sticker for American Farmland Trust and a fourth for Conservation Voters of South Carolina.

As for her politics, the bumper stickers on her car tell the story well. One sticker says, “If you’re not making any more of it, Free- man subscribes to Will Rogers’ philosophy on land: they’re not going to take anything you have that you’re not using.” Freeman admits, “If you enjoy a place like Aiken, then you also must realize that you need to take action in order to preserve what you love about it.”

She recalls sitting around the kitchen table with family discussing the possibility of an Aiken land trust to meet the community’s needs. “In South Carolina you can learn from other states’ mistakes and successes.” In 1999 she co-founded the Aiken County Open Land Trust (ACOLT) and served as its first president. Now, Freeman spends most of her time in Aiken with her husband, Mike W.C. Freeman, a thoroughbred racehorse trainer, and their five dogs and two horses Viola and Joey. In addition to her volunteer obligations – board service for ACOLT, American Farm Land Trust, Hitchcock Woods, Greenleaf Plantation and Proctor Academy – Freeman enjoys spending time at Chimte Bell Farm, her 230-acre horse farm.

For her politics, she bumper stickers on her car tell the story well. One sticker for Governor Mark Sanford – the like his bad environmental record. One sticker for first cousin John Kerry’s 2004 Presidential campaign. Another sticker for American Farmland Trust and a fourth for Conservation Voters of South Carolina.

Ironically, South Carolinians enjoy comparatively low power rates per kilowatt but pay some of the highest average utility bills in the country. South Carolina is the third highest electricity user per capita in the country.

Soaring energy prices and environmental concerns have elevated interest in efficiency and renewables as the cheapest, cleanest and fastest way to meet our growing energy needs.

Senator Glenn McConnell (R-Charleston) and Representative Phillip Lowe (R-Florence) recently introduced an Energy Efficiency Package to address this growing need and to lead South Carolina toward a clean energy future. The Energy Efficiency Package is the latest recognition that South Carolinians are increasingly embracing efficiency and renewable energy sources as one of our state’s “first fuels.” The package includes:

- Senate Bill 1140 establishes energy efficiency and renewable energy goals for state government and directs state agencies to procure efficient products in the future, like replacing incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs.
- Senate Bill 1141/House Bill 4763 provides consumers a $75 rebate and sales tax exemption for the purchase of Energy Star certified manufactured homes in South Carolina.
- Senate Bill 1142 provides a state income tax credit for the purchase of photovoltaic, solar and fuel cell property and provides a sales tax exemption for the purchase of equipment that produces electricity from renewable sources.
- Senate Bill 1143/House Bill 4761 provides two one-month sales tax holidays for the purchase of energy efficient appliances: October, National Energy Efficiency Month, and April, National Earth Day Month.

Because rising energy prices disproportionately impact the economically disadvantaged, Sen. McConnell also sponsored “Operation Empower- ced” (S.1076) to create a private, nonprofit fund. “Operation Empowered represents precisely the kind of bold, visionary thinking that is in the best interest of the environment and economy,” said Bruce Wood, owner of Sunstore Solar.

Other legislators are pushing bills to make our state’s energy greener. Representatives Laurie Funderburk (D-Kershaw) and Mac Toole (R-Lex- ington) are sponsoring a bill (H.3395), requiring the SC Energy Office and the Office of Regulatory Staff to provide the General Assembly with recommendations on establishing a net metering program. This bill has passed the full House and is now under review in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Senator Jim Ritchie (R-Spartanburg) is asking the state to invest in a “green fleet,” in order to run state government more efficiently for taxpay- ers. Senate Bill 368, part of an energy efficiency package introduced in 2007 by Sen. Ritchie, encourages the state’s fleet management program to purchase hybrid vehicles, and is being reviewed by the full House in the upcoming weeks.

“South Carolina is undergoing unprecedented growth, bringing with it both tremendous economic opportunity and increased demands on our energy sector,” said Sen. Ritchie. “How we meet growing demand will determine not only our state’s economic future, but the health and sustainability of our communities.”

