

Upstate Update

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

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1. First Phase of Nine Times Project Complete

The 2,260-acre "Nine Times" tract in northern Pickens County is one of the most beautiful and biologically significant properties in the country. It contains five mountains, seven distinct forest types, and a rich abundance of plant and animal life, including native brook trout, black bears, and 134 species of wildflowers.

At the end of last year, after learning that Crescent Resources, the owner of Nine Times, was planning on putting it on the market, **Upstate Forever** borrowed approx \$2.7 million to purchase 560 acres of the property and obtained an exclusive two-year option to acquire the remaining 1,700 acres. Throughout this year, **Upstate Forever**, The Nature Conservancy, and our other partners have been working hard to raise the funds to pay off the debt and secure the permanent protection of the 560-acre parcel. With a wonderful grant from the South Carolina Conservation Bank, a generous gift from Fred and Alice Stanback, and many other private gifts, the campaign succeeded!

On Sept 17, the debt was paid off, and **Upstate Forever** conveyed the 560-acre parcel to The Nature Conservancy, which will manage the property as a nature preserve open for public use and enjoyment.

But we have much more work to do. Now we turn our attention to raising the funds needed to exercise the option and protect the remaining 1,700 acres.

2. Cliffs Wastewater Plan Raises Concerns

At a public hearing on September 4, **Upstate Forever** and local citizens expressed concern over the wastewater management plan at the Cliffs at Mountain Park in northern Greenville County. There has been an ongoing controversy (see [UU 96](#) and previous issues) over the potential impact on the North Saluda River of two issues related to the development: wastewater disposal and golf course design. The golf course, which was designed with 16 bridges, nine playovers and limited buffers, was approved by DHEC in July. This decision is currently being appealed to the SC Administrative Law Court by **Upstate Forever** and six other conservation organizations.

As for the issue of wastewater, the Cliffs had originally requested a permit from DHEC to discharge sewage effluent directly into the North Saluda. In response to opposition from **Upstate Forever** and many others, the Cliffs withdrew that permit application and filed a new application to spray treated wastewater on the golf course. But it later withdrew that application and is now seeking a permit for

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a subsurface drip disposal system outside the river's floodplain. While putting wastewater in the river is certainly the most objectionable of the three plans, the latest plan has raised some red flags for river advocates. Because the Cliffs would be dispersing the treated wastewater into a wooded area rather than using it to water the golf course, conservationists and local residents fear that the Cliffs will take water from the North Saluda for irrigation. The Cliffs' refusal to explain how they will irrigate the golf course strongly suggests that this is what they intend to do. According to a report cited in a recent [article](#) in *Golf Digest*, US golf courses require an average of 300,000 gallons of water *per day* to maintain. The removal of so much water from the already drought-affected North Saluda could be devastating to downstream wildlife, residents, and other users. See this [article](#) in *The Greenville News* about the hearing: www.upstateforever.org/newsviews_ufnews/UFN_2008/ufn080905GN_CliffsWastewaterPlans.pdf. For more information, visit citizens' group Save Our Saluda at www.saveoursaluda.org.

3. Upstate Forever Releases "Saving Lake Greenwood" Report

Lake Greenwood is a source of drinking water, tourism, economic development and pride in the Greenwood community. But a severe algal bloom in the lake in 1999 raised great concerns about the lake's condition.

In response, the V. Kann Rasmussen Foundation and Fuji Photo Film, Inc. funded the [Saluda-Reedy Watershed Consortium](#), a five-year comprehensive assessment of the lake and its entire watershed. *Upstate Forever* was honored to be the recipient of the grant and the manager of the project, which included a broad-based coalition of universities, government agencies, nonprofits, and private firms.

Upstate Forever has summarized the findings of all the project's research and studies pertaining to the lake in a report entitled "*Saving Lake Greenwood: An Action Plan for Restoring and Protecting Water Quality.*" The bottom-line conclusion is that the lake is in serious trouble, primarily as a result of excessive loadings of phosphorus and sediment. The report concludes with an action plan detailing specific steps needed to improve the lake's condition. To read the report in full, visit www.saludareedy.org/resLakeMgt.html.

