

Upstate Update

NUMBER 61

JANUARY
2005

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

This edition of the Upstate Update is dedicated to the memory of Dr. Elizabeth Ellison, beloved teacher and conservationist. The following tribute was written by Liz's longtime friend and Upstate Forever Board member, Wes Cooler.

Learning From Liz

Just over a year ago, in the same instant, the people of South Carolina gained a significant addition to Table Rock State Park and lost one of our most ardent advocates for the natural world. The death of Dr. Elizabeth Ellison meant that her beloved Camp Oolenoy - the Roper farm and homestead adjacent to Table Rock - will forever be a public part of our Upstate legacy. Sadly, it will be so without Liz.

As the Park Service plans for the preservation and future use of Camp Oolenoy, the Roper House sits empty for now. The visitors to whom Liz dispensed her sage advice no longer pass through the gauntlet of cats that occupied her front porch. The table in the dining room no longer holds the latest of Liz's awards or letters from her stable of notable friends. Just memories now. Just a big, old, empty house.

It would have been easy, in this busy world of instant global communications, to visit Liz in her time capsule of a home, surrounded by antique appliances, a television that probably displayed Eisenhower's inaugural speech, tons of papers and letters (and the cats), and see her as an anachronism - another elderly person to visit on Sunday afternoon. Nothing could have been further from reality.

Liz was the definition of complexity: trained as a classical violinist, a highly educated world traveler, able to call on powerful politicians by first name, up-to-date on the world news, yet conversant in the skills of the farmer, wise in the ways of the natural world around her, steeped in the lore of the mountain folk. But most complex of all, Liz was a cutting-edge conservationist. She, before others, saw the coming tide of development in the Upstate. She, before others, established a camp for urban kids to immerse them in the natural world. She, before others, acted to preserve her own little corner of the world for generations to come.

The impact of Liz's life will be felt in the Upstate for generations to come. The thousands of physical education students she taught, the hundreds of Oolenoy campers she initiated to nature in the shadow of Table Rock, the land she donated to Lander University for an environmental education center, Camp Oolenoy now a part of the Park, her book - *The Oolenoy Lady*, and the thousands of folks who met her and were infected with her love of nature. All are part of Liz's legacy. She will be greatly missed yet greatly remembered. I was glad to be in her circle of friends and learn so much from her words and her deeds.

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TOP TEN ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2004

Here's our annual Top Ten List of the most notable achievements in land use, conservation and sustainable development issues in the Upstate during last year (not necessarily in order of importance).

1. *Conservation Bank Up and Running.*

December 9, 2004 will be remembered as one of the great days for the conservation movement in South Carolina. The Conservation Bank Board met that day in Columbia to consider and act on the first group of applications for funding under the program. At the end of the day, they had approved \$11 million to protect over 25,000 acres in our state. *Upstate Forever* is honored to be one of the approved applicants. (See next article.)

It was a day conservationists had dreamed about for a long time but frankly weren't sure would ever happen. The dream started in 2001, when business leaders, conservationists, and interested citizens from across the state joined forces to support passage of the Conservation Bank Act.

The Act encountered strong opposition from a determined and vocal group of legislators in the House of Representatives, but the proponents eventually prevailed and the Act was signed into law in April of 2002. Thanks to the many *Upstate Forever* members who contacted their legislators—your voice was heard!

The 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 Conservation Bank will prove to be one of the most important programs ever established in our state's history. How exciting that it is finally underway!

2. *Land Conservation in Upstate South Carolina.*

2004 was a good year for conservation in the Upstate. In addition to the land protected by the South Carolina Conservation Bank, there were a number of other significant conservation-related achievements in the Upstate region. Certainly one of the most noteworthy is the acquisition of two acres atop South Carolina's highest peak, Sassafras Mountain, located in Pickens County along the South Carolina-North Carolina border. All of the South Carolina land adjacent to the 3,560-foot-high peak had already been protected when the state purchased the 32,000 acre Jocassee Gorges property in 1997. Plans to construct a non-intrusive observation platform on the summit are being considered by the Department of Natural Resources.

