



# LandMark 2016

20th Anniversary Edition



Eastern mud turtle

A publication of The LandTrust for Central NC

## The Conclusion of Our 20th Anniversary Year



Dancers enjoy beach music at RiverDance.

Over the past year, The LandTrust celebrated our 20th anniversary and 25,000 acres saved through a variety of great events. With our Founder's Dinner, Summer Paddle Series, RiverDance, and "Nature Inspires" Art Contest, we reflected on all that we accomplished together with your support! Thank you for celebrating with us. We will take this energy into the future as we continue to save the places you love!

New Sarum BBQ Fundraiser April 16th
Redemption Road Pre-Release Event April 30th
Naturalist Weekend May 14th
Uwharrie Trail Thru Hike May 19-22nd
Annual Meeting June 12th

## Land Protection

# LandTrust Awarded Over \$1.2 Million for Land Protection



Uwharrie River views from the Uwharrie River Bend property.

The LandTrust is proud to have recently received a number of grants and a large private donation for land conservation in the central Piedmont.

The Smith Branch Longleaf Preserve is a 107-acre property located in Montgomery County. The most notable aspect of this property is that it has been managed for more than 20 years for longleaf pine ecosystem restoration and enhancement. A plethora of unique flora and fauna are found on the site, including a rare plant, slender blue

iris (*Iris prismatica*), as well as timber rattlesnake, yellow-fringed orchid, and fox squirrels.

The North Carolina Clean Water Management Trust Fund (CWMTF) has funded a conservation easement on the Smith Branch Longleaf Preserve at \$242,000. CWMTF was established in 1996 to help finance projects that address water quality issues, such as restoring degraded waters and protecting unpolluted waters.

*(Continued on page 3...)*

# Letter from our Board President

I am pleased to introduce you, our LandTrust friends and supporters, to our new Executive Director Travis Morehead.

Previously the Operations Director for the Carolina Thread Trail, Travis also brings a distinguished military background with excellent demonstrated leadership qualities to our organization. Additionally, he has extensive prior experience with land use and code enforcement for the town of Cary. A native of the area, Travis and his family live in Badin in the shadow of Morrow Mountain. With an extensive knowledge of the areas we serve, Travis' demonstrated combination of administrative skills, experience, and knowledge relevant to our mission will serve him well as Executive Director.

The Search Committee performed a thorough search and considered candidates from a wide geographic area before settling on Travis. We believe that he is a perfect fit for our organization. Under Travis' leadership, we look to continue our vision of developing a team of professionals that can bring an enhanced level of service to our area.

In addition to our new ED, we have also hired Ethan Greene as our new Stewardship Director. A Montgomery County native, Ethan finished work for his Master's Degree in December at Mississippi State University and joined us in early January. Ethan is already making great strides to incorporate his expertise and knowledge of our area to revitalize our stewardship program.

Alicia Vasto, our former Stanback intern in 2012 and AmeriCorps member in 2015, has been hired full time and began in February as our Operations and Communications Director. Alicia is a Duke graduate and is familiar with many aspects of our organization as a result of her

internship and AmeriCorps position with us.

With this dynamic trio joining our existing staff, including Joe Morris, Crystal Cockman, and Eli Beverly, we anticipate that we will be able to move forward at full speed in 2016. Our staff has done a magnificent job of stepping up to numerous challenges in the past year and is looking forward to being able to refocus their energy in the coming year on the projects that matter to you, our supporters.

We have many opportunities to expand our work. With a full staff working out of our Salisbury office, we envision new efficiencies and synergies which will allow the Board of Directors to concentrate on developing policies and providing oversight at a level which takes advantage of the many talents which our Board members, volunteers, and friends bring to the table.

Fortunately, last year was very successful from a fiscal standpoint and we move forward into 2016 in solid financial condition. Staff is to be commended for obtaining several large grants which were awarded at the end of 2015 that will allow us to continue the valuable land protection work we do in North Carolina's heartland.