Representative Joan Brady (R-Richland) is also pursuing energy reform in state government with H.4705. Rep. Brady’s bill establishes a pilot program whereby the state’s Energy and Control Board, the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Health and Environmental Control, must purchase at least one percent of their electricity from green power programs.

Several legislators are working on free-market incentives that encour- age industry, entrepreneurs, government agencies and consumers to “go green.” By “priming the pump” with tax breaks, rebates and investments, elected leaders aim to unleash the ingenuity and determination of our state’s business community.

Studies done by the South Carolina Electric Cooperatives demonstrate that within 10 years, South Carolina can produce 1700 megawatts of electricity – the equivalent of three new coal plants – through efficiency and renewable energy. If the General Assembly will enact these bills this year, consumers and entrepreneurs are poised to seize the potential of the “green” economy to lead our state into a strong, energy-independent future.

Events & Activities

Events & Activities Briefings
April 22 – Earth Day
April 22 – Wine & hors d’oeuvres with Ann Timberlake, Camden
April 28 – Annual Conservation Day Oyster roast, Columbia
May 1 – Legislative Crossover Day
May 3 – Cocktails & hors d’oeuvres at Secessionville Manor, James Island
May 6 – Cocktails & hors d’oeuvres at the White Homestead, Fort Mill
June 1 – Primary Election Day

2008 Organization Lobby Days
April 8 – SC Wildlife Federation Camo Coalition
April 15 – SC Alliance for Sustainable Campuses and Communities
April 29 – Annual Conservation Day
May 13 – Audubon South Carolina
May 20 – Kitchen Table Climate Study Group
May 27 – SC Land Trust Network

Conservation Voters of South Carolina hosted the national League of Conservation Voters annual conference in Charleston from March 27-30. Thirty-five affiliate state voter leagues met to share best practices and learn about national trends in the conservation movement.

LEFT: Phil Greenberg, Executive Director; Ann Timmelsale, VP of LCV State Capacity; Building Ed Zuckerman and Holly Hook at the key note reception on Thursday, March 27, at Cathy Forester’s historic home.

Conservation Voters of South Carolina
Test You Conservation IQ – 2008 Briefing Book Release

Conservation Voters Education Fund is proud to release the 2008 Conservation Briefing Book. This biennial reference book enumerates the many conservation challenges facing South Carolina and suggests next steps for meeting these challenges.

Test your Conservation Briefing Book IQ with the question below:

1) In 2006, how many of South Carolina's 24 major rivers were listed on the Department of Health and Environmental Controls' (DHEC) registry of impaired waters?
   a. 3
   b. 12
   c. 15
   d. 24

2) South Carolina has one of the fastest rates of land development in the country, ranking 10th in the rate of conversion of farmland and forestland to urban use. How many acres does South Carolina convert each day?
   a. 10 acres per day
   b. 20 acres per day
   c. 60 acres per day
   d. 200 acres per day

3) South Carolina spends ___ annually importing energy from out of state.
   a. $4 million
   b. $10 million
   c. $1 billion
   d. $10 billion

4) According to the SC Energy Office, South Carolina is the ___ consumer of electricity per capita, in the nation.
   a. 4th highest
   b. 6th highest
   c. 12th highest
   d. 42nd highest

5) The Conservation Bank protects land at the average cost to taxpayers of ___.
   a. $600/acre
   b. $500/acre
   c. $1200/acre
   d. Whatever the market price is.

6) Stormwater Runoff is ____.
   a. A new event at the Summer Olympics.
   b. Sediment, nutrients and pollutants washed into the nearest stream.
   c. Taken into account by developers prior to construction.
   d. Any stormwater that runs off into a stream or lake.

Score: Five or More Correct - We need to help you lobby elected leaders. Three or Four Correct – Check the Briefing Book to improve your IQ.
Two to Zero Correct - You need a copy of the Briefing Book. ASAP

The Conservation Briefing Book is available at a cost of $5 to cover printing and shipping cost.
Contact Debbie Parker at 803-799-0716 or dparker@scvoters.org to receive a copy.