Three important Upstate acquisitions totaling 238 acres were added to the state's Heritage Trust Program last year. Six of those acres completed the Poinsett Bridge Heritage Preserve, most of which was purchased in 2003, thanks largely to the efforts of a group of local citizens that included historian Anne McCuen, County Councilman Joe Dill, State Senator Verne Smith, and *Upstate Forever's* Brad Wyche. The Poinsett Bridge was constructed in 1820 and is the oldest surviving bridge in South Carolina. It served as part of the state road that linked Charleston, the Upstate, and North Carolina for more than 100 years.

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A second acquisition is the addition of 212 acres to the Chestnut Ridge Heritage Preserve in northeastern Greenville County off Highway 11. This addition helps protect the headwaters of the Pacolet River and contains numerous rare plant and animal species. The site supports the only occurrence in South Carolina of the endangered plant species *reflexed blue-eyed grass*, a member of the iris family. The preserve also features steep terrains, rich cove habitat, and numerous rock outcrops.

A 20-acre donation to the Bunched Arrowhead Heritage Preserve is the final of the three Upstate acquisitions in 2004. Located in the Tigerville area, this preserve contains both wetland and upland areas and features a number of rare plant species including the federally endangered bunched arrowhead, an aquatic perennial herb found only in wetland areas and only known to exist in a very limited geographical region of North and South Carolina.

Upstate Forever accepted four conservation easements last year protecting 554 acres. The largest tract is a 320-acre farm in southern Greenville County with frontage on the Reedy River, one of the most important freshwater sources in the region. This property also provides important habitat for wildlife in one of the region's fastest growing areas. Our second easement, "Always Farms" near Landrum, is close to several other properties protected by **Upstate Forever**. This tract consists of 156 acres of rolling farmland and forest and is in close proximity to the North Pacolet River, another of the region's most important watercourses. The third easement is a 48-acre tract atop Paris Mountain and covered with mature canopy hardwoods including oak, hickory and sycamore. The property is a haven for wildlife and is home to deer, turkey, hawks, owls and songbirds. Sharing a common boundary with Paris Mountain State Park, this parcel can be seen from many of the park's hiking trails. The final easement is a 27.5-acre parcel in the Eastatoee Valley in Pickens County. The property borders the Eastatoee River, classified by DHEC as an Outstanding Resource Water, the highest certification in the state. The entire Valley and its adjoining mountain slopes provide habitat to a spectacular diversity of plant life, including 41 rare species, three very rare species, and a species of goldenrod that is new to science. The Valley also has great historic significance. For centuries before the Europeans arrived, the area was home to the Eastern Branch of the Cherokee Nation which farmed the rich soils along the river. Hundreds of Cherokee artifacts have been discovered in the Valley. With these four new easements, Upstate Forever now protects 18 properties and over 3,600 acres of some of the region's most beautiful and important lands.

Another 2004 highlight was the launch of the South Carolina Conservation Bank. (See item number 1.) In October, the Bank awarded its first round of grants, including one to **Upstate Forever**. The grant will be used to purchase a conservation easement that will protect over 200 acres of lands adjacent to Jones Gap State Park. The easement should be signed this year.

Upstate Forever was also involved in an application submitted by The Conestee Foundation to pay off the debt on a key tract of land bordering Lake Conestee in Greenville County. The Bank awarded the grant conditioned upon the Foundation raising matching funds this year. **Upstate Forever** will hold the conservation easement on this tract.

The Spartanburg Area Conservancy Endowment (SPACE) added a parcel along the Pacolet River to its protected lands and is working on a number of other projects expected to be completed this year.

The U.S. Forest Service acquired an 84-acre site on Long Creek in the Chattooga watershed last year. With assistance from the Trust for Public Land, the Forest Service obtained funding for this Oconee County site through the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The Chattooga River is a National Wild and Scenic River, one of the country's most popular recreation destinations and home to countless species of plants and animals. The newly protected site is an addition to the Sumter National Forest and will be managed by the Forest Service.