Your Board of Directors is more engaged than ever and is experiencing a renewed surge of purpose working collaboratively with staff through our various committees to synthesize a clear vision of our immediate goals and while always being mindful of our duty to anticipate and appropriately transition into the next phase of the growth for The LandTrust for Central North Carolina.

Thank you for your continued support and service.

- Darrell Hancock



# Land Protection Grants Continued...



*Slender blue iris at Smith Branch Longleaf Preserve.*

The LandTrust has also secured funding from the Open Space Institute (OSI) in the amount of \$51,517. This funding was provided by the Southeast Resilient Landscapes Fund. The Resilient Landscapes Initiative is designed to help land trusts and public agencies strategically protect places that are most likely to endure over the long term in the face of a changing climate.

CWMTF also funded another one of The LandTrust's projects. The Barnes Creek Headwaters is 182 acres in Montgomery County. It possesses the headwaters of the pristine Barnes Creek, an outstanding resource water, which is the highest water quality designation given in North Carolina. The project was funded at \$191,000.

The Uwharrie River Bend property in Montgomery County received OSI Resilient Landscapes funding for purchase by The LandTrust. Located on the Uwharrie River, this property boasts some large bottomland hardwood trees, as well as the rare plant Forkleaf Toothwort (*Cardamine dissecta*). It is also habitat for black-throated green warblers, a bird rarely found in the Piedmont. OSI funded the project at \$90,000.

The Smithfield Agreement Environmental Enhancement Grant program is also contributing to the purchase of Uwharrie River Bend. This grant is administered through the North Carolina



*Bluffs seen across the river from Uwharrie River Bend.*



*Longleaf pines at Smith Branch Longleaf Preserve.*

Attorney General's office (NCAG). Through an agreement between NCAG and Smithfield Foods, Inc., Smithfield contributes up to \$2 million per year to a fund administered by the Attorney General from which funds are paid out annually to projects that provide long or short term environmental enhancement. The permanent protection of Uwharrie River Bend is a long-term environmental enhancement grant in the amount of \$120,000.

Additionally, a private donation of \$350,000 has been committed for the purchase of Uwharrie River Bend. The Conservation Trust for North Carolina (CTNC) is helping cover transactional costs with \$15,000 through their Piedmont, Sandhills, and Coast Small Grants program.

Lastly, the North Carolina Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation (ADFP) Trust Fund funded the purchase of a conservation easement on the 220-acre Williams Farm in Cabarrus County. This farm is largely in cropland, mostly small grains such as corn and soybeans. The farm possesses frontage on the beautiful Rocky River, a popular spot for kayaking. ADFP will be contributing \$175,000 towards the purchase of the agricultural easement on the farm. CTNC will also be contributing \$10,000 for transactional costs through their Farmland Forever Fund.

The LandTrust works hard to secure these grants to continue to do important land protection work in our 10-county region. The grant funding for these projects go towards the purchase of property or the purchase of conservation easements and do not go towards The LandTrust's operational budget. We appreciate your continued support of The LandTrust for Central NC!

# Letter from New Director Travis Morehead

The LandTrust for Central North Carolina is an outstanding organization with an incredible reputation in the conservation community. At one point in my life, I stood on the outside looking in, as this LandTrust met the conservation challenges of the day. Now, some 25,000 acres later, the challenge of conservation continues. However, I am no longer on the outside looking in. On February 15, 2016, I joined the organization as its new Executive Director. Needless to say, I am very honored and excited to be here, as together we chart the course of conservation for the next 20 years.

I was fortunate to grow up in the region now served by The LandTrust; in a close knit rural community often referred to as “the Valley” in eastern Stanly County. It was a community where you knew your neighbors; where your neighbors often shared the surplus from their summer garden; where the ladies canned vegetables and made blackberry jam. A place where the kids fished in the neighbor’s ponds and looked for arrowheads in the farmer’s fresh plowed fields. It sounds idealistic and very Mayberry-like, and perhaps it is, but that was my childhood. From those roots began my connection to the land, to the region, and to the importance of conservation. I have recently moved my family home to “the Valley”, where my roots are deep and my memories are vivid. My hope is that I will be able to pass these experiences on to my children.

