

Upstate Update

NUMBER 47
SEPTEMBER
2 0 0 3

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

This Update Update discusses:

- 1) The vote by the full House to restore the Transportation Enhancements program.
- 2) The introduction and withdrawal of the bill that would transfer all federally owned lands along Lakes Hartwell, Russell and Thurmond to the counties.
- 3) The proposed gold mining operation in Oconee County that Upstate Forever and many others are strongly opposing.
- 4) The wonderful report from the Greenville County Vision 2025's Parks and Open Space committee.
- 5) The certification of Furman University's Hipp Hall as the first "green building" in South Carolina.
- 6) Another award received by the City of Greenville for its downtown revitalization program.
- 7) Upcoming area events.
- 8) Lots o' Links.

1. Full House Restores Transportation Enhancements Program!

The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991, popularly known as "ISTEA," was a monumental achievement for those who believe that our nation's transportation policy needs to be about more than building and widening roads. ISTEA required that ten per cent of Surface Transportation Program funds be dedicated to "transportation enhancements," such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities, "rail-to-trail" programs, highway beautification, historic preservation and environmental mitigation of highway impacts.

In 1998, the federal highway program was reauthorized through passage of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, known as "TEA-21." The ten per cent set aside was continued, and overall funding levels were substantially increased.

Since 1991, thousands of communities have used Transportation Enhancement Funds to build nearly 16,000 projects throughout the country. In the Upstate, these projects include sidewalks on Main Street in Fountain Inn, bicycle lanes on Perimeter Road in Clemson, and highway beautification projects in Landrum, Inman and Campobello.

This year, as Congress began to consider reauthorizing the federal transportation law, it was widely assumed that the Transportation Enhancements program would remain in effect. So what a shock it was when the House Appropriations Committee voted on July 24 to end the entire program!

Promoting sensible growth and protecting special places in the Upstate

Supporters of the program quickly launched a national campaign to reverse the Committee's action. The hard work paid off on September 4 when the full House restored the program by the overwhelming vote of 327 to 90. Regrettably, our Upstate representatives—Jim DeMint and Gresham Barrett—were among the 90. All of the votes may be found at <http://clerkweb.house.gov/cgi-bin/vote.exe?year=2003&rollnumber=469>.

For more information, see www.tea3.org.

2. *Bill That Would Transfer All Federal Lands Along Lakes Hartwell, Thurmond and Russell To the Counties Is Introduced And Then Withdrawn.*

Representatives Charlie Norwood of Georgia and Gresham Barrett of South Carolina perhaps should have heeded the old adage, "Think Before You Act," before introducing in Congress a bill called "the Savannah River Lakes Private Lands Ownership Restoration Act." The bill, which contains less than 300 words, would transfer to the counties over 100,000 acres of land that the United States Corps of Engineers now owns and controls along Lakes Hartwell, Thurmond and Russell.

These "buffer lands" extend far beyond the lakes and have been carefully managed and protected by the Corps for years. No homes or other structures are allowed in the buffer area; permits must be obtained for docks; and removal of trees and vegetation is tightly regulated. The management program, while not perfect, has generally worked well, providing important protection to the water quality of the lakes.

Representatives Norwood and Barrett should not be surprised at the public outcry to their bill. Lakefront landowners spent many sleepless nights wondering if they would end up on "the second row" as the counties begin selling off the buffer land to developers. *Upstate Forever* and other conservation groups expressed their dismay at the water quality impacts of putting houses, asphalt and septic tanks in the buffer area. According to a representative from the Corps, the bill would result in the invalidation of the thousands of dock permits that the agency has issued. What would happen to the recreation facilities now owned and managed by the Corps?

In response to the public outcry, Representatives Norwood and Barrett recently withdrew the bill but said they would continue to evaluate the issues. To stay up to date on this, contact the Lake Hartwell Association at mail@lakehartwellassociation.org.

3. *Upstate Forever Speaks Out Against Proposed Gold Mining Operation in Oconee County.*

Upstate Forever has joined many citizens in expressing strong opposition to a proposed gold mining operation in Oconee County. The Lost Dutchman's Mining

Association (LDMA) has applied to the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) for a permit to conduct recreational gold mining operations in and along Crane's Creek (also known as Knox Creek) in Oconee County. The 120-acre site is bordered on three sides by the Andrew Pickens District, part of the Sumter National Forest and one of the most beautiful and biologically diverse areas in the Southeast.

