

# 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: Developed Land in the Upstate Will Triple by 2030

The amount of developed land in the Upstate will triple by the year 2030 if current practices and policies continue, according to a new study released by the Strom Thurmond Institute (STI) at Clemson University. Researchers predicted the extent of development in eight Upstate Counties (Greenville, Spartanburg, Anderson, Pickens, Laurens, Newberry, Abbeville and Greenwood) using a computerized growth model and other information.

A key factor in the model is the ratio of the expansion of developed land to the increase in population. Based on actual changes from 1990 to 2000, the model conservatively used a ratio of 5 to 1; that is, for every 10 percent increase in population growth, developed land is predicted to increase by 50 percent. The study found that, in 2000, the extent of developed land in the Upstate was 576,000 acres. The study forecasts that, if current trends continue, the developed portion of the Upstate will increase to over 1.5 million acres by 2030—a staggering rate of 86 acres per day. To put that in perspective, Haywood Mall in Greenville is about 82 acres in size.

“This study clearly shows the direction the Upstate is heading,” said Dr. Jeff Allen, the project leader at STI. “But this result is not inevitable. The region can avoid this fate by reducing the ratio and developing less land relative to population growth.” The study also assessed what the result would be if development occurred in a more efficient manner. For example, if we were to develop land at a 3 to 1 ratio relative to population growth, we would save 380,000 acres by 2030. Looking at different ratios allow us to see how the region can accommodate the same number of people and businesses without consuming so much land – and thus generate all the economic benefits of growth at a fraction of the cost.

Reducing the ratio is not unrealistic. A related study conducted by Clemson’s Center for Community Growth and Change (CCGC) in 2005 found that the development to population growth ratio for the Upstate for the 50-year period from 1940 to 1990 was only 0.5 to 1; that is, for every 10 percent increase in population growth, developed land increased by only 5 percent.

The STI study is a huge wake-up call for the Upstate to finally get serious about managing growth. We don’t have much time before the study’s projections become reality. For more information about the study and to see the maps of projected future development, visit our website at [www.upstateforever.org](http://www.upstateforever.org). The study is one of the many projects of the Saluda-Reedy Watershed Consortium, a broad-based coalition of partners whose work has been funded by grants made to *Upstate Forever*.

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

## 2. Stop I-3 through South Carolina!

*Upstate Forever's* Board of Directors voted unanimously on January 15 to oppose the study of a new interstate corridor (tentatively named I-3) which would connect Savannah to Knoxville. The route originally proposed in 2004 would traverse Georgia's mountains. However, in response to the public outcry against the project, Rep. Paul Broun of Georgia has indicated that he will propose an amendment to the federal transportation bill that would authorize a \$1.3 million study of a route directly through Upstate South Carolina instead.

The project is a bad idea for Georgia, and it's just as bad for South Carolina for many reasons:

- There is already an existing and adequate route from Savannah to Knoxville (Interstates 95, 26 and 40)
- The project would worsen air quality problems in the Upstate, where we are barely in compliance with the federal ozone standard
- It would have tremendous adverse effects on the South Carolina Heritage Corridor and our mountains
- It would encourage more sprawl
- It would benefit Georgia, mainly the Port of Savannah and Augusta, and harm South Carolina
- The project violates the principle of taking care of what we already have rather than building new roads

An [Action Alert](#) is currently posted on our homepage: [www.upstateforever.org](http://www.upstateforever.org). For more information, maps, brochures, press archives, signs, etc., visit [www.stopi3.org](http://www.stopi3.org).

## 3. Upstate Forever Working to Improve Cliffs Development

In [UU 89](#), we described the events leading up to a 45-day "truce" between the Cliffs Communities and *Upstate Forever* on two permit applications at their Mountain Park development in northern Greenville County with huge potential impacts on the North Saluda River. Here is an update on the controversy:

**Wastewater.** The 45-day clock expired during the first week of January with an official DHEC public hearing about the proposed discharge of up to 175,000 gallons of treated wastewater per day into the North Saluda. More than 200 citizens attended the hearing, and nearly all speakers opposed the discharge permit. Audio recordings of the hearing are available on the SC Native Plant Society website at [www.scnps.org/news\\_ups.html](http://www.scnps.org/news_ups.html).

