

Upstate update

NUMBER 70
NOV/DEC
2005

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

In this Upstate Update:

1. New Mega Landfill Approved in Spartanburg
2. Blue Ridge Electric Coop Offers Green Power Program
3. Upstate Forever News
4. Upcoming Events
5. Lots o' Links
6. Quote of the Month

1. *New Mega Landfill Approved in Spartanburg.*

The Palmetto Landfill in Spartanburg County will soon be full, and its owner, Waste Management Inc., is eager to build a new one just like it in the southern part of the county. Two years ago, Spartanburg County Council said no, but Waste Management, a formidable and determined company, regrouped and came back with another offer. This time, the company got the green light—a 4 to 3 vote on October 17 to approve entering into negotiations with the company to build a new mega-landfill near the Enoree community.

The decision has caused a bitter dispute among the Council members, outraged the Enoree community, and alarmed many county leaders. *Upstate Forever* has steadfastly opposed the construction of a new landfill in the county. We hope County Council will reconsider its decision. They certainly have the time and the authority to do so.

There are so many reasons for saying no to the proposal that it's hard to know where to begin.

Let's start with South Carolina law, which provides that it is "the policy of the State to encourage a regional approach to solid waste management." (S.C. Code of Laws, Section 44-96-50(C)). There is a clear regional solution to Spartanburg County's waste needs, namely, two major landfills that are located close to the county and that have many years of capacity remaining. One is Allied Waste's landfill in Anderson County, and the other is Republic Services' facility in Union County, just across the Spartanburg County line. The Waste Management site in Enoree is less than ten miles from the Union facility. It makes no sense to build another one that close.

But Waste Management put a lot of money on the table. They have offered to dispose of Spartanburg County's residential waste at no charge for the next 20 years and to pay an annual "host fee" of \$2.5 million per year for all of the out-of-county waste that is brought here. The present value of the offer over the 20-year period is \$34 million. They also offered another \$2 million for the Enoree community, \$1 million to the County when the final permit is issued, and \$1 million to assist the County in closing the Wellford facility.

Promoting sensible growth and protecting special places in the Upstate

These offers indicate just how important a new landfill is to Waste Management and how much profit they expect to make from it. To be sure, it's a lot of money, especially for a county struggling with its budget. Some say it's an offer the county can't refuse. But let's look at the other side of the equation—at *all of the costs* associated with a new mega-landfill in the county. These costs include:

- Odor, dust, vermin and litter
- Leachate (the result of decomposing waste)
- Risk of groundwater contamination
- Waste trucks on our roads
- Adverse impact on property values and thus property tax revenues

And there's the intangible but very real cost of what a landfill says about the citizens of Spartanburg County. Spartanburg County has already done more than its fair share of taking care of other people's garbage. They should be far past the point where waste is considered a source of revenue. The county is better than that.

There's another important lesson to be learned from this controversy. Spartanburg County is one of the fastest growing and most rapidly developing counties in the United States. Its population now exceeds 250,000 and continues to grow at the rate of 50 per people week. The land development rate is 11 acres per day—that's the equivalent of a brand new WestGate Mall every week.

Spartanburg County is dramatically changing. The county has two choices. It can do nothing and let other people and businesses (many from out of state) determine its future. Or the county's citizens can be the ones in charge. They can decide whether they want to have another large landfill in Spartanburg County. They can decide what Spartanburg County will be like for their children and grandchildren.

For years, Spartanburg County residents have resisted zoning. While zoning is hardly perfect, it is essential to maintaining and improving the quality of life in fast-growing areas like Spartanburg County. A modest zoning ordinance would serve Spartanburg County well. If such an ordinance had been in place, there almost certainly would be no new big landfill in the county.

We can no longer have it both ways in Spartanburg County or the Upstate. We cannot demand the right to do anything and everything we want with our own property and yet deny the same right to others.

2. Blue Ridge Electric Coop Offers Green Power Program.

Kudos to Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative for promoting renewable energy! The cooperative's 60,000 customers in Anderson, Greenville, Oconee, Pickens, and Spartanburg Counties now have the option to purchase green power in 100 kilowatt-hour blocks at \$3 apiece. Green power is electricity generated from a renewable resource, in this case methane gas emitted as a waste byproduct from a landfill in Anderson. The power is provided by the state-owned utility company, Santee Cooper, which has offered a green power option to customers in the Pee Dee since 2001. Revenues generated by Blue Ridge's program will be reinvested in the future development of renewable resources and facilities. If you are a Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative customer, you can sign up for green power by calling (800) 240-3400; more information is available at www.blueridge.coop and <http://www.santeecooper.com/greenpower/index.html>.

