

Upstate Update

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

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1. SRWC Releases Pavement Standards Audit

Impervious surfaces, defined as structures that prevent water from soaking into the ground, go hand-in-hand with development. Increasing a community's impervious cover, including streets, sidewalks, parking lots, driveways, and roofs, increases the volume and rate of stormwater flowing into its drainage system. This increased runoff, according to the USEPA, leads to more frequent and larger floods as well as increased water treatment costs, higher concentrations of pollutants, and adverse affects on aquatic life. All of these effects can be observed here in the Upstate.

The negative impacts of impervious cover should not be shrugged off as part of the price of progress. In fact, the design of streets, parking lots, sidewalks, and driveways is largely determined by local ordinances regulating pavement width, parking ratios, drainage standards, landscaping, and the like. To study this relationship, the Saluda-Reedy Watershed Consortium has completed an audit of pavement standards and ordinances in Pickens and Greenville counties. This in-depth report provides a topic-by-topic assessment of every aspect of the development process that creates new pavement of any kind. It also offers a comprehensive set of options for improving regulations so as to minimize both the impacts and the cost of paving. The report features photos and examples, analysis of benefits and trade-offs, model practices, and more. With a clear, easy-to-use format and municipality-by-municipality data, the release of this study is an important step towards reducing the stormwater impacts of new development in the rapidly growing Greenville-Pickens region.

Over the next few months, the SRWC will meet with community leaders in both counties and develop a consensus set of recommendations for modifications to the ordinances addressed in the report. The audit was conducted by The Lawrence Group, coordinated by *Upstate Forever* on behalf of the Saluda-Reedy Watershed Consortium, and funded by the V. Kann Rassmussen Foundation. The full report is available at: <http://www.saludareedy.org/outreach/lid/lidauditweb.pdf> (web version) and <http://www.saludareedy.org/outreach/lid/lidauditprint.pdf> (print version).

2. Planning Commissions Demystified

The critically important decisions relating to growth and development in the Upstate are made at the local level. Since more than 80 percent of our region consists of unincorporated areas (outside of the cities), the most powerful and influential local entity is unquestionably the county council. These councils rely heavily on the reports and recommendations of their respective planning commissions.

Planning commissions consist of citizen volunteers who are appointed by the elected county or city government (e.g. county council) for a specific term length. The commission's members are intended to

Promoting sensible growth and protecting special places in the Upstate

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represent a cross-section of the community, and routinely meet in order to provide objective recommendations for consideration by local elected officials on long-range community planning issues, such as updates to the comprehensive plan and the impacts of development plans on the broader public interest. Planning commissions are excellent opportunities for public service where local citizens can make a real difference for the community as a whole.

Each planning commission has its own set of application procedures, deadlines, and member term limits. For more information about volunteering to serve on an Upstate county planning commission, the phone numbers and websites are provided below. Similarly, city offices can be contacted to get information for city planning commissions.

Anderson County:

- County Council phone: (864) 260-4062
- Commission website: www.andersoncountysc.org/web/board_planning.asp

Greenville County:

- Planning Commission phone: (864) 467-7270
- Commission website: www.greenvilleplanning.com/our_commissioners/index.htm

Greenwood County:

- Planning Department phone: (864) 942-8636
- Commission website: www.co.greenwood.sc.us/planning.aspx

Laurens County:

- Clerk to County Council phone: (864) 984-5214
- Commission website: www.laurenscountysc.org/BoardCommissionView.aspx?id=26

Oconee County:

- Planning Department: (864) 638-4218
- Commission website: www.oconeesc.com/planning/defaultpages/PlanningCommissionInformation.htm

Pickens County:

- County Council phone: (864) 898-5856
- Commission website: www.co.pickens.sc.us/planning/boardcomm.asp

Spartanburg County:

- Planning Department phone: (864) 596-3570
- Commission website: www.spartanburgcounty.org/govt/depts/cc/boards/PC.html

3. Whole Foods Opening Benefits Upstate Forever

On April 24, two days before the store opened to the public, *Upstate Forever* supporters got a sneak peak at the new Whole Foods Market in Greenville. For a \$15 donation, attendees enjoyed music, displays, and delicious food samples. A crowd surpassing 1200 people crowded the store, raising a total of \$18,517 and garnering a number of new members for *Upstate Forever*. Our deepest appreciation goes out to Whole Foods and store manager Jennifer Sparks, as well as to *Upstate Forever* staff member Kimberly Ferlauto, who made the event such a spectacular success. Thank you!!

