

# Upstate Update

NUMBER 99

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2009

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

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### Top Ten List for 2008

Here's our annual Top Ten List of the most notable achievements in land use, conservation, and sustainable development issues in the Upstate (not necessarily in order of importance).

#### 1. Growth Projection Study Released

"Imagine more Woodruff Roads, a lot more Woodruff Roads." That was the assessment of Dr. Jeff Allen, lead researcher for a monumental growth projection study released in February by the Strom Thurmond Institute at Clemson University, and available on our website. There is also an extensive article about the study in our last newsletter: [www.upstateforever.org/Newsletters/Spring08\\_Advocate/AGrowthStudy\\_spr08.html](http://www.upstateforever.org/Newsletters/Spring08_Advocate/AGrowthStudy_spr08.html). The amount of developed land in the Upstate will triple by the year 2030 if current land use practices and policies continue, according to the study, which 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. Later in the year, a companion study of Oconee County by Dr. Craig Campbell projected an even more dramatic increase in land consumption -- 900% -- in that county.

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 forecasts that, if current trends continue, the developed portion of the Upstate will triple by 2030 to over 1.5 million acres—a staggering rate of 86 acres per day.

The good news is that this result is not inevitable. Rather, it is a wake-up call. The study also assessed what the result would be if development occurred in a more efficient manner. If we were to develop land at the same rate as the population is increasing (a 1 to 1 growth ratio), we would save 755,000 acres -- nearly 50 percent -- by 2030. Looking at different ratios allow us to see how the Upstate can accommodate the same number of people and businesses without consuming so much land and without having to spend so much money in providing services and infrastructure in the region.

#### 2. Green Goes Mainstream

Green design and construction continued moving into the mainstream in 2008. A record number of LEED and EarthCraft certified buildings were constructed in the Upstate, including Hubbel Lighting's new facility along I-85, the Collaboration 3 building at ICAR, and the Southern Living home at Furman University. And a record number of professionals became certified under the LEED and EarthCraft programs, with many attending the EarthCraft trainings sponsored by *Upstate Forever*, the Home Builders Association of Greenville, and Southface Energy Institute.

*Upstate Forever* did its part by acquiring and "greenovating" an old building for our main office in Greenville. Built in 1916 as a residence, the building had been vacant for twenty years and was badly deteriorated. By renovating an existing building instead of constructing a new one, we adhered to the principle that "the greenest building is the one already built." Another important principle that

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

we followed was to reuse existing materials wherever possible. Where it was not possible to reuse the materials, most of them were recycled. Finally, where new materials had to be used, we made sure they were highly sustainable. The office is not only a wonderful new home for our organization but also a model for green renovation work. For more information about our project, visit our blog at [www.upstateforever.org/ufOffice/](http://www.upstateforever.org/ufOffice/).

### 3. Upstate Forever Undertakes Comprehensive Water Quality Initiative

*Upstate Forever* announced in May the details of an ambitious and innovative set of strategies for protecting and improving water quality in our region. The \$1.1 million Targeted Watershed Implementation Grant (TWG) project is funded by an \$800,000 award from the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and a \$300,000 match from the V. Kann Rasmussen Foundation. Other partners in the project are the City of Greenville, the County of Greenville, Clemson University, and Furman University. The EPA award is one of only fifteen projects funded nationwide -- and the only one in the Southeast -- in 2008.

The partners will work over a four-year period to design and test strategies for minimizing the impacts of development on our rivers and streams. The project includes three main components: an LID Decision-Making Tool, a Stormwater Banking Program, and a Floodplain Restoration Bank. The driving force behind each of these components is making them *market-based*: taking advantage of the phenomenal growth and economic investment that are predicted for our region, and using funds from these new developments to pay for projects to fix our past mistakes.

### 4. Counties Plan for the Future

2008 saw some real progress toward better planning in the Upstate. Two counties established processes for citizen-initiated zoning, following a model established by Anderson County in 1999. In Greenville, where about half of the county remains unzoned, a text amendment to the zoning code approved in October enables the county planning department to establish "Zoning Referendum Areas" in currently unzoned areas in consultation with residents and property owners. The process involves gaining signatures on a petition and, later on, a public referendum. In Oconee County, which has no zoning whatsoever, the County Council approved a zoning enabling ordinance in November (but delayed implementation until spring), dividing the county into 17 planning districts. Property owners in a district or in a smaller area may petition for zoning. In addition, the ordinance establishes overlay districts for Lakes Keowee and Jocassee as well as the I-85 corridor. In both counties, it remains to be seen whether zoning petition drives will be successful and whether county councils will ultimately choose to approve proposed zonings.

