

# Upstate Advocate

2020-2021 | FALL/WINTER

An abstract oil painting with thick, textured brushstrokes. The colors are vibrant and layered, featuring shades of teal, orange, green, and dark brown. The composition is dynamic, with horizontal bands of color and some diagonal lines. The overall effect is one of energy and movement.

## INSPIRED

LOCAL ARTISTS DRAW ENERGY, COMFORT, AND  
CREATIVITY FROM THE UPSTATE'S LANDSCAPES

*"Grant Meadow,"* oil painting by Jessica Fields. Upstate Forever's Land Trust recently expanded protection for this beautiful property at the base of Table Rock in Pickens County (details on page 5).

**PLUS:**  
Q&A WITH JOHN LANE & DREW LANHAM  
SAVING OUR VANISHING FARMLAND  
10 SMART GROWTH PRINCIPLES



## ON (& OFF) THE CLOCK:

Upstate Forever staff at work and play



Andrea Cooper & UF board member Chris Richardson presented 1,000 masks to Greenlink this summer to help keep transit riders safe.



Megan Burton & family tend to (and, in some cases, snack on) their backyard garden.



Congratulations to UF's Caitlyn Gendusa (formerly Smith) and new husband Vincent.



Megan Chase, Clean Water Advocate, displays her finished quilt — and yes, it's river-themed!



Protecting Land & Water | Advocacy | Balanced Growth

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### Mission

Upstate Forever is a conservation organization that protects critical lands, waters, and the unique character of the Upstate of South Carolina.

### Vision

To conserve our land and water resources, resulting in an environmentally healthy and economically prosperous region, with a high quality of life now and for future generations.

### Board of Directors

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Dan Burden	Vince Graham	John Lane	Nell Newman	David Shi
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## FROM THE DIRECTOR

# Nature is not just a 'nice thing to have' — it is essential

It's a challenging time, but Upstate Forever is still hard at work to protect the critical lands, waters, and unique character of our region. The ongoing COVID-19 crisis has shown just how important that work is.

Over the past few months, the Upstate's parks and other public outdoor areas have been routinely packed to capacity as people desperately seek normalcy and refuge in nature.

**The pandemic has brought this truth to the forefront: access to nature is not something that's just "nice to have"— it is a necessity for human health and happiness.**

The turbulence swirling around us has made some of Upstate Forever's work more challenging, to be sure, but we have to keep going. We need more dedicated green spaces for recreation and refuge, and we need them now.

Because of your support, Upstate Forever continues to forge ahead on our work to permanently protect more critical natural spaces — parks, public trails, trout streams, forests, bike paths, and scenic vistas — before development encroaches even further into our remaining wild places.

*[See some recently protected properties on [PAGES 4-5](#)]*

In addition to our conservation work, we are making strides every day to advocate for our water quality ([page 19](#)); expand clean, affordable energy options ([page 6](#)); and promote land use solutions that reduce sprawl and support equitable, prosperous communities ([page 23](#)). None of this work could happen without you, and we thank you.

In this issue of the *Upstate Advocate*, some talented local artists share how nature comforts, restores, and inspires them. We also hear from celebrated authors Dr. Drew Lanham and John Lane about the wounds of racism, stress, and fear, and how healing may be found in the wilderness.

We could all use some healing right now. I hope our region's beautiful places help you and your loved ones find calm, strength, and inspiration in the days ahead.



**Andrea Cooper**, Executive Director



## Happy retirement, Peg!

After more than 15 years serving as Upstate Forever's Financial Director, Peg O'Donoghue has entered her well-deserved retirement. Joy Dickerson, former Assistant Financial Director, will step into the Director role in Peg's stead.

Peg has been witness to a lot of change at Upstate Forever over the years, to put it mildly. When she started in 2005, there were around seven full-time staff working out of a small office in the West End. Fast forward 15 years, and Upstate Forever has two offices (in Greenville and Spartanburg) and 21 employees.

During her tenure at UF, Peg managed the finances of major capital campaigns, oversaw large grants from the Federal Government and the private sector, and achieved clean audits throughout.

She's also kept a sense of humor, whether that meant offering candy bribes to timesheet-challenged employees, spitting watermelon seeds at staff fun day, or laughing about her ongoing difficulties with tangled reading glasses.

Peg is looking forward to trips with her husband Ed and dog Dora, as well as frequent visits with her granddaughter Quinn. Peg, we will miss you but are happy for you! Thank you for keeping UF's finances in tip-top shape.







Friendfield Farm



Sandy Run Forest



Cedar Rock

## RECENT LAND PROTECTION

### 600+ acres preserved in Union County

This summer, our Land Conservation team worked with two private landowners to protect more than 600 acres in Union County.

**Friendfield Farm** is 383 acres of prime farmland, timber, and hunting land. With more than a mile of land along Fairforest Creek, the property plays a significant role in safeguarding the creek's water quality. Friendfield Farm is also one of the most diverse properties among Upstate Forever's conservation easements. The unique forested floodplain provides dynamic habitat characterized by a lush understory of plants when the river is low, or a teeming fish hatchery when it's high.

**Sandy Run Forest** is comprised of 237 acres of forests, farmland, and open fields. Located less than a mile from the Lower Pacolet River, this property is also critical to water quality, in addition to serving as important wildlife habitat. The property's sloping terrain provides prime habitat for a wide variety of plant life, including mature hardwood canopy species and ferns. Funding from the South Carolina Conservation Bank contributed to this project.

### A "new to us" conservation easement

Recently, The Nature Conservancy of South Carolina transferred a 500-acre conservation easement to Upstate Forever. This protected property, called **Cedar Rock**, is located in the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains adjacent to the Mountain Bridge Wilderness Area. The property is rich in habitat for black bears, Eastern big-eared bats, and certain rare plants. The western boundary is part of a public trail from Jones Gap State Park to Falls Creek Falls.

The property has been under a conservation easement with The Nature Conservancy since 1995, and part of the property is owned by Naturaland Trust. By assuming the conservation easement, Upstate Forever's nationally accredited land trust will take on the responsibility of conducting yearly stewardship visits to ensure the terms of the agreement are being upheld.