4. Spartanburg Spends "175 Minutes in Morgan Square"

In celebration of Morgan Square's new look and the city's 175th birthday, *Upstate Forever* and the City of Spartanburg sponsored "175 Minutes in Morgan Square" on April 28 from 6-8:55 p.m. The event included beach music by The Windjammers and downtown architectural tours featuring the Masonic Temple. At dusk, before a large crowd, *Upstate Forever* screened the film "Community of Choices," and held a reception afterwards at Carriage House Wines. The movie focused on the economic, social, and environmental benefits

of preserving community character. It addressed the role that historic preservation, urban design, trees and landscaping, open space preservation and other issues play in shaping our sense of place.

“This movie talks about finding the proper balance between the built and natural environment, and ways of putting an end to unplanned and unmanaged growth,” said Stephanie Monroe, *Upstate Forever’s* Spartanburg Office Director. “The challenge to the citizens watching this movie is to think about how all the issues play a part in shaping our sense of place.”

Monroe added that citizens should not be content to rely on officials, and encouraged more citizen involvement. “Planned growth supports better development practices such as mixed uses, transportation choices, and compact development,” Monroe added. “As our residents age, many will be driving-challenged. So why are we building our community for the automobile-dependent? Good planning is critical to protecting Spartanburg’s quality of life.”

5. Reading List: Staff Pick

[How Buildings Learn](#) by Stewart Brand

Reviewed by [Mary Bennett Greene](#), Membership Coordinator

A meditation on how time influences the built environment, this fascinating and instructive book offers a fresh perspective on the design qualities that make great buildings. Perhaps better known for creating the *Whole Earth Catalog*, Stewart Brand eloquently convinces his audience to cherish buildings that last. Filled with excellent photographs and illustrations, *How Buildings Learn* teaches readers to delight in the layers of architectural adaptations made by changing building occupants. We cannot continue to build uninspiring throwaway structures that are only meant to withstand 30-year write-off periods. Nor should we praise iconic structures that are utterly unusable and only serve to promote the egos and artistic whims of their architects and commissioners. Instead we need buildings that are comfortable, adaptable to our changing needs, and delightful enough to make us want to keep using them forever. Not only does Brand make the case for building adaptive architecture, but he also offers practical suggestions about policies, building material choices, and technical decisions that will help make this kind of architecture a reality.

6. Upstate House Guide to Sustainable Living: Flooring

While carpeting raises concerns about allergies and toxins, and hardwoods are usually not sustainably harvested, there are several good flooring options for environmentally-conscious consumers. Carlton and Brenda Owen chose an eclectic recycled product and two very different rapidly grown, sustainable ones for their new residence, Upstate House.

Wooden pallets consume almost 40% of all of the hardwood lumber produced in the U.S. Each year we use and dispose of an estimated 170 million of them. Many find their way into landfills while others are recycled, and still others are burned for fuel. The U.S. Forest Service has worked with North Carolina State University to create a high-value product from recycled wooden pallets which is being sold by Oaks Unlimited (<http://www.palletflooring.com/>), a family-owned hardwood lumber manufacturer in Maggie Valley, NC. The Owens decided to give this innovative product a try in the office portion of Upstate House. Each plank is slightly thinner than traditional hardwood flooring and shows the old nail or staple holes from the period of its life as a pallet. Another difference over traditional flooring is that the wood isn’t from a single species of tree. The planks, roughly three feet long, come from red oak, white oak, yellow poplar and even sweetgum, yielding a much more diverse and random look. The eclectic appearance and the fact that scientists and entrepreneurs are finding ways to convert erstwhile waste to a high-value item made the product a natural choice for Upstate House.

On the main living level, the Owens specified a new product developed by Aracruz in southern Brazil and now marketed to the rest of the world by Weyerhaeuser Company (<http://www.weyerhaeuser.com/>). The product, Lyptus® wood, uses the wood of eucalyptus trees grown in short-rotations (typically 15 years)

on old farms. The tight grain and clear wood yields a stunning product in just a fraction of the time that it takes to grow quality hardwoods in North America.