Every day the challenge of conserving these places, our natural resources, and our heritage gets a little more difficult. I am reminded of a saying that seems very applicable to our plight— “The only easy day was yesterday.” The LandTrust is an organization that is preparing to meet the challenges that the coming days hold,



but we need your help. In this edition of the LandMark, you will find an envelope whereby you can join The LandTrust team. You can rise and join us in meeting the conservation challenges of tomorrow; we need you now more than ever.

For our current supporters and team members, we thank you for your support. For those that aren’t current members, I would encourage you to join us and share our story with your family and neighbors. Perhaps you may be unable to give monetarily but have some spare time on your hands. We’d love to put your skills to use as a volunteer, here in the office or out in the field. It is my earnest hope that you will join our efforts, to rise and meet the conservation challenge that this new day holds.

President Theodore Roosevelt once said “Nothing in the world is worth having or worth doing unless it means effort, pain, difficulty... I have never in my life envied a human being who led an easy life. I have envied a great many people who led difficult lives and led them well.” The work done by The LandTrust for Central North Carolina is worth doing. Conserving this part of the Piedmont, our home, is worthwhile. It will be difficult and yes, it will require a great deal of effort, but it will be worth it for our time and for generations to come! If you’re up for the challenge ahead, come and join us—we’d love to have you.

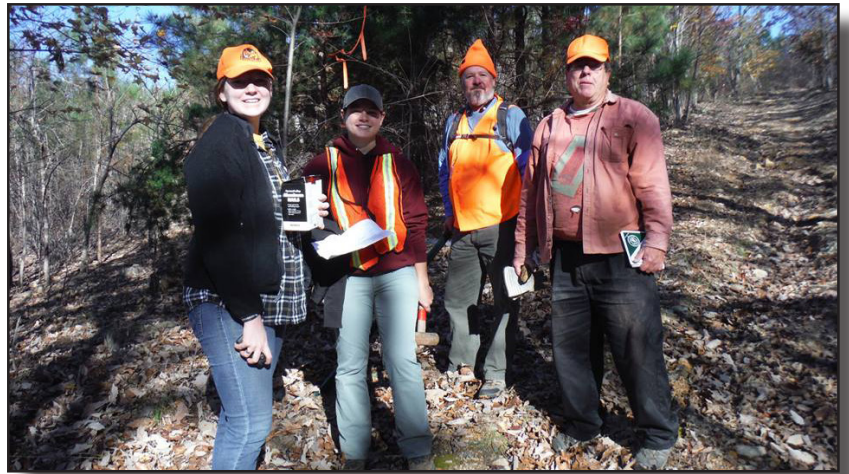
-Travis Morehead



# Sykes Property Sold & Uwharrie TrailBlazer Clean Up

The LandTrust is excited to announce that the Uwharrie Trail is one step closer to being reconnected to its full 40-mile length. The LandTrust was able to purchase the Sykes Property, a 7-acre tract directly across the High Pine Church Road from the NC Zoo's McArthur Property. The McArthur Property will be the site of the new Walker's Creek trailhead for the Uwharrie Trail. The Sykes Property extends the trail across the road and starts to bridge the last gap between the Walker's Creek Trailhead and the Birkhead Wilderness.

When The LandTrust initially purchased the 13-acre Sykes property, it included a house. We were able to carve off 6 acres with the house and resell it, retaining the 7 acres where the future trail will be routed. This portion has some good topography as well as some large rock outcrops at higher elevations.



*Uwharrie TrailBlazers marked the boundaries at the Sykes Property on November 14.*

On November 14, the Uwharrie Trailblazers took their talents to the Sykes property to clean it up and mark boundaries. Trash was hauled out and branches were cleaned out of a historic spring box. Recent archaeology undergraduate, Emery Bencini, joined to tell us about the historical significance of the spring box and other signs of historic human occupation on the site.