3. *Upstate Forever Opens Office in Spartanburg.*

Since *Upstate Forever* was founded six years ago, we have known that the best way to become involved in a community is to have a physical presence there. Our long range plans are to have at least two offices in the Upstate in addition to our main office in Greenville. When the Mary Black Foundation of Spartanburg took the bold step last year to reprioritize their funding initiatives to include an "Active Living" component, we jumped at the opportunity and applied for a five year grant that would enable us to open an office there. In February we learned the wonderful news that the grant had been awarded.

Our Spartanburg Active Living project has five parts: an "Active Living Assessment" of the codes and 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; joining the efforts already underway to improve pedestrian accessibility in the downtown area; and engaging in educational and advocacy efforts for improving Active Living conditions in Spartanburg County.

We found the perfect place for our new office at 100 E. Main Street in the historic Belk Building right in the heart of downtown Spartanburg. We hired a wonderful staff that includes Office Director Stephanie Monroe, Project Manager Emily Neely, and Administrative Assistant Molly Parnes, who hit the ground running and have already made considerable progress in reaching our project's goals.

We are deeply humbled and honored by the generous support provided by the Mary Black Foundation, and we are excited about our work to promote a more active and greener Spartanburg County!

4. *Upstate Downtowns Continue to Make Remarkable Progress.*

Anderson. Advancing its downtown master plan, Anderson continues to attract new projects to its charming main streets. One of the most important redevelopment projects is the Anderson County Arts Center - a warehouse once used as a storage depot for the railroad and downtown businesses that is being renovated into a new home for the arts. The new Center will house galleries, classrooms and studios, and about half of the building will be available for restaurants, shops, and office space. As part of its fundraising campaign, the Arts Center sponsored a "Fish Out Of Water" public art display consisting of 32 giant fish sculptures that dotted the landscape in and around Anderson for six months. Several of the sculptures remain after having been made permanent displays. Three banks have announced new locations east of the downtown area, and Carolina First is planning to bring additional investment into the city's historic center when it replaces its existing office.

Easley. Plans were completed last year to improve Downtown Crossing in Easley's historic downtown and include a park, more trees and landscaping, and additional businesses. Plans also include design standards for any new buildings in the city's Tax Increment Finance district to help protect the city's turn-of-the-century architecture and make it more inviting to pedestrians and shoppers.

Greenville. There's no doubt about it - downtown Greenville is on a roll. Projects stretch from one end of town to the other, bringing exciting opportunities for urban living, shopping, and office space to residents and visitors to our region. In the center of town, three new mixed-use, multi-level buildings offer retail and commercial space on the ground floor with residential units above. Wachovia Place was completed last year while Poinsett Corners and the LEED-registered Bookends are scheduled to open early this year, with a total of 159 new residential units and considerable commercial and retail space.

Travel north on Main Street and you will soon be in what has become known as the North End, where shops, clubs and restaurants continue to open, bringing an artsy, eclectic flavor to an area surrounded by historic neighborhoods. On the opposite side of town is the thriving historic West End, where Reedy Falls Park (see next article) has increased this district's attraction for new investment and activity.

Certainly the most significant commercial development in downtown Greenville in recent history is the West End's RiverPlace, an exciting nine-building mixed-use complex on ten acres that was begun last year along the Reedy River. RiverPlace will ultimately include condominiums, offices, retail shops, art studios, restaurants and a hotel all built around a spectacular fountain plaza and tree-lined promenade. Other plans for downtown projects are on the table, including redevelopment and new construction of multi-story buildings peppering the central district.

Greer. Downtown Greer - or Greer Station, as it is now called - has hit its stride. During the past ten years, a collection of neglected, abandoned buildings that left many business owners struggling for survival has been transforming into a thriving, active retail district with skyrocketing property values, thanks to the efforts of a group of key players whose vision sparked the revitalization activities. Instead of numerous empty storefronts, Greer Station now boasts more than 90 businesses that include shopping, dining, and office space. Several building owners have renovated to include living quarters above street-level businesses, and more residential space is planned.

