

Upstate Update

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

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1. EARTH DAY MESSAGE 2007

The first Earth Day in 1970 was a great success, waking up the United States to the horrendous abuses of our environment. It led to passage of our landmark federal environmental laws—the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, all enacted within six years of that first Earth Day.

The focus of that first Earth Day was on the very visible signs of environmental degradation: grossly polluted rivers, belching smokestacks, and leaking drums of hazardous waste. In the last 37 years, we have done a good job in this country in addressing these problems.

But is now painfully obvious that these are just some battles we have won. Meanwhile, on Planet Earth, we have been losing the war.

We are losing the war because we have already destroyed half of the world's wetlands, half of its tropical and temperate forests, and 90 per cent of its large predator fish. We are witnessing a massive extinction of plant and animal species—27,000 every year, 1,000 times the normal rate. Every second we lose another 750 metric tons of topsoil. Every hour another 5,000 acres of forests are wiped out.

Meanwhile, the world's population is increasing at the rate of 10,000 people per hour, and every one of these people aspires to, and rightfully so, the same standard of living that we enjoy in the United States. But based on the way we currently use and exploit the world's natural resources, that goal is unattainable--we would need two Earths.

We're losing the war because the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is higher than at any time in the last 650,000 years, having risen from 280 to 380 parts per million today. There is now overwhelming consensus among scientists that this increase is the direct result of human activities and has already caused widespread environmental and economic harm.

On April 14, "Step It Up" rallies were held throughout the United States to call attention to the climate crisis and to demand that Congress take action.

But we need more than a step. Neal Armstrong took a giant leap for mankind on the moon. We need a giant leap now for Planet Earth.

Gus Speth, a South Carolina native and Dean of the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, has presented a compelling explanation of why the approach of the first Earth Day will not work well today:

Promoting sensible growth and protecting special places in the Upstate

In 1970, we were against. Today we must be for. Then we defined problems. Today we must design solutions.

In 1970, technology was viewed as evil. Today technology is what we need to get us out of this mess.

In 1970, it was national. Today it must be global.

In 1970, it was environmental protection. Today is sustainable development.

In 1970, we took a top down approach. Now, we must encourage innovative, bottoms-up approaches—"green jazz that is unscripted, improvisational and creative."

In 1970, we were too elitist. Today we must stress justice and equity.

In 1970, we created an environmental sector. Today we must make every economic sector an environmental sector.

In 1970, we demanded government leadership. We urgently need that leadership now, and the Step It Up rallies called for that. But we cannot wait for government. We must take action in our own lives, homes, businesses, and communities. We must think globally and act locally.

Wallace Stevens wrote, "After the final no, there comes a yes, and on that yes the future of the world depends." On Earth Day 2007, let us all say yes, we will face this crisis, yes, we will resolve it, and yes, we will secure a bright future for Planet Earth.

2. *Climate Change and the End of Oil*

Noted author James Howard Kunstler discussed "the converging catastrophes of the 21st century"—climate change and the end of oil—in a captivating presentation at Furman University on March 14, sponsored by *Upstate Forever*, Furman University, Carolina Climate Network, and Southern Alliance for Clean Energy. These catastrophes will cause seismic changes in our nation's economy and culture, according to Kunstler.

First on his list is our current pattern of low-density exurban development. Decrying sprawl as "the greatest misallocation of resources in the history of civilization," Kunstler connected our willingness to throw good money after bad (for roads, schools, and other infrastructure) to an endemic American "psychology of previous investment." He predicted that big cities will contract substantially in area while densifying at the core, while some cities in the unsustainably arid Southwest, such as Phoenix and Las Vegas, will "dry up and blow away."

As rural land will be valued less as raw material for future subdivisions and industrial parks, Kunstler predicts it will gain importance for its productive agricultural capability. Locally-grown food requires smaller energy inputs—from seed to harvest to table.

Kunstler stresses that, rather than waiting around for a technological magic pill to enable us to continue our current lifestyles apace, we must drastically reduce our energy consumption. One concrete step he proposes is the restoration of the U.S. passenger railroad system, once "the envy of the world," reducing reliance on air travel for shorter inter-city trips. Rail is also a more energy-efficient means than trucking for moving freight, and could tie into a revitalized network of wharves for maritime trade. He concludes that we should no longer tolerate places that "dishonor our collective life," but reemphasize the public realm while rebuilding local economic and social networks.

To read more by and about James Howard Kunstler, visit www.kunstler.com (warning: the author's biting commentary is peppered with adult language).

3. Light Imprint New Urbanism: Cost-Effective Conservation

How can we conserve natural resources while reducing development costs by nearly one-third? An answer is Light Imprint New Urbanism (LINU), a new development strategy which aims to lie lightly on the land by coordinating engineering practices and New Urbanist design techniques, offering different solutions for different transect (development intensity) zones.

