

CONSERVATION



The Newsletter of
The Upper Savannah Land Trust

IN THE LAKELANDS

COVERING ABBEVILLE, EDGEFIELD, GREENWOOD, LAURENS, McCORMICK, NEWBERRY & SALUDA COUNTIES ► SPRING 2007

USLT Conserves More Than 4000 Acres

Upper Savannah Land Trust is a non-governmental public charity, also known as a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Since it was organized in 2000, it has received grants for several projects, partnered with other organizations on various conservation efforts, and

Annual Meeting Slated for Eichelberger Farm

The sixth annual meeting of the USLT will be held at Eichacre Annex, 2719 Ninety Six Highway, Tuesday, May 1, at 5:00 p.m.

The Eichelberger farm is two miles from the Ninety Six traffic light and 5.5 miles from the start of Highway 34 in Greenwood at Highway 25 South. Look for the meeting sign and horses on the north side of Highway 34 (Ninety Six Highway).

USLT members are urged to attend and bring a friend to this informative meeting and barbecue to celebrate the best year yet for the USLT. Call (864) 223-7804 for more information.

participated in educational programs open to landowners and professionals.

However, **land protection** is at the core of what we do as a land trust. Our mission is to encourage and support conservation of natural and scenic lands, farms, forests, waterways, and open spaces in our area.

Following are the acreages protected in six of the seven counties in which we operate plus parcels outside of our normal area:

ABBEVILLE	138
ANDERSON	800
GREENWOOD	1,882
LAURENS	898
McCORMICK	7
NEWBERRY	218
SALUDA	126
TOTAL	4,069

Anyone wishing to have more information on donating conservation easements should contact a board member or call (864) 223-7804.

UPPER SAVANNAH LAND TRUST

The mission of the Upper Savannah Land Trust is to encourage and support conservation of natural and scenic lands, farms, forests, waterways, and open spaces in our seven-country area: **Abbeville, Edgefield, Greenwood, Laurens, McCormick, Newberry, and Saluda** Counties.

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**Conservation
in the Lakelands**
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UPPER SAVANNAH



Land Trust

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From the President's Desk . . .

Congress recently passed legislation that gives tremendous benefits to landowners wishing to donate conservation easements that protect farms, forestland, wildlife habitat, and open space. BUT these additional incentives are only available for easements donated in 2006 and 2007.

If you are considering a conservation easement, you may want to act now. Under the new law, conservation donors can deduct up to 50 percent of their adjusted gross income (the previous limit was 30 percent).

If most of their income is from farming, ranching, or forestry, they can deduct all of their income. Also, if the value of the donation exceeds these limits in the year of the gift, they

can "carry forward" the deduction for up to 15 years (the prior law allowed only 5 years).

Donors also benefit from state tax credits and estate tax reduction and exclusion. S-corporations can now also take advantage of tax credits from donations of conservation easements.

An easement typically restricts development of the land, though it is not unusual for the landowner to reserve the right to build a limited number of single-family residences. Easements provide for continued private enjoyment and productive use of the land by the owner as well as those who inherit or buy the land later.

Roy



Equine activities on the Burns easement property

2006 Was a Banner Conservation Year for the USLT

The Upper Savannah Land Trust made significant conservation gains in 2006. Four voluntary conservation easement in four different counties were accepted by the organization from individual land-owners.

The owners were interested in protecting their private lands while also assisting the land trust's mission of encouraging and supporting protection of our natural resources. Each easement is different, as each was negotiated according to the particular needs and desires of the owners of the property.

Watershed Protection

The easement in Anderson County includes 38 acres within five miles of busy I-85. It contains the natural spring headwaters of Three and Twenty Creek, with a watershed that is one of the largest wetland basins in the Upstate. Protecting this habitat will help counteract strong growth pressures in the area that are eliminating wildlife and degrading water quality. A cemetery is also located on the property with headstones dated from 1843. **Spenser** and **Laurie Leavitt**, the owners, enjoy sharing with others their favorite outdoor activities such as hunting and horseback riding.

Ecological Significance

Mallard Bend, owned by **Mallard Bend, LLC**, donated a conservation easement on 126 acres located on US Hwy 378 in Saluda County. The property protects land of vital ecological quality, as it contains over two miles of frontage on the Little Saluda River and Richland Creek, major water courses of the Piedmont. The confluence of these waters creates an important and sustainable habitat for much wildlife and many types of flora, including some "species of concern." The owners use the land for hunting, fishing, and paddling.

Farm & Wildlife Conservation

One of the largest easements held by the land trust came late in the year from landowners **Russ** and **Judy Burns** in northern Laurens County, with frontage on I-385. Foxbrier Farm is a working cattle and horse ranch of approximately 857 acres, part of a 1772 land grant from the king of England to Peter Porcher of Charleston. It encompasses the headwaters of Little River and includes seven lakes and seven watering ponds. The land has a 15-mile trail system

for hiking, birding, nature study, and equine activities. Some areas are also managed as a wildlife refuge with habitat for upland game, waterfowl, and songbirds. The 9200 feet of public road frontage adds to the scenic value of this agreement.

Value Added by Linkage

L. B. Adams Jr. donated his third conservation easement to the land trust. Oregon Farms, near Ninety Six on Little Mountain Road, includes mature stands of mixed hardwoods on a unique remote hillside in a developed area. This tract of 495 acres is particularly valuable in that it joins part of a similar area already under easement protection—the 425 acre Eichelberger property. The two properties combine to provide a remarkable block of 920 protected acres. Oregon Farms includes a 140 foot bluff that drops to a large creek bottom along big rock creek. Protection of this creek and the Wilson Creek watershed will improve drinking and recreational water quality in the area..



"A landowner can use the easement to reflect his or her future desires for the property, and thereby insure that the property is protected . . . forever."

Conservation News Briefs

USLT Joins Outreach

The Upper Savannah Land Trust and Upstate Forever have formed a joint outreach program to encourage donation of conservation easements in Laurens County. Peggy and "B" Adams, Russ and Judy Burns, and Patrick Morgan represent the USLT on the com-

mittee while Dianne and Chad Culbertson, Dana Leavitt, and Mary Hayes Huguley serve from Upstate Forever.

The group provides information and guidance to Laurens County landowners who might be interested in conserving the resources and values of their properties.

New Easements Pending

At least five new conservation easements have been proposed to the USLT Board for approval in 2007. When the details of the easements have been roughed out, the Board will take action.

We Need Your Support

Upper Savannah Land Trust is a 501 (c)(3) membership organization. It is dedicated to protecting the natural beauty and integrity of our area. **You can become a partner in this effort by joining the Upper Savannah in one of the following categories:**

\$25.00 – Individual	\$50.00 – Family	\$100.00 – Supporter
\$250.00 – Business	\$500.00 – Founding Partner	\$1,000.00 – Founding Sponsor

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