---

Conservation Voters believes the June primary election contests are essential to building a bipartisan conservation majority. Over 80 percent of South Carolina's 170 legislative districts have been drawn to benefit a particular party. This has led to increasingly competitive intra-party primaries to select less competitive general election contests between Republicans and Democrats.

Demographics in 22 Senate and 58 House districts strongly favor Republicans, while Democrats hold sway over 16 Senate and 42 House seats. Because South Carolina voters do not register by party, prior election performance and demographics are used to classify districts as solidly Republican, Democratic or possible "swing" districts in a general election. Swing district races are more likely to evolve into general election contests, so our focus for the June 10 elections are on the contests that determine who is most likely to win in the general election.

Out of the 30 primary contests that Conservation Voters is monitoring, a number of upstate races stand out. In Spartanburg, Sen. Jim Ritchie faces two well-funded candidates, attorney Max Hyde and engineer Shane Martin in a Republican primary. Ritchie's record supporting Conservation Bank funding and sponsoring energy efficiency legislation has earned him the respect of conservationists.

In Greenville, two House incumbents face primary challengers. In District 21, Republican Bob Leah faces Bill Wylie, former CEO of Goodwill Industries, and in District 23, Democrat Fletcher Smith is vying for Sen. Linda Short's seat. Coleman and attorney Leah Moody are vying for Sen. Short's seat.

In Sumter County, Sen. Phil Leventis, a proven conservation champion, faces former Democratic House member Mac McLeod – while in Aiken County, Republicans Brad Bonnie, County Councilman Scott Singer and attorney Tom Young are squaring off in a three-way primary to replace retiring Rep. Scott Perry.

In the Lowcountry, the departure of conservation champion Rep. Ben Hagood creates a void that has attracted two Republican candidates: Mt. Pleasant City Councilman Joe Bostic and Isle of Palms Mayor Mike Sorely. Newly elected Sen. Catherine Cipriano is defending her Beaufort seat from Tom Davis, Gov. Sanford’s former Chief of Staff. On the Democratic side, former Rep. Thayer Rivers, a strong environmental advocate, is seeking to win back his Jasper County seat from rep. Curtis Brantley.

Several Horry County Republican races could change the face of a generally anti-conservation delegation. Sen. Luke Rankin faces Republican challengers, Liz Gailand, chair of Horry County Council and Howard Bond. Rep. Thad Vicars is opposed by Steven Neves and former Horry School Board member, Helen Smith. And four contestants have filed to run for the seat being vacated by Rep. Billy Witherspoon: George Hearn, Randy Alford, Mark Bennett and Kevin Harder.

Are you a political junkie? For continued coverage of conservative politics check your email for The Conservative Voter’s Edition. To receive our online newsletters, email Chris Kenney at denny@scvoters.org.

---

A PAC is a political committee established and administered by a corporation, labor union, membership organization or trade association for the purpose of engaging in electoral activity.

In 1944, the Congress of Industrial Organization (the CIO, one of today’s AFL-CIO) was looking for ways to help rank executive Franklin Roosevelt. However, the SmithCoolidge Act of 1943 prohibited labor unions from contributing funds to federal candidates. In an attempt to circumvent the law, CIO urged their members to make individual contributions to Roosevelt’s campaign. This PACs were born.

Since then, states and the federal government have added rules to govern the raising and spending of PAC dollars. For example, in South Carolina, individuals, corporations or partnerships may contribute $3,500 per election cycle to a single PAC.

Today, PACs are often described as “corrupt special interest money.” While it is true that a PAC represents a special interest, it represents the interests of the individuals contributing to the PAC.

Conservation Voters PAC represents our members and our commitment to a safe, clean and healthy environment through more accountable state government. Does that make Conservation Voters PACs a “special interest” PAC? Absolutely.