In addition, Spartanburg County spent much of the last year exploring new approaches to zoning and other land use regulations and gaining citizen input. Spartanburg, Greenville, Oconee, Pickens, and Abbeville Counties, along with many municipalities, are currently undergoing (or have recently completed) comprehensive plan reviews or updates. Citizen input to these plans has strongly supported protecting natural resources and managing future growth.

### 5. State Maps Out Climate Change Strategies

In July, the Governor's Climate, Energy and Commerce Advisory Committee (CECAC) released its final report, recommending that by 2020 South Carolina reduce its total greenhouse gas emissions to 5 percent below 1990 levels. The report proposes 51 specific policies to achieve this goal. The CECAC, of which *Upstate Forever's* Executive Director Brad Wyche was a member, included representatives from the energy, manufacturing, agriculture, forestry, tourism and recreation, health care, non-governmental organizations, academia, and state and local government sectors. The report is available at [www.scclimatchange.us/plenarygroup.cfm](http://www.scclimatchange.us/plenarygroup.cfm).

Another publication released last year provides a thorough overview of the issue of climate change in our state and details solutions both individual and collective. “Climate Change in South Carolina” is the product of former *Upstate Forever* intern Colin Hagan’s year-long Compton Mentor Fellowship. View it on the web at [www.scclimatechange.org](http://www.scclimatechange.org).

## 6. Tougher Ozone Standards Approved

In March, US EPA announced tougher standards for ground-level ozone, the primary component of smog. The new primary standard of 75 parts per billion will take effect in 2010, replacing the current standard of 80 ppb. In addition, a new secondary standard of 75 ppb, to protect crops and trees, will be instituted. For more information, see [epa.gov/air/ozonepollution/standards.html](http://epa.gov/air/ozonepollution/standards.html).

While many health advocates feel the new standards don’t go far enough, some local government and industry representatives are concerned about the impact on economic development. We believe, however, that by managing growth in smart and effective ways, the Upstate can meet the new standards without much difficulty and continue to prosper economically. And based on overwhelming scientific evidence about the impacts of ozone on public health and the environment, we must do so.

## 7. Nine Times Property Becomes a Nature Preserve

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 2007, after learning that Crescent Resources, the owner of Nine Times, was planning on putting it on the market, *Upstate Forever* borrowed approximately \$2.7 million to purchase 560 acres of the property and obtained an exclusive two-year option to acquire the remaining 1,700 acres. In the following months, *Upstate Forever*, The Nature Conservancy, and our other partners worked 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!

In September, 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. Now we turn our attention to raising \$7.9 million by October, 2009 in order to exercise the purchase option and protect the remaining 1,700 acres. For more information, see [www.nature.org/wherewework/northamerica/states/southcarolina/press/press3695.html](http://www.nature.org/wherewework/northamerica/states/southcarolina/press/press3695.html).

## 8. Land Trust Achieves Accreditation

In September, after a rigorous two-year application process, *Upstate Forever* became the first land trust in South Carolina and one of only four in the Southeast to be awarded accredited status by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance. The accreditation seal indicates to the public that the organization meets national standards for excellence, upholds the public trust and ensures that its conservation efforts are permanent. For more information, see [www.landtrustaccreditation.org](http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org).

Since 2000, *Upstate Forever’s* land trust program has assisted landowners to permanently protect their properties through conservation agreements. Today, we protect over 10,000 acres of farms, forest, and other significant lands throughout the Upstate. Across the nation, more than 1,700 land trusts have worked with willing landowners to conserve over 37 million acres of critical lands.

## 9. Tree Ordinance Enacted in Greenville

After three years of hard work by many dedicated citizens and elected officials, Greenville County Council voted to approve a tree conservation ordinance in January, 2008. While the final version of the ordinance has a number of deficiencies, it is a good start and hopefully will be strengthened in the near future. The ordinance never would have happened without the active involvement of many *Upstate Forever* members and citizens.

