



# LANDOWNER RESOURCE GUIDE

## Congratulations!

You own conserved land. **We're here to help.**

Upstate Forever is honored to be your partner in protecting your land. We take land conservation and landowner relationships seriously. Our Stewardship Team works closely with landowners to answer questions about their conservation easements and ensure that the agreements are upheld.

## Meet Our Stewardship Team!



**Lauren Ulich**

Restoration & Stewardship  
Manager



**Ericka Berg**

Land Stewardship  
Coordinator



**Kelsi Sullivan**

Land Stewardship  
Specialist

The stewardship staff members:

- Help landowners understand how their easement applies to their land
- Review and respond to reserved rights requests
- Connect landowners to resources for land management
- Visit every easement property annually
- Address violations of the conservation easement (when necessary)

# Understanding Your Reserved Rights

Every conservation easement is unique, created with the initial grantor's wishes in mind, and tailored to protect the conservation values of the property. When you own land, you may have rights, like the right to subdivide, harvest timber, farm, or build structures. A conservation easement removes or limits some of those rights.

The rights landowners retain following a conservation easement are referred to as "reserved rights." These may require prior permission or notification with Upstate Forever and could include the building of residences or structures, timber harvest, new roads, or new trails.

## WHEN TO CONTACT UPSTATE FOREVER

We hope that you'll reach out to us any time you have questions about your conservation easement, but there are times when you might need our approval or input to exercise certain reserved rights. In general, it's always a good idea to contact us before making any big changes to the property. For example, these activities may include:



### Before You Sell or Lease

The conservation easement stays with the land for perpetuity. When you sell, transfer, or lease your land, the other party needs to be aware of how the easement process works. We can help facilitate the process and ensure the easement is communicated to potential landowners or lessees.



### Before You Build

A conservation easement may allow for residential, agricultural, or equestrian structures, docks, decks, patios, roads, bridges, ponds, etc. It is extremely important to 1) confirm that your easement allows new structures or expansion of existing structures, and 2) follow the correct process for approval and/or notification before beginning any construction on-site.



### Before Big Changes

Your easement might have reserved rights that cover big changes to the property, such as tree cutting or removal, new agricultural activities, altering soil or land, or activities near waterways. These rights may require prior notification and/or approval per your conservation easement.

Our goal is to make the review and approval process as easy as possible. Once you contact us, we'll respond to the request within 30 days and ensure we have all pertinent information.





## PREPARING FOR YOUR ANNUAL VISIT

Our Stewardship Team visits every conservation easement annually. We conduct site visits year-round, so you may be contacted at any time throughout the year to schedule a site visit.



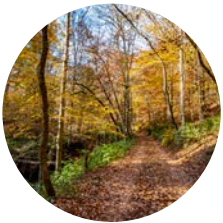
### Scheduling:

Our staff make their best effort to abide by landowners' wishes when we schedule our monitoring visits. However, we have many properties and have to schedule year-round, including through hunting seasons. In addition to the annual visit, the Stewardship Team may need to schedule additional visits to gather specific follow-up information.



### Landowner availability:

We always enjoy visiting with landowners and encourage you to attend the site visit whenever possible. However, we understand if you are not available or would prefer not to attend the annual site visit. Landowners are not required to be present for their site visit.



### What to expect:

A Stewardship Team member walks the property, takes photos and notes for our records, and visits with you (if you are available). We document any changes to the property since last year's visit, field any questions or concerns you have, and discuss future plans for the property. After the visit, you'll be provided with a copy of the report.



### What if there is a violation?

We are hopeful that maintaining a close relationship with our landowners will help prevent potential violations. In the event that a violation does occur, we are legally obligated to uphold the conservation easement. We will work closely with you to find a solution while keeping a positive, productive relationship throughout the process.

We aim to be a resource for landowners while ensuring that the conservation easement is upheld. It is our duty to uphold the conservation easement and protect the property's conservation values.



## LAND MANAGEMENT RESOURCES

Below are groups who may be able to help achieve your land management goals

### Clemson Cooperative Extension

Provides information in agribusiness, agriculture, and natural resources, supporting SC's agriculture and forestry industries and landowners.

[clemson.edu/extension](http://clemson.edu/extension)



### South Carolina Native Plant Society

Provides information, programs, and activities related to native plant communities in SC, including field trips, plant rescues, native plant sales, and monthly educational lectures. [scnps.org](http://scnps.org)



### Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

Provides technical conservation and financial assistance to farmers and forest landowners, including conservation plans and assistance implementing best management practices. [nrcs.usda.gov](http://nrcs.usda.gov)



### Quail Forever's Farm Bill Biologist Program

Provides local wildlife biologists for farmers and landowners to assist with pre- and post-implementation of habitat programs.

[quailforever.org/Habitat/findBiologist.aspx](http://quailforever.org/Habitat/findBiologist.aspx)



### Soil and Water Conservation Districts

SC's 46 districts provide technical assistance to facilitate the protection, wise use, and enhancement of the state's soil and water resources.

[dnr.sc.gov/conservation/index.html](http://dnr.sc.gov/conservation/index.html)



### Upstate Forever DHEC/319 Funding

Provides cost-share assistance to implement projects like septic tank repairs, drip irrigation and livestock fencing, and conservation easements to homeowners within certain watersheds. [upstateforever.org/319grants](http://upstateforever.org/319grants)



**South Carolina Forestry Commission (SCFC)** Technical assistance for timber income management, habitat improvement, and other objectives including a multiple-resource Stewardship Management Plan. [scfc.gov](http://scfc.gov)




### USDA APHIS

Provides technical assistance for farmers and landowners related to animal health, welfare, pests, disease, and wildlife damage. [aphis.usda.gov](http://aphis.usda.gov)




## Have questions or want to talk to someone about land management?

Contact Stewardship and Restoration Manager Lauren Ulich at [lulich@upstateforever.org](mailto:lulich@upstateforever.org) or 864-250-0500 x 112.


 Farms & Agriculture

 Native Plants

 Water Quality

 Forest Management

 Non-Native Species Management

 Wildlife Habitat