



CONSERVATION IN THE LAKELANDS

SERVING EIGHT COUNTIES IN THE WESTERN PIEDMONT OF SOUTH CAROLINA

► SPRING 2017

Accreditation! Is it Worth it?

By Wallace Wood
Executive Director

I woke up at night asking that question when we were in the valley of revising and creating documents, revising and creating policy, retrieving emails and letters to prove how we conducted business, searching easement transactions, tax forms and financial reviews. And the list goes on for all of the things we had to do for our accreditation application.

After our board and I have spent hundreds of hours preparing our application which filled a three-inch binder notebook, I can say Yes! But there were many times when I doubted our decision. This has been a daunting task, and along with us, you may ask why we are seeking accreditation.

Our board adopted the Land Trust Standards and Practices, and we evaluated our organization by them. They were created to make sure land trusts are prepared to protect their conservation easements in perpetuity and to conduct business in accordance with rules for non-profit organizations and the Internal Revenue Service.

Applying for accreditation has helped our board learn more about themselves, discovering our strengths and weaknesses. We have accomplished much with a small budget by helping conserve 42,105 acres of working farms and forests, open spaces, and special places and have protected water and wildlife resources which is a major strength.

With our tremendous success comes tremendous responsibility for making sure our properties are protected according to



USLT's administrative team is shown with the Accreditation Application. Seated, from left, are Executive Director Wallace Wood and President Rossie Corwon; standing from left are Treasurer Andy Robinson and Secretary Rick Green. Not pictured is Vice President Hamp Warner.

the terms of their easements forever. We need the financial and procedural resources to accomplish this. It will take more money to conduct our business and to protect our easement properties than was anticipated. The Land Trust Alliance has monetary standards for maintaining easements, and we must meet these. This has brought a new challenge for our board and USLT family.

We must find a dependable revenue stream to keep our organization running in the times when we may not be getting new easements, the times when we are just fulfilling our obligations with existing easements.

Accreditation continued on page 4

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.

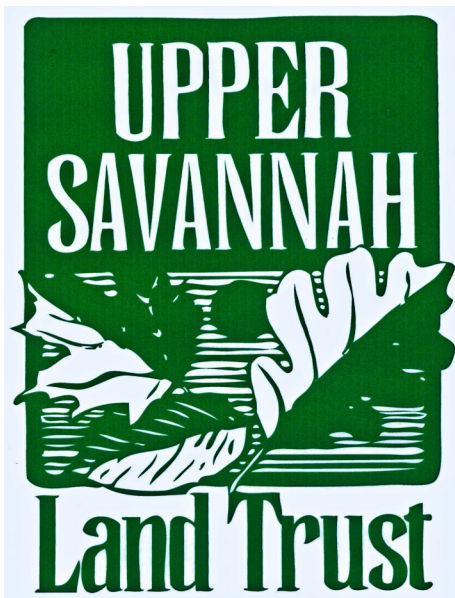
The Upper Savannah Land Trust is a 501 (c) (3) membership organization. Contributions are tax deductible.

Inside this issue:

President's Desk	2
Board Membership	2
Annual Report	3
Easement workshop	3
Donor Listing	5
In case of ownership change	6

**Conservation
in the Lakelands**

Volume 11, Issue 1



**430 Helix Road
Greenwood, SC 29646**

USLT Officers and Board 2017-18

Executive Director
Wallace Wood

Officers

Rossie Corwon, President
Hamp Warner, Vice-President
Rick Green, Secretary
Andy Robinson, Treasurer

Board Members

Doug Bell
Alvin Feltman
Bryan Green
Sandy Gresham
Patrick Griswold
Will Hodges
Lanny Miller
John Patrick
J. William Rogers, II
Jimmy Sanders
Brad Thompson, Sr.
Stan Todd
Frank Wideman

From the President's Desk . . .

Dear Members,

Today, as I write this letter, I am thankful, proud, and nostalgic.

I am thankful for our Executive Director, Wallace Wood, for his leadership and effort in pursuing accreditation. I am thankful for our Board members who spent freely of their time and talents in completing the accreditation process while managing the business of the Land Trust. I am thankful for our members who support the efforts of the Land Trust. And I am especially thankful for the longstanding support of Mr. Emmett Davis, Jr.

Recent headlines noted that, by Presidential Order, 27 National Monuments are to be released back to the states in which they reside, and will no longer be federally protected land. This is a complex issue with arguments to be made on both sides; however, I am proud that Land Trusts across this country stand as a permanent solution for conservation and protection of special places.

