

# Upstate Update

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

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### 1. No New Landfill in Spartanburg County!

On March 16, Spartanburg County Council announced that it had rejected the offer from Waste Management to build a new mega-landfill in the southern part of the county. As to whether a different offer might be considered, the [Spartanburg Herald Journal article](#) says: "[County Council member David] Britt left no doubt about the future of the deal. 'It's dead; it's over,' he said."

So that's it! It's really over! There will be no new big landfill in Spartanburg County!

It's a great victory for a determined team of landfill opponents, including **Upstate Forever**, the Spartanburg League of Women Voters, RESCUE (the group of residents near the proposed site), and **Upstate Forever** Board member Joe Lesesne who courageously led the countywide campaign to stop it. Because of **Upstate Forever's** support, we were able to set up a website, send out over 50,000 mailings, facilitate the delivery of over 3,300 "no landfill" post cards from citizens throughout the county to their Council representatives, and operate a phone bank. Many thanks to all of the **Upstate Forever** members who spoke out—your voices were heard! And we also deeply appreciate the financial contributions that several of our members made to support the effort.

For more information on why the landfill was not needed and would have been so harmful to Spartanburg County, see [www.stopthelandfillnow.com](http://www.stopthelandfillnow.com). Also, stay tuned for an article in our next newsletter reviewing the entire history of this dispute.

### 2. Upstate Forever Opposes Sale of Forest Service Land

*Last month, the Bush Administration proposed to sell off more than 300,000 acres of national forest land, including 4,665 acres in South Carolina, to fund the rural schools program for five more years. Upstate Forever sent the following letter to President Bush and the Forest Service strongly objecting to the proposal:*

Upstate Forever is a nonprofit, membership-based organization that promotes sensible growth, sustainable development, and land conservation in the Upstate region of South Carolina, which includes the Sumter National Forest in Oconee County. As part of our land conservation work, we administer and manage a land trust program for this region.

For the following reasons, we strongly object to the proposal to sell over 300,000 acres of our National Forests.

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

EDUCATION • ADVOCACY • LAND TRUST

## 1. *Selling Off Public Lands Is Not a Sensible Way to Fund the Rural Schools Program.*

We fully support the rural schools program as a fair way to compensate school districts for their inability to receive property tax revenues from National Forest lands, and we believe that the program should continue to be adequately funded. It makes no sense, however, for the lands themselves to be the source of this funding. The proposal is particularly shocking since the sale proceeds would fund the program for only five years.

Thus, if the proposal is approved, in five years we will have come full circle—the rural schools program will again have no funding and over 300,000 acres of our public lands will have been lost forever. What happens then? Do another 300,000 acres go on the market? When does it stop?

The answer is not to start—we should not step onto the slippery slope. Forest Service lands should be kept in public ownership, and more reliable and more sensible sources should be used to provide long term funding for the rural schools program.

## 2. *In Fast Growing Regions Like the Upstate, Public Lands are Becoming Even More Valuable; Thus, Their Protection Should Be a Top Priority.*

In many regions of the United States, land is being developed at a voracious rate. Low density developments and massive seas of asphalt are consuming the landscape, wiping out forests and farmlands, destroying wildlife habitat, and polluting our water resources.

This problem is particularly acute in the South. In a national study that ranks the most sprawling regions in the country, four of the top five are in the South (Ewing, Pendall and Chen, [Measuring Sprawl and Its Impact](#), 2002). One of these is the region where we work, where land is being developed at the mind-boggling rate of over 40 acres per day. At this rate, an area equivalent to the entire Sumter National Forest in Oconee County will be paved over in less than six years!

The Forest Service itself has recognized the problem. In a comprehensive study of forests in the South, [The Southern Forest Resource Assessment](#) (2001), the agency described urbanization as the “force of change” that is having “the most direct, immediate and permanent impact” on our forests.

Years ago, when most of the South was rural and urbanization had not become a force, the protection of our National Forests and other public lands may not have seemed very important. But today, with the landscape rapidly disappearing, the need to protect these places has become quite evident and compelling. Our National Forests must continue to remain part of the “green infrastructure” that will become even more important in the future.