#### CONSERVATION PROPERTIES ON THE MARKET

*Interested in owning a property that is protected by a conservation easement with Upstate Forever? When the properties we steward go on the market, we post them on our website at [upstateforever.org/listings](https://upstateforever.org/listings) as a service to easement holders.*

*If you are selling a UF-protected property and would like us to add it to the listings page, contact Christina Sprecher, Land Stewardship Manager, at [csprecher@upstateforever.org](mailto:csprecher@upstateforever.org).*





## Iconic view of Table Rock further protected

Our nationally-accredited land trust recently completed a conservation project further protecting the iconic view of **Grant Meadow** and Table Rock in Pickens County. Nestled at the base of Table Rock and hugging Cherokee Foothills Scenic Highway 11, the recent addition of 21 protected acres joins the 36-acre property that was placed under a conservation easement in 2013.

The Grant family, owners of this beloved property, feel strongly about preserving the meadow's beauty and long distance views for generations to come.

"My dad had acquired this property in 1950. I took an interest in it early on helping clear it and fence it for pasture land, which started my appreciation and love for this land," said landowner Hoyt Grant. "Being close to Table Rock State Park, my family enjoyed spending time and making memories there. I was able to acquire the additional 21 acres from my brother before he passed away this year and I knew I wanted to keep it protected for the future."

In addition to breathtaking views, the property contains prime soils (having physical and chemical characteristics as determined by the USDA) and two tributaries of the South Saluda River. Grant Meadow will continue to be managed as a hay meadow, ensuring its iconic view remains unobstructed. "The view is a favorite photo spot for visitors young and old, and I feel very blessed to have a part in protecting its beauty," said Mr. Grant.

### DO YOU OWN LAND YOU'D LIKE TO PROTECT FOREVER?

*Our Land Trust helps landowners preserve their legacy through voluntary conservation easements. You continue to own the land, and you may realize significant tax benefits. Funding may also be available. For more information, email Scott Park, Glenn Hilliard Director of Land Conservation, at [spark@upstateforever.org](mailto:spark@upstateforever.org).*

### LEGISLATIVE SUCCESS

## The Great American Outdoors Act is a huge win for conservation

This summer, the **Great American Outdoors Act** was passed and signed into law. Referred to as "an historic achievement" (Southern Environmental Law Center) and "the biggest land conservation legislation in a generation" (Harvard's Linda Bilmes), this landmark bill will fully and permanently fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), providing billions of dollars in funding for parks, trails, and public lands and waters across the country each year.

The LWCF has funded projects in nearly every county in the United States, including each of the Upstate's ten counties. Caesars Head, Jones Gap, Keowee-Toxaway, and Croft State Parks, Cleveland Park (both in Greenville and Spartanburg), Stumphouse Tunnel, and Chau Ram County Park are just some of our region's spaces that have received grants from the LWCF.

Future funding can mean further investing in Upstate residents' physical and mental health, and boosting local economies through tourism and outdoor recreation.

Our sincere thanks go to the Upstate representatives who supported this bill: Senator Lindsey Graham (who was a co-sponsor of the Act), Senator Tim Scott, and Representative Jeff Duncan.

Read more and find contact info to thank your legislators at [upstateforever.org/GAOA](https://upstateforever.org/GAOA)



CLEAN ENERGY

# Solar Net Metering Deal Sets National Precedent

A landmark deal struck with Duke Energy in South Carolina will restructure how rooftop solar power is valued when it is combined with smart meters and smart thermostats. If approved by the SC Public Service Commission, future solar customers in this program will have the chance to reduce their bills in the summer when their panels are producing energy during peak usage periods, but also in the winter if they install a smart thermostat that would allow Duke to reduce electricity demand during extreme winter peak usage events.

Upstate Forever and partners South Carolina Coastal Conservation League and the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy, all represented by the Southern Environmental Law Center, were joined by Sunrun and Vote Solar in the negotiations. The proposal has attracted attention from jurisdictions across the country.

This new proposal for solar customers is about more than the solar panels on a roof. This structure is about how our homes — and the way we consume energy, conserve energy, and export energy back to the grid — actually have value as part of the system as a whole when we pay attention to timing. Technologies such as smart meters and smart thermostats have become more agile and responsive, and they allow us now to be more than just an end-user of energy. When our homes become an



integral and valuable asset for the grid, we can use this flexibility to avoid the construction of expensive fossil-fuel peaking generation and grid upgrades that would have to be paid for by all customers.

This is the beginning of the traditional electricity market and utility structure paradigm getting flipped on its head. Upstate Forever commends Duke Energy for their partnership in crafting this proposal, and we are proud to be at the head of the pack on this issue nationally.

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## NEW BOARD MEMBER

### Sam Erwin

Sam Erwin serves as Regional President of the Carolinas for IBERIABANK. He is a Greenwood County native, a cum laude graduate of Clemson University, and is involved in a wide variety of civic and professional organizations, including The South Carolina Bankers Association, Greenville Tech Foundation, and the Business Development Corporation of South Carolina. Sam and his wife, Meg, reside in Greenville and have two grown sons, Sam and Patrick. He enjoys traveling with his family, hunting, fishing, and playing golf. For his full bio, visit [upstateforever.org/board](http://upstateforever.org/board).



## NEW STAFF MEMBER

### Virginia Kolb

Virginia joined our staff as Receptionist / Finance Assistant this summer. Virginia received her BA in Sociology from Converse College and an MBA from the University of South Carolina. A Sumter native, Virginia fell in love with Greenville and moved here four years ago. Virginia spends her free time visiting her children and grandchildren. She also loves to play the piano, read, watch old movies, cook, and walk. For her full bio, visit [upstateforever.org/team](http://upstateforever.org/team).