Downtown Greer is a National Historic Register District, with more than 40 buildings on the list, and where visitors from throughout the region come to shop in antique stores and boutiques and dine in restaurants that range from upscale elegance to downhome country cooking. Alongside the commercial redevelopment have been the City's efforts to improve the downtown area by investing more than \$1 million in beautification and landscaping projects. Future plans include the addition of more downtown restaurants and the relocation of an existing rail line that would free 15 surrounding acres for a mixture of retail and residential buildings designed to reflect Greer Station's historical architecture.

Greenwood. A master plan for Greenwood's city center that has been in the works for two years was unveiled late last year. Greenwood leaders hope the plan will infuse \$128 million in private investments over the next six years, adding to previous efforts to bring more business to its downtown and transform the city into the cultural hub of the six-county surrounding region.

Laurens. Responding to recent redevelopment successes that include the newly renovated city hall, restoration of the historic courthouse square and streetscape improvements, a number of businesses and restaurants either expanded or located in the downtown area last year, bringing new interest and foot traffic to its charming streets and sidewalks. Among those who have noticed Laurens and its quaint character is The Learning Channel (TLC), whose small town renovation reality show, Town Haul, will feature downtown Laurens during six one-hour episodes beginning March 5. Six projects will be part of Town Haul's "extreme makeover" in Laurens, including the expansion and transformation of a barbershop near the public square, restoration of the Franklin Building façade, a new amphitheater and farmer's market, restoration of an abandoned lot into public greenspace, and a new children's play park. TLC selected Laurens for the project from among 50 small towns across America.

Simpsonville. Good things continue in downtown Simpsonville, where recent projects have brought new sidewalks and streetscaping to the city's business district. While residential growth has generated the construction of thousands of new homes and jumpstarted explosive strip development in the surrounding suburban areas, city leaders have tenaciously sought new projects for their downtown. Among them is the exciting renovation of the abandoned Woodside Cotton Mill just a short walk from Main Street, which is undergoing a massive transformation that will mix living, shopping and dining space. In addition, plans are underway to revitalize Curtis Street and add sidewalks and trees to several adjacent streets.

The new downtown attractions should begin seeing additional increased traffic when the Heritage Park recreational complex opens early this year. This new state-of-the-art park has already been booked for more than 25 tournaments in 2005 and includes baseball fields and training facilities, playgrounds, a biking/walking trail, shelters, and a replica steam engine train that will seat 40 children.

Spartanburg. Downtown revitalization efforts continue in Spartanburg as the city moves closer to its renovation of Morgan Square. Working from a plan developed in 2003, city leaders hope to complete the project this year. Plans include softening the square by replacing parking with informal grass lawns, trees, and an open-air pavilion. The statue of General Daniel Morgan will be moved to a place of honor inside the square's new park-like feature and the clock tower will be moved to a location nearby. In addition to the Morgan Square improvements, construction is expected to begin this year on a \$35 million cultural arts center at the Renaissance Park site near the Marriott, which opened in 2003. Streetscape improvements will also be made leading to the new QS/1 Data Systems corporate headquarters building just off Morgan Square. QS/1's building is a six-story, LEED-registered complex that brings 210 employees into town every day.

Following his earlier successes to jumpstart redevelopment downtown with the Extended Stay and Advance America headquarters buildings, George Dean Johnson's company opened a new three-story building on Main Street in 2004 that adds nearly 19,000 square feet of downtown office space. In addition, several new dining and retail projects began last year, including Wild Wing Café in a renovated building that formerly housed the Greenwald's men's clothing store. These improvements and others have made Spartanburg's downtown a vibrant destination for both workers and visitors. The downtown's vitality hasn't escaped our notice. When *Upstate Forever* began looking for space for our new Spartanburg office last year, our sights were set on downtown. We were delighted to find the perfect space in the Belk building, which is listed in the Historic Register and has been renovated to house several offices and shops on the ground floor with apartments above.