4. Counties Receiving Input on Zoning and Land Use

Three Upstate counties continue to explore the institution of zoning as a land-use planning tool (see [UU 96](#) and previous issues). Spartanburg County is nearing the end of a series of public meetings to obtain citizen input on the topic. The final two meetings will take place on September 22 at Campobello-Gramling Elementary School and on September 23 at Oakland Elementary School, both beginning at 7:00 p.m. The *Spartanburg Herald-Journal* recently published an [op-ed](#) by *Upstate Forever's* Angela Viney on the always-controversial "z-word"; read it at www.upstateforever.org/newsviews_ufnews/UFN_2008/ufn080907SHJ_ZoningOpEdViney.pdf.

On September 16, Greenville County Council held a public hearing and unanimously passed at second reading an ordinance establishing zoning by referendum in currently unzoned areas of the county. Under the proposed ordinance, the county planning department would establish "Zoning Referendum Areas" (ZRAs) in consultation with residents and property owners. If 15 percent of registered voters in the ZRA sign a petition to establish zoning, a referendum would be held. The final decision on implementing zoning in a ZRA would then rest with County Council. You can read the proposed ordinance here: www.greenvillecounty.org/County_Council/Agenda/Council/Referendum%20Zoning%20FOR%20SEPT%2016.pdf.

And in Oconee County, on September 8, the planning commission heard a consulting firm's preliminary report on establishing citizen-initiated zoning. While the consultants recommended that the zoning process should be triggered when 15 percent of *registered voters* in a district (based on fire district

boundaries) petition for it, planning commissioners had earlier set the threshold at 30 percent of *property owners* in a district. To read the consultant's recommendations, go to www.oconeesc.com/planning/meetingdocuments/september_8_2008/Benchmark_Handout.pdf; a final report is due later this year.

5. New Office Nears Completion

Upstate Forever's green office renovation project is almost complete! The walls are painted, the green roof is installed, and the recycled carpet is down at our future main office at 507 Pettigrew Street in downtown Greenville. See photos and learn more on our renovation blog: www.upstateforever.org/ufOffice/. Our move-in date is October 1, and we are busily preparing for the big day. Thank you to all the volunteers who helped make the exterior as green as the interior at our landscaping workdays September 13 and 20. A huge thank you also goes out to Bowater Incorporated for their generous donations of used office furniture and equipment.

Once we are settled into our new workspace, we will hold an open house with tours on Saturday, November 22. If you are interested in other volunteer opportunities, contact Dan Roberts, our indefatigable Volunteer Coordinator, at droberts@upstateforever.org.

6. Wanted: Bicycles

Upstate Forever wants to walk its talk—or rather, *ride* its talk. We seek donations of bicycles (working or non-working) as well as funds with which to purchase bicycles so our Greenville staff members can travel sustainably to and from meetings in the downtown area. [TTR \(Tandem, Touring & Recumbent\) Bikes](#) has generously volunteered to repair donated bicycles and is providing a generous discount on the purchase of new bikes. If you would like to make a donation or have questions, contact Heather Nix (hnix@upstateforever.org) or Laura Garrett (lgarrett@upstateforever.org) at (864) 250-0500.

In addition, we are excited to report that Furman University has donated a large bike rack to install at our new office, so we will have a secure place to park our fleet. We will soon be joined by many other businesses, as the City of Greenville recently passed an [ordinance](#) requiring dedicated bicycle parking in new parking lots.

7. It's Not So Hard to Build Green

Upstate Forever's conference, "Saving More than Money: Energy Efficiency in the Home," on August 28 in Spartanburg featured informative and entertaining presentations by homeowners and building professionals detailing their experiences with green building and remodeling. If you were not one of the 80 fortunate attendees, some of the great information shared at the conference will be available soon on our website's "[Building Spartanburg Green](#)" section. Thank you to our sponsors, Neely's Building Supplies and Eco-Realty International.