# INSPIRED

LOCAL ARTISTS DRAW ENERGY, COMFORT, AND CREATIVITY FROM THE UPSTATE'S LANDSCAPES >>





# Sarah Mandell

## FIBER ARTIST

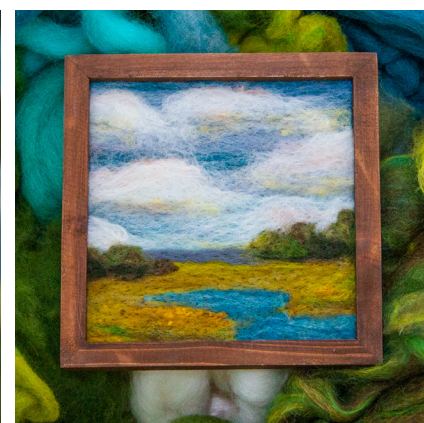
My focus for the last few years has been fiber art, particularly needle felted landscapes. These textured “paintings” are created with dyed wool roving, using only a barbed felting needle to move and attach the fiber to a piece of fabric. It’s a lot like painting — I block out the scene with base colors, then come back and layer on more wool with the needle, tapping the needle into the fiber which pulls it tighter and tighter the longer I work on it, adding shadows and details. I even blend some of my own wool colors.

Moving to the Upstate in 2010 felt like a breath of fresh air, and a lot of that had to do with the natural beauty found in the Upstate. I have never lived so close to mountains before and they truly are a magical place — by far my favorite type of landscape to look at, drive through, or feature in my art.

I also enjoy including farms and forests in my work. Here in the Upstate, we’re never very far from rural scenery, and my husband and I take joyrides through the country so I can find inspiration and take reference photos of cool old barns or fields full of crops to use for future felted landscapes.

I’m very inspired by nature. I enjoy hiking and taking daytrips all over the state and often times these new sights and scenes lead to a felted landscape, or even a series. Almost all of my felted landscapes feature scenes from the Southeast, from the mountains for the Upstate, to the irregular patterns in the Lowcountry marshes, and the textures of the Midlands. I use my art as an excuse to go see new things, and vice versa. Finding inspiration is the easiest part of what I do — I look around, take it all in, memorize the colors, and recreate what I see in this unique medium.

View more of Sarah’s work at [onceagainsam.com](http://onceagainsam.com) or on social media @[OnceAgainSam](https://www.instagram.com/OnceAgainSam).

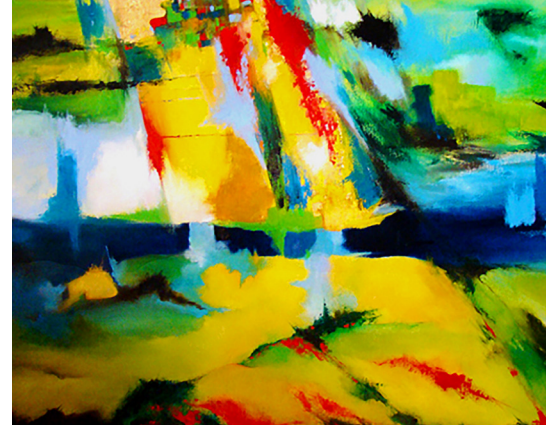


*Sarah Mandell creates needle felted landscapes with dyed wool.*





Paintings by Roberto Cortez, clockwise from left: "Liquid Mind," "Exploring The Path," and "Liquid Nature"



I love how nature expresses itself with so many different colors and textures — the green in spring, the luscious landscapes, all the different flowers in the summer.

— ROBERTO CORTEZ

## Roberto Cortez | ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONIST PAINTER

One of the reasons my wife and I moved to South Carolina was because we felt trapped in the city of San Francisco, where the environment was so repressive. Creativity was stunted because of the lack of space, coupled with the traffic and the noise. The contrast of moving to and living in the Upstate was that we can finally breathe here, and take in nature so much more easily. We are so lucky to live here.

Here in the Upstate where we have all four seasons, I love how nature expresses itself with so many different colors and textures — the green in spring, the luscious landscapes, all the different flowers in the summer. I like to exercise outside. I love taking long bike rides on the Swamp Rabbit Trail where I notice the leaves, the way the light plays on them, as well as the way I react to nature.

Currently, my color palette is bright shades of blue and green, sometimes turquoise and I notice how they contrast with the warm bold colors. Although I do not do

realistic drawings of a tree, for example, my work is more a distorted view of nature, which captures the essence of the ethereal feeling I have towards the natural world.

Art is very therapeutic and helps relax my mind and focus my energy towards creating something positive. Working intensely is a way to leave all the problems of the world behind and concentrate on the moment, not the past or the future. The present is all we have.

Painting has opened my mind to be more aware of the similarities of human behavior. Feelings and emotions are universal aspects — it doesn't matter where you are from, your background, your culture, your race, we are all in essence the same. We have goals, dreams, desires and expectations. I have realized that we can transcend all the barriers through art.

View more of Roberto's work at [robertocortezfineart.com](http://robertocortezfineart.com) or on Instagram [@robertocortez\\_fineart](https://www.instagram.com/robertocortez_fineart).

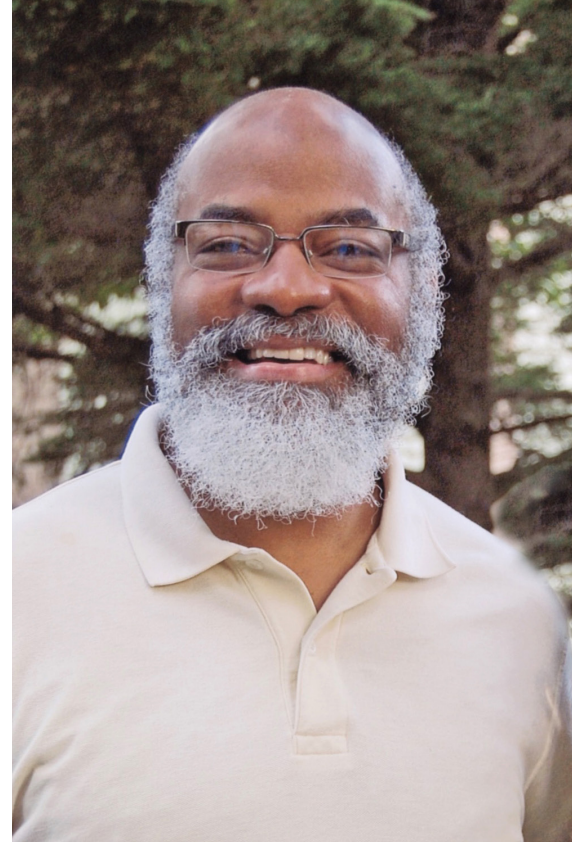
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**SUPPORT UPSTATE FOREVER:** Donate \$35 or more by December 31, 2020 and receive an exclusive set of six notecards featuring prints from some of the Upstate artists featured in this issue. While supplies last. Visit [upstateforever.org/notecards](http://upstateforever.org/notecards) to learn more.