Lyptus® wood, the product of a cross between two of the world's more than 600 species of eucalyptus, is so beautiful and so workable that it is finding its way into a range of products from fine furniture to cabinets as well as flooring. This wood has a long list of environmental benefits: it comes from a rapidly-renewable forest, provides a new product for farmers, is available pre-finished so there is no need for surfacing or use of VOCs on site, and possesses a hardness rating greater than white oak, jatoba, mahogany, red oak, hard maple or beech.

For the two guest rooms, the Owens chose bamboo, which is as beautiful and durable as hardwood but can be re-harvested in just three years. Other environmentally-friendly flooring choices include cork and linoleum; the Natural Resources Defense Council has a helpful article with links to vendors at <http://www.nrdc.org/onearth/02win/livgreen.asp>.

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.

7. Greenville County Tree Committee

The Greenville County Tree Policy Advisory Committee is currently gathering information about what should—and should not be included in a future countywide tree ordinance. In June, the committee will begin deliberating specific recommendations, so it needs to hear from Greenville County citizens now. Unfortunately, public attendance has been thin. The committee meets every second Thursday at 8:00 a.m. in Conference Room B of Greenville County Square; the next meeting is scheduled for **May 25**.

In addition, public hearings are being held in various locations of the county. The next one is scheduled for May 25 at 6:30 p.m. at Woodmont High School; the final hearing will be held June 8 at 6:30 p.m. at Greenville County Square. It is critically important that the committee hears the views of citizens in favor of setting minimum tree requirements in new developments. If you can't attend public meetings, please make your feelings heard on the internet: on her blog, *Greenville News* columnist Jeanne Brooks wonders where all the impassioned tree ordinance supporters have gone. Visit her site (http://news.greenvilleonline.com/blogs/brooks/2006/05/post_2.html#more) and post a comment.

For more information about the tree committee, see [UU 72](#) and regular updates on the *Upstate Forever* website (www.upstateforever.org), or contact committee member Diane Eldridge, special consultant and advisor to *Upstate Forever*, at diane.eldridge@charter.net.

8. Air Quality Report Card: Mixed Results for the Upstate

Greenwood County has some of the cleanest air in South Carolina in terms of particulate pollution, but Greenville County's air failed the American Lung Association's ratings in their new report, "State of the Air 2006." Oconee and Spartanburg Counties also received passing grades, while Anderson, Laurens, and Pickens Counties were not rated. In the category of high ozone levels, Anderson, Pickens, and Spartanburg Counties all received grades of "F," while Oconee County rated a "C," and other Upstate counties were not graded. It is clear that we have a long way to go in our region in order to achieve healthy air quality. To read the report, visit <http://lungaction.org/reports/stateoftheair2006.html>.

9. Upcoming Events

Upstate Forever Events

May 25, The Impacts of Land Use Change on Lake Greenwood, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Another in a series of [Watershed Tours](#) sponsored by the Saluda-Reedy Watershed Consortium that provides an in-the-field assessment of the [impacts of development](#) -- both along the lakeshore and upstream -- on water quality in Lake Greenwood. Open to interested community leaders and professionals within the watershed; to register, contact [Kathy Chandler](#) at (864) 596-5075 or [click here for more information](#) about the tour.

May 27, Shootin' the Shoals, Ware Shoals, SC, 11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. You're invited to participate in a flow study on a little-known stretch of the Saluda River. The Foothills Paddling Club has arranged for a six-hour release of the Saluda's entire flow into the main channel at Ware Shoals. This event will enable the assessment of the paddling potential of a mile-plus stretch of continuous shoals that is normally too low to run. This free event is for experienced paddlers. For information and directions, contact Jason Van Driesche at (864) 250-0500x22 or visit <http://www.saludareedy.org/shoals.html>.

May 31, Low-Impact Development as a Market Differentiation Strategy, 12:00 - 4:30 p.m. A [field trip](#) sponsored by the SRWC; contact [Kathy Chandler](#) to register (864) 596-5075 or [click here](#).

June 1, The Benefits of Using Floodplains as Community Greenways, Furman University, Greenville, SC, 12:00 - 5:00 p.m. Third 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 SRWC and the Appalachian and Upper Savannah COGs. For more information, visit <http://www.saludareedy.org/events.html>; to register, call (864) 250-0500 ext. 22 or email jasonvand@upstateforever.org.