3. *Upstate Forever News.*

Annual Meeting and Award Winners

Celebrating this year's accomplishments at the beautiful Asbury Hills Retreat and Conference Center on November 5, eighty *Upstate Forever* members, staff, and guests enjoyed the Annual Meeting, lunch, and hikes amidst the vivid fall colors. Click [here](#) to view a pictorial summary of the year's activities.

One order of business at the meeting was to elect the board of directors, including new board member Marianna Black Habisreutinger of Spartanburg County. Welcome, Marianna! We are also thrilled to announce that [Tom Kester](#), a board member since 2002, has assumed the role of chair, continuing the line of extraordinary leadership that has immeasurably benefited this organization. And we thank Wes Cooler, who is stepping down from the board, for his years of tireless and passionate service.

Another highlight of the meeting was the presentation of our Annual Awards:

Land Steward of the Year: Madelon Wallace. Madelon Wallace had a vision to protect the 1,260-acre Fairview Farm, a place of great biological diversity and stunning scenic beauty in northern Spartanburg County. The site of a Revolutionary War battle, the property has substantial frontage on the Pacolet River and will soon be traversed by the "Mountains to the Sea" Palmetto Trail. When the owners were not interested in preserving the property, Madelon put her own money at risk in securing an option to purchase and then assembled a group of buyers in an extremely complex conservation deal. The success of that project led to the establishment of three more major easements in the Landrum/Tryon area, with over 2,500 acres now permanently protected.

Innovator of the Year: Milliken & Company. Headquartered in the Upstate, Milliken & Company employs 16,000 people in 65 plants in 12 countries. Beautiful landscaping is a hallmark of all their facilities; their wonderful campus in Spartanburg comprises 600 acres populated with "Noble Trees" and is open to the public. Before most people had even heard of the term "sustainable development," Milliken was actually implementing it, tracking water and energy use company-wide since 1971. They now recycle 100% of their paper waste and 98% of all waste and have reduced the use of chemicals by 88% in last 10 years. Milliken is setting the standard for other corporations in the efficient use of natural resources. Click [here](#) to read a recent article about another example of Milliken's environmental stewardship: the donation of carbon dioxide credits.

Public Servant of the Year: Burnie Maybank. The Director of the South Carolina Department of Revenue, Burnie earned national distinction this year as a moderate voice for reform in response to some highly-publicized, abusive conservation easements. Recognizing that questionable transactions hurt the work that good land trusts do, he launched the first statewide audit of land trusts in the nation and later testified before Congress on changes needed in the system. As DOR Director, Burnie has published guidebooks outlining tax benefits for conservation easements. A long-time ally and friend of conservation, Burnie has a distinguished record of public service to our state, including serving on the SC DHEC Board, the SC Public Service Commission, and as General Counsel to the Secretary of State. He received the Order of the Palmetto, the highest award that can be given to a civilian in South Carolina.

Extraordinary Leadership Award: Carlton Owen. A member of *Upstate Forever's* board since its inception, and chair since 2002, Carlton is only the second person ever to receive this award. *Upstate Forever* is a much stronger, more efficient and more effective organization because of Carlton's superlative leadership. Carlton recognized the need for more structure as the nonprofit organization grew in membership and staff size. Because of his leadership, the organization has implemented staff goals and objectives, established values and policies for the organization, and established an investment policy for its endowment. Other projects and organizations that have benefited from Carlton's organizational talents include: Upstate House (a partnership with the Home Builders' Association of Greenville that is a fundraiser for *Upstate Forever* and a demonstration project for green building techniques), the Rail-Trail project connecting Travelers Rest to downtown Greenville, and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and its "Acres for America" project that has preserved more than 300,000 acres across the nation.

Volunteer of the Year: Dan Roberts. Dan has shared his numerous talents and skills with *Upstate Forever* in a variety of ways. An accomplished writer, Dan researched and wrote several items this year for the monthly *Upstate Update*. An expert in computers, he spent countless hours training our staff and keeping our computer system running. When *Upstate Forever* moved to its new office, Dan recruited other volunteers and got our system up and running again very quickly.

Conservation Bank Funds Three *Upstate Forever* Easements

The South Carolina Conservation Bank was established in 2002 to provide a dedicated source of funding for the acquisition and protection of natural and historic resources. To date, the Bank has funded 31 projects totaling 33,000 acres statewide for \$21.5 million, obtained from a portion of real estate transfer fees. In its latest round of grantmaking on October 20, the Bank voted to fund three *Upstate Forever* Land Trust Program conservation easements: Blythe-Goodwin-Hagood House (Greenville County, 11 acres), Fall Creek (Oconee County, 94 acres) and Phase II of Cleveland-Wilson Farms (Greenville County, 271 acres). For more information about the S.C. Conservation Bank, visit their web site at <http://sccbank.sc.gov>.