And finally, I want to share writings of Ken Burger, from his collection of articles

called "Baptized in Sweet Tea." He wrote, "There is no sound as Southern as a screen door slamming behind a little boy on his way out into the world of wonder. There is no pretension in a screen door. It just has a welcoming way about it. Just the sound of them swinging open and shut brings back memories of a time when we knew when our neighbors pulled into their driveway, when the milkman came by in the early morning, how often the town sprayed for mosquitoes, if the ice cream truck was coming, when it was raining, and if the kids were still playing in the sprinkler in the back yard."

Looking back with nostalgia on our Land Trust's humble beginnings, we can remember the simpler times and be proud of our success. However, with growth comes more responsibility and complexity. We can now look to the future with confidence that we will be good stewards of the easements entrusted to our care. Accreditation is a giant step in that direction.

Sincerely,
Rossie Corwon



Brad Thompson, Sr., right, is presented the 2017 Peggy Adams Conservation Award by USLT Vice President Hamp Warner. Brad is a long-time board member of USLT and has made many contributions to the organization. He serves as chairman of the Easement Review Committee, serves on the Easement Monitoring Committee and his company Thompson Forest Consultants donates mapping services. Brad has recruited many of our easement donors. Congratulations on the well deserved honor.

Visit us at our web site:
www.scuslt.com

Or follow us on Facebook at
www.facebook.com/scuslt



2016 Upper Savannah Land Trust conservation easement donors., from left, are Stan and Mary Todd, Dr. J. B. Thomas, Hamp Warner, Dr. Matthew Bachinski, Dr. Bill Warner, Frank Holleman, Aremena Ellis, Mark Kiser, Millen Ellis and Brad Thompson. Not pictured: Cate Townsend, Sandra Thomas, and Bal and Kit Ballentine.

Membership Donors Supporting USLT Conservation Efforts in 2016

Membership Donors

We gratefully acknowledge the support of these donors in 2016.

Savannah/Saluda Society, \$3,000 or more

Margaret & L.B. Adams
Matthew & Laura Bachinski*
Bal Ballentine*
E.I. Davis Jr. & Stephen Davis
Millen Ellis*
Generostee Weems Mitigation & Restore LLC
Mark Kiser*
SC Native Plant Society*
Southern Resources LLP
Jeffrey B. Thomas*
Brad & Pam Thompson*
Mary & Stanley Todd*
Catherine Townsend*
John H. & Jill Warner*

* Includes donation for easement stewardship

Guardian, \$1,000 - \$1,499

Capsugel
Rossie Corwon
Storey Foundation

Sponsor, \$500 - \$900

AgSouth Farm Credit
Judy & Russell Burns
Colombo Energy Inc.
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Rivers Edge Forest Products
Stone & Associates, LLC
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Wallace & Susan Wood

Patron, \$250 - \$499

Elyse Benson
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S.C. Conservation Credit Exchange
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Raye & Avery Parrish
Robert K. & Sharon M. Phillips
Robert Hugh Riley
W.E. Robinson, Jr.
Clark Rushton
Ivey J. Sumrell
W. Virgil Wall, Jr.
John H. Welborn

THANK YOU TO ALL DONORS!!

Tree Farm Program, NWTF sponsor easement workshop

By Wallace Wood

The South Carolina Tree Farm Program and the National Wild Turkey Federation hosted a workshop on Conservation Easements on Saturday May 13 at the national headquarters of NWTF in Edgefield. The Upper Savannah Land Trust made a presentation at the workshop.

Janet Steele, Education and Outreach Coordinator with The Forestry Association of South Carolina and the S.C. Tree Farm Program was the program coordinator. Ms. Becky Humphries, NWTF CEO, gave the welcome.

