \$30 million per year; Raleigh, North Carolina: \$47 million bond; DeKalb County, Georgia: \$125 million bond, to name just a few).

North Carolina has a highly successful program called the Clean Water Management Trust Fund, which provides funds to local governments, state agencies and conservation organizations for, among other things, protecting lands vital to water quality. Since its establishment in 1996, the Clean Water Fund has awarded 453 grants totaling \$363 million and leveraged over \$555 million in private and other public funds.

North Carolina's budget problems are just as difficult as ours. Yet the North Carolina General Assembly recently approved \$62 million for the Clean Water Fund for fiscal years 2003-04 and the same amount in 2004-05. North Carolina's total budget is about \$15 billion—nearly three times the budget of South Carolina. So that \$62 million is the equivalent of \$20 million here. The proposed level of funding for the Conservation Bank—about \$10 million—is only half of that.

As the 2004 legislative session began, supporters of the Conservation Bank knew that nothing could be taken for granted. We rallied against a bill that would defer funding for yet another year, while strongly supporting the inclusion of \$10 million of funding in the Governor's budget. On February 6, more than 100 citizens throughout South Carolina came to Columbia for "Conservation Lobby Day" to show their support for the Conservation Bank and other important initiatives. A very positive sign was the overwhelming vote by the House Ways and Means Committee to fully fund the program.

But then the full House dropped the bomb on March 12 when they transferred \$2.5 million of the Bank's funds to the Medicaid budget and \$5 million for beach renourishment, leaving the Bank with a pitiful \$2.5 million in funding. Beach renourishment and Medicaid, of course, are important needs, but we shouldn't pay for them by robbing the Conservation Bank!

The budget approved by the House has been sent to the Senate. I urge citizens to contact their Senators and ask them to honor the commitment made in 2002 to fully fund the South Carolina Conservation Bank this year.

Let's give the Conservation Bank a chance to work!"

#### 4. Spartanburg Adopts Upstate's First Citywide Riparian Buffer Ordinance!

Congratulations to the Spartanburg City Council, which has given Spartanburg the distinction of being the Upstate region's first jurisdiction to approve a Riparian Buffer Zone Ordinance that protects all its rivers, streams, and lakes. (Pickens County has an ordinance that protects the shorelines of its principal lakes - Hartwell, Jocassee, and Keowee.)

The purpose of a riparian buffer is to protect water quality by reducing the effects of runoff and sedimentation on waterways. The buffer helps stabilize soils, slow stormwater, trap sediments and other pollutants, and provides habitat for wildlife.

The Spartanburg ordinance establishes a 100-foot buffer along principal streams and associated water bodies, and a 50-foot buffer along all tributaries. Land disturbing activities and new structures are prohibited within the buffer zone unless a variance is obtained from the City. The buffer area must be maintained in a natural state or be planted according to standards set by the ordinance.

This is a landmark ordinance in the Upstate region and we applaud the Spartanburg City Council for their leadership in protecting the region's water quality. We hope other Upstate cities and counties will recognize the value of riparian protection and follow Spartanburg's lead.

## 5. Four Upstate Residents Win Conservation Awards.

The South Carolina Wildlife Federation recognized the conservation efforts of four Upstate citizens at their 39th Annual Conservation Awards banquet in January. Congratulations to the following people for their well deserved awards:

Brad Jones, Anderson - Outdoor Ethics Award  
Ingrid Quigg Norris, Spartanburg - Education Award  
Rick Willey, Clemson - Communications Award  
Walter McPhail, Mauldin - Forest Award

## 6. Did you know.....

...that a new bicycle courier service is available in Greenville? Greencity Couriers provides delivery service within the city limits and is donating one cent of every dollar they make to help install bike racks downtown and on city buses to help reduce traffic and pollution.

...that three of the nation's 24 worst highway bottlenecks are in Atlanta and that drivers lose a total of 52,450 hours every year attempting to get through them?<sup>1</sup>

...that a recent study conducted by the University of South Carolina found that women are more likely than men to be physically active?<sup>2</sup>

...that China is approximately the same size as the United States but has more than four times as many people?<sup>3</sup>

...that the average per capita use of paper in the United States is 10 times that in China?<sup>4</sup>

...that for every 1,000 persons in China there are 16 vehicles, and in the United States there are 774?<sup>5</sup>

...that the amount of water use per person in the United States is more than four times greater than in China?<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Interchanges at I-75 at I-85, I-285 and I-85, I-285 and I-75. From *Unclogging America's Arteries: Effective Relief for Highway Bottlenecks*. Cambridge Systematics, March 2004. <http://www.highways.org/bottleneck/2004/index.cfm?city=63>

<sup>2</sup> USC Arnold School of Public Health, <http://uscnews.sc.edu/hlth071.html>

<sup>3</sup> "China's Growing Pains," *National Geographic*, Volume 205, Number 3, March 2004, p. 66-95.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* Water consumption includes agricultural, industrial, and domestic uses.