8. State Seeks Citizen Input on Water and Energy Resources

Senator Danny Verdin of Laurens and Greenville, Chairman of the S.C. Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, is conducting a series of public meetings around the state. The meetings will provide citizens with the opportunity to comment on our state's water and energy resources, so that the "end users" of water and energy might have a significant part in future legislation. There will be a public comment session in the Upstate on **Tuesday, September 30** from 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. at the Self Auditorium at the Strom Thurmond Institute of Clemson University. For more information, contact Gene Hogan, the Committee's Research Director, at (803) 212-6232.

9. Upcoming Upstate Forever Events

Tuesday, September 30

**Conservation Agreements: The Voluntary Protection of Land
Carolina First Center, Greenville, SC, 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.**

This conference will be devoted to explaining and discussing conservation agreements, one of the most widely used means of protecting natural, scenic, agricultural and historic lands in the United States. A conservation agreement is a voluntary agreement by a landowner to protect his or her property, for which the owner may be able to realize significant income, estate and property tax benefits. The conference will end with a panel of owners who will explain why they decided to protect their properties with conservation agreements. Whether you are a landowner, professional advisor or concerned citizen, this conference will be of great interest to you. Professional development credits are available. The cost is \$50. For more information, [download a brochure](#) on our website, or contact Erin Knight at eknight@upstateforever.org or at (864) 250-0500x26.

Saturday, October 4

**National Hunting and Fishing Day: An Outdoor Family Adventure
Duke World of Energy, Seneca, SC, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.**

Come celebrate the great outdoors with the 2nd annual Outdoor Family Adventure in celebration of National Hunting and Fishing Day. Experts will be on hand to teach children and adults how to safely fire air rifles and bows and arrows, paddle kayaks and canoes, climb trees using tree stands, and much more related to enjoying the great outdoors. All events are free. Shuttle bus service will be provided from the Oconee Nuclear Station parking area off Highway 183. This event is sponsored by Duke Energy, *Upstate Forever*, and other organizations promoting the outdoors and conservation. Contact spartanburg@upstateforever.org or (864) 327-0090 for more information.

Thursday, October 9

**Green Screen Film Festival: *The Real Dirt on Farmer John*
Hub-Bub, 149 S. Daniel Morgan Avenue, Spartanburg, SC, 7:30 p.m.**

Upstate Forever and Hub-Bub are presenting a free series of environmental films on Thursdays throughout October and November (excluding October 2 and November 27) at 7:30 p.m. The series kicks off on October 9 with *The Real Dirt on Farmer John*, an inspiring documentary about one man's quest to create a revolutionary farming community. For more information, contact spartanburg@upstateforever.org or (864) 327-0090.

Saturdays, October 11 and 18

10th Anniversary Event!

The Upstate Ramble: A Tour of 10 Protected Properties

Greenville and Spartanburg Counties (October 11), Pickens and Oconee Counties (October 18), 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Don't miss this amazing two-day autumn tour of some of the most beautiful, unique, and historically significant places in the Upstate! *Upstate Forever* holds conservation agreements on all ten of these properties, ensuring that they will remain special places forever. On October 11, we'll visit five properties in Greenville and Spartanburg Counties. Then on October 18, we'll visit five properties in Pickens and Oconee Counties. At each stop, a landowner or local expert on the property will speak about the site's importance and showcase some its most remarkable features. Transportation will be by chartered bus and lunch will be provided. Cost is \$100 per person for one day, or \$175 for both days. Space is limited, so please reserve your spot by contacting Gretchen Wilson at gwilson@upstateforever.org or (864) 250-0500.

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Thursday, October 16

Green Screen Film Festival: *Everything's Cool*

Hub-Bub, 149 S. Daniel Morgan Avenue, Spartanburg, SC, 7:30 p.m.