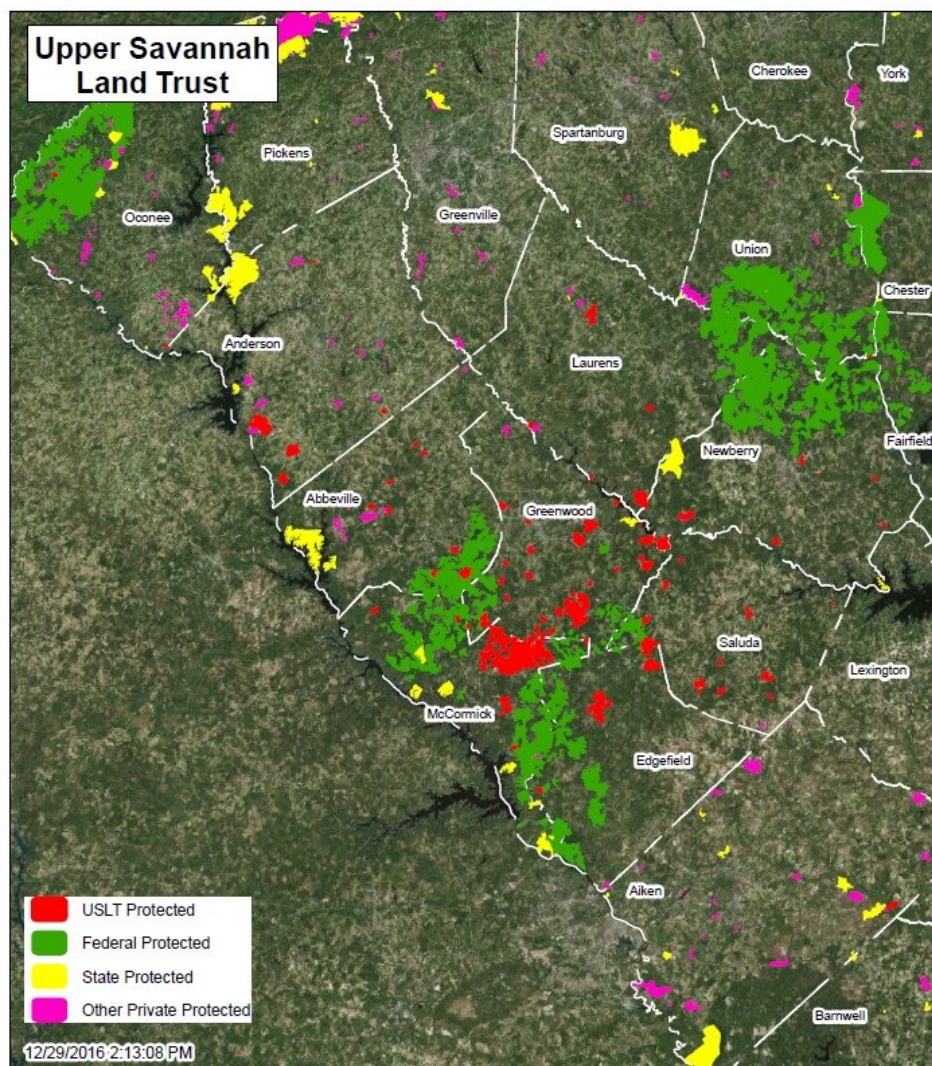
Janet's presentation was on "Why Would a Landowner Consider a Conservation Easement." Ken Driggers with Ken Driggers Conservation Services talked about "Considerations for Drafting the Conservation Easement Document." Rick Holstein with Holstein Appraisals in Batesburg discussed "Conservation Easement Appraisal." Wallace Wood, USLT Executive Director and



S.C. Tree Farm Program board member, covered "The Role of Land Trusts and Other Grantee Organizations."

Jimmy Sanders, USLT board member and S.C. Tree Farm Program chairman, served as the moderator.

Matthews Barbeque of Saluda served a delicious pork barbeque meal by the pond at NWTF headquarters. There were 40 participants, some of whom showed much interest in conservation easements.



Thompson Forest Consultants LLC has provided map showing protected lands in our Upper Savannah Land Trust region.

CONSERVATION EASEMENTS AND ACRES BY COUNTY 2017		
County	Number of Easements	Acres
Abbeville	7	1,560
Aiken	1	342
Anderson	7	2,731
Edgefield	6	4,524
Greenwood	32	10,615
Laurens	7	2,587
McCormick	14	14,697
Newberry	11	2,227
Oconee	2	126
Saluda	15	2,696
Total	102	42,105

Accreditation

Continued from front page

Accreditation will give us better recognition and respect in the land trust community both state and nationally. It helps eliminate the hint of uncertainty about whether we are doing things right. Once you have gone through the accreditation process, you have more respect for those who have been accredited.

Hopefully accreditation will boost fundraising. Funders want to support well-run effective non-profits. Accreditation provides assurance that we will make good use of your contributions.

Accreditation signals to potential staff and board members that our land trust is a strong and respected organization.

Our insurance premiums for legal defense of easements will be less. Accredited land trusts are 18% less likely to face a legal challenge. Being accredited may expand opportunities. Increasingly, accreditation is required for state conservation incentives and grants.