## 7. Upcoming Events

### *Upstate Forever Events*

#### **4/3/04, Eastatoee 2- Return to the Valley, 9:00 am - 3:00 pm**

Enjoy a day in the beautiful and historic Eastatoee Valley as we visit Wes and Ann Cooler, the hosts of our very first field trip. This time we will focus on lessons they have learned about living with the land and the river. We will look at efforts to restore and enhance trout habitat in the Eastatoee River, visit a neighbor's renovated homestead, discuss local history, and learn about the botanically amazing Wadakoe Mountain. As we end our day, we will participate in an exercise to help Wes and Ann structure a conservation easement for their property. **Max:** 20 people **Cost:** \$20

#### **4/24/04, Photography Outing With Bill Robertson, 9:00 am - 3:00 pm**

Back by popular demand! Bill Robertson, award winning photographer, will share his ideas and techniques on light, perspective, and composition as we hike along the Horsepasture River to Rainbow Falls. **Max:** 20 people **Cost:** \$20

### *Other Events*

#### **3/22/04 - 3/25/04, The Carolina Recycling Association (CRA) 14th Annual Conference & Trade Show, Charlotte, North Carolina.**

The conference includes over thirty educational/ informational sessions, five tours, and four workshops, featuring such topics as sustainable design, composting, best management practices, and innovations in waste management and recycling. For additional information, contact the CRA at (919) 545-9050, (919) 545-9060 Fax or [cra@cra-recycle.org](mailto:cra@cra-recycle.org).  
<http://www.cra-recycle.org/>

#### **3/26/04, Banff Mountain Film Festival, McAlister Auditorium, Furman University, Greenville, South Carolina, 7:00 - 10:00 pm.**

This film festival benefits the Mental Health Association of Greenville County. Attendees have the chance to win a kayak or a complete car camping package. Tickets are \$7 for students and \$10 for adults if purchased in advance from Timmons Arena or a Ticketmaster Outlet (Publix Supermarkets), or \$12 at the door. For more information call MHAGC 864-467-3344 or visit the following web sites:  
[www.timmonsarena.com](http://www.timmonsarena.com) [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com).

#### **4/4/04 - 4/7/04, Sixth Annual Bike Walk Conference, Arlington, Virginia.**

The goal of the conference is to explore ways to improve where we work and live by "Creating Living Communities." In addition to addressing the skills and materials needed to begin transforming a community, the conference is dedicated to facilitating dialogue among elected officials, planners, engineers, advocates, educators and local decision makers. The ultimate goal is to further the interests of bicycling and walking for transportation, fitness, and recreation. <http://www.bikewalkvirginia.org/conference/index.html>

**4/6/04, "Conservation or Development: What Difference Does It Make?"**

**Burgiss Theater, Furman University, Greenville, South Carolina, 7:00 p.m.**

This panel discussion, sponsored by a Lilly Foundation grant for Theological Exploration for Vocation, will focus on growth and development in northwestern Greenville County. It has been dubbed "Theo-Eco" for the three intertwined strands of modern life on which it seeks to raise awareness and promote action: the intersections of the theological/ethical, the ecological, and the economic. The purpose is seeking to raise the current level of awareness and create a voice for more responsible development in relation to quality of life and natural life issues. *Upstate Forever's* Diane Eldridge will participate as a panelist.

**4/23/04 - 4/25/04, South Carolina Native Plant Society's 7th Annual  
Native Plant Symposium, Greenville, South Carolina.**

This conference, hosted by the Upstate Chapter of the SCNPS, will be held April 23-25, 2004 at the Palmetto Expo Center in Greenville. The program is entitled "Jocassee, Jewel of the Upstate," and will focus on the flora and fauna of the Jocassee Gorges region. *Upstate Forever's* Brad Wyche will moderate a discussion by a panel of experts on the management issues facing this spectacularly beautiful and biologically diverse region.

[www.scnps.org/activities.html](http://www.scnps.org/activities.html)

**5/5/04 - 5/7/04, Land Development Conference and Expo, Baltimore, Maryland.**

The conference provides educational sessions on Executive Management, Sustainable Development, Collaboration and Project Management, and Land Use Planning and land development. For more information, visit: <http://www.landdevelopment2004.com/>.

**5/24/04 - 5/26/04, Obesity and the Built Environment: Improving Public Health  
Through Community Design, May 24-26, Washington, DC.**

This conference will provide a forum to discuss and illustrate how different elements of the built environment contribute to obesity via access to food and physical activity, and how environmental health research and interventions can address this public health problem.