"Blue Ridge Sunset" by Dwight Rose (watercolor painting)



## Dwight Rose | WATERCOLOR PAINTER

Being a creative, I have always relied on nature as inspiration for my work. It started for me in my early years as a young child living and growing up along the coast of the Caribbean Sea with the backdrop of Jamaica's Blue Mountains. This helped shape my appreciation of Mother Nature, especially the resources she provided for my sensibilities and survival. It's an indebtedness I feel we should all have.

I have visited 24 countries and lived in three. Living in the Middle East was a seven-year teaching experience of desert, dunes, and no natural waterways other than the Persian Gulf. My first impression was of amazement that life could be sustained in such an arid place. My paintings took a different direction; I was able to find the beauty in this environment that was void of the lush vegetation that I was so accustomed to. Without a doubt, it demonstrated how important it was for greenery of some kind, as its absence made me yearn for it even more.

At the conclusion of this adventure, I moved to Spartanburg and was surrounded by the rich and varied palette of colors and places offered within the Upstate. The Carolinas and the Upstate have countless natural resources for artistic inspiration. The Blue Ridge

Mountains, gorgeous lakes, countless waterfalls, and unmatched rural stretches of green spaces combined with its seasonal weather resulted in the perfect stimuli I yearned for as an artist.

Working with diverse groups of students at local institutions was a great privilege for me and afforded me the opportunity to share the Upstate's beauty while using it as my inspiration. My commitment to teaching spans a 35-year period which included 11 years in the Upstate. I can confidently say that during my tenure in the region my partner was the surrounding natural beauty. Mother Nature was the focus of many paintings exhibited and on display in several public spaces. And through their display, I received the recognition to attain professional membership in excellence to the South Carolina Watermedia Society.

We thrive on the ecosystem that surrounds us. It never ceases to amaze me the way people react differently to various subjects in my paintings. Invariably the reactions to my landscapes have been embraced more favorably; people love to experience that captured moment in time.

View more of Dwight's work at [dwightrose.com](http://dwightrose.com).



A watercolor painting of a landscape. In the foreground, there are large, dark, textured shapes representing foliage or rocks, rendered in shades of green, blue, and brown. A river flows through the middle ground, with several large, smooth, light-colored rocks protruding from the water. The water is painted with soft, blended colors of blue, green, and yellow. In the background, a long, low bridge spans across the river. A small figure of a person is visible walking on the bridge. The sky is a pale, hazy blue. The overall style is soft and atmospheric, characteristic of watercolor painting.

The Carolinas and the Upstate have countless natural resources for artistic inspiration. The Blue Ridge Mountains, gorgeous lakes, countless waterfalls, and unmatched rural stretches of green spaces combined with its seasonal weather resulted in the perfect stimuli I yearned for as an artist.

— DWIGHT ROSE





## Jessica Fields | CONTEMPORARY LANDSCAPE PAINTER

We moved to the Upstate from Texas about 7 years ago, specifically because of the natural environment. I love Houston and miss the food and people dearly, but we were three hours from a decent nice walk, much less hiking or campgrounds. Here, I still get excited about being able to see the mountains when I-385 crests over Roper Mountain.

Immediately my work began to change. My landscapes could once have been confused for abstract paintings of stripes because I came from such a grand flatness. But now, my works are stacks of colorful curving hills and mountains.

Well... Until recently. Since the pandemic has started I am obsessed with still life work. Isn't that a bit on the nose? STILL LIFE. It's not that we don't get out. Like everyone else, we are scouring the All Trails app for lightly trafficked trails to head out to on weekends. But bringing home those big skies and valleys for inspiration to paint

by just feels like a mockery of the moment. So lately it's lemons and cherries and peaches sitting on intricately patterned bowls and fabrics. Its tiny handheld bits of nature and the outside. The more detail the better. I can be hypnotized into another world. And hopefully I share that with the viewer.

It's the sharing that makes it art for me. Most of my work is quite small, so I see them as postcards from a certain time, place, and feeling. My work is about stealing sensations, or "borrowing" in the Robin Hood sense of the word. I think we all leave bits of ourselves with places and things. And I try to pick them up and share them. I consider myself a landscape painter, but I certainly go on tangents.

So maybe the truth of it is that I am a painter of places. And sometimes those places are lemons or people.

View more of Jessica's work at [fieldart.work](https://fieldart.work) or on Instagram [@fieldart](https://www.instagram.com/fieldart).



## ARE YOU A LOCAL ARTIST?

We would love to feature your nature story on Upstate Forever's blog and social media channels. To participate, email Megan Burton, Communications Coordinator, at [mburton@upstateforever.org](mailto:mburton@upstateforever.org).

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## Nancy Basket | BASKET WEAVER

I moved to the Upstate about 30 years ago to discover more about my Cherokee heritage. I will stay here for the rest of my life.

I came here to find the elders, and they have taught me the stories, culture, and traditions of our ancestors. I have been weaving with longleaf pine needles now for more than four decades. I came here to get those, too, but when I went into the forest to get the pine needles, I found kudzu.

Kudzu is an amazing thing. It doesn't care if there is a drought. It can grow 12 inches a day. Parts of the young plants can be eaten (I use the roots in a stir fry and the leaves in a quiche like you would spinach). But when the plants become bigger is when I use them in my work. I turn them into paper in the barn in my backyard, which is constructed from bales made of kudzu. I have a loom set up and I have even woven kudzu cloth. And, of course, I weave baskets and five-foot or larger shades from kudzu. There is so much you can do with it — the possibilities are endless. It has taught me to find what you think is a nuisance, and turn it into a treasure.

That lesson is so important, especially for kids. I teach Cherokee culture in the public school system, helping children connect to nature. It's really important they understand that everything has a purpose, even what you think may be ugly or nasty.