Spartanburg Office News

On Oct. 14, Vince Graham spoke about his experiences building traditional neighborhood developments in the South Carolina Lowcountry, including I'On Village, Newpoint, and Morris Square. His "Breakfast Briefing" drew a huge crowd of about 170 people to the Spartanburg County Library. Graham focused on his drive to design neighborhoods that emphasize the public realm—such as the streets, parks, sidewalks and other community spaces—rather than the private. He suggested that the popularity of older neighborhoods, such as those seen in Savannah and Beaufort—and their counterparts in the Upstate, like Converse Heights in Spartanburg—illustrate that there is a large demand for neighborhoods with well-designed public realms. (If you missed Graham's talk and would like to view it on DVD, please call the *Upstate Forever's* Spartanburg office at 327-0090 to borrow a copy of the presentation.)

On Nov. 2, *Upstate Forever* led a group of 30 developers, builders, local government representatives, and citizens from Spartanburg to visit two mixed-use, infill developments in the Triangle area of North Carolina. Follow-up meetings of the trip participants are planned to discuss aspects of the Southern Village and North Hills projects that might prove feasible in future development in our area. Read more about the trip and the sites visited in an [article](#) from the *Spartanburg Herald-Journal*.

4. Upcoming Events.

Upstate Forever Events

February 16, Cleaning Up Lake Greenwood: A Status Report and Next Steps, Greenwood, SC, 12:00 - 5:00 p.m. This is the second in a quarterly series of seminars on water resource management issues called the Watershed Leaders Forum, and is free and open to the Upstate community. It is sponsored by the Appalachian and Upper Savannah Councils of Government, Lander University, and the Saluda-Reedy Watershed Consortium, with support from the V. Kann Rasmussen Foundation. For more information, visit <http://www.saludareedy.org/events.html>; to register, call (864) 250-0500 ext. 22 or email jasonvand@upstateforever.org.

Other Events

Third Saturday of Each Month, Garner's Natural Market and Café, Greenville, SC. Shop at Garner's and help raise money for *Upstate Forever!* On the third Saturday of every month, Garner's will donate ten percent of what you spend to *Upstate Forever*. Simply mention that you are making the purchase in our name and Garner's will handle the rest! For more information about Garner's, visit www.garnersnatural.com.

January 17, Native Grasses of the Southeast, Hayden Conference Center, S.C. Botanical Garden, Clemson, SC, 7:00 p.m. Dr. Bill Stringer will speak to the Upstate Chapter of the South Carolina Native Plant Society. For more information, go to www.scnps.org.

5. Lots o' Links.

New Riverside High School Teaches a Lesson in Green Building. Greenville County's new school building may be the most energy efficient and environmentally friendly high school in the nation.

Child Pedestrians at Risk. This report from Safe Kids USA ranks the 47 largest U.S. metro areas by child pedestrian safety, and summarizes strategies to make walking safer.

Spinning Tar into Oil. Did you know that more of our nation's oil comes from Canada than any other country? With the current rise in crude prices, Canadian petroleum companies are moving beyond traditional oil wells and are obtaining oil from the tar sands of Alberta, raising environmental concerns.

Housing Poised to Recede from Peak Levels. The Federal Reserve has had difficulty slowing down the wildly booming housing market, but it may finally be having some success, according to the National Association of Home Builders.

Even Low Levels of Toxins May Be a Danger. There is no clearly safe level of exposure to four of the most common environmental toxins in the world, and more should be done to protect the public, researchers argue in a new report.

The \$25 Trillion Land Grab. Ten "megapolitan" areas, including our own I-85 corridor, are poised for a boom that, by 2030, will dwarf America's post WWII buildout. Included with the article from CNN.com is a forecast for each of the regions.

Why Save the Arctic Refuge? This site convincingly presents the case against opening ANWR to oil drilling and explains what you can do to stop it.

Upstate pdate

NUMBER 70
Nov/DEC
2005

[Targeting Changes in Big Box Stores.](#) Target stores are cropping up in downtowns and urban centers across the nation, showing great flexibility in building designs and parking access.

[Report from Mississippi.](#) New Urbanists gathered in Biloxi for a week in October to plan for redevelopment that strengthens communities devastated by hurricanes. Their reports and designs are now available at the Mississippi Renewal Forum web site.

[The Lower Ninth Ward Determined to Rebuild.](#) The Lower Ninth Ward was a lively, stable, walkable community before Katrina, and its longtime residents don't want to see it razed.

6. Quote of the Month.

“If we can do it with aluminum cans, why can't we recycle our largest human artifacts: buildings?”

Professor Daniel Bluestone of the University of Virginia, speaking about textile mill community revitalization at the South Carolina Mayors Institute for Community Design, Greenville, 11/15/2005