The Sykes house and original 13 acres were purchased for \$167,500. The LandTrust resold the house and 6 acres for \$135,000, which leaves a total of \$32,500 paid for the 7 acres that were retained. If you would like to contribute to this project and the extension of the Uwharrie Trail, please contact our Development Director, Joe Morris, at [joe@landtrustnc.org](mailto:joe@landtrustnc.org) or by phone at 704-647-0302.

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## Organizational Development

# New Board Members Spotlight

The LandTrust is excited to announce four new board members have joined the LandTrust cause to help guide and support our efforts to preserve special places in North Carolina's heartland. Our board members generously volunteer their time, skills, and experience to help further the mission of The LandTrust. We welcome Darryl Corriher, Walter Holland, Dan Smith, and Dennis Isaacson. See spotlights of two of our new members below.

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Darryl Corriher returns to our board after previously serving as a member from 2002 to 2005. He continues a family farming tradition with partners Tom Hall and Philip Sloop, growing wheat, corn and soybeans in western Rowan County. He has been farming for 41 years and enjoys the entrepreneurial aspect of farming and the opportunity to be outdoors. His main interest is farmland preservation but he also sees the importance of preserving areas like the Uwharries and the Two Rivers project. Darryl is proud to be a part of The LandTrust board and assist in continuing the great work of preserving these places.



Walter B. Holland was raised on a cattle farm on the South Yadkin River. After graduating with an electrical engineering degree from the University of Notre Dame in 1972, he attended medical school at Wake Forest. He completed a residency in ophthalmology in 1979 and served in the Medical Corps in the US Army as an ophthalmologist from 1979-1982. After that, he started his own ophthalmology practice in Statesville, where he worked until retirement in 2015. In 1995, he and his wife Edie purchased another farm in Iredell County where they manage a cow-calf beef cattle operation. Both of his farms are under easement with The LandTrust since the early 2000s. Walter is the proud parent of three children and grandparent of four. He is especially interested in farmland preservation, as evidenced by his two agricultural easements with The LandTrust. He values agricultural practices which protect water quality. He hopes to see the aesthetically beautiful farmlands of Iredell County preserved in the future.

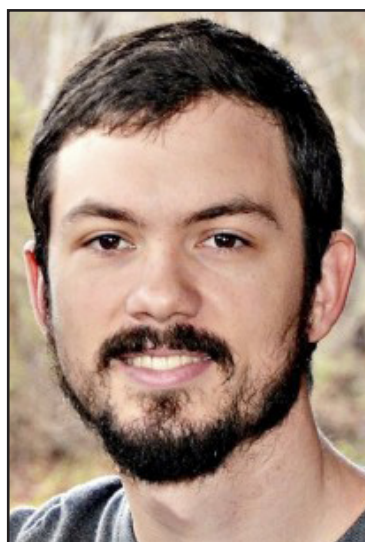
## The LandTrust Welcomes Three New Staff Members!

The LandTrust welcomes three new staff members that have joined our team at the beginning of this year. Travis Morehead, Alicia Vasto, and Ethan Greene join our existing staff of Joe Morris, Crystal Cockman, and Eli Beverly. Together, we will continue doing the good work of saving the places you love!

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### Travis Morehead, Executive Director

We welcomed Travis to The LandTrust as our new Executive Director on February 15. Travis joined us from the Catawba Lands Conservancy, where he was the operations director of the Carolina Thread Trail project. Prior to that, he served in the military, including a combat deployment in Iraq, and worked as a senior and principal city planner for the town of Cary. Travis grew up in Stanly County and attended high school in Albemarle. He has a degree in political science with a concentration in town, city, and county management from Appalachian State University. Travis is dedicated to the Uwharrie region and the heartland area of North Carolina. He states, “The LandTrust for Central North Carolina has a national reputation, and I consider a chance to be a part of the unique work it is doing here as the opportunity of a lifetime.”