Crane's Creek is a small stream that has the potential to be restored for trout habitat. Partners for Trout, a broad-based coalition of advocates for protecting and expanding trout waters in South Carolina, is keenly interested in undertaking a restoration project on the stream. Obviously, such a project would have no chance of success with a gold mining operation underway.

LDMA's business is based on the concept of a "mining rally," where hundreds of its members come to a site, stay for long periods of time, and search for gold with picks, pumps, suction dredges and other equipment. The rallies are held at sites where people can stay for up to six months at a time, and many of them have all "the comforts of home," including clubhouses, sanitary facilities, RV hookups, and dump stations.

It is not difficult to understand the impact of this kind of intensive, long-term and uncontrolled use of a site. Day after day, week after week, month after month, LDMA members will be in the stream, damaging its bed and banks and dredging out its sediment, and using heavy equipment to build "high-banking" pits near the stream.

Even LDMA concedes that there is no economically viable deposit of gold at the site. Indeed, a mineralogical assessment of sediments in the stream by its own consultant found no evidence of any gold, while limited dredging previously allowed by DHEC turned up only a few scattered flakes. Why destroy a stream for such a miniscule reward?

This is not the typical situation where a permit is issued to a mining operator with a limited number of trained and supervised employees or contractors who carry out the operation and can be held accountable for problems or violations. Rather, LDMA's "mining rallies" involve hundreds of people whose activities and impacts cannot possibly be controlled unless a team of DHEC inspectors is on the scene at all times—an obvious impossibility.

The South Carolina Mining Act gives DHEC the authority to deny a mining permit that would cause an "undue adverse impact" on natural resources or publicly owned lands. We hope DHEC exercises this authority and denies the permit.

4. Greenville Vision 2025 Project - Recommendations from the Parks and Open Space Committee.

We would like to share with you the wonderful set of recommendations from the Parks and Open Space Committee of the Greenville Vision 2025 program:

“Vision Statement

In 2025, Greenville County is a place where parks, greenways, open spaces and environmentally significant lands and resources are in abundance, are protected, provide a wide variety of recreational opportunities, receive adequate financial support, and enhance the quality of life for all residents of the county.

Goals

- 1) By 2025, at least 15 per cent (76,500 acres) of the total land area in Greenville County will be devoted to parks, greenways, and open spaces for use and enjoyment by the general public. These parks, greenways, and open spaces shall be distributed throughout the county and shall provide a wide variety of opportunities, ranging from natural, undisturbed areas to active recreation facilities. In addition, by 2025, at least 10 per cent (51,000 acres) of the county’s total land area will be preserved voluntarily through conservation easements and other methods.

	Public Parks, Greenways, and Open Spaces	Open Spaces Protected by Conservation Easements (Public & Private)
Current	17,000	24,000
Needed	59,500	27,500
Total by 2025	76,500	51,000

- 2) By 2015, the standards set forth in the Greenville County Parks and Recreation Master Plan and in the master plans for the municipalities in the county will be achieved.

Objectives:

- 80% of the county’s population is within a safe 10-minute bicycle ride of a public park.
- The Reedy, Saluda, Tyger and Enoree River Greenway Systems of parks, multi-use trails and public open spaces have been completed.

- There is an ample supply of urban green space, such as “pocket parks.”
 - Greenways for walking and bicycling have been built along many major highway, railroad and utility corridors.
 - Abandoned commercial and industrial properties are frequently re-used for parks and public spaces, and there is an ongoing identification and re-use of abandoned rock quarries and other suitable land for regional retention ponds for stormwater and recreational use.
 - All public education campuses are public parks, and many also serve as community centers, public libraries, police substations, dining sites for senior citizens, and sites for public forums and meetings, and when appropriate, parking facilities are shared.
 - More national and state scenic highways are designated in Greenville County and are protected and maintained to perpetuate their scenic value and attraction to tourists.
- 3) The county, municipalities and the private sector provide sufficient funding for the maintenance, improvement and redevelopment of existing parks, greenways and open spaces and for the acquisition and development of lands for such uses in the future.

Objectives:

- Many funding sources are available, such as bonds (general and revenue), impact fees, user fees, accommodations taxes, real estate transfer fees, and referendum-approved sales taxes.
 - South Carolina taxpayers are able to designate contributions for parks on their state income tax returns.
 - There is strong corporate support of parks through donations, volunteer hours, and special fundraising promotions.
 - There is an ongoing effort to encourage private gifts of property for parks and conservation.
- 4) Both incentives and regulations are used to create parks, greenways, and open spaces in Greenville County.