The second screening in the Green Screen series, *Everything's Cool*, is a film about America finally "getting" global warming in the wake of the most dangerous chasm ever to emerge between scientific understanding and political action. For more information, contact spartanburg@upstateforever.org or (864) 327-0090.

Monday, October 20

Spartanburg Candidate Forum

Spartanburg County Public Library Headquarters, Spartanburg, SC, 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Upstate Forever, the League of Women Voters of Spartanburg County, 107.3 JAMZ, and News Channel 7 are partnering to host a free political forum for the 16 candidates running in the eight contested November races in Spartanburg. A 107.3 JAMZ personality will moderate the forum and a panel of three local media representatives will pose the questions. To submit questions for the panel in advance, visit http://1073jamz.com/event_guide/politicalforum.html.

Thursday, October 23

Green Screen Film Festival: *King Corn*

Hub-Bub, 149 S. Daniel Morgan Avenue, Spartanburg, SC, 7:30 p.m.

The third screening in the Green Screen series, *King Corn*, examines the industrialization of corn in America. Two college friends Iowa to farm a single acre of corn, and, in the process, examine the implications of the corn industry on family farms and on the eating habits of our nation. For more information, contact spartanburg@upstateforever.org or (864) 327-0090.

Saturday, October 25

Clean Water, Clear Future: Celebrating the Diversity of our Mountain Streams

Old Camp Spearhead/Civitan Camp, Cleveland, SC, 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Join *Upstate Forever* and Trout Unlimited as we celebrate the diversity of our mountain streams! Activities will include a full lunch, fly casting and fly tying lessons, bluegrass music, square dancing, and guided nature and photography hikes. Proceeds will go towards *Upstate Forever's* and Trout Unlimited's work for clean water in the Upstate. Tickets are \$15 per person or \$50 per family. To purchase tickets, contact Gretchen Wilson at gwilson@upstateforever.org or at (864) 250-0500.

Thursday, October 30

Green Screen Film Festival: *Renewal*

Hub-Bub, 149 S. Daniel Morgan Avenue, Spartanburg, SC, 7:30 p.m.

The fourth screening in the Green Screen series, *Renewal*, documents the increase in environmental activism in congregations of all faiths across America. Evangelical Christians fighting mountaintop removal, Muslims supporting sustainable farming, and Jews fostering children's connection between nature and spirituality are just a few of the stories depicted. For more information, contact spartanburg@upstateforever.org or (864) 327-0090.

Saturday, November 1

10th Anniversary Event!

Upstate Forever's Annual Meeting and Greengrass Festival

Hartness Estate, Greenville, SC

The Annual Meeting is a great way to meet *Upstate Forever* staff and mingle with other members. Then stay and enjoy some bluegrass with a "green" twist at a unique festival celebrating *Upstate Forever's* 10th Anniversary! The SteelDrivers, an acclaimed bluegrass/Americana band from Nashville, will take the stage along with local performers.

Note: The 10K Swamp Rabbit Run originally scheduled for November 1 has been postponed until April.

10. Lots o' Links

[How Green is Golf?](#) Not very.

[Carolina Clear.](#) A great citizen resource on water quality from Clemson University.

[Smart Growth with Teeth.](#) A smart bill for smart growth is on the verge of passage in California.

[Cleaner Air, One Yard at a Time.](#) New EPA rules will limit emissions from gas mowers by 35%.

[Ten Reasons to Buy Local Food.](#) A guide from our neighbors at ASAP (Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project).

11. Quote of the Month

"I don't want to take any more water out of the river."

--Greenville County Council member Joe Dill, who represents northern Greenville County, voicing concern that the Cliffs at Mountain Park development will use water from the North Saluda River to irrigate its planned golf course, quoted in *The Greenville News*, 9/5/08

Upstate Forever

---Promoting sensible growth and the protection of special places in the Upstate since 1998---