### Ethan Greene, Stewardship Director

Ethan began his position as our new Stewardship Director on January 4. Ethan grew up in Troy where he attended West Montgomery High School and roamed the Uwharrie Mountains in his free time. At NC State, Ethan studied fisheries, wildlife and conservation biology. He continued with graduate work at Mississippi State University, focusing his research on the ecological effects of growing switchgrass biofuels within pine plantations. In North Carolina, his work has included monitoring small mammal communities in Mocksville, researching white-tailed deer populations in Moore County, and helping restore natural landscapes in Pittsboro. “As stewardship director, I can address causes of ecological problems and not just the symptoms. The LandTrust’s board, staff, and amazingly generous supporters are deeply caring people dedicated to protecting the land, ecology, people, and future of central North Carolina. It’s a privilege to be a part of this effort,” said Ethan.

### Alicia Vasto, Operations and Communications Director

The LandTrust has named Alicia Vasto its new Operations and Communications Director, effective February 8. Alicia already has a great deal of experience with The LandTrust, working as a Stanback intern during the summer of 2012 and serving as the AmeriCorps Stewardship and Outreach Coordinator from last April through January. Alicia grew up in Adel, Iowa and received a degree in environmental science from the University of Notre Dame. In 2013, she attained a Master of Environmental Management degree from Duke University, completing a management plan for the Low Water Bridge Preserve as her master’s project. Alicia is thrilled with the opportunity to continue working with The LandTrust, stating, “I have learned a lot during my time with The LandTrust so far and had the chance to work on many interesting projects. I look forward to continuing to do meaningful work in this unique part of the state.”



## Upcoming Events

# New Sarum Grand Opening BBQ Fundraiser

The LandTrust for Central North Carolina is partnering with our friends and new neighbors at New Sarum Brewing Company, conveniently located on Depot St next door to our Salisbury office in the Gateway building, for their grand opening on April 16th from 1:30 PM until about 9 PM.

The folks at New Sarum Brewing get it. The LandTrust has worked to protect over 1,000 acres on the Yadkin River, immediately adjacent to the in-take facility that supplies drinking water to Salisbury and parts of Rowan County. The narrow sliver of land between the South Yadkin and Yadkin Rivers is affectionately known as “The Point” - a permanently protected open space. This conserved property helps provide clean water for municipal consumption and, of course, for making good beer!



*Shakerag BBQ at RiverDance last year.*

Shakerag BBQ will be on hand to prepare wood-smoked, North Carolina-style BBQ as a fundraiser for The LandTrust. Pitmaster Seth Morris, a former LandTrust intern and current UNC-Chapel Hill law student, practices the fine art of traditional, slow roasting locally-sourced pork over firewood coals from hickory and oak. It is good stuff!

In addition to great food and local brew, the grand opening event will feature a line-up of several bands and tours of the impressive brewery facility. Make plans to stop by and have a cold one and some ‘cue to benefit The LandTrust. Come help us welcome New Sarum Brewing Company to the neighborhood!



## Upcoming Events

# John Hart *Redemption Road* Pre-Release Event

Native son of Salisbury and New York Times bestselling author John Hart has generously offered the occasion of the pre-release of his new novel *Redemption Road* to benefit The LandTrust for Central North Carolina. As a former LandTrust board member, Hart has long been a supporter of the conservation mission. Many of his bestselling thrillers are set in the familiar geography of the North Carolina Piedmont and reflect his immense knowledge of local history and the natural environment. Hart has done it again with *Redemption Road*, creating for his characters, on paper, a landscape of the imagination that resembles the places we North Carolinians love and live. The LandTrust is proud and humbled to be part of this extraordinary opportunity.

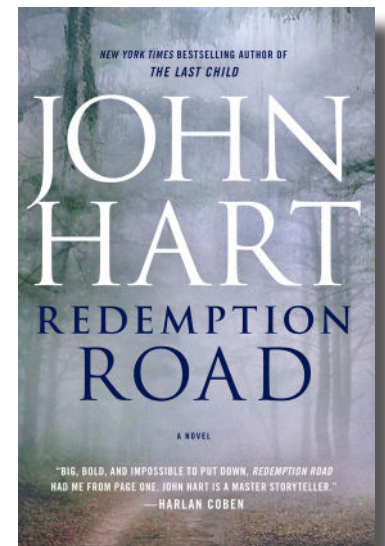


In addition to spectacular Southern culinary delights by Divine Appetit, guests will receive a signed copy of *Redemption Road*. Hart and his publisher, Peter Wolverton, will discuss the novel and the writing process.