5. *Envision Upstate.*

The Upstate is one of the fastest growing and most rapidly changing areas in the United States. Our ten county region's population now exceeds one million and continues to increase at the rate of 44 people per day. Land is being developed at the rate of over 40 acres per day---that is the equivalent of a brand new Haywood Mall being built every two days.

According to the initial findings of a growth impact study for the Upstate performed by the Clemson University Center for Community Growth and Change, there will be 340,000 more people living in the Upstate in less than 25 years. These residents will require 132,000 more houses, drive 260,000 more cars, need 7 million more square feet of retail space, add 60,000 students to our schools, and each day discharge 30 million more gallons of wastewater.

Please read the above paragraph again and think about the enormous impact of such growth on our region. It is truly hard to comprehend.

Certainly we need growth to keep the economy strong and to provide good jobs and new opportunities for our citizens. The issue is not whether the Upstate is going to continue to grow---that is inevitable. Rather, the issue is how and where this growth will be accommodated. It is, indeed, one of the most important issues our region will ever face.

Will we become a polluted, traffic-choked area like Atlanta or Dallas or will we maintain the quality of life that makes us one of the best and most attractive places in the country?

Some rapidly growing regions across the United States are tackling this issue head on. One of the best examples is "Envision Utah," the widely acclaimed, award-winning program for the Salt Lake City region. One of the highlights of 2004 was a visit to the Upstate by Utah State Senator Greg Bell, the former chairman of Envision Utah, to describe the program in detail.

Envision Utah does not employ a heavy-handed, regulatory approach. To the contrary, the program is entirely voluntary and educational, providing information, resources and support to local communities and service providers throughout the region on growth and development issues.

As Senator Bell explained, one of the key elements of the Envision Utah program was the publication of four "Scenario Maps" for the future of the Salt Lake region. Two of the maps (called A and B) basically showed what the region would become if current development patterns remained unchanged, while the other two (C and D) showed the result if development was made more compact and walkable.

They compared the costs of the four scenarios and found a staggering \$15 billion difference in the cost of public infrastructure (roads, water, sewer, utilities, etc.) between scenario A (\$38 billion) and scenario D (\$23 billion). Utah Governor (and now EPA Administrator) Mike Leavitt's comment, "We can't afford this!" earned front page headlines.

The study also showed a breathtaking difference in the amount of new land consumed by development: 409 square miles for scenario A, and only 85 square miles for scenario D. Yet there was only a one-tenth of an acre difference in the average residential lot size between the two scenarios (one third of an acre for scenario A and one-fourth of an acre for scenario D).

The maps were widely publicized throughout the region, and the public was asked to weigh in. There was overwhelming support for a future that is less sprawling, less land consumptive, more fiscally responsible. and more pedestrian friendly. In fact, less than 10 per cent supported scenarios A and B.

The good news for us is that their approach is not unique to Salt Lake—it can work in any region. Envision Utah provides a wonderful model by which our region can come to grips with the formidable challenges posed by rapid growth and change.

6. Upstate Air Quality.

Being declared in non-attainment of federal air quality standards is bad news, not only for public health but also for economic development. Non-attainment status brings with it a broad range of tough restrictions on industrial development, transportation, and other essential aspects of a modern economy. It should come as no surprise, then, that when the EPA last year designated Greenville, Spartanburg, and Anderson counties as being in non-attainment with the federal ozone standard, a concerted and coordinated response from all three counties was already underway.

This response took the form of an Early Action Compact (EAC), which is an option that the EPA offers to certain non-attainment areas. Under an EAC, the non-attainment counties agree to implement a series of "specific, quantified, and permanent" local measures that will result in measurable and substantial improvements in air quality. In return, the EPA defers the effective date of the non-attainment designation - and therefore the penalties that come with non-attainment - by several years.