June 3, Land Trust Day, Mast General Store, Greenville, SC, 10:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. Mast General Store at 111 North Main Street in downtown Greenville will donate 20 percent of all sales on Saturday, June 3 to *Upstate Forever*. As an added bonus, wildlife artist Bruce Bunch will be in the store that day selling his watercolors, donating 30 percent of all sales to *Upstate Forever*. Take your shopping list for weddings, dads, grads, and summer outdoor adventures and celebrate Land Trust Day! Parking is free in the Richardson Street garage, located behind the store. Call (864) 250-0500 with questions.

June 8, Economic Development and Water Quality in the Lakelands Region, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. A [Watershed Tour](#) sponsored by the SRWC providing an overview of the connections between water quality and quality growth in the Lakelands. Open to interested community leaders and professionals within the watershed; to register, contact [Kathy Chandler](#) at (864) 596-5075 or [click here for more information](#).

June 13, Key Management Issues in Lake Greenwood and other Piedmont Lakes, 12:00 - 4:30 p.m. A pontoon boat excursion on Lake Greenwood. This [field trip](#) is sponsored by the SRWC; contact [Kathy Chandler](#) to register (864) 596-5075 or [click here for more information](#).

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. The free 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. For more information, visit http://www.upstateforever.org/ufs_event.html. To register, call (864) 327-0090 or e-mail spartanburg@upstateforever.org.

Other Events

May 25, Greenville County Tree Policy Advisory Committee Public Hearing, Woodmont High School, Piedmont, SC, 6:30 p.m. The fourth of five public hearings taking place around the county. For more information, contact committee member Diane Eldridge at diane.eldridge@charter.net.

June 6, Water Quality in South Carolina, Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship of Clemson, Clemson, SC, 7:30 p.m. The Foothills Group of the SC Sierra Club welcomes Richelle Tolton and Andy Miller, DHEC's watershed managers for the Savannah and Saluda river basins, to discuss their 2006 report on statewide water quality, explaining how water quality is measured and what can be done to protect and improve water quality. For more information, visit <http://southcarolina.sierraclub.org/foothills/>.

June 8, Greenville County Tree Policy Advisory Committee Public Hearing, Council Chambers, Greenville County Square, 6:30 p.m. The last of five public hearings taking place around the county. For more information, contact committee member Diane Eldridge at diane.eldridge@charter.net.

June 10, Electronics Recycling Day, Greenville, SC, 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Free recycling of TVs, CPUs, monitors, scanners, printers, wires, and circuit boards for City of Greenville residents and businesses at 360 S. Hudson Street. For information, call (864) 467-8300.

10. Lots o' Links

[The Long and Grinding Road](#). "Extreme commuters," who travel more than 90 minutes to work, one way, are the fastest-growing group of commuters.

[Why Suburbs Will Never Have Tall Trees](#). Because of modern construction techniques, it could take more than a century – and generations of homeowners – before today's new subdivisions boast a tree canopy.

[Public Ready for Zero Energy Homes as Early as 2012](#). The National Association of Home Builders sees a growing trend in lower energy consumption.

[Meltingpot or Boomtown?](#) A new report from the National League of Cities identifies Greenville as a "Spread City," characterized by low density, few households with children, and few immigrant residents.

[Do You Jigeemu?](#) This website aims to provide up-to-date and specific information on recycling and energy conservation for people in every community across the country, particularly highlighting free services available.

[Saying Goodbye to the 'Burbs](#). People aren't just fleeing the cities--they're fleeing the suburbs, migrating to the outermost metropolitan fringes, according to new Census Bureau population estimates. Click on *Newsweek's* map to see population estimates for every county.

[In New Orleans, Recycling Opportunity Being Wasted](#). With large-scale home demolitions now underway, there are no comprehensive plans to salvage and recycle building materials.

[Cycle South Carolina 2006](#). A four-day bike ride of 240 miles begins and end in Spartanburg this July.

[Recycling Electronic Waste in the Upstate](#). A Michigan-based company, Cleanlites, with an office in Spartanburg, saves from the landfill electronics and light bulbs containing mercury.

11. Quote of the Month

"But we definitely want to keep up our end of the bargain and manage our storm water properly."

- Val Hutchinson, member of Richland County Council, in response to DHEC's imposition of a \$830,000 fine against the County for many deficiencies in its storm water management program. It is the second highest fine levied by DHEC in the past five years. Quoted in *The State* 5/3/06.