I teach students to weave a bird's nest with kudzu. They come to respect birds and their habitats and nature better, and at the end of four days, the freeformed kudzu basket that they've made themselves will hold four jelly beans!

I believe it is so important to go outside often and immerse ourselves in nature, to get to know what is available in our backyards. If you can't get outside every day, you're holed up. In order to be whole, we need to be outside.

View more of Nancy's work at [NancyBasket.com](http://NancyBasket.com).

In order to be whole,  
we need to be outside.

— NANCY BASKET



THE FIREFLY COLLECTIVE

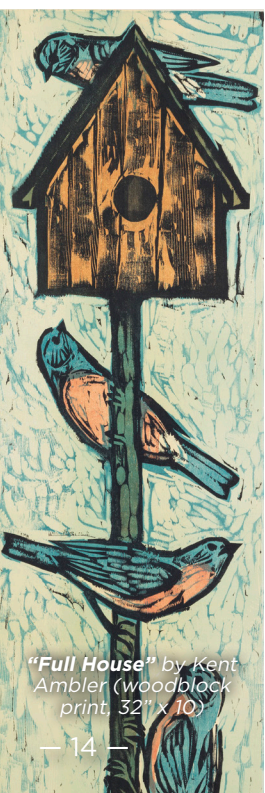


**Two Nations Basket**  
by Nancy Basket (pine needles)





*"Afterglow" by Kent Ambler  
(woodblock print, 32" x 24")*



*"Full House" by Kent  
Ambler (woodblock  
print, 32" x 10")*



## Kent Ambler

PRINTMAKER, PAINTER, & SCULPTOR

I was born near Chicago and grew up in Indiana. I graduated from Ball State University with a fine arts degree where I took an intro to printmaking course. The course began with woodcuts, which instantly clicked with me. I love the different mark making properties of the process.

After college, I moved to New Mexico and lived there for six years. New Mexico is beautiful but can be very isolating, and I started to miss the green landscape back east. We've been in the Upstate for 20 years now. It feels like home.

I love where I live, on several acres on Paris Mountain. The property has twelve acres, so there is no traffic outside my windows — just woodland, birds, a koi pond, and my three dogs running around. If you look at my work you will see much of this.

I've always loved living in the woods; the peace and solitude really help to clear my mind to be creative. Night time in the woods gives off such a mysterious feeling and I often try to capture that in my work. I have seen all kinds of wildlife on my property, which also makes its way into my artwork: bears, foxes, turkeys, deer, coyotes, snakes, owls, hawks, and woodpeckers, to name a few.

Living on Paris Mountain I have the best of two worlds: what feels like a woodland retreat is only four miles from downtown Greenville. Greenville is growing at such a fast pace — I've witnessed at least sixty homes and three apartment complexes built within a mile of my home in the past ten years. I do think its very important that Upstate Forever protects mountain woodlands.

View more of Kent's work at [KentAmbler.com](http://KentAmbler.com) or on Instagram [@KentAmblerArt](https://www.instagram.com/KentAmblerArt).



# Allison Ford

ABSTRACT & COLLAGE ARTIST

I grew up on the South Carolina coast and we came up to the mountains a lot. Being up here has always been very inspiring to me, and I've lived in the Upstate for about ten years.

I have always been a creative person who dabbles in a lot of different things. In college, I took two art classes, but it wasn't until I was an adult until I realized I really wanted to learn to paint. I took a class at the Greenville Center for Creative Arts that was full of really experienced artists — and I didn't even have my own paint. I was in way over my head. It was not where I was supposed to be, but exactly where I was supposed to be. I just kept at it and started developing my own style. My work is about color, shape, and movement.

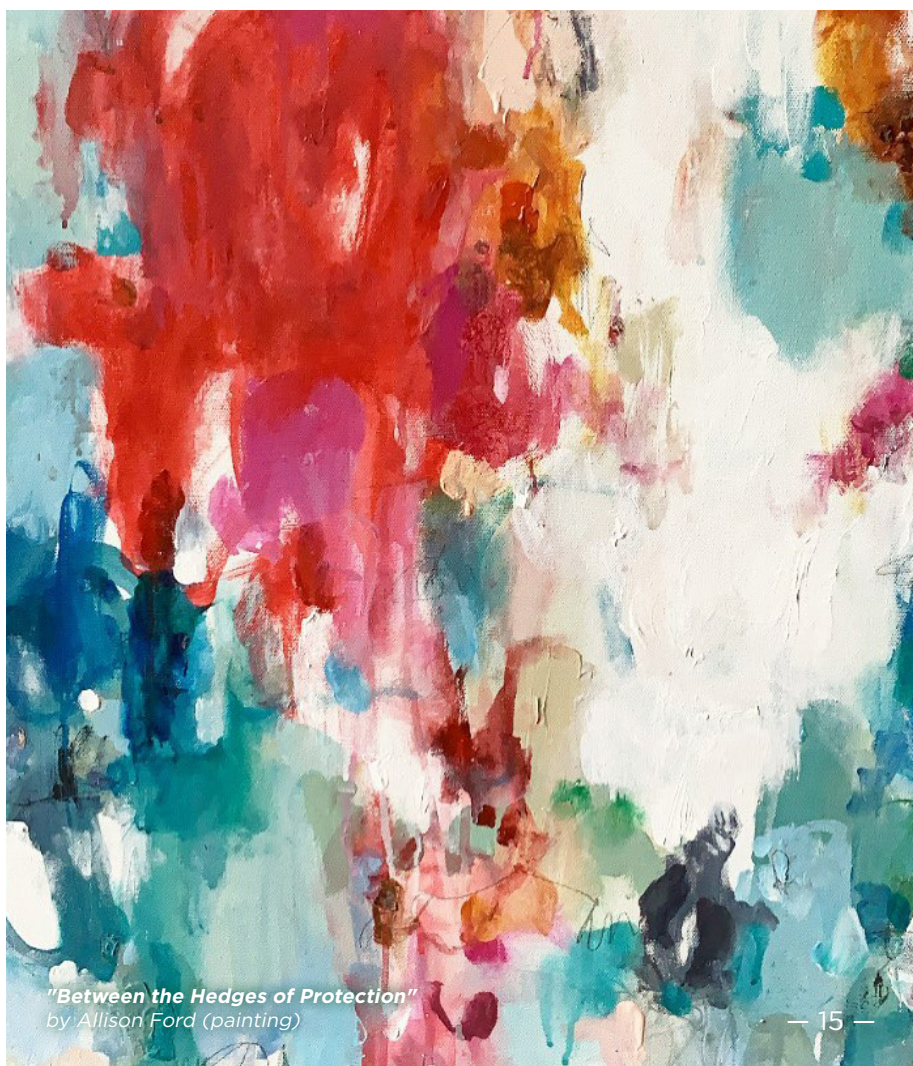
My family has spent a ton of time outdoors lately. We have gone on so many hikes and have been finding areas to just explore nature as a family. It has been lovely. Nature has brought me peace during the pandemic and the opportunity to focus on what is most important. It has also brought inspiration for my work. I've been so inspired by trees and water. These don't necessarily translate to my work in ways that a viewer can always see, but the feeling that nature creates, the colors found in nature, are what I hope to convey.