Objectives:

- Protect and conserve important open spaces and environmentally significant lands and resources throughout the county by a variety of methods, such as Purchase of Development Rights programs and Transfer of Development Rights programs.
 - Provide incentives to encourage developers to create parks, greenways and open spaces and to preserve environmentally significant lands and resources.
- 5) One agency will have overall responsibility for public parks, greenways and open spaces throughout Greenville County.
- 6) There is strong public support for parks, greenways, open spaces and environmentally significant lands and resources in Greenville County, and local officials and the public recognize the positive impact these places have on economic development, public wellness, increased property values, tourism, and quality of life.

Objectives:

- There is an ongoing and concerted effort to educate the news media, community leaders, politicians, developers, civic groups, utilities and the general public about the value and importance of public parks, greenways, open spaces and environmentally significant lands and resources in Greenville County.”

Later this year the Vision 2025 Steering Committee and the public will consider the recommendations. What an inspiring plan to keep the “Green in Greenville”—and the rest of the Upstate!

5. *City of Greenville Wins Another Pedestrian Award!*

In Upstate Update Number 44, we reported that the City of Greenville had earned the 2003 Great American Streets Award from the National Trust for Historic Preservation for its outstanding Main Street revitalization. The City has done it again, recently winning the City at Your Feet Award from the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals. The award, one of the Association’s four 2003 Pedestrian Advocates Honor Awards, was given to the City for its work to improve walking conditions through downtown revitalization, neighborhood sidewalk improvements, and neighborhood traffic management.

Greenville was the only city to win an award. The pedestrian advocacy group Walk San Francisco was given the Best Foot Forward Award, and two other awards went to individuals for their work to promote pedestrian safety and accessibility.

Kudos to Greenville's leaders and staff who have worked so hard to make the city a safer and more pleasant place for children and adults to walk and enjoy being outside!

6. *Furman University's Hipp Hall Is South Carolina's First LEED-Certified Building.*

The new Herman N. Hipp Hall at Furman University has become the first building in South Carolina to be certified under the U. S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program. LEED buildings must meet a number of design and construction criteria related to site-planning, water and energy efficiency, indoor air quality, and the use of environmentally sensitive materials. The Council assigns qualifying buildings one of four levels - certified, silver, gold, and platinum - based on the number of "green" features they include. Hipp Hall is one of only two buildings in the southeast to receive the gold rating.

Designed by the Greenville firm Craig, Gauden & Davis, and built by Triangle Construction, the 38,000 square-foot Hipp Hall opened in the summer of 2002 and features a three-story day lit lobby and several energy-saving features, including a radiant energy barrier on the roof, carbon dioxide monitors that help regulate outside air circulation based on building occupancy, and sensors that switch off the lights when rooms are not in use. Indoor air quality is enhanced through the use of low emitting paints, carpets, wood stains, caulks, and adhesives.

While green technologies may cost more than their traditional counterparts, they more than pay for themselves through reduced energy bills. Furman's construction manager estimates that Hipp Hall will save the university \$15,000 in energy costs every year.

Cost is not the only consideration. Hipp Hall is one of the increasing number of green buildings in the United States that "do not poison the air with fumes nor the soul with artificiality. Instead, they create delight when entered, serenity and health when occupied, and regret when departed." A. Lovins, H. Lovins and Hawken, *Natural Capitalism* (1999), p. 110. Congratulations to Furman University for its initiative and leadership in this important area!

7. Upcoming Events.

Upstate Forever Events

Haynie-Sirrine Neighborhood Cleanup - October 18, Greenville. *Upstate Forever* is partnering with the Haynie-Sirrine Neighborhood Association, First Baptist Church, and the City of Greenville to help clean up the streets and streams in this urban neighborhood.

South Carolina Low-Impact Development Conference - October 22-23, Columbia. Developers, local governments, water resource professionals, land use planners, stormwater managers and many others are faced with tough water quality and quantity management decisions. Low-impact development combines a hydrologically functional site design with pollution prevention measures to compensate for land development impacts on hydrology and water quality. Co-sponsored by *Upstate Forever*. <http://www.sc.edu/sustainableu/LID1003Conf.htm>

Upstate Forever Field Trips

Exploring Nature in Spartanburg County - October 13. Guided tours of Peter's Creek Nature Preserve and Hatcher Gardens and Woodland Preserve. Dr. Gill Newberry of USC-Spartanburg will serve as our guide at Peter's Creek Preserve. Space is limited - call for reservations. Cost: \$20 per person. *For Upstate Forever Members.*