Duany Plater-Zyberk, the architectural firm that has been at the forefront of the New Urbanism movement, recently completed a report on Light Imprint New Urbanism, using Greenville's Griffin Park development (which the firm designed) as a case study. There, the LINU strategy resulted in a 27 percent cost increase with the introduction of tree protection fences. Yet a 50 percent cost savings was realized by: 1) the reduction of curbs and gutters; 2) the reduction in the number of stormwater pipes and inlets; 3) the reduction in pervious pavement in alleys and streets; and 4) the introduction of rain gardens. The study concluded that LINU's emphasis on sustainability, pedestrian-oriented design and environmental and infrastructural efficiency reduced the community's anticipated total construction and engineering expenses by 31 percent!

Griffin Park, a "traditional neighborhood development", is one of the first examples of LINU development in the nation. The first phase of construction offered an opportunity to document the evolution of this environmentally sensitive community; one that lies lightly on the land by coordinating engineering practices and New Urban design techniques; preserves mature tree stands; and lowers the construction and engineering costs without compromising design priorities such as connectivity and the public realm.

To read the full report analyzing Griffin Park, visit www.dpz.com/pdf/Research/Light%20Imprint%20NU%20Report.pdf. You can also learn more about LINU at our May 1 Low Impact Development Breakfast Series event; see "Upcoming Events" below or visit www.saludareedy.org/events.html for details and registration information.

4. Greenville Moves Forward on Trails Plan

The City of Greenville recently held a public workshop as part of its trails and greenways master planning process. Approximately 60 citizens attended to share their opinions about trails and greenways, expressing the most interest in trails that would connect the downtown area with Paris Mountain. The full report will be available in May. In the meantime, if you have not already completed a questionnaire about your trail and greenways usage and interests, you can still give your input: visit www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=556953316398.

5. Hargett Elected to National Wildlife Federation Board

Founding *Upstate Forever* board chairman and lifelong conservationist Dr. Dave Hargett has been elected as the new Region 3 Director for the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) Board. Dave is an environmental consultant who is a longtime technical advisor and board member of the South Carolina Wildlife Federation. In his new role, Dave will help lead the nation's largest membership conservation organization, with over one million members. Congratulations, Dave!

6. Huffman Honored at Statehouse

On March 20, the Upstate's Rick Huffman was recognized for his unyielding commitment to conservation as the recipient of the 2006 South Carolina Environmental Awareness Award. Rick, owner of a native plant-focused landscape design firm, is the founder of the South Carolina Native Plant Society and currently serves as president of the organization's Upstate chapter. Under his leadership, the SCNPS sponsors many events each month, including native plant sales, speakers, plant rescues, and field trips, which serve to educate the public and make gardening with natives easy and accessible. Rick is tireless in

his efforts to help protect our natural resources and to assist people in making eco-friendly plant choices. Congratulations, Rick!

7. Wyche Named to Climate Change Panel

In [UU83](#), we reported that Governor Mark Sanford has issued an executive order establishing a Climate, Energy and Commerce Advisory Committee, charged with submitting an action plan by March 2008. We are pleased to announce that *Upstate Forever* Executive Director Brad Wyche has been named to this committee, which will review climate change impacts in South Carolina and recommend strategies for addressing those impacts.

In other news, Governor Sanford convened planners, elected officials, architects, and interested citizens in Charleston March 26 to discuss different ways and policies for managing the state's phenomenal growth. Andrés Duany, the New Urbanist movement's preeminent architect and theorist, was the featured speaker.

8. Upcoming Events

Upstate Forever Events

May 1, Light Imprint New Urbanism, University Center, Greenville, SC, 7:45 - 9:00 a.m. Join *Upstate Forever* and the Home Builders Association of Greenville for the third event in our 2007 Low Impact Development Breakfast Series: a public presentation by Tom Low of Duany, Plater-Zyberk & Company. For more information, visit www.saludareedy.org/events.html. The event is free of charge and breakfast will be provided. Contact John Tynan at jtynan@upstateforever.org or (864) 250-0500x31 to reserve your place.

May 4, Building Our Future: The Importance of Planning for Quality Growth, Spartanburg Marriott at Renaissance Park, Spartanburg, SC, 7:30 a.m. The first session of our 2007-08 "Building Our Future" speaker series will feature David Pressly, Immediate Past President of the National Association of Home Builders. This event is sponsored by *Upstate Forever*, Partners for Active Living and the Spartanburg Area Chamber of Commerce. For more information or to register, contact spartanburg@upstateforever.org or (864) 327-0090.

May 8, Fourth Annual Conservation Lobby Day and Legislative Oyster Roast, Columbia, SC, 7:30 a.m. - 11:00 p.m. Join us for the conservation community's largest annual Lobby Day at the State House. Hundreds of citizens representing conservation groups from throughout South Carolina will join forces in Columbia to lobby our Senators and Representatives on issues such as Conservation Bank funding, DOT reform, energy efficiency, and the ability of local communities to plan for future growth. The day concludes with a celebratory oyster roast and Lowcountry boil at the Seibels House where we will shuck oysters alongside state legislators and enjoy some great live music.