Members often ask why should I contribute to your PAC and not directly to conservation candidates? In short, you should do both, especially if you are able to tell your candidate that you are supporting him or her because of their position on conservation issues. One advantage to contributing to Conservation Voters PAC is that any donation a receive a contribution from our PAC, they know that support is the result of their pro-conservation record.

Stacy Williams of Myrtle Beach had done the math: one dedicated elementary school teacher, plus three younger colleagues, plus $1,000 cutbacks in her fourth-grade classroom could equal thousands of dollars to raise sea turtles off South Carolina’s coast.

Conservation Voters Education Fund is proud to announce the hiring of Williams as Field Director of their new campaign project for Harry and Georgetown Counties. A former PETA and Custom Home Aids organizer, Williams served as co-chair of the Save the Turtles coalition during the now-famous "Save the Turtles" campaign.

"I, Carey’s children’s book chronicling the lifecycle of the loggerhead sea turtle. The proceeds from the book purchased informational sea turtle signage along the South Carolina coast.

A teacher at Myrtle Beach Intermediate School since 2002, Williams looks forward to using her educational and organizational experience to help conservatives in Harry and Georgetown Counties. She began working part-time in February and became a full-time staff member in June.

CrazeMatters seeks to maximize the participation of conservation-minded Harry and Georgetown County citizens in public policy decision impacting growth and development.

PEE DEE POWERHOUSE

Conservation Voters Education Fund’s new Climate Change and Sustainability Project Director, Carolyn Jelleby, believes “the effectiveness of local government is only as good as the involvement of its citizens.”

In 2003, Jelleby organized Responsible Economic Development (RED) to challenge a Wales缊t, center developed because of its impact on neighborhoods, school, and the environment. RED’s focus is to save sea turtles off South Carolina’s coast.

Jelleby is a former Conservation Chair for the Pee Dee Sierra Club, where she initiated the Jeffress Creek Preservation Project, which advocates on the protection of the local watershed. As Senior Vice President of Environment for Wildlife Advocacy, Jelleby pledged funding for the Conservation Bank, preservation of Heritage Farms and the removal of unlawful river shacks, among other issues.

Conservation Voters Education Fund is excited to have Jelleby leading our Climate Change and Sustainability program.

---

From the CONSERVATION OFFERS REAL CHOICE IN POLITICS & RESULTS

All too often, I hear from citizens across our state that “no good comes from politics.” Another complaint is that there are not enough choices between candidates on the ballot. Certainly, there are rankings of voters, policies and politicians’ records on the environment create clear distinctions between candidates.

And we have had never a year like 2008. It is not just that all Senate and House races are on the ballot, to a state where incumbents are almost guaranteed to win, over ten percent of the contests have already been declared open. Six Senators are retiring and sixteen House members are either leaving or running for higher office. This is both an opportunity and a challenge for conservationists.

We can currently count on just over 40 percent of the Legislature as reliable pro-conservation votes. Our goal is to attain a bipartisan majority by 2010, and to increase competition between candidates to be seen by voters as truly “green” invites more public discussion about the importance of clean and reliable water, breathable air and protected land for sport and recreation.

However, elections are not an end but a means. Now is the time to educate candidates about issues and to ask the hard questions. We want to know, for example, did any politician pledge to add incremental funding for the Conservation Bank to protect South Carolina’s special places or if they believe they communities should be able to collect impact fees from developers to help pay for new schools and infrastructure.

We need to know if candidates will push aggressively for energy efficiency measures or if they will support a moratorium on the construction of new coal plants until need and environmental impact can be independently evaluated.

We invite you to help us and let us know what you are hearing and thinking about these races. Candidates seeking our endorsement participate in a multi-step process that includes an evaluation of a candidate’s previous conservation record, questionnaire and interview responses and an objective analysis of the candidate’s viability.

Endorsed candidates benefit from our counsel, the financial support of our Political Action Committee, the direct communication with voters. And we all benefit by electing better stewards of our environment to make the right decisions to create a healthy and safe future for South Carolina.