I've been finding solace and a resting place in art, too. Everyone is creative in their own certain way and it's important to find something, your thing, that brings you peace and happiness. This pandemic is touching people in a different way, but it's hard for everyone. Everyone needs something to make them happy. That's what painting is for me.

View more of Allison's work at [helloallisonart.com](http://helloallisonart.com) or on Instagram [@helloallisonart](https://www.instagram.com/helloallisonart).

Nature has brought me peace during the pandemic and the opportunity to focus on what is most important.

— ALLISON FORD



*"Between the Hedges of Protection"*  
by Allison Ford (painting)





## Sherrill Hill

STAINED GLASS ARTIST

I've been working with glass for nearly three decades. My family has lived in other parts of the country, in North Carolina and Mississippi, before moving back home to Greenville. But I feel so inspired by this setting. Driving into the Upstate you feel it. You can feel the soul of the place.

When I was little and wanted to spend time with my dad, we'd head to his workshop or to work in the yard. I grew up outside and tinkering with tools. Then I went to the Fine Arts Center in Greenville, where I studied theater, and continued learning about art and theater through college. When it was time for an internship, I found a stained glass place near the University of South Carolina and I fell in love. I learned hands-on. I didn't learn from a class.

I wake up at the crack of dawn and head to my workshop. I thoroughly enjoy the morning because I love watching the sunrise, seeing my neighborhood owls and hawks, and listening to the creek that runs right beside my home. I'm very lucky to have nature surrounding me. I'm inspired by it every day.

When I'm creating stained glass, everything I do functions within light. The feeling I want you to get — and I pray about it every time I enter my shop and work on a piece — is oneness with the light you see. I want you to walk in a room and feel the soul of the piece.

View more of Sherrill's work at [sherrillsglass.com](http://sherrillsglass.com) or on social media @[sherrillsglass](https://www.instagram.com/sherrillsglass).

## Yuri Tsuzuki

SCULPTOR

South Carolina has been my home since the 1960s when I moved here from Japan. My grandfather and father traveled here from Nagoya to build the first of many textile mills in the South. As a child shuttled back and forth, my only constants were the two trees in my respective gardens: A magnolia tree and a cherry tree.

I believe that the way we see and interpret the world is imprinted upon us as a child. Having been brought up between Japan and Greenville, the way nature is experienced and appreciated in these two cultures greatly influences and informs how I work as an artist.

Japan taught me to see the beautiful spirit residing in every tree, stone, and stream — to find beauty in the most humble and simple of things. This notion expands from nature into my art and life.

From childhood, I was taught to respect and acknowledge the fleeting moment and its beauty, that only change is a certainty, and this certainty expresses itself in my art and how I think about my art. To find the essence. To abandon preconception. To thoughtfully let go. The material — whether paper, wood, or steel — is approached with humility and an understanding of its innate properties. Paper tears. Wood rots. Steel is too heavy to lift.

I want my art to be sensitive and alert to the changes of light, shadow, growth, decay. The lifeblood of nature is where I seek energy, inspiration.



Many of the traditional art forms — *shodo* (art of calligraphy), *ikebana* (art of flowers), *sado* (art of tea) — are each a lesson in self-restraint and deference. Their methodologies infiltrate my work and my person. To delve. To reflect the light and shadow within. To recognize the intimate interplay in nature. The sound of wind and water, the intangible shadows of night and day. To acknowledge the beauty and reality of contradiction, opposition, and dichotomy.

A few years ago, I had an exhibition titled, "Forest Meditation." The gallery was filled with paintings and sculptures of trees. On the floor, I placed a path of stones to give a sense of walking through the forest. In Japan, there is a practice called "*Shinrin Yoku*" — Forest Bathing. It is the practice of walking or wandering mindfully in nature to recharge our senses and to reconnect with our sense of well being, a meditation through the forest. The Upstate offers an enviable number of settings for this very practice. Yet, surrounded by such natural beauty, we oftentimes tend to take it for granted until we journey elsewhere.

Places like this remind me how important it is to live in the present. And nature is all about being present. My art takes so much from nature. And being an artist is about keeping all the senses engaged and alive. Whether it be the lakes, the mountains, or the quiet streams, the Upstate offers us places to look inward. Some places I return to over and over again, going deeper — a relationship made of layers of time. Greenville is one such place I return with open heart and spirit. Thank you Upstate Forever for making Greenville my "forever" place.

View more of Yuri's work at [YuriTsuzuki.com](http://YuriTsuzuki.com) or on Instagram @[YuriTsuzuki](https://www.instagram.com/YuriTsuzuki).

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*To view more work from each of these featured artists, visit [upstateforever.org/inspired](http://upstateforever.org/inspired)*



In Japan, there is a practice called "*Shinrin Yoku*" — Forest Bathing. It is the practice of walking or wandering mindfully in nature to recharge our senses and to reconnect with our sense of well being, a meditation through the forest.