The mission of the Forest Service is “to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation’s forests to meet the needs of present and future generations.” Notably and thankfully, the word “sell” is absent. Please stay true to your mission and abandon this ill-conceived proposal.

*We encourage all Upstate Forever members to write their own letters opposing the proposed sale. Public comments should be sent by March 30 to [SRS\\_Land\\_Sales@fs.fed.us](mailto:SRS_Land_Sales@fs.fed.us) or to: US Forest Service, SRS Comments, Lands 4S, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Mailstop 1124, Washington, DC 20250-0003. For more information on the proposal, including maps of affected parcels, visit [www.fs.fed.us/news/2006/releases/02/secure-rural-schools.shtml](http://www.fs.fed.us/news/2006/releases/02/secure-rural-schools.shtml).*

## 3. *SRWC Releases “State of the Watershed” Report, Holds Lake Greenwood Forum*

The Saluda-Reedy Watershed Consortium has just released a comprehensive yet user-friendly report: “The State of the Watershed 2005.” This outstanding report is written in a question and answer format and summarizes more than two years of Consortium-supported research. The report highlights key threats to water quality and discusses strategies for improving water quality throughout the watershed.

To view this report online, visit [www.saludareedy.org/research/sotw\\_report.pdf](http://www.saludareedy.org/research/sotw_report.pdf). To request a copy by mail, call Jennifer Rennicks at 864-250-0500x34.

On February 14, SRWC hosted its second Watershed Leaders Forum, entitled “Water Quality in Lake Greenwood: A Status Report and Next Steps.” A standing-room-only crowd of almost 200 participants packed the Drummond Center at Lake Greenwood State Park to discuss this vital natural and recreational resource. For an agenda, scientific reports, and more, visit [www.saludareedy.org/outreach/forum2.html](http://www.saludareedy.org/outreach/forum2.html).

#### 4. Greenville County Tree Committee Update

The Greenville County Tree Policy Advisory Committee meets every second Thursday at 8:00 a.m. in Conference Room B of Greenville County Square, including March 30 and April 13 and 27. You are urged to attend these meetings and to speak during the 15 minutes set aside for public comments. It is critically important that the committee hears the views of citizens in favor of setting minimum tree requirements in new developments. In addition, five public hearings will be held in various locations of the county. The first one is scheduled for March 30 at 6:30 p.m. at Travelers Rest City Hall. For more information, see [UU 72](#) and regular updates on the *Upstate Forever* website ([www.upstateforever.org](http://www.upstateforever.org)), or contact committee member Diane Eldridge, special consultant and advisor to *Upstate Forever*, at [diane.eldridge@charter.net](mailto:diane.eldridge@charter.net).

#### 5. Upstate House Guide to Sustainable Living: Solar Water Heating

Traditional hot water heaters are full-time energy wasters because they are always on, even when you’re on vacation or only need hot water for your morning shower. It’s that full-time 24/7 heating that accounts for one of the most easily identified sources of wasted energy and added cost in the average home. Carlton and Brenda Owen knew they could do better in their new residence, Upstate House.

The Owens added a 50-gallon passive solar panel on the roof ([www.solarcart.com](http://www.solarcart.com)). Water preheated by the solar system will then go directly to a whole house “on-demand” water heater manufactured by Eemax, Inc. ([www.eemax.com](http://www.eemax.com)). Doing away with the traditional hot water heater means that they will only use electricity to heat water when they need it, not 24 hours a day. Additionally, the preheated water coming from the solar-powered system means that the on-demand unit will have limited work to do to bring the water to the desired temperature.

In addition to being a private residence, Upstate House is also a joint project of *Upstate Forever* and the Home Builders Association of Greenville. It is both a demonstration project promoting environmentally-friendly building practices and a fundraiser to promote the EarthCraft House green building standard in the Upstate. For more information about Upstate House, visit [www.upstatehouse.org](http://www.upstatehouse.org).

#### 6. Upstate Forever Benefits from Art Show

We want to express our deep appreciation to nationally-renowned artists Anne and Bill Jameson and *Upstate Forever* member and art gallery owner Irene Morrah for their most generous gift of ten percent of the proceeds from the show that opened at Irene’s gallery on February 17. It’s not too late to view these beautiful paintings featuring disappearing Carolina landscapes. For an appointment, please call Irene Morrah at (864) 242-4166.