## 10. Strategies Developed for Saving Lake Greenwood

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 Project, a five-year comprehensive assessment of the lake and its entire watershed that was completed in 2007. *Upstate Forever* was honored to be the recipient of the grants and the manager of the project, which included a broad-based coalition of universities, government agencies, nonprofits, and private firms.

In 2008, *Upstate Forever* 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. The report will be available soon on our website.

## The Terrible Ten

Here's some of the bad news from the past year:

- The General Assembly raided all remaining funds in the South Carolina Conservation Bank.
- The General Assembly failed to pass a law requiring permits to withdraw water from our state's rivers, lakes, and streams.
- DHEC failed to put reasonable caps on our state's excessive landfill capacity and to remove a grandfather variance allowing replacement of existing landfills, which will continue to encourage the importation of out-of-state garbage.
- The DHEC Board approved plans for an ill-conceived golf course and questionable wastewater treatment plan at the Cliffs at Mountain Park development along the North Saluda River.
- Greenville and four other US metropolitan areas were left off the EPA's list of cities required to take immediate action to reduce particle pollution in the air, according to the American Lung Association, putting public health in those areas "at considerable risk."
- Spartanburg County failed to update its out-of-compliance stormwater ordinance.
- Greenville County failed to pass an ordinance that required an evaluation of the impact of large developments on traffic.
- Curbside recycling was suspended in Simpsonville and Fountain Inn.
- A proposed interstate highway (I-3) continued to be discussed. It would link Savannah and Knoxville but result in massive increases in traffic, sprawl, and pollution in the Upstate and the Southern Appalachians.
- As unprecedented drought conditions continued, only slightly mitigated by December rains, water conservation efforts were few and far between.

## Upcoming Upstate Forever Events

**Tuesday, February 3**

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

Conservation agreements are one of the most popular and widely used means of protecting natural, scenic, agricultural and historic lands in the United States. Conference attendees will learn what conservation agreements are, how they can be tailored to individual needs, and what tax incentives are available to landowners. Cost is \$100; professional development credits are available for accountants, attorneys, urban planners, financial planners, and foresters. For a conference brochure, visit [www.upstateforever.org/index\\_doc/090203ConservationAgreementsConference.pdf](http://www.upstateforever.org/index_doc/090203ConservationAgreementsConference.pdf). For further information, contact *Upstate Forever* at (864) 250-0500 or [info@upstateforever.org](mailto:info@upstateforever.org).

**Tuesday, February 3**

**High Performance Renovation Training**

**Hub-Bub Showroom, 149 S. Daniel Morgan Ave., Spartanburg, SC, 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.**

This course will teach contractors and homeowners how to apply high-performance construction techniques to renovations and remodeling projects to improve the energy efficiency, indoor air quality and durability of existing houses. Taught by Daniel Harvey, EarthCraft House Renovation Project Manager, the cost is \$100 for *Upstate Forever* members and \$135 for non-members; lunch is included. Continuing education credits may be available. For more information or to register, contact Shelley Robbins at (864) 327-0090 or [srobbins@upstateforever.org](mailto:srobbins@upstateforever.org).

**Wednesday, February 4**

**EarthCraft Course for Builders**

**Greenville, SC 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.**

The Home Builders Association of Greenville and *Upstate Forever* are sponsoring this course for builders. Topics to be covered include how to apply high-performance construction techniques to new homes; how to improve the energy efficiency, indoor air quality and durability of homes; and how to certify a new home as an EarthCraft House. Cost is \$110 for HBA members and \$115 for nonmembers; lunch is included. For a registration form or more information, visit [www.hbaofgreenville.com/pdfs/FEBEarthCraft.pdf](http://www.hbaofgreenville.com/pdfs/FEBEarthCraft.pdf) or call (864) 254-0133.

**Thursdays, February 5, 12, 19, 26**

**Flicks for Thought Film Series**

**Upstate History Museum, Greenville, SC, 5:30 p.m.**

*Upstate Forever*, the Upcountry History Museum, and Greenville Organic Foods Organization present "Flicks for Thought," a series of agricultural and environmental films. Sponsored by Whole Foods Market, a reception with light refreshments will precede each screening. The scheduled films are *King Corn* (February 5), *A Crude Awakening: The Oil Crash* (February 12), *The Real Dirt on Farmer John* (February 19), and *Renewal* (February 26). Admission is \$5. For more information, contact Kirbie Crowe at [kcrowe@upstateforever.org](mailto:kcrowe@upstateforever.org) or (864) 250-0500x21.