The process is not over. Some of our board members and I will participate in conference calls with the Accreditation Commission where some tough questions are anticipated.

The assistance of our consultant, Henrietta Jordan, has been a tremendous help. I would hate to think about doing the application alone. Henri has vast knowledge about non-profit organizations and what is required by land trust to hold conservation easements in a professional and ethical manner.

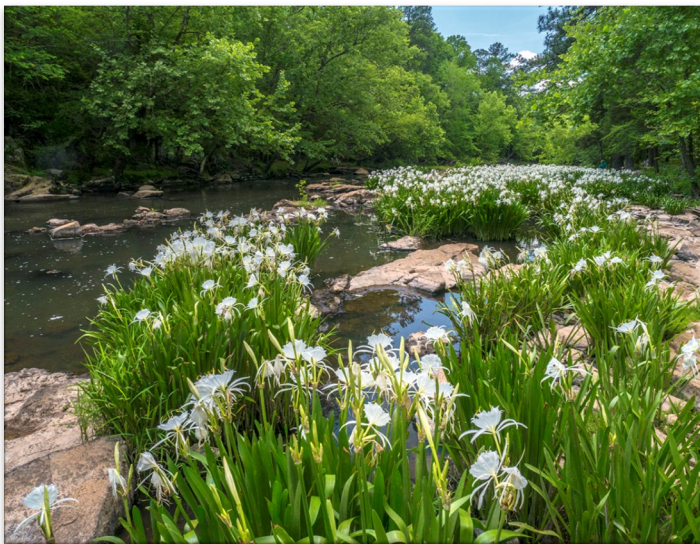
I look forward to being recognized as "Accredited" at the Land Trust Alliance's "Rally" in November in Denver, Colorado.



The South Carolina Native Plant Society had outings at Parks Mill on May 13 and 20 with over 100 participants to educate about the lilies and the mill. Dr. Bill Stringer, volunteer with the Society, tells the group about the history of the mill and the importance of grist mills to the economy in the area. There were three mills along Stevens Creek at one time in a 12-mile stretch. Water turbine technology that powered Parks Mill was introduced in the late 1800's. Volunteers with the Society have been busy cleaning up the site and have built a new bridge across the canal.



Upper Savannah Land Trust Annual Meeting guest speaker Michael Hook, small game program leader at the Department of Natural Resources, spoke to nearly 100 who attended March 16 at the Arts Center at the Federal Building in Greenwood and hung around afterwards to talk with landowners. Hook heads the South Carolina Bobwhite Initiative, which was launched in 2015 by the SC DNR to help restore the bobwhite population to past levels and unearth why the population has dwindled. The Index-Journal article on the meeting can be found at the USLT website at www.scuslt.com/2017/03/1553/.



Shoals spider lilies (*Hymenocallis coronaria*) are in bloom in May on Stevens Creek. This is one of the few remaining populations in South Carolina. With a recent purchase by the Naturaland Trust, management by the S.C. Native Plant Society and a conservation easement with the Upper Savannah Land Trust, this site will be protected. The Native Plant Society is seeking donations to help with this project. (Photo courtesy of Bill Sharpton, former McCormick County resident)

Please inform us of ownership changes!

Part of our duty as a land trust is to keep up with land ownership changes, subdivisions and implementation of reserved rights. It is very helpful and saves our staff time if you let us know when these changes occur. In the case of a new owner, we must get all contact info and copies of deeds. If a subdivision is to be made, this must be documented and a new notebook and file number created for our records and yearly monitoring. Sometimes landowners create LLCs, FLPs, etc. and thus the ownership changes. We need copy of deed showing where this transpired and primary contact person. Email our office at info@scuslt.com or call 864-941-8078. Thank you for making our record keeping easier. Time saved is money saved for our organization.



Shannon Hill, administrative assistant with the Upper Savannah Council of Governments, and Upper Savannah Land Trust Executive Director Wallace Wood are assembling four copies of the LTA Accreditation Application. Board member Sandy Gresham also helped. The application filled a three-inch binder.

Conservation easements conserve vital lands while easing tax burdens on donors

We Need Your Support

Please consider a tax-deductible donation to the USLT in one of our membership categories. Form may be downloaded from our web site or you may donate through PayPal.

**Friend (\$50 – \$99) Family (\$100 – \$249) Patron (\$250 – \$499)
Sponsor (\$500 – \$999) Guardian (\$1,000 – \$1,499)
Savannah/Saluda Society (\$3,000 or more)**



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