## 7. Member Feedback: Green Schools

*Upstate Forever member DeWitt Stone writes:*

I enjoyed reading the piece on [Green Schools] mentioned in the latest *Upstate Update*. However, in addition to energy conservation in school buildings, I would like to have seen some discussion of the environmental impact of massive bus transportation required by the very large schools which have just been constructed. There should have been a study of these costs in terms of time, money, and pollution.

While there is a valid educational argument for having high schools large enough to support a full program, the monster elementary schools just make no sense from the viewpoint of neighborhood ownership or transportation costs - not to mention the much-needed discussion of the stress that mega-schools place on young children. Most of us attended elementary schools which were tiny in comparison to today's behemoths. I think that we were educated reasonably well.

*Executive Director Brad Wyche responds:*

Good points, DeWitt--I completely agree. That's why we fought so hard (but failed) to keep the Simpsonville Elementary School open and why we continue to point to the mega Dorman High School as an example of how NOT to site schools.

## 8. Upcoming Events

### Upstate Forever Events

**April 8, Spring Field Trip: Historic Oconee Station Wildflower Walk.** The Historic Oconee Station and Station Falls Trail offer wonderful opportunities to look back in time. We will review the human history as well as the geological and plant evolution which created this unique forest. This ecosystem has been in place an estimated one million years and is considered one of the best cove forest habitats in the Southeast. On our visit, we will see a wide variety of woodland wildflowers, ferns and interesting habitats. The walk is an easy two miles. The pace will be leisurely so we can enjoy the wildflowers and soak up this wonderful place. The spring trilliums promise to be spectacular!

The group will gather at Holly Springs Grocery at the intersection of Scenic Highway 11 and Highway 178 at 9 a.m. From there we will carpool to the trailhead to meet our guide for the day, Rick Huffman, president of the Upstate Chapter of the [South Carolina Native Plant Society](#). Registration is free but space is limited. To reserve a spot contact Gretchen Wilson at (864) 250- 0500 or [gwilson@upstateforever.org](mailto:gwilson@upstateforever.org).

**June 16, Starting with What We Have: Reinvestment and Redesign of Existing Commercial Districts to Create Economic Impact, Azalea Ballroom, Spartanburg Marriott, Spartanburg, SC, 7:30 a.m.** This second event in the "Building our Future" quarterly speaker series features Charleston Mayor Joe Riley. If you've never before heard the informative and inspiring Mayor Riley in person, you are in for a treat! The series, sponsored by *Upstate Forever* and the Spartanburg Area Chamber of Commerce, provides a forum to address the economic benefits of planning for sensible growth and development as they relate to Spartanburg County.

There is no charge for this event, but reservations are requested. For more information, visit [http://www.upstateforever.org/ufs\\_event.html](http://www.upstateforever.org/ufs_event.html). To register, call *Upstate Forever's* Spartanburg office at 864-327-0090 or e-mail [spartanburg@upstateforever.org](mailto:spartanburg@upstateforever.org).

### Other Events

**March 30, Greenville County Tree Policy Advisory Committee Public Hearing, Travelers Rest City Hall, 6:30 p.m.** The first of five public hearings taking place around the county. For more information, contact Diane Eldridge, special consultant and advisor to *Upstate Forever* and a member of the Committee, at [diane.eldridge@charter.net](mailto:diane.eldridge@charter.net).

**April 8, Native Plant Sale, 15 Roper Mountain Road (formerly Lowe's) Parking Lot, Greenville, SC 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.** Plants native to our soils and climate provide the best food sources for native birds, butterflies, and other wildlife, and generally require less upkeep than exotic ornamentals. Sponsored by the SC Native Plant Society. [www.scnps.org](http://www.scnps.org)

**April 18, Sudden Oak Death, Dental Building, Greenville Technical College Main Campus, Greenville, SC, 7:00 p.m.** Dr. Steve Jeffers of Clemson University will discuss the threat posed to our region's forests by this frightening invader. Sponsored by the SC Native Plant Society. Free. [www.scnps.org](http://www.scnps.org)

**April 21-23, Partners in Conservation: Preserving Our Natural Heritage, College of Charleston, Charleston, SC.** The SC Native Plant Society's annual symposium will focus on the many partnerships between conservation organizations, government agencies and others interested in South Carolina's magnificent heritage. For information, visit [www.scnps.org/symposium.html](http://www.scnps.org/symposium.html).