Shortly before the hearing, the Cliffs changed direction and submitted a new application for a permit to irrigate the golf course with highly treated wastewater -- a 'land-based' system -- instead of discharging it to the river. This is exactly what we urged the Cliffs to do, and we are pleased that they are now seriously pursuing this option. We will carefully review the application materials and notify our members of any issues or concerns that we have. We expect a decision on the wastewater permit by mid-March and anticipate that the land-based system permit application will be posted for public comment around the same time.

**River Modification and Golf Course.** During the 45-day "truce" we walked the entire length of the North Saluda with representatives of the Cliffs and identified ways to minimize impacts and improve the proposed design. The Cliffs agreed to limit rechanneling to one significantly impaired section of the North Saluda, utilize natural stabilization techniques, protect many existing trees, and maintain a minimum 25-foot vegetated buffer along both sides of the river. We recently received the Cliffs' revised plans for the golf course and are carefully evaluating them now. We will let our members know our assessment as soon as possible.

#### 4. Tree Ordinance Passes in Greenville

The three-year roller coaster ride finally came to an end on January 22: Greenville County enacted a tree conservation ordinance!

After failing by one vote at second reading in November, the ordinance was resurrected in January when County Council voted to reconsider it. But then they voted 9 to 3 to replace it with a pathetically weakened and simplified version (see our [op-ed](#) in *The Greenville News* explaining why this version was worse than having no ordinance at all).

On January 22, Council considered the ordinance for third and final reading. Council Chairman Butch Kirven offered a new version of the ordinance, which included many of the original provisions proposed by the citizen advisory committee. This amendment passed by a vote of 7 to 5. Voting in favor were Council members Burns, Flint, Gibson, Gilstrap, Kirven, Norris, and Payne. Voting against were Council members Cates, Dill, Meadows, Taylor, and Trout. Next, Council voted 8 to 3 to approve the ordinance as amended for third reading. The seven Council members who had previously voted yes were joined by Tony Trout. Council members Cates, Dill, and Meadows voted against passage, with Bob Taylor abstaining.

We are pleased that Greenville County finally has a tree ordinance, although it is far from ideal. The ordinance provides no protection at all for existing trees, even the magnificent “heritage” trees, nor are stream buffers protected. Hopefully the ordinance can be strengthened in the near future. To read more of our analysis of the ordinance, see the latest issue of our “[Keeping the Green in Greenville](#)” bulletin: [www.upstateforever.org/prog\\_tree/ktgg\\_080125.pdf](http://www.upstateforever.org/prog_tree/ktgg_080125.pdf). To read the new ordinance in its entirety, go to [www.upstateforever.org/prog\\_tree/TreeOrdinance080122.pdf](http://www.upstateforever.org/prog_tree/TreeOrdinance080122.pdf).

Many thanks to the members of the Tree Advisory Committee, all of the *Upstate Forever* members and all the concerned citizens who stayed on the roller coaster and spoke out. This never would have happened without you!

#### 5. Wow! 10,000 Acres Protected!

2007 was another banner year for *Upstate Forever's* Land Trust program. With a flurry of conservation agreements signed just before year end, we surpassed the 10,000-acre mark for protected land! The 13 agreements signed in 2007, protecting over 1,800 acres, brought our total acreage in the Upstate under permanent protection to 10,156. In addition, this year we finalized the outright purchase of 560 acres at Nine Times and assisted with several other large agreements that are being held by other land trusts. We're looking forward to more great accomplishments in 2008!

#### 6. Upstate Forever Green Office Renovation Update

Renovating a 95-year-old residence into a functional and green office building is not a walk in the park. But we are making progress on *Upstate Forever's* future main office in Greenville's Pettigru Historic District. The lengthy and expensive lead and asbestos abatements are now complete. Interior walls have been demolished, and some structural issues with the foundation and footings have been identified. Final permitting is pending.

