

Greenwood council asked for money for water conservation forums

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Index-Journal regional editor

Greenwood City Council was asked Monday to contribute money toward the continuation of a series of forums designed to unite the efforts of Greenwood

and Greenville, and other areas adjacent and in between, to preserve the water quality of the Saluda-Reedy Watershed.

The request was made on behalf of Upstate Forever by Jason Van Driesche, the organization's director of water-

shed conservation. The \$20,000 request was not acted on by the council at its monthly meeting.

Van Driesche's request was for the council to authorize Greenwood CPW to make the donation through the city.

The money will go toward

more in a series of Watershed Leaders Forums, the second of which was conducted Feb. 14 at the Drummond Center at Lake Greenwood State Recreation Area. The first forum, at Furman University, addressed flooding issues in the upper watershed.

This month's forum addressed water quality issues of Lake Greenwood.

"Between 170 and 180 people were there," Van Driesche said of the second forum. "It showed a lot of people are concerned about the future of the lake."

The V. Kann Rasmussen Foundation and Fuji Photo Film Inc. have commitments of a combined \$2.5 million over five years to the watershed preservation project, mostly for scientific research.

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"We need your help to put these funds to maximum use," he told city council.

Van Driesche said what the group needs now is funding for efforts to bring together decision-makers to form policies that will protect the watershed, a 1,400-mile system of waterways ranging from creeks and streams to the Saluda and Reedy Rivers and Rabon Creek that feed the waters of Lake Greenwood. Greenwood County owns the man-made lake, created by the hydroelectric Buzzard Roost Dam on the Saluda River.

Greenwood gets its drinking water from Lake Greenwood, via CPW. Greenwood Metro discharges its wastewater to the Saluda River below the dam.

Van Driesche said Greenwood County has made commitments of \$60,000 to water quality-related projects. He said he is working on setting up a time to make a presentation about the watershed to the Greenwood County Council.

Van Driesche said future water quality forums would be conducted in the Upstate and in Greenwood, likely at Lander University, which is a partner in the consortium's scientific research efforts.

"The thing that ties it all together is sending better water down to Greenwood," he said.