In theory, this arrangement benefits everyone. Businesses escape the hard-hitting and non-negotiable restrictions that would come with non-attainment designation. Citizens get to breathe

cleaner air sooner. And the region as a whole benefits in a multitude of other ways from local efforts to improve air quality, from better public transportation to more neighborhood schools to lower energy costs.

It now falls to community leaders and to the citizens of the Upstate to follow through on the commitment that has been made to improve air quality. The Early Action Compact was built around a list of 23 specific measures, all of which will require real effort and leadership to achieve. But the benefits far outweigh the sacrifices - especially when you compare them with what we would face if the EPA decided we weren't making enough progress, or when you consider the health-related consequences of breathing polluted air.

The upshot is, this a case of a little pain now or a lot of pain later. The events of 2004 provided us with a reason to improve air quality and a blueprint for making it happen. Now it's time to get to work.

7. Celebrating the Reedy River.

One of the most important achievements in Greenville's history is the spectacular Reedy Falls Park project. The project began nearly 30 years ago when the Carolina Foothills Garden Club started its work to reclaim the park, clean up the river, and restore Falls Cottage. In 1990, a landscape architect who had been involved with the garden club's efforts created the idea to transform the park into a regional attraction with public gardens and a pedestrian bridge. The concept gained support from the City of Greenville, corporations, and individuals who turned the idea into reality. The automobile-oriented Camperdown Bridge was removed to make way for the Liberty Bridge, a one-of-a-kind, 355-foot long suspension pedestrian bridge spanning Reedy River Falls in the city's West End. The park has undergone a spectacular transformation and now features landscaped gardens, amphitheaters, shelters, walkways, meadows and nearby restaurants.

Upstream a short distance is Linky Stone Park, which is undergoing a makeover of its own. A project of Leadership Greenville, the park is being transformed into an amazing multi-themed children's garden with numerous learning areas including the Rainbow Garden, Greenville History Garden, Five Senses Garden and Fairy Tale Forest. In addition, as its community project, the Fletcher Group has constructed a geology feature using a variety of stone types that mimics the topography of the Blue Ridge Escarpment as seen from Greenville. *Upstate Forever's* Erin Knight worked "after hours" as an independent contractor and designed the new garden.

8. Exciting Green Building Program Comes to Greenville County.

One of *Upstate Forever's* principal goals is better development practices in our region. Thus, we were excited to join forces with the Home Builders Association of Greenville, the South Carolina Energy Office, and Southface Energy Institute to bring EarthCraft House, a green building program for residential development, to the Upstate last year. EarthCraft originated in Atlanta when the Southface Energy Institute partnered with the Atlanta Homebuilders Association to start a voluntary program that serves as a blueprint for healthy, comfortable homes. These houses are a "win-win" - they create a healthier home, reduce the owner's utility bills and help protect the environment by lessening the demand on our natural resources.

The pilot phase for the EarthCraft House program is being funded by a grant from the State Energy Office and is the first EarthCraft designation to be established outside the state of Georgia. The pilot project includes funding for builder training, inspections and certification for twelve EarthCraft houses that will be built in the Greenville area. The first EarthCraft builder training was held in October and attended by more than 25 local builders.

EarthCraft House offers numerous guidelines for reducing pollution and the waste of natural resources when building, giving residential builders a great deal of flexibility when choosing the environmental measures best suited for each project. Any size and type of house can qualify as an EarthCraft House. In addition to meeting the criteria established by the EarthCraft program, Greenville's EarthCraft homes will also meet strict "Energy Star" standards set by the EPA and the Department of Energy. Energy Star homes are 15-30 per cent more energy efficient than homes built to traditional standards.

An EarthCraft house offers advantages over traditional homes, among them: lower overall energy consumption and thus costs to operate; more environmentally-friendly materials with fewer pollutants; reduced impact on the environment through site design and landscaping; and fewer environmental or health-related issues such as allergies and the presence of mold and mildew.