Recycling is a major focus of the project. After digging up an old 500-gallon oil tank on the property, we were able to recycle the tank, although the fuel inside was too old to be reused. We removed the chimneys but will reuse all of the bricks onsite for walls, foundation, and landscaping. And we are pleased to announce that Interface, Inc. is donating recycled carpeting for our office!!

Thirty enthusiastic *Upstate Forever* volunteers attended a site tour on January 26. We are grateful to our wonderful volunteer coordinator, Dan Roberts, who organized the morning's events. We also thank Carlton Owen for opening up Upstate House so folks could warm up and view first-hand a completed green building project. Volunteer workdays will be scheduled as the renovation progresses; contact Dan at [droberts@upstateforever.org](mailto:droberts@upstateforever.org) if you would like to sign up as a volunteer on this or any other project. And to stay up-to-date on the progress of the office renovation, subscribe to our blog: [www.upstateforever.org/ufOffice/!](http://www.upstateforever.org/ufOffice/)

## 7. Daniel High School Update

In [UU 87](#) (September 2007), we reported that the Pickens County School Board was considering relocating Daniel High School to a site that included 40 acres of the Clemson Experimental Forest. We urged Clemson University not to sell any portion of the biologically rich Forest. We also asked the District to consider the far more sustainable solution of keeping Daniel High School at its current site. We are happy to report that on January 14 the School Board approved the construction of a new school on the existing Daniel High site. For more information, visit Friends of the Clemson Experimental Forest at [www.friendsofthecf.org](http://www.friendsofthecf.org).

## 8. Time to Be Heard in Columbia

The SC General Assembly is back in session for 2008. Once again *Upstate Forever* will have its own Conservation Lobby Day in Columbia. On Tuesday, March 4 we will journey to the legislature where you can observe the legislative process in action and talk directly with some of your own representatives about critically important conservation and quality of life issues. Vans will leave from both Greenville and Spartanburg at 9:00 a.m. and will return by 5:30 p.m. (see "Upcoming *Upstate Forever* Events" below). If you would like more information or to sign up, contact Nancy Fitzer at [nfitzer@upstateforever.org](mailto:nfitzer@upstateforever.org) or (864) 250-0500x30. If you would like to keep abreast of conservation-related legislation and actions you can take from home, email Nancy to subscribe to our weekly *Legislative Update*.

## 9. Art and Conservation a Grand Success!

Our second annual Art and Conservation celebration on January 31 was a fantastic evening of delicious food, wonderful company and fabulous art. More than three dozen artists offered paintings, pottery, jewelry, furniture, and fabric works for sale or auction, with at least 50 percent of the proceeds benefitting *Upstate Forever*. Our sincere thanks go out to the 250 people who attended; to our generous sponsors The Pаметto Bank, Irene Morrah Fine Art, Whole Foods Market, and The Greenville News; and to our wonderful volunteers who helped *Upstate Forever's* Membership and Special Events Director Kirbie Crowe make this an unforgettable evening: Donna Astle, Lou Astle, Dora Bikas, Patti Crawford, Judy Cromwell, Glenna Descy, Dan Gerst, Allen Hooker, Lynne Lucas, Bridget O'Donoghue, Nicola Page, Dan Roberts, Darlene Roberts, and Rachel Vykukal.

## 10. Upcoming Upstate Forever Events

Tuesday, March 4

*Upstate Forever* Lobby Day 2008

South Carolina Statehouse, Columbia, SC 11:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Join us at the State House to speak to your legislators about conservation issues. Staff from *Upstate Forever* and Conservation Voters of South Carolina will be on hand to brief you on current issues and explain the lobbying process. The specific issues to be pursued will depend on what is happening that week in the House and Senate, but some key issues this session are additional funding for the Conservation Bank, incentives promoting energy independence and efficiency, protection of South Carolina's surface water, and better notification of citizens about polluted waterways. You're not expected to be an expert—all

you need is a willingness to learn and a desire to bring about change. We will even provide transportation, with vans leaving from both Greenville and Spartanburg at 9:00 a.m. and returning by 5:30 p.m. Contact Nancy Fitzer at [nfitzer@upstateforever.org](mailto:nfitzer@upstateforever.org) or (864) 250-0500x30 if you are interested in participating. Another Lobby Day, this time with organizations from around the state, will take place on April 29.