You're not expected to be an expert to participate -- all you need is a willingness to learn and a desire to bring about change. Staff from *Upstate Forever* and the Conservation Voters of South Carolina will be on hand to brief you on the issues and to guide you through the lobbying process. We will even provide transportation, with vans leaving from both Greenville and Spartanburg at 7:30 a.m. and returning at approximately 11:00 p.m. Please contact Nancy Fitzer at nfitzer@upstateforever.org or (864) 250-0500x30 to discuss the details if you are interested in participating.

May 15, Too Hot NOT to Handle: Global Warming in South Carolina and What You Can Do About It, Younts Conference Center, Furman University, Greenville, SC, 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. Dr. Stephen Smith, Executive Director of the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy is featured at the next event in *Upstate Forever's* Climate Change Speaker Series. Dr. Smith will talk about the science of climate change, including the newest UN climate report (released on April 6). He will also focus on what's at stake for the Southeast and how the general public can get involved with climate change efforts. For more information, contact John Tynan at jtynan@upstateforever.org or (864) 250-0500x31.

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May 19, Peter's Creek Heritage Preserve Hike, Spartanburg, SC, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Dr. Gillian Newberry, professor of Biology at USC Upstate, will lead a hike through the spectacular Peter's Creek Heritage Preserve next month. Not only was Dr. Newberry instrumental in the creation of this preserve, but she also discovered the threatened species dwarf heartleaf residing there, which participants will have a chance to view. The hike is an easy two miles and the forest is brilliant in May, when many of the species should be perfect for enjoying. To reserve your place on the hike or for more information, contact Tonya Ward at (864) 327-0090 or tward@upstateforever.org. Attendance is limited, so register early!

June 2, Land Trust Day, Mast General Store, Greenville, SC, 10:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. Once again this year, Mast General Store at 111 North Main Street in downtown Greenville will donate 20 percent of all sales on Saturday, June 2 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 *Upstate Forever* at (864) 250-0500 with questions.

June 5, Benefits of Dispersed Stormwater Management, University Center, Greenville, SC, 7:45 - 9:00 a.m. Join *Upstate Forever* and the Home Builders Association of Greenville for the fourth event in our 2007 Low Impact Development Breakfast Series: a public presentation by John Darrohn of Seaman, Whiteside and Associates, Inc. For more information, visit www.saludareedy.org/events.html. The event is free of charge and breakfast will be provided. Contact John Tynan at jtynan@upstateforever.org or (864) 250-0500x31 to reserve your place.

June 21, Upstate Forever Golf Tournament, Carolina Springs Golf and Country Club, Greenville, SC, 12:00 noon. Please join us for our second annual benefit tournament, complete with lunch, fantastic prizes, a silent auction, and hors d'oeuvres. Entry fees are \$720 per team or \$180 per individual. To register, contact Ralph Settle at rsettle@upstateforever.org or (864) 250-0500x21.

Other Events

April 28, Keep Oconee Beautiful Association Earth Day Celebration, Seneca Library, Seneca, SC, 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Enjoy children's crafts and activities, informational displays, recycled art projects, and great prizes at this free event. For more information, visit www.kobasc.com.

May 10, Wildlife And Industry Together (WAIT) Seminar, Piedmont Technical College, Greenwood, SC, 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. This free seminar will demonstrate how industries can provide great wildlife habitat on their facility grounds. Sponsored by Fuji-Greenwood and presented by Piedmont Technical College. For information, contact the SC Wildlife Federation at mail@scwf.org or (803) 256-0670.

May 19, Computer and Fluorescent Build Recycling Event, 360 S. Hudson Street, Greenville, SC, 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. City of Greenville residents and businesses are invited to recycle free of charge their computer monitors, mice, keyboards, circuit boards, wires, anything else one can plug into a computer, fluorescent bulbs, fluorescent tubes and ballasts. For more information, call (864) 467-8300 or visit www.greatergreenville.com.

June 23, Great American Backyard Campout. Folks across America are invited to come together every fourth Saturday of June and camp in their backyards, local parks and camp grounds to discover a whole other world that lives in their "backyard". Sponsored by the National Wildlife Federation; for more information, visit www.nwf.org/playandobserve.

9. Lots o' Links

Wanted: Greenways Director. Greenville County Recreation District is seeking a Director of Greenways, Natural and Historic Resources to plan, direct and lead the development, construction and maintenance of a county-wide system of greenways.

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Wanted: Restoration Ecology Program Coordinator. Clemson University's Restoration Institute is hiring a program coordinator to support this exciting new program.

Seeking an International Solution to Mountains of E-Waste. The US is the world's largest exporter of e-waste to developing countries, with toxic consequences for the land, water, and living things.

Bad Air Day? Up-to-the-minute air quality information is available from the EPA with a new service called "EnviroFlash."

Is "Density" a Dirty Word? The US will need 60 million additional housing units to accommodate our growing population over the next 25 years, and we will need to reexamine what density means—density can be done well, or it can be done poorly.

10. Quote of the Month

"We teach our children how to compete in the global economy, but what about the global ecology?"

-Rick Huffman, President of the Upstate Chapter of the SC Native Plant Society, in his acceptance speech to the SC General Assembly for the SC Environmental Awareness Award, published in the SCNPS Upstate Chapter May newsletter (www.scnps.org), 3/20/07.

