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Upstate Forever checks up on Keowee River

Environmental group likes what it's heard about mixed-use development

BY CARLOS GALARZA
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SENECA — A ranking official with a regional environmental group said Thursday that the organization likes everything it has heard so far about the proposed $200 million Keowee River project on Highway 130 near Seneca.

Angela Viney, director of the sustainable communities program at Upstate Forever, said the group initially had questions and concerns about the impact of the project on the water's edge and environmentally sensitive areas contained in the 774-acre site.

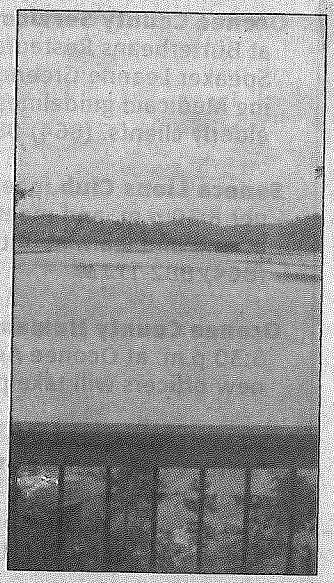
Viney said Scott Vick, one of the principals of the project, met with Upstate Forever (UF) officials at the group's offices in Greenville to explain the project and answer questions. She said the use of buffers would address those concerns.

Vick told the group that 200 to 300 acres would be for residential, less than 100 acres would be for commercial and more than 300 acres would be left green.

According to what Vick told UF officials, homes in the complex would range from $270,000 to $690,000. Viney said Vick thinks homes in that price range are not currently being served in Oconee County.

Vick unveiled plans for the Keowee River project Aug. 13. The announcement was accompanied by news that the YMCA would move from its facilities in Clemson to a brand-new home on the grounds of the Keowee River project.

The development will be inter-generational with homes and activity centers for young families, as well as a complete retirement community. Plans also call for an onsite medical center, a waterfront park and pavilion, hotel and conference center, trails, outdoor amphitheater, restaurants and retail shops.



JESSICA NELMS | STAFF

A regional environmental group says it likes what's been proposed by developers of the Keowee River project, which would feature homes, retail, a YMCA complex and plenty of green space with public access.

The phased project would begin with the building of the YMCA and anticipated build out over a span of two decades.

"It all sounds very good," Viney said.

Viney, who formerly served as the executive director of the South Carolina Wildlife Federation, said she hopes the meeting with Vick will start an open relationship between the developer and Upstate Forever.

"We want to keep in touch, be informed and assist in any way," she said.

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