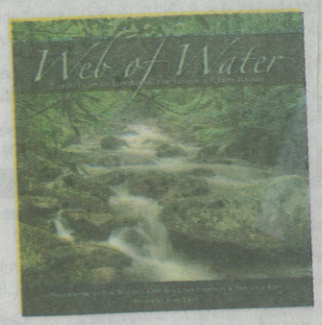
'Web of Water' showcases Upstate rivers

Photographers capture diversity of watersheds

By Charles Sowell
Special to The Greenville News



One of this year's best coffee table books is a local product brought to the region by Upstate Forever and the Hub City Press called "Web of Water: Reflections of Life Along the Saluda and Reedy Rivers."

It features photos of Tom Blagden, Clay Bolt, Jon Holloway and Ben Geer Keys taken over a five-year period and the prose of John Lane, Upstate nature writer and Wofford University professor, and will be introduced to Greenville at Studio 220 at the Hyatt from 5 to 7 p.m. Tuesday.

The Spartanburg book launch will be May 6 at Indigo Hall, 190 Ezell St. The Spartanburg event coincides with the 10th anniversary of Upstate Forever in Spartanburg.

"Get hold of a copy and read it. You really need to wax poetic about this book," Lane said.

Through images and prose, the book tells the story of two of the most important watersheds in Upstate South Carolina — the Saluda and Reedy rivers, which flow through the heart of the industrial region. Both suffer from the effects of the industrial age and of a rapidly growing population, yet both have found remarkable recovery and harbor amazing beauty.

A press release about the book tells the facts: that the Saluda-Reedy watershed reaches 10 counties, from the Blue Ridge Escarpment along the North Carolina-South Carolina border to Lake Greenwood; that nearly 400,000 people live, work and play here in an area encompassing more than 1,500 square miles; that the Saluda and Reedy and the 11,400-acre Lake Greenwood are sources of drinking water, tourism, industry and cultural significance.

Those are the dry statistics on the region. The book, and the men who created it, are something else entirely.

"This is a photographer's book," said Lane. "All of the pictures, particularly the close-ups of insects and animals of the region, are really spectacular."

Blagden has been a professional photographer for more than 30 years, and his photos have been featured on national conservation calendars as well as on the covers of Smithsonian, Audubon, Outdoor Photographer, Nature Conservancy and Sierra. He has also written six books on South Carolina.

Bolt's close-ups of insects and animals are particularly captivating. His images and projects are regularly featured by organizations such as The Nature Conservancy and National Geographic.

Holloway, who lives in Greenwood, has traveled with photographic exhibits here and in India, South Africa and Cuba.

Lifelong Greenville resident Keys has spent years hiking and photographing the Southern Appalachians. He is the former president of Keys Printing in Greenville.

Avid paddler Lane's prose has appeared in Outside, American White Water, Canoe, South Carolina Wildlife and many other periodicals. His long essays, "River Wild" (on paddling 59 miles of the Youghiogheny River) and "Confluence: Pacolet River," appeared in the anthologies "Heart of a Nation" and "Adventure America," both from National Geographic Books.

Angela Viney, director of the Spartanburg office of Upstate Forever, said her organization started working on the concept of the book several years ago.

"We wanted something special to let people know of the amazing diversity of our watersheds and the crucial role they play in living here," she said.



lamander (Pseudotriton ruber) sits in a bog · Pickens. CLAY BOLT/"WEB OF WATER"



Mountain sweet pitcher plants (Sarracenia rubra ssp. jonesii) grow in a cataract bog in Cleveland. The plant is on the federal list of endangered plants. CLAY BOLT/"WEB OF WATER"