<http://www.niehs.nih.gov/drcpt/beoconf/home.htm>

## 8. Lots o' Links

### China's Growing Pains.

China is getting richer as it turns into the "workshop of the world," but along with its rapidly growing economy is increasing concern about its environmental ills. Many of the country's citizens are in regular contact with toxic dust and smog-forming substances such as sulfur dioxide, carbon dioxide - much of it caused by their reliance on burning coal for energy. According to an astonishing article in the March 2004 edition of National Geographic magazine, only one third of China's cities meet national standards for air quality, and 700,000 people die every year from indoor air pollution due to coal burning

alone. Not only are the Chinese facing serious air quality issues, but water pollution - much of it from sewage - threatens their drinking water. The country's high incidence of liver, stomach and esophageal cancers has been scientifically linked to its poor water quality. Visit this National Geographic website to read an excerpt from the article:

<http://magma.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/0403/feature4/index.html>

### **Adding New Lanes to Roads Does Not Reduce Congestion.**

A new study from the EPA reports that widening roads alone does nothing to reduce traffic congestion. However, greater street connectivity, shorter route options, and more extensive transit service do have a positive impact on congestion.

[http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/CharPerm\\_RTS.htm](http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/CharPerm_RTS.htm)

### **Traffic: Why It's Getting Worse, What Government Can Do.**

Study by Brookings Institute: Increasing traffic congestion is an inescapable condition in large and growing metropolitan areas across the world from Los Angeles to Tokyo and Cairo to Sao Paulo. Peak-hour traffic congestion is an inherent result of the way modern societies operate. It stems from the widespread desires of people to pursue certain goals that inevitably overload existing roads and transit systems every day. But everyone hates traffic congestion, and it keeps getting worse, in spite of attempted remedies. Commuters are often frustrated by policymakers' inability to do anything about the problem, which poses a significant public policy challenge. Although governments may never be able to eliminate road congestion, there are several ways cities and states can help curb it.

<http://www.brookings.edu/comm/policybriefs/pb128.htm>

### **Parking Lots and Climate Change.**

Do massive asphalt and concrete "urban heat islands" like Houston or Atlanta really help ratchet up the global thermostat? What about huge tracts of farmland like those that span the Midwest? A growing number of atmospheric scientists are taking a hard look at parking lots because, they say, land use changes have at least as much, and perhaps even greater, impact on climate change than CO<sup>2</sup>. It's an idea that has caused a heated controversy in the scientific community and is prompting a closer look at the forces behind climate change.

<http://www.csmonitor.com/2004/0205/p21s01-sten.html>

### **How to Lure Commuters Out of their Cars and Into Transit.**

An Atlanta survey shows that more drivers would take public transit if they knew they could get to their destination as quickly as driving.

<http://www.ajc.com/metro/content/metro/0204a/03transit.html>

### **Taking Steps: An Assessment of Metropolitan Planning Organization Support for Bicycling and Walking.**

New Report from National Center for Bicycling and Walking

[http://www.bikewalk.org/assets/Reports/steps\\_booklet.pdf](http://www.bikewalk.org/assets/Reports/steps_booklet.pdf)

## **Zoning Regulations: Returning to the Old Days.**

San Diego considers changing outdated zoning codes to jumpstart a return to traditional development patterns long prohibited by conventional regulations.

<http://www.signonsandiego.com/news/state/20040222-1144-ca-reinventinggrowth.html>

## **Overcoming Obstacles to Smart Growth through Code Reform.**

A new report from the Local Government Commission.

[http://www.lgc.org/freepub/PDF/Land\\_Use/sg\\_code\\_exec\\_summary.pdf](http://www.lgc.org/freepub/PDF/Land_Use/sg_code_exec_summary.pdf)

## **Wisconsin Bicycle Facility Design Handbook.**

New design standards for bike lanes, shared use paths, etc. Published by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation in January 2004.

<http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/projects/state/docs/bike-facility.pdf>

## **Michigan's School Construction Boom: The Real Costs of New Public Schools.**

Excellent and extensive series of articles addressing issues related to school sprawl, savings attributed to preserving old schools, and more.

<http://www.mlui.org/growthmanagement/fullarticle.asp?fileid=16633>

## **New School Construction a Catalyst for Sprawl.**

What compels communities to build schools in the middle of nowhere?

<http://governing.com/articles/3schools.htm>

## **Thinking out of the Big Box.**

An article describes the woes caused by the increasing number of empty retail big boxes in our communities and presents some strategies for rehabilitation and re-use, including conversion into more profitable retail centers.

[http://retailtrafficmag.com/ar/retail\\_breaking\\_box\\_2/index.htm](http://retailtrafficmag.com/ar/retail_breaking_box_2/index.htm)

## **Carolina Farm Stewardship Association.**

This non-profit's mission is "to support and expand local and organic agriculture in the Carolinas by inspiring, educating, and organizing farmers and consumers." Their website provides information about local farmers, organic farming methods, and much more.

<http://www.carolinafarmstewards.org/index.html>

## **9. Quote of the Month**

"What good is money if you can't breathe the air?"

Jasper Becker, "China's Growing Pains,"  
National Geographic (March 2004), page 80