## Saturday, March 8

### Birding Field Trip

Croft State Park, Spartanburg, SC, 8:00 a.m.

Join *Upstate Forever* and the Spartanburg chapter of the Audubon Society for this winter birding expedition in Croft State Park, a 7,000-acre multi-use park in the heart of Spartanburg County. Space is limited to 20 participants, so register now by calling *Upstate Forever's* Spartanburg office at (864) 327-0090 or emailing Ned Barrett at [nbarrett@upstateforever.org](mailto:nbarrett@upstateforever.org).

## Friday, March 14

### Building Our Future Speaker Series: Moving Our Transportation System Forward

Spartanburg Marriott at Renaissance Park, Spartanburg, SC, 7:30 a.m.

The next event in our free breakfast series will feature renowned scholar Dr. Robert Burchell, Co-Director of the Center for Urban Policy Research at Rutgers University. Dr. Burchell will discuss national trends in transportation and infrastructure spending, the case for alternative transportation, and implementation strategies. This event is hosted by *Upstate Forever*, Partners for Active Living and the Spartanburg Area Chamber of Commerce. For more information or to register, contact [spartanburg@upstateforever.org](mailto:spartanburg@upstateforever.org) or call (864) 327-0090.

## Saturday, March 22

### Saluda Lake Paddle

Sunrift Adventures, Greenville, SC, 10:00 a.m.

To celebrate our tenth anniversary year, *Upstate Forever* is launching a partnership with Sunrift Adventures to offer more adventurous outings! Our first trip will explore the northern reaches of Saluda Lake and parts of the Saluda River. Wildflowers will be in bloom during what is sure to be an unforgettable trip! Cost is \$30 and the trip is limited to *Upstate Forever* members. Canoes, kayaks, and tandem kayaks are available for rental for \$10 per person. Bring your own lunch. Space is limited to 16, so register early by contacting Gretchen Wilson at [gwilson@upstateforever.org](mailto:gwilson@upstateforever.org) or (864) 250-0500.

## 11. Lots o' Links

[Support Tax Incentives for Conservation](#). Conservation advocates seek a permanent extension of the Federal tax incentive for conservation easements that expired December 31. The Senate Farm Bill includes such a permanent extension. 65 House Members (none from SC) sent a letter to the House Agriculture Committee urging a permanent extension of the tax incentive for conservation easements in the House Farm Bill, H.R. 1576. We are asking *Upstate Forever* members to [call your Representative](#) and tell them how important these provisions are to conservation in our community.

[Promoting Good Growth in Oconee County](#). Advocates for Quality Development is a local group working to preserve the Golden Corner's environment, ecology, watershed and quality of life. See their web site for more information about their current initiative, advocacy for zoning enabling legislation in Oconee County.

[Get Your E-Nature Guides](#). Drs. Ed Pivorun and Patrick McMillan of Clemson University have produced a series of interactive DVDs with encyclopedic and entertaining information about area wildflowers, snakes, salamanders, and more.

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**[Walkability is Worth More.](#)** Chris Leinberger, author of *The Option of Urbanism*, has found that people will pay anywhere between 40% to 200% more per square foot to live in a walkable urban neighborhood instead of drivable suburban one.

**[Craftsman Court.](#)** Speaking of walkable neighborhoods, local builder and longtime *Upstate Forever* member Trey Cole is launching a small development of EarthCraft-certified homes in downtown Greenville.

**[Car Boom Puts Europe on the Road to a Smoggy Future.](#)** In many booming cities, our European cousins are experiencing American-style traffic congestion.

**[Take the Survey.](#)** Upstate Alliance, an organization promoting economic development in ten counties of the Upstate, is seeking input from our members for its strategic planning process—so please click on the link to fill out the online survey.

## 12. Quote of the Month

“Imagine more Woodruff Roads, a lot more Woodruff Roads.”

--Dr. Jeff Allen of Clemson University’s Strom Thurmond Institute, on his study’s projections of future land development in the Upstate, quoted in *The Greenville Journal*, 2/15/08

