

# Upstate Update

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

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### 1. Study Indicates Dramatic Loss of Greenville's Forest Land

Between 1985 and 2000, Greenville County lost more than 77,000 acres of forest land—a whopping 21% decrease -- according to a new study by [Dr. Jeff Allen](#) of Clemson University's Strom Thurmond Institute for the [Saluda-Reedy Watershed Project](#), which is managed by *Upstate Forever*. Dr. Allen's analysis of satellite images reveals a shocking loss rate of 14 acres of forest per day.

Intact forests provide multiple benefits to society, including reduced runoff, absorption of pollutants, improved air quality, wildlife habitat, and higher property values. Greenville County's Tree Policy Advisory Committee has created an online [public survey](#) about a proposed tree protection ordinance. Please complete the survey and share your concerns about Greenville County's rapidly disappearing tree canopy.

### 2. Tram-Trail Chugs Along

The Greenville County Economic Development Corporation voted unanimously on May 15 to move ahead with the development of the Swamp Rabbit Tram-Trail along an 11.8-mile abandoned rail corridor running between Greenville and Travelers Rest. With this vote, the GCEDC rejected a bid by Western Carolina Railway Service Corporation to lease the line for commercial rail service.

Last summer, volunteers from *Upstate Forever* and other groups cleared brush from the rail line, demonstrating the extensive public support for a trail. The trail project has been sponsored by the City of Travelers Rest, City of Greenville, Greenville County Recreation District, *Upstate Forever*, Furman University, and the Palmetto Conservation Foundation.

The GCEDC also resolved to “develop a multi-jurisdictional agreement that would outline operating responsibilities and directions -- making clear that GCEDC retains ownership of the line and any investments in the corridor should the agreement be terminated.” And perhaps most exciting, the GCEDC agreed to pursue an operating agreement with the Greenville County Recreation District to “expediently” implement the removal of the railroad track and ties and install a trail (phase 1). It will also work with the Greenville Transit Authority to study the feasibility of a paved tram-trail (phase 2). As a first step, a public hearing was held on June 27 to gather comments from nearby landowners and other residents.

Promoting sensible growth and protecting special places in the Upstate

An example of a successfully completed rail-trail project can be found right here in the Upstate. The Mary Black Foundation Rail Trail in downtown Spartanburg had its grand opening on June 3. The two-mile trail, constructed by the Palmetto Conservation Foundation, is already proving popular with local citizens, and provides a glimpse of a transportation alternative that will one day be available in Greenville County.

### 3. SC Global Warming Pollution Up

Global warming pollution in South Carolina jumped 186% between 1960 and 2001, according to a new analysis of government data released by the [Southern Alliance for Clean Energy](#). Increased coal emissions from power plants and oil emissions from transportation sources were responsible for 58% and 33% of this increase, respectively. Nationwide, according to the US PIRG, emissions of carbon dioxide nearly doubled during the same period, jumping from 2.9 billion metric tons in 1960 to almost 5.7 billion metric tons in 2001, an increase of 95 percent. The report's authors state that such emissions could be reduced substantially by using existing technologies to make power plants and cars more efficient and increasing the use of clean, renewable energy sources, such as wind, solar, geothermal, and biomass. The full report, "The Carbon Boom," is available at [www.uspirg.org/carbonboom](http://www.uspirg.org/carbonboom).

### 4. Charleston Mayor Has Advice for Spartanburg

On June 16, Charleston Mayor Joseph Riley came to Spartanburg to make the second speech in the "Building our Future" speaker series, sponsored by *Upstate Forever* and the Spartanburg Area Chamber of Commerce. Mayor Riley is widely considered one of the most visionary and highly effective governmental leaders in America. First elected in December 1975, he is currently serving an unprecedented eighth term. Under his leadership, Charleston has increased its commitment to racial harmony and progress, achieved a substantial decrease in crime, experienced a remarkable revitalization of its historic downtown business district, seen the creation and growth of Spoleto Festival U.S.A., built the beautiful Waterfront Park, developed nationally-acclaimed affordable housing, and experienced unprecedented growth in size and population.

Mayor Riley emphasized three basic principles during his speech. First is the importance of providing beautiful and vibrant places for the public. "The public realm is key," he said. "And the best places should be set aside for the public." A spectacular example of this principle in Charleston is the Waterfront Park. The City rejected proposals for private development of this area—the result of that decision is one of the most wonderful public spaces in the country. The community benefits from public spaces in another way as well. "If you take care of the public realm, the tax base will follow. It always does," Riley said. For example, adjoining Waterfront Park is some of the most valuable private real estate in the Southeast.

Second is the need for a plan, followed by the courage to stick with it. It is hard, but essential, for local leaders to say no to projects that are not consistent with the plan. Third, a community must preserve the places, buildings and sites that connect it to the past and make it special. Of course, no community has done a better job of historic preservation than Charleston. What Charleston has done - and continues to do under Mayor Riley's leadership - is an inspiring model for communities everywhere.