The pre-release event will be held beginning at 7:00 PM on Saturday, April 30th at the Rowan Museum in downtown Salisbury (202 N. Main St., Salisbury, NC), which was built in 1854 as a county courthouse—the perfect setting for a Southern mystery with legal twists and turns. To purchase event tickets, visit [www.landtrustcnc.org/2016/johnhart/](http://www.landtrustcnc.org/2016/johnhart/).

Adding to the excitement of this one of a kind event, The LandTrust is hosting a raffle to name a character in John Hart’s next novel! Tickets for the Character Naming Raffle will be sold for \$20.00 each with proceeds benefiting The LandTrust. The winner will be drawn at the event on April 30 but does not need to be present to win. Entries may be purchased online at [www.landtrustcnc.org](http://www.landtrustcnc.org) or at the event.

Contact Joe with questions at [joe@landtrustcnc.org](mailto:joe@landtrustcnc.org) or (704)647-0302.



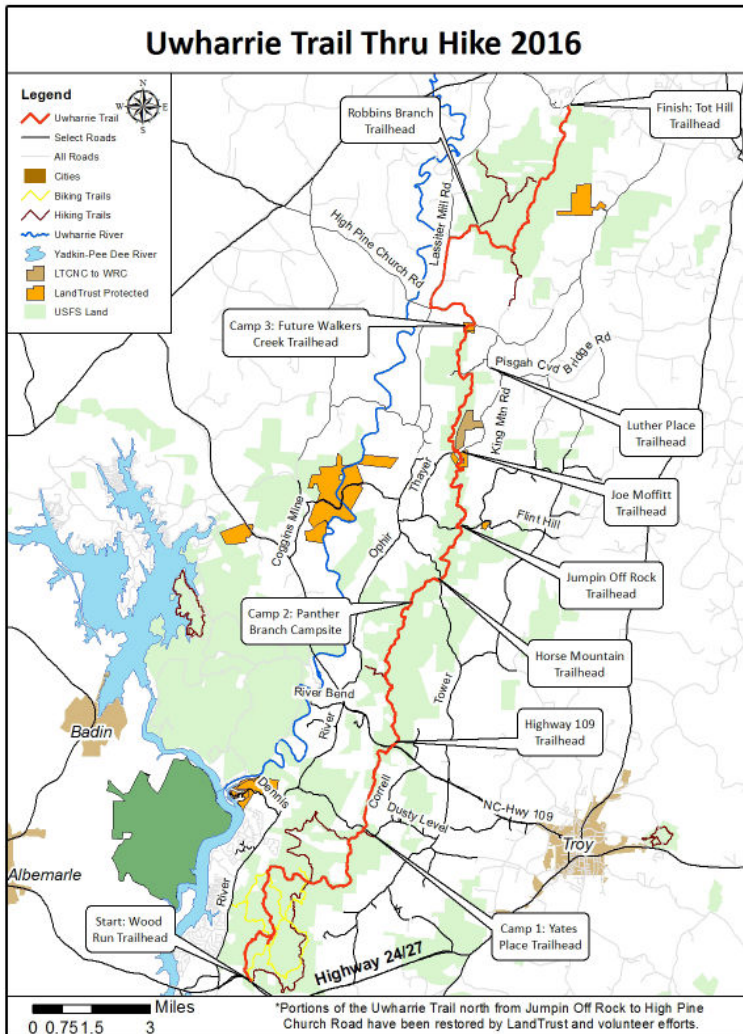
## Upcoming Events

# Join us for Our 4th Annual Uwharrie Trail Thru Hike and Celebration!

At 40 miles, the Uwharrie Trail is the longest single-track footpath in Piedmont North Carolina. The LandTrust and other conservation partners have been working for the past 20 years to reconnect this trail, and thanks to these efforts it can now be hiked in its 40-mile entirety. The Uwharrie Trail is known for its cultural and natural significance, including such unique features as old gold mines, rare plants and wildlife, ghost stories, and more. Join us for an awesome backpacking trip through some of the oldest mountains in the world, as we pay tribute to the trailblazers and uncover the secrets of the past.

The thru hike is four approximately 10-mile days with camping at established campsites: Yates Place, Panther Branch, and the McArthur/Walker's Creek Trailhead. Panther Branch is the only campsite without vehicle access but it is only a short walk.

Thru-hikers will park at the end of the trail (Tot Hill Golf Club, 3185 Tot Hill Farm Rd, Asheboro, NC) and we provide shuttles to the start (Wood Run Trailhead on Highway 24/27) on May 19. The shuttles from the Tot Hill Golf Club to the trailhead will run at 7:00 and 8:30 AM. Campsites will be near roads, so if you are interested in joining in



for only a portion or in slackpacking, that is an option but you must arrange for your own transportation.

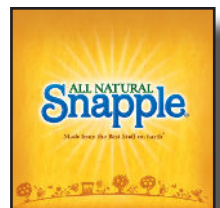
We will also offer a Saturday (May 21) day hike option. Hikers will park at the Walker Creek Trailhead (6871 High Pine Church Rd, Asheboro, NC 27205). A shuttle will run at 8:00 AM to take day-hikers from Walker Creek to the start of the day's hike at the Jumpin' Off Rock Trailhead.

A cookout celebration will be held at the Walker Creek Trailhead on Saturday, May 21 beginning around 4 PM. Beer will be generously provided by Four Saints Brewing Company in Asheboro.



All participants and cookout attendees must register at [www.landtrustcnc.yapsody.com](http://www.landtrustcnc.yapsody.com). This year's thru hike is \$40, the day hike is \$5, and the cookout is \$10. Any additional donations will go towards reconnecting the Uwharrie Trail!

Special thanks to the Dr. Pepper Snapple Group for providing support for the Thru Hike event and the completion of the Uwharrie Trail!



We hope to see you on the trail! Visit our website for more information. Contact Alicia at [alicia@landtrustcnc.org](mailto:alicia@landtrustcnc.org) or 704-647-0302 with questions.



## Upcoming Events

# Uwharrie Naturalist Weekend - May 14th



*View from a canoe on the Uwharrie River at last year's Naturalist Weekend.*

The LandTrust will host our 4th annual Uwharrie Naturalist Weekend on May 14th this year. Naturalist Weekend is a one of a kind event in the Uwharries. It

is a day of nature exploration and showcases the 1,300-acre Low Water Bridge Preserve on the Uwharrie River in Montgomery County. John Gerwin, ornithologist at the North Carolina Museum of Sciences in Raleigh, will lead morning and afternoon hikes, pointing out unique bird species by sight and sound along the way. Neotropical migrant songbirds will be abundant at this time of year, and hikes will also feature discussions about native plants, reptiles, amphibians, and other species found along the way.

Additionally, we will have a paddle down the Uwharrie River during the afternoon of the 14th. Bring your own boat or borrow one of ours! Boats will be available on a first come first serve basis for those that RSVP. Paddlers will enjoy the cool water of the river and the unique wildlife that can be found along the 7-mile stretch of river from Low Water Bridge down to the Hwy 109 take out.

The approximate address for Low Water Bridge Preserve is 860 Low Water Bridge Rd, Troy, NC 27371. Hikes will begin at 10 AM and 2 PM. The paddle trip will begin at 2 PM. The event is free but donations are welcome to offset the costs of putting on this program. We hope you can join us! RSVP information will be available soon on our website. Contact Alicia with questions at 704-647-0302 or [alicia@landtrustcnc.org](mailto:alicia@landtrustcnc.org).

## Past Events

# Boone's Cave Park Hike

The Sunday after Thanksgiving, a motley crew of about 20 headed out to Boone's Cave Park to explore the historic haunts of Daniel Boone. The day was warm but gave way to sprinkles in the late afternoon. This did