

# WATERSHED NEWS



Photo courtesy of Upstate Forever

*Reedy River Falls on July 29, 2004, when a summer storm produced the second-highest peak flood level ever recorded on the Reedy River.*

## **A CALL TO ACTION:**

## **Community Leaders Attend Seminar on Flooding**

What kind of event would bring together a professor, a city council member, a developer and a county engineer? In early November, these and other community leaders gathered at Furman University's Younts Conference Center in Greenville to attend the first ever Watershed Leaders Forum entitled *Weathering the Storm: Are We Ready for the Next Big Flood?*

More than 100 people spent the afternoon learning about factors that lead to flooding (such as severe weather events and an overall increase in a region's percentage of impervious surfaces) and reviewing the resources and agencies available to help in emergency situations. The forum concluded with a session that presented innovative techniques and strategies for lessening the frequency and

intensity of future floods in our region.

A wide variety of formats from slide-show presentations to informal networking sessions to a specially-developed summary report on flooding-related issues [accessible on the project website <http://www.saludareedy.org/recentpubs.html>] conveyed resources and information to the attendees.

Response to the Forum was overwhelmingly positive, with one participant commenting it was "a great opportunity to hear a wide range of speakers on a topic that, sooner or later, affects each of us living in the Upstate."

The next Forum, *Water Quality in Lake Greenwood: Current Status and Next Steps*, will be held at Lake Greenwood State Park on February 14, 2006.

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## **WELCOME TO THE SALUDA-REEDY WATERSHED NEWS!**

The purpose of this newsletter is to keep citizens and leaders throughout the Upstate up to date on the progress of the Saluda-Reedy Watershed Consortium's efforts to ensure clean, healthy, and abundant water for all.

Each issue includes updates on a variety of Consortium projects, as well as information on upcoming events of interest to watershed professionals, local officials, and concerned citizens.

## **WHAT IS THE SALUDA-REEDY CONSORTIUM?**

The Saluda-Reedy Watershed Consortium is a collaborative effort by organizations and individuals concerned about the impacts of changing land use on the purity and abundance of water in the rivers and lakes of the Saluda-Reedy watershed.

As our region grows, the shift from rural to urban land use has the potential to do lasting damage to rivers, lakes, and streams – unless we develop with care.

The goal of this project is to provide local leaders and the public as a whole with the tools and information they need to take good care of our rivers and lakes.

## FACES OF THE WATERSHED:

### Registered Forester Steven Smith



*Steven Smith, a SC Registered Forester, is Vice-President of Carolina Wood, Inc., a sawmill that purchases standing timber from private landowners. He recently shared his thoughts on watershed-friendly timber management.*

*Why is stream health and water quality an important consideration for timber operators?*

Many people in the timber business, from foresters to loggers, are outdoorsmen who share concerns about the natural environment and have a sincere desire to protect and conserve our natural resources.

*What are some of the best management practices, (BMPs) or guidelines you employ on a job site to ensure that water quality is being protected?*

In most cases, we leave at least a 40-foot buffer along streams, and selectively harvest within a buffer only if it won't expose the stream to excess sunlight. We don't operate heavy equipment within the buffer zone. We use proper stream-crossing techniques to reduce the amount of sediments entering the stream and establish water bars upon completion of a job. Silt fences and seed applications are implemented where necessary. Our company has recently built a set of 35 foot bridges



Photo courtesy of Rebekah Glass

*Several months after a selective timber-harvest along the Reedy River in 2005, Registered Forester Steven Smith leads Saluda Reedy Watershed Consortium tour participants through the site to demonstrate the BMPs he routinely employs, such as leaving riparian buffers.*

that we use to cross streams. These bridges allow us to cross the stream with very little soil disturbance.

*Are there regulations for implementing these BMPs or is most of what you do voluntary?* Although BMPs are voluntary in South Carolina, my company and I have an outstanding compliance rate in the state with these voluntary practices.

*A recent timber-harvesting operation along the Reedy River highlights the care you take to protect floodplain forest adjacent to rivers. We saw a 60-foot buffer with healthy understory vegetation and mature trees. Several buffer-zone trees were removed, but other than the stumps, there was no evidence of disturbance. Is it more time-consuming to incorporate concerns about stream health and water quality into a timber-harvesting job?* Yes, it is more time consuming and more labor intensive for us since it increases operation costs and slows down production. However, we feel the extra time and effort is well worth the positive benefits for the rivers and the environment as a whole.