*The next "Building Our Future" event takes place August 18. See the Upcoming Events section for details.*

## 5. National Forest Watch

In [UU 73](#), we outlined *Upstate Forever's* opposition to the Bush Administration's proposal to sell off more than 300,000 acres of national forest land, including 4,665 acres in South Carolina, to provide short-term funding for rural schools. Many of you responded with letters and calls of your own to the Forest Service and our representatives in Washington. These were among more than 130,000 citizen comments, the overwhelming majority negative, received by the Forest Service. A June 20 [article](#) in *The (Charleston) Post and Courier* reports that, thanks in large part to the public outcry against the plan, the proposal is unlikely to pass Congress this year. Unfortunately, the bill probably will be repackaged and presented again next year, so keep your pencils sharpened!

More good news: South Carolina is at the forefront in conserving roadless areas in our national forests. In May 2005, a new rule was adopted that established a process to enable governors to institute or adjust management requirements for National Forest System inventoried roadless areas within their states. On June 21, the USDA, which oversees the US Forest Service, accepted the first three state petitions, from the governors of Virginia, North Carolina, and our own state of South Carolina. SC Governor Mark Sanford, quoted in a USDA press release, said, "The approval of our request to keep these areas roadless -- along with our ongoing efforts to protect other ecologically significant land in the state -- is an important step toward preserving the way we look and feel as a state and preserve our competitive advantage with respect to our quality of life." Well done, Gov. Sanford! For more information about the federal government's roadless area conservation efforts, visit [www.roadless.fs.fed.us](http://www.roadless.fs.fed.us)

## 6. Golf Tourney a Success!

It was a great day at Carolina Springs Golf Club for *Upstate Forever's* first-ever charity golf tournament on June 15. Eighty-eight players on 23 teams participated in the event, which, in conjunction with a silent auction and raffle, raised over \$12,000 to support the work of our organization. A huge thank you goes to Sam Phillips, who had the idea for the tournament and agreed to host it at his club. The tournament had a "green theme," featuring a Ford Escape hybrid as the prize for a hole-in-one (sadly, there was not a winner), and other prizes including biodegradable trees, camping gear, a mountain bike, and a presentation by Peter Stangel of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation on how to make golf courses more environmentally friendly. Many thanks to everyone who participated and the following sponsors:

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#### **7. Mast General Store Donates to Upstate Forever**

On June 4, Greenville's Mast General Store donated 20 percent of their gross sales revenue to *Upstate Forever* as part of its annual celebration of Land Trust Day. Response from the public was outstanding, and *Upstate Forever's* share totaled \$6,377! In addition, artist Bruce Bunch is generously donating 30 percent of his day's sales. Our deepest thanks go out to John and Faye Cooper, Mast General's owners; Mary Nase and her wonderful staff at the Greenville store; the *Upstate Forever* board and staff members who greeted the customers all day; and to all of you who shopped and spread the word about Land Trust Day.

#### **8. Reading List: Staff Pick**

[\*Prodigal Summer\*](#) by Barbara Kingsolver  
Reviewed by Mary Hays Huguley, [Summer Intern](#)

Barbara Kingsolver's most recent fictional work, *Prodigal Summer*, should have some special meaning for Upstate residents since it takes place in the hollows and hills of southern Appalachia. The novel weaves together three compelling human stories to relay a powerful ecological message, emphasizing humanity's place in Nature's endless cycle of life and death. The novel's three female protagonists all find themselves in the heart of very real issues impacting the Appalachian region; in "Moth Love" a young widow labors to hold on to a small farm without planting tobacco, in "Predators" a middle-aged forester is torn between her passion for a hunter and the animals he hunts, and in "Old Chestnuts" an elderly apple farmer grapples with her ornery neighbor and his compulsive pesticide use. Storylines exploring issues like the quest for a blight-free chestnut, alternative crops to tobacco, and the ethics of hunting predator species will be familiar subjects to Upstate locals, and Kingsolver demonstrates her thorough knowledge of all of them as both a biologist and as a southern Appalachian native. Like all of her works, *Prodigal Summer* is testimony to Kingsolver's deep love and respect for the natural world and its perpetual succession of creation and rebirth, all the while celebrating humankind's membership in the vast, complex community of life on Earth.

## 9. Upcoming Events

### Upstate Forever Events

**August 18, Designing Communities for Active Living, Spartanburg Marriott, Azalea Ballroom, Spartanburg, SC, 7:30 a.m.** The third event in the “Building our Future” quarterly speaker series features Rich Killingsworth, Program Director of Health Promotion at the Mott Foundation and a national expert on the relationship of the built environment and physical activity. He will discuss using the concept of “placemaking” to design, revitalize, and plan our communities into places that have purpose, provide for our basic needs, and promote health. 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. To register, call *Upstate Forever’s* Spartanburg office at (864) 327-0090 or e-mail [spartanburg@upstateforever.org](mailto:spartanburg@upstateforever.org). For general information, visit [http://www.upstateforever.org/ufs\\_event.html](http://www.upstateforever.org/ufs_event.html).