Upstate Forever's Annual Meeting - November 8. Mark your calendars now and plan to join us at Spartanburg County's historic Walnut Grove Plantation. Lunch will be served. *For Upstate Forever members.*

Other Events

Upcountry Folklife Festival and Old Time Fiddlin' Convention - September 20, Historic Hagood Grist Mill, Pickens County. This wonderful celebration of music, food, traditional arts and living history begins at 10:00 a.m. and continues all day. Entertainment will feature Ol' Time Music Contests for banjo, guitar and more, a Battle of the Old Time Bands, an Old Time Clogging Contest, and the "2003 Fiddler of the Mill" competition. For more information contact the Pickens County Museum by phone at (864) 898-5963 or by email at pictmus@co.pickens.sc.us

Building for Greener Communities - September 29-October 1, Nebraska City, Nebraska. Presented by the National Arbor Day Foundation, the National Association of Home Builders, and Firewise Communities. Bringing a greener approach to the planning and management of our communities is the focus of this conference. <http://arborday.org/programs/conferences/greenercommunities/>

Walk Your Child to School Day - October 8, Greenville County. Organized by Greenville SAFE KIDS with support from the Greenville County School District, local fire departments and law enforcement, this event promotes a safe walking environment for students. Over 20 Greenville County elementary schools have signed up to participate. Contact your child's school to find out if it is one of them. If you would like to learn more about WALK YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL DAY, please contact Kathy Harper at Greenville SAFE KIDS by calling (864) 454-1108.

Walkin' Jim Stoltz - October 18, Technical Resource Center Auditorium at Greenville Tech. Presented by the Sierra Club. A stirring journey in song, slides, stories and poetry across the wide open spaces and through the windows of time with a man who has walked over 23,000 miles through North American wildlands. Admission \$10.00 in advance, \$12.00 at the door. To purchase tickets call (864) 836-4039 or send an e-mail to <http://www.southcarolina.sierraclub.org/williambartram/>.

"Working With Our Partners: Moving Forward Step-by-Step," South Carolina Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodation Conference - October 26-28, Hyatt Hotel, Greenville, SC. Second annual statewide conference on improving bicycle and pedestrian accommodations. Presented by the S.C. Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration. Registration fee \$95.00. For more information or to download the agenda and a registration form, visit http://www.scdot.org/Events/BikePed_default.html

8. Lots o' Links.

Study Proves Direct Link Between Sprawl and Public Health. According to a study recently released by the American Journal of Health Promotion, people who live in sprawling, automobile-dependent neighborhoods walk less, weigh more, and have higher blood pressure. Among other points, the study found that people who live in the least sprawling areas had a 29 per cent lower risk of developing high blood pressure than those in the most sprawling areas. To read a report that summarizes the results of the study and recommends steps that communities can take to address the problem, visit <http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/healthreport.html>

A Tale of Two (River) Cities. St. Louis and Portland are renewing their connections with the rivers that made the cities important. http://www.oregonlive.com/news/oregonian/david_sarasohn/index.ssf?/base/editorial/1062850181101350.xml

Rethinking Parking Requirements. Suggestions from Livable Places to reduce amount of land dedicated to parking. <http://www.livableplaces.org/policy/parking.html>

How Bikeable is Your Community? Take this quiz from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and rate your neighborhood's bikeability. <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/pedbimot/bike/Bikeability/checklist.htm>

Is U.S. Wildfire Policy a “Smoke Screen”? Is President Bush’s “Healthy Forests” initiative a sound environmental strategy or a “smoke screen” for the logging industry? A national expert comments. http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2003/08/0814_030815_forestfires.html

City of Atlanta Growing along with Suburbs. Ending a decades-long trend of suburban flight, residents are moving to the city of Atlanta in droves. <http://www.ajc.com/metro/content/metro/0803/15atlgrows.html>

China Goes Car Crazy. Suburbs, drive-ins and car washes: How the car is changing China. <http://www.fortune.com/fortune/articles/0,15114,474472,00.html>

In Defense of Strip Developments. According to the Thoreau Institute, being anti-strip mall is both anti-consumer and anti-business. <http://ti.org/vaupdate42.html>

9. *Quote of the Month.*

“If you don’t build it, they will come anyway.”

Dr. Robert E. Lang
Director, The Metropolitan Institute
Title of Keynote Speech
Affordable Housing Conference presented by
Upstate Forever and the Home Builders Association
of Greenville
September 16, 2003