*What advice do you have for landowners interested in managing their land for timber as well as maintaining healthy streams and wildlife habitat?* Landowners interested in quality work should ask the timber buyer to visit several jobs of a prospective logging crew before deciding to work with them for a job. The logging crew should be professionally trained and supervised by a Registered Forester. All logging crews should follow BMPs; however, landowners should look for those individuals that go above and beyond what is recommended, and the loggers that do should be compensated for their effort. In other words, the best stumpage price quoted may not mean the best job at the end.

*What do you feel are the benefits from your extra efforts to employ BMPs on job sites?* We demonstrate that timber can be harvested in sensitive areas without negative environmental impacts. Personally, I take pride in the condition of a site after the job is completed and know that we have done our best to protect our environment while utilizing our forest resources. 

**For more information, please contact Steven at:  
Carolina Wood, Inc.  
PO Box 523  
Clinton, SC 29325  
864/246-1103 or 864/616-9490**

## **WATERSHED AWARENESS:**

# **The State of the Watershed 2005**

As of fall 2005, the Saluda-Reedy Watershed has become the best-studied watershed in the state. For more than two years, teams of scientists and researchers have studied the watershed from multiple angles.

One study examined sedimentation rates in the watershed's various reservoirs and impoundments while another study conducted an in-depth analysis of satellite imagery to quantify the rate of land-use change throughout the watershed over the past 15 years. When these and other research projects concluded in the summer of 2005, the findings were pulled together in a comprehensive, yet user-friendly report called the State of the Watershed 2005.

The report, written in a question and answer format, summarizes more than two years of watershed research, points out key threats to water quality, and discusses strategies that can be employed to improve water quality throughout the watershed. The general outline of the report is:

1. What is the Saluda-Reedy Watershed?
2. What is the condition of the rivers and lakes of the Saluda-Reedy Watershed?
3. What do current trends in water quality mean for Lake Greenwood?
4. What can we do to protect the rivers and lakes of the Saluda-Reedy Watershed?
5. What is the Saluda-Reedy Watershed Consortium's strategy for moving us towards improving water quality?

The State of the Watershed 2005 can be accessed and online at <http://www.saludareedy.org/sotw.html>. Printed copies will also be available at the upcoming Watershed Leaders Forum, *Water Quality in Lake Greenwood: Current Status and Next Steps*, on February 14, 2006, at Lake Greenwood State Park. To obtain a copy by mail, contact the watershed project coordinator Jennifer Rennicks at (864) 250-0500 or [jrennicks@upstateforever.org](mailto:jrennicks@upstateforever.org). 



Photo of Lake Conestee courtesy of Ben Keys

## **BY THE NUMBERS:**

### **A Watershed Snapshot**

Number of square miles comprising the watershed above the Lake Greenwood dam: **1,165**

Number of miles in length from the watershed's headwaters to the Lake Greenwood dam: **80**

Approximate number of miles of watershed streams: **1,400**

Number of municipalities wholly or partially contained within the watershed: **18**

Number of urban waterfalls within the watershed (Reedy River Falls in Greenville, SC is one of the nation's only urban waterfalls): **1**

Number of regulated dams throughout the watershed: **164**

Estimated number of unregulated dams throughout the watershed: **2,500**

Number of watershed residents: **338,000**

Number of persons per square mile within the watershed (two times the state average): **290**

Expected population growth rate in the watershed by 2030: **33%**

Number of gallons utilized and consumed each day for household and commercial use throughout the watershed: **80,000,000**

Number of gallons used each day per person throughout the watershed: **175**



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**WANT MORE INFO ABOUT THE PROJECT?**

Contact: Jennifer Rennicks,  
 Saluda-Reedy Project Coordinator at  
 Upstate Forever (864) 250-0500 or  
 jrennicks@upstateforever.org



Photo courtesy of Upstate Forever

*Attendees at the first Watershed Leaders Forum, November 2005 at Furman University*

**A CALL TO ACTION:**

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Developed by Upstate Forever and the Upper Savannah and Appalachian Council of Governments (COGs) with the financial support of the Saluda-Reedy Watershed Consortium, these Forums will convene quarterly at various locations throughout the watershed. Upcoming Forums will examine topics such as:

- ❑ **Streams on the Cheap** (Low-cost stream restoration techniques for developers and municipalities)
- ❑ **Taking it to the Bank** (The benefits of stream mitigation banking for communities, developers and the environment)
- ❑ **Greenways for Growth** (Turning floodplains into parks as a catalyst for community revitalization)

The next forum [**Water Quality in Lake Greenwood: Current Status and Next Steps**] will be held on February 14, 2006 at Lake Greenwood State Park and is open to anyone wishing to attend. More information will be posted soon on the project website [<http://www.saludareedy.org/events.html>] or contact Jason Van Driesche (jasonvand@upstateforever.org) for more information and to register.