**April 22-29, Greenville County Pride Week, Greenville, SC.** Organize a litter cleanup in your neighborhood. To get involved, call Sarah Robinson of PalmettoPride at 1-877-725-7733 or visit [www.palmettopride.org](http://www.palmettopride.org).

**April 25, Native Plants for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Garden, Burwell Center, Wofford College, Spartanburg, SC, 7:00 p.m.** Marc Cathey of the American Horticultural Society will educate participants in a holistic approach to gardening. Cost is \$10. For a registration form, visit [www.scnps.org/PDFs/Cathey\\_registration.pdf](http://www.scnps.org/PDFs/Cathey_registration.pdf) or call 864-472-6732.

**May 4-5, Conservation Development: Merging Economics and the Environment, Southern Pine Conference Center at Callaway Gardens, Pine Mountain, GA.** Join EDAW, Inc., the Urban Land Institute, and other professionals in the fields of development, design, planning and natural resource management to explore current market trends, economic incentives, conservation tax credits, the environmental benefits, and lessons learned from conservation-based projects. For information and registration, visit [www.edaw.com/conSym/home.aspx](http://www.edaw.com/conSym/home.aspx).

**May 16, Financial Strategies for Landowners: Advanced Seminar on Conservation Easements, Tax, and Estate Planning, North Carolina Arboretum, Asheville, NC, 9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.** Land protection strategies for landowners, attorneys, accountants, appraisers, financial planners, realtors, foresters, and other professional landowner advisors, presented by Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy. Cost is \$110. Registration opens March 29; visit [www.carolinamountain.org](http://www.carolinamountain.org) or call 828-697-5777.

## 9. Lots o' Links

**Who, or What, is PAM?** The Piedmont Atlantic MegaRegion, covering South Carolina, North Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, and Florida, was the subject of a recent symposium at Georgia Tech.

**Trees Greenville.** A new organization strives to "plant, promote, and protect" Greenville's trees.

**Out of the Car and Into Shape.** An eloquent rumination about the joys of walking—exploring neighborhoods, experiencing nature—for transportation and exercise, and the necessary ingredients that make it fun.

**Solving the World's Problems.** Noted author Jared Diamond talks about his work examining the success and failure of civilizations, and how we can cut consumption while raising our standard of living.

**Building Green: From Principle to Practice.** The Natural Resources Defense Council has a new web site providing detailed guidance on the design, construction, and marketing of green building projects.

**Fetch Your Fries on Foot.** A California city restricts new drive-through business to cut down on pollution and increase walkability.

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[Immortal Styrofoam Meets Its Match.](#) Scientists have found a bacterium that eats this non-biodegradable material and turns it into usable plastic.

[Engineers Have a Duty to Protect the Environment.](#) The National Society of Professional Engineers has adopted a change to their code of ethics recognizing the engineer's obligation to perform services consistent with basic principles of sustainable development.

[Study: Development May Spread Old Pesticides.](#) Dartmouth researchers have found that the development of former farmland can disturb pesticides spread nearly a century ago and contaminate nearby water sources.

[Termite-Infested Mulch?](#) You may have received an email warning that local home improvement stores are selling termite-infested mulch gleaned from the Gulf Coast, but it is actually an urban legend.

[A 5-Bedroom Swiss Cottage in New Jersey--for \\$4000?](#) How luxury home-buyers' tastes have changed—or not—since 1883.

[Powered by Pooches.](#) Pet waste: the latest renewable energy source.

And now, for something completely different . . . [Man Coughs Up Nail 35 Years After Accident.](#)

## 10. Quote of the Month

“This is like selling an heirloom your grandmother gave to you.”

-Gwen Fowler, Oconee County resident and real estate agent, on the proposed sale of U.S. Forest Service land, quoted in the *Anderson Independent-Mail*, 2/17/06