— YURI TSUZUKI



# Wounds & Wildness

A CONVERSATION WITH AUTHORS  
JOHN LANE & DREW LANHAM



Left to right:  
John Lane and  
Drew Lanham

**John Lane** is Emeritus Professor of environmental studies at Wofford College and was founding director of the college's Goodall Environmental Studies Center. He is the author of a dozen books of poetry and prose, including *Coyote Settles the South*, one of four finalists for the John Burroughs Medal and named by the Burroughs Society one of the year's "Nature Books of Uncommon Merit."

**J. Drew Lanham** is the Alumni Distinguished Professor of Wildlife Ecology at Clemson University, as well as a widely published author and award-nominated poet. He writes about his experience as a birder, hunter, and wild wandering soul. He is a member of the South Carolina Wildlife Federation, South Carolina Audubon, Aldo Leopold Foundation, Birdnote, and the American Birding Association.

The two met in 2005, after teachers at a Vermont writing conference suggested that Drew look John up after returning to South Carolina. John and Drew began hanging out regularly — taking walks and showing up at the same events — and began a regular correspondence.

The following conversation is based on an exchange between John and Drew at a recent virtual event hosted by the Georgia Center for the Book. View the entire event recording at [bit.ly/GCBLaneLanham](https://bit.ly/GCBLaneLanham).

**Q:** *Pat Conroy wrote, "Geography is my wound." I know that geography and place are important to both of you and in your writing as well. Can you comment on the wound of geography?*

**JOHN:** I think about that quote all the time. I've always thought that it's almost the opposite for me; geography is my healing! It always has been; it's where I go to be healed. Drew, where do you go with that? You and I have had a lot of discussions about this because I know you have a much more complex relationship to landscape, at times, than I do.



## UF & partners challenge rollbacks to bedrock environmental law

Rollbacks to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) were announced in July of 2020. For 50 years, NEPA has provided communities — often marginalized, poor, and minority neighborhoods — the opportunity to delay or stop potentially harmful projects like highways and pipelines.

In our region, a weakening of NEPA would effectively silence the Upstate voice on projects ranging from pipelines and federal road projects all the way up to how the nearby national forests Pisgah, Sumter, and Nantahala — where we hike, bike, fish and play — are managed. Those national forests also impact some of our drinking water sources.

We have joined 15 other conservation organizations represented by the Southern Environmental Law Center to challenge this decision. The new rule went into effect on September 14, 2020 after our petition for an injunction was denied, but our challenge to the legality of the process used to revise the rule is ongoing.

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- » Land Protection
- » The Upstate Update (Monthly Newsletter)
- » Legislative Updates, (Weekly during session)
- » Greenville City & County Comp Plan Updates
- » Planning & Growth Spartanburg
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Join at [upstateforever.org/email](https://upstateforever.org/email)



**DREW:** One of my intellectual mentors is Aldo Leopold. He said somewhere that “we live in a world of wounds.” Well, geography is the wound I am trying to heal. Ancestral enslavement, Jim Crow — it’s hard to go across a lot of landscapes, especially in the Lowcountry, and not feel that wound. I can’t pass a field of cotton and just see it as pretty. That cotton is stained in different ways. So geography is that wound I’m trying to heal with the land. Mainly with wildness...large doses of wildness.

**Q:** *Racial justice, pandemic, climate change, political unrest... the trauma keeps accumulating. Poetry and the arts are a balm for the soul. Do you struggle to write under this trauma or do the emotions of the time we live in fuel your work?*

**DREW:** You know, the trauma, I call it a “morbidly target-rich writing environment” and so there’s a certain urgency to write to it. When I teach writing, I always teach about writing to tension and understanding what those tensions are. Climate change and environmental degradation is an obvious tension that I try to write to, not in terms of polar bears drowning but in not having air to breathe. But then, a knee on someone’s neck also makes it impossible to breathe. For that reason, I can’t separate any of it. I write to all of that tension. John, how in this “world of wounds” do you find celebration to write about?

**JOHN:** I am convinced that we need stories to survive, and that the form is maybe best for me to bring together all the complexities facing us today. Throughout my whole 40-year career as a poet, I’ve always meant for my poems to be a tribute to attention. Attending to landscape, attending to relationships, attending to people, to plants and animals, to joy and hope.

**DREW:** I think that’s one of the things in these conversations that we have daily, that I’ve learned and I’ve taken, sort of a tribute to attention.

**Q:** *What hopes do each of you have?*

**JOHN:** I hope we come out of this thing better people. That we figure out some of these multiple traumas. We’ve got to come through it. It’s so easy to get caught up in personal or economic expectations for what makes up the Good Life. With climate change underway, it’s really important to have an organization like UF looking at the bigger, broader regional picture.

**DREW:** My hope is for a new normal that is greener, more just, more equitable, and more healthy. That is my hope. 🌿



# The Upstate's farms are under threat



**By Caitlyn Gendusa**

LAND CONSERVATION SPECIALIST  
[csmith@upstateforever.org](mailto:csmith@upstateforever.org)

To all appearances, farms are booming in the Upstate. Local food businesses like Swamp Rabbit Café and Grocery, the Pharmacy, and Oak Hill Café & Farm are thriving. Farmers' markets and agritourism spots like Split Creek Farm and Happy Cow Creamery are massively popular. We love our local food here in the Upstate — which is why people are often surprised to hear that our region's farms are under serious threat.

The alarming truth is that farmland is rapidly disappearing in the Upstate, and across South Carolina in general. From 2001-2016, nearly 280,000 acres of agricultural land were developed in South Carolina, according to the American Farmland Trust. Greenville and Spartanburg ranked in the top four counties in the state for land conversion threat. To make matters worse, South Carolina also ranks near the bottom when it comes to policies and programs that protect agricultural land from development.

## Why is farmland disappearing?

As our population grows and cities sprawl outward, the less expensive open land outside urban centers

is increasingly converted into subdivisions, shopping centers, and other developments. Farmland is particularly susceptible to development as farmers often feel increased pressure to sell due to economic stress or lack of family succession plans.

Without plans to protect prime farmland resources, the Upstate faces a serious risk of losing the agricultural identity, associated economic benefits, and rural character tied to our farms.