**Friday, March 6**

**Transfer of Development Rights**

**Stephenson Dining Hall, Limestone College, Gaffney, SC, 7:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.**

**Afternoon workshop in Spartanburg area TBA**

Tyson Smith, a lawyer and planner with White & Smith, LLC, will discuss transfer of development rights (TDR), a market-based tool communities can implement to direct growth to desired areas while protecting important lands and resources. This talk is sponsored by *Upstate Forever* and the Cherokee County Chamber of Commerce; a light breakfast will be served. In the afternoon, Mr. Smith will conduct a TDR workshop in the Spartanburg area for elected and appointed officials, planning staff, and other interested citizens. For more information, contact [spartanburg@upstateforever.org](mailto:spartanburg@upstateforever.org), or call (864) 327-0090.

# Upstate Update

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Thursday, March 26

3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Art and Conservation Celebration

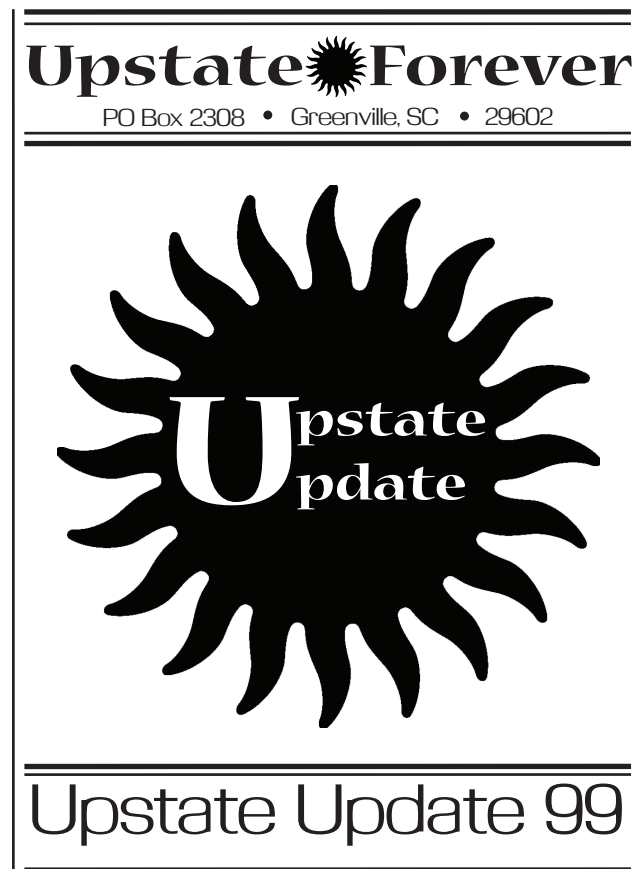
Saffron's Sidewalk Cafe, Greenville, SC, 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Join us as we once again celebrate the beauty of the natural world through exquisite works by regional artists. Working in a variety of media, over 40 artists will submit a variety of pieces that showcase nature and the incredible area in which we live. Saffron's Sidewalk Cafe will provide delicious food and beverages. Art sales will be by silent auction, so come prepared to bid! Tickets are \$50 per person; for advance purchase, contact Gretchen Wilson at (864) 250-0500 or [gwilson@upstateforever.org](mailto:gwilson@upstateforever.org).

### Quote of the Year

"When you look at the difference in these two growth scenarios, the initial cost of providing services to that big an area is enormous. People just aren't thinking about that, I think because this kind of growth is so incremental, it happens one lot, one subdivision at a time. Before you know it, it's upon you. We see what's happening in Atlanta: They're out of water. That's going to be our future if we don't change our practices now. You have to have growth, but you have to do it in a way where you don't destroy yourself."

-- Dr. Jeffrey Allen, lead researcher on the Strom Thurmond Institute study forecasting growth in the Upstate through 2030, quoted in the *Greenwood index-Journal*, 2/14/08



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