

CONSERVATION



The Newsletter of
The Upper Savannah Land Trust

IN THE LAKELANDS

SERVING EIGHT COUNTIES IN THE WESTERN PIEDMONT OF SOUTH CARO-

► SPRING 2009

USLT Easements Top 7,300 Acre Mark

With the addition of over 1,400 acres conserved with easements in 2008, the Upper Savannah Land Trust now holds 7,319 acres in trust.

This represents amazing growth for an organization that was only incorporated in October of 2000 and which accepted its first easement as a 33 acre tract.

Three easements in three different counties accounted for the 1,413 acres protected in 2008:

- White Tail Hollow is over 147 acres of beautiful hardwood and pine forest along highway 378 in Saluda County.
- The RDCC conservation easement covers 41 acres that will

protect open space in an urban area on the boundary of the city of Greenwood.

- Located on County Line Road in Laurens County, Wildcat Plantation features 1,226 acres that protect part of the Lake Greenwood watershed.

Since its inception, the non-profit, all volunteer Trust has found widespread acceptance among landowners in its eight county service area and now holds 30 easements.

Each easement represents donors with a deep commitment to protecting the natural environment that has made our part of the piedmont a special place to live.

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 eight-county area:

Abbeville, Anderson, Edgefield, Greenwood, Laurens, McCormick, Newberry, and Saluda Counties.

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County	Easements	Acres Conserved
Abbeville	1	138
Anderson	2	800
Edgefield	1	753
Greenwood	11	2,266
Laurens	4	2,122
McCormick	1	7
Newberry	6	762
Saluda	4	471

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in the Lakelands**
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UPPER SAVANNAH



Land Trust

**P. O. Box 918
Greenwood, SC 29648**

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Wallace Wood, Vice-President
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From the President's Desk . . .

Interest in land conservation has increased greatly in recent years. This is due partly to greater public awareness as local people have watched the rapid development that is now spreading across the southeast.

As a result, many landowners have begun thinking about what they want to happen to their land in the future. Many of them have grown up enjoying nature and the outdoors, and want others in the future to have that same opportunity. They have discovered that a conservation easement makes this possible.

Upper Savannah Land Trust works with landowners to help them develop an agreement that best suits their individual needs while assuring them that their land will never be developed.

Adding to the increased interest in land conservation are the federal tax benefits for donating property that are set to expire in December, 2009. These benefits include a 15-year write-off of up to 100 percent of the donors adjusted gross income. According to the Land Trust Alliance, these benefits and the looming deadline is driving a preservation boom.

Ken Driggers, an attorney who negotiates property deals for land trusts in S.C., agrees by saying that he is busier now at this time of year than he has ever been. For those who are contemplating a conservation easement for their property, the time for action has never been better.

Roy

FAQs on the Value of Conservation Easements

Do I give up my ownership when I grant an easement?

No, you continue to own and use your land normally. You only give up certain rights, such as development rights.

Why should I give up these rights?

The easement can become a valuable estate planning tool. Tax reductions can be substantial in Federal, estate, property, and state taxes. Further, an easement assures the landowner's wishes for the property will continue for all time.

Will the public have access to my property if I give an easement?

Generally, no. Details will be worked out in your easement document.

How do I know if my property qualifies?

Get in touch with a non-profit land trust organization like the Upper Savannah Land Trust for an evaluation of your property.

An easement is a contract that conserves properties of special value.

USLT ANNUAL MEETING SET FOR MAY 5

Meeting at The Territories Saluda River Plantation

The USLT annual meeting will be held May 5 at 5:00 p.m. in the Outfitters Cabin at The Territories Saluda River Plantation off Highway 34 one mile from the Saluda River.

Tim Burke, Executive V P for development of Grand Harbor and The Territories, will present a program showcasing some of the wonderful property and habitat that is being protected by The Territories. A meal will be served by The Hash House of Troy, South Carolina.

From Greenwood, take highway 34 through Ninety Six towards Chappells. After the intersection of Hwy 34 and SC 702, stay on Hwy 34 for 1.5 miles and cross the bridge over the Saluda River. The entrance is less than one mile. Look for the sign on the right.

From Chappells, take Hwy 34 towards Ninety Six for about 3 miles. The entrance will be on the left. If you cross the bridge you have gone too far.



The Nature Center is the first building inside the gate where you will be welcomed and given directions to the Outfitters Cabin.

USLT members should bring guests.

Snapshots from Last Year's Annual Meeting



The Nature Conservancy's Matt Nespeca discussing his agency's joint ventures in conserving special places.

USLT Board members Patrick, Hugh, and Jimmy solving the world's problems on the back deck during the social hour.



Members and guests digging into barbecue and fixings following the annual meeting at Eichacres Farm.

Conservation News Briefs

Upstate Forever, a fellow land trust organization with which the USLT shares responsibility in the upstate, has announced that its five-year study of the Lake Greenwood/Saluda River watershed has led to the designation of the Saluda as America's 6th Most Endangered River for 2009.

This Endangered River announcement coincided with the

launch of **Upstate Forever's** Saving Lake Greenwood campaign.

The Saving Lake Greenwood report is the result of five years of intensive research by the Saluda-Reedy River Watershed Consortium (SRWC), a broad-based coalition headed by **Upstate Forever** that includes universities, natural resource agencies, private businesses, and other conservation organizations.

The research from the SRWC identified two primary threats to the long-term health of Lake Greenwood: sediment from upstream development and phosphorus from wastewater discharges. Together the pollutants can lead to substantial algae growth in Lake Greenwood which can result in reductions of property values around the lake and significant fish kills in the lake.

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 Land Trust 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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