The Upstate region of South Carolina is one of the nation's fastest growing areas; therefore, it is important to meet the needs of new residents in ways that are increasingly more sustainable (economically viable, socially equitable and environmentally sound). The EarthCraft House is one such way. We were delighted to partner with the HBA to bring this program to Greenville and hope to see it expand throughout the Upstate region. We will keep you informed about EarthCraft's progress and successes.

9. *The Nature Conservancy Opens Upstate Office.*

The Nature Conservancy, one of the leading conservation organizations in the world, opened an office in the Upstate in 2004. Kristen Austin was hired to direct the office, which is focusing on the protection of the Southern Blue Ridge Escarpment in the northernmost part of our region. While great progress has been made in preserving important lands in the Escarpment, including the Greenville watershed lands (on which The Nature Conservancy holds a conservation easement), the Mountain Bridge Wilderness Area, and Jocassee Gorges, many tracts remain at serious risk. Wasting no time, Kristen assembled a task force of partners that held several meetings during the year. *Upstate Forever* is honored to be a member of the task force.

The Nature Conservancy's office is located at 27 Cleveland Street in Greenville (across the street from the Chamber of Commerce). Please stop by and welcome them to the Upstate. We need their help and are glad they are here!

10. *Palmetto Trail Makes Progress.*

When completed, the Palmetto Trail will run more than 425 miles across South Carolina—from "the Mountains to the Sea." The Palmetto Conservation Foundation launched this exciting project in 1997 and has already opened about 240 miles of the trail. Last year, PCF opened, or obtained authorization to open, several important segments of the trail in the Upstate, including the Oconee Connector, passages through the Greenville watershed and Jocassee Gorges, and the Hub City Connector and School for the Deaf and Blind trail in Spartanburg.

The Palmetto Trail will serve as the spine for a statewide network of paths open to walkers, bicyclists and, in some places, equestrians. By helping to make communities more walkable, the Palmetto Trail provides important health and environmental benefits. It also provides access and promotes connectivity to historic sites and important natural areas in South Carolina. For more information, visit PCF's website at www.palmettoconservation.org.

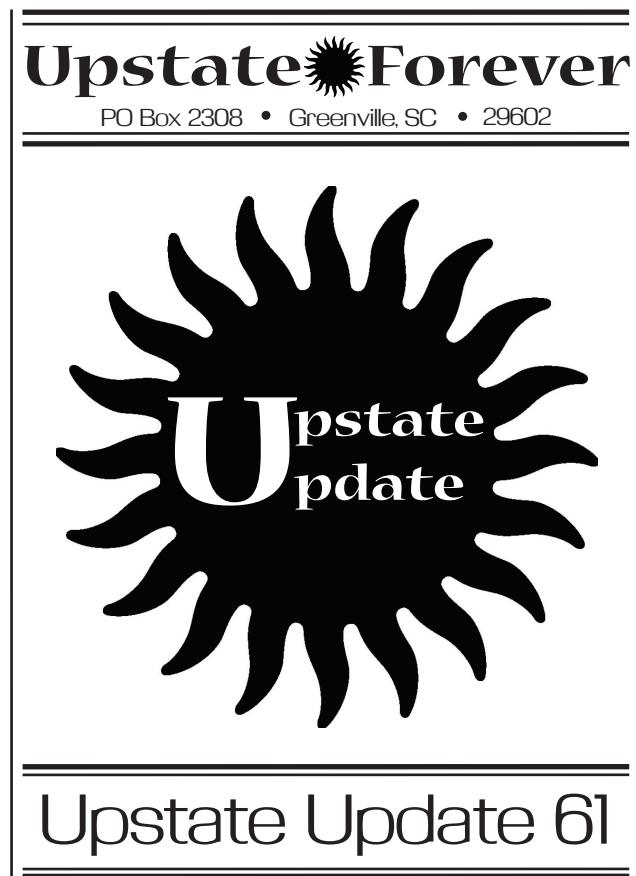
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Quote of the Year

“Enjoy the world as if you’re going to die tomorrow. Treat the world as if you’re going to live forever.”

Dr. Elizabeth Ellison



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