**October 20, Creating Suburban Neighborhoods of Lasting Value, Spartanburg Marriott, Azalea Ballroom, Spartanburg, SC, 7:30 a.m.** The final “Building Our Future” Speaker Series event of 2006 features Tom Low, Director of Town Planning for Duany Plater-Zyberk & Co. of Charlotte, and Rick Sumerel, Chief Operating Officer of Verdae Development, Inc. of Greenville. Sponsored by *Upstate Forever* and the Spartanburg Chamber of Commerce. [http://www.upstateforever.org/ufs\\_event.html](http://www.upstateforever.org/ufs_event.html)

### Other Events

**July 18, The Clemson Experimental Forest: Some Special Botanical Features, Founders Hall Dining Commons, Southern Wesleyan University, Central, SC, 7:00 p.m.** The Upstate Chapter of the South Carolina Native Plant Society welcomes John Garton, retired biologist and Clemson Forest volunteer, who will present the major botanical and zoological features of this 17,500 acre public resource. [www.scnps.org](http://www.scnps.org)

**October 12-15, National Land Conservation Conference: Rally 2006: Rhythms of the Land, Nashville Convention Center, Nashville, TN.** The annual conference of the Land Trust Alliance features seminars, workshops, notable speakers, field trips, and traditional roots music. For information, visit [www.lta.org/training/rally.htm](http://www.lta.org/training/rally.htm).

**November 9-10, Tree Solutions 2006: For Those Who Want Answers, Spartanburg Marriott Conference Center, Spartanburg, SC.** The South Carolina Urban & Community Forestry Council presents this special program for arborists, urban foresters, planners, horticulturalists, tree boards, and other citizens. For more information, visit [www.scurbanforestry.org](http://www.scurbanforestry.org).

## 10. Lots o’ Links

**[Poll: South Carolina Hunters and Anglers Want Action, Leadership on Global Warming.](#)** Some of our state’s most conservative citizens, sportsmen believe global warming is happening, want to see the U.S. become a leader in addressing the problem, and want immediate action at both the state and national level to combat this growing threat, according to a recent poll by the South Carolina Wildlife Federation.

**[Living Green Below Your Means.](#)** A periodic column on saving both money and environmental resources by Jennifer Errick of the Center for the New American Dream.

**[Why Do Canadians Cycle More Than Americans?](#)** An intriguing study concludes that this is the result of differences between the nations’ transportation and land-use policies, and not due to intrinsic differences in history, culture or resource availability.

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[New Home Size Reaches All-Time High in 2005](#). According to a recent Census report, new homes today average 2,434 square feet, vinyl siding is the most popular exterior choice, the split level is dead, and porches are making a comeback.

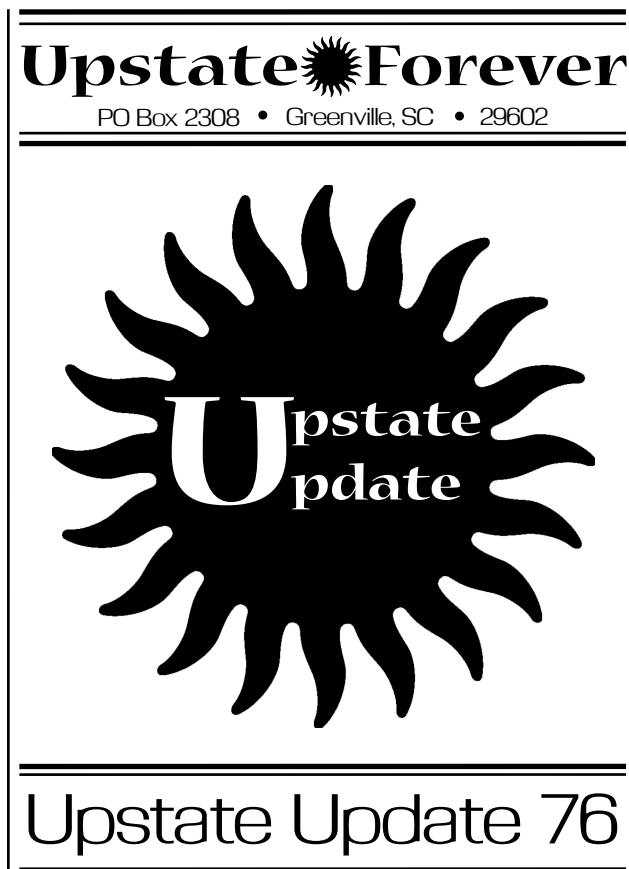
[Rapanos: Lawbreaker or Principled Resistor?](#) Learn more about the Supreme Court's recent decision on Federal authority over wetlands under the Clean Water Act in this article from the Michigan Land Use Institute.

[Strong Warning on Sprawl](#). A recent editorial emphasizes the need for a regional approach to planning and development in the Charleston area.

## 11. Quote of the Month

"Maybe it's not the best idea we ever came up with."

- U.S Department of Agriculture Under Secretary Mark Rey, on the Bush Administration's proposal to sell off over 300,000 acres of US Forest Service land, quoted in *The (Charleston) Post and Courier*, 6/20/06.



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