## Economic impacts from farmland loss

This news is a challenge to the farming economy in the Upstate, a region that produces more agricultural goods like cattle and chicken than anywhere else in the state. Because cattle production in particular requires much more land than many other crops, large tracts of land are essential to ensuring the Upstate continues to be a leader in cattle production. Rapid loss of farmland also means the Upstate could easily miss out on emerging and growing agricultural products like industrial hemp, heirloom corn, and value-added dairy.

## Food insecurity will intensify

Diminishing farmland will also intensify food insecurity in the Upstate. According to DHEC, Pickens, Oconee, Abbeville, Laurens, and Spartanburg counties have some of the state's highest numbers of food deserts, which

Local farms are prime examples of “essential businesses” and are central to the quality of life in the Upstate.

*Cragmoor Farms in Roebuck, which produces fresh fruits and vegetables for Spartanburg School District 6, is permanently protected by an Upstate Forever conservation easement.*





are areas void of fresh fruit, vegetables, and other healthful whole foods. Food deserts are often found in areas with many low-income residents. In a sad irony, many farming-heavy counties have a high food insecurity rate; for instance, in Laurens County, the rate is 14.1%, with over 9,000 residents that are food insecure. This tells us there is a lack of local distribution outlets and incentives for farmers in many areas.

## We need local food systems

In the wake of the global COVID-19 health crisis, we've seen how important it is to maintain strong local systems for food distribution. When national supply lines for produce, meat, and other goods are disrupted, we rely on local farms to sustain us. If we don't proactively work to protect farmland, we lose the flexibility and self-reliance that come with robust local agriculture systems. Now, more than ever, we should be supporting our local food systems.

Fortunately, it's not too late; but we must act immediately to enact policies, food equity measures, and farmland protection to improve the quality of life for all Upstate residents. Local farms are prime examples of "essential businesses" and are central to the quality of life in the Upstate. Let's protect them from mounting threats while we still can. 🌱

## Here's how you can help support local farmers and create solutions to protect farmland:



**Know someone who owns farmland they'd like to protect forever?** Let them know that Upstate Forever recently received more than \$3.9 million in USDA funding to protect local farmland through voluntary conservation easements. For more information, visit [upstateforever.org/farmland](https://upstateforever.org/farmland).



**Consider purchasing at least once a week** from an Upstate farm. To see a list of farms and businesses offering delivery, on-farm pickup, CSAs, and other purchase options during social distancing, visit [agriculture.sc.gov/coronavirus/local](https://agriculture.sc.gov/coronavirus/local).



**Contact your state legislators** and tell them you would like to see increased funding for the South Carolina Conservation Bank, an important tool that has been used to protect places like Greenbrier Farms in Easley and Cragmoor Farms in Spartanburg. You can also let your county officials know that protecting farmland and open space is important to you. Find links and resources to help you contact elected officials at [upstateforever.org/local-officials](https://upstateforever.org/local-officials).



**Support Upstate Forever:** Your gifts are what enable our nationally-accredited Land Trust to protect the Upstate's special natural places — our farms, forests, rivers, and mountains. You can mail a check to our Greenville office or give online at [upstateforever.org/donate](https://upstateforever.org/donate).



**Join our Land Protection email list** to get the latest updates on initiatives that support increased funding for conservation in the Upstate. To sign up for this and our other email lists, go to [upstateforever.org/email](https://upstateforever.org/email).



## Join The Legacy Society

By including Upstate Forever in your will, trust, or estate plans, you can help enhance the Upstate's quality of life for future generations.

To learn more about planned gift options or request a copy of our complimentary estate planning guide, visit [UpstateForever.GiftLegacy.com](http://UpstateForever.GiftLegacy.com) or contact Aldon Knight, Director of Development & Community Relations, at [aknight@upstateforever.org](mailto:aknight@upstateforever.org) or (864) 250-0500 x31.

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# WHAT DO WE MEAN BY Smart Growth?

As the Upstate's population increases, it is up to local governments, stakeholders, and citizens to drive smart and balanced growth so that all residents have the opportunity to thrive. Here are 10 core principles of smart growth and how our communities can benefit from embracing them. Visit [upstateforever.org/smart-growth](http://upstateforever.org/smart-growth) to learn more.



**Embrace mixed land use**, the practice of placing a combination of residential, commercial, and recreational properties within close proximity. This is critical to the development of healthy, vibrant, and equitable communities.



**Preserve open space.** Protecting undeveloped land helps people, wildlife, and even economies thrive. It's important to prioritize greenspace protection not only in rural areas, but urban as well.



**Take advantage of compact building design.** The Upstate's current sprawling growth pattern is not fiscally or environmentally sustainable. Building with a smaller footprint — growing up rather than out — preserves more greenspace, protects water resources, supports a wider variety of transportation choices, and leads to lower infrastructure costs.



**Direct development toward existing communities.** Infill and redevelopment in existing communities is a smart way to mitigate sprawl, especially when implemented with an eye toward improving the quality of life for existing and new residents.



**Create a range of housing opportunities & types.** Local communities are abundant with single-family homes and clusters of high-density apartments. Housing types that fall somewhere between these two are often called the “missing middle.” Missing middle housing can satisfy demand for walkable urban living while simultaneously providing product types that are more affordable by design.



**Provide a variety of transportation choices.** Successful planning for the Upstate must couple a multi-modal approach — embracing diverse transportation options like walking, bicycling, public transit, and driving — with supportive development patterns to create a variety of transportation options for all residents.



**Create walkable neighborhoods** within a reasonable distance (approximately 1/4 mile) of a variety of amenities within a network of streets designed to make walking practical, safe, and convenient.



**Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost-effective.** Local governments can help make it easier for private investors and developers to create compact, mixed-use development and missing middle housing types.



**Foster distinct communities with a strong sense of place.** Smart growth encourages planners to craft a vision of a unique community, set standards for development that respect and reflect the values and cultures of the people who call them home, and foster physical environments that support a more cohesive community fabric.



**Encourage community & stakeholder collaboration.** The needs of every growing community — and the developments necessary to address those needs — are best defined by the people who live, work, and play there. Opportunities for citizens to provide feedback through public meetings and workshops help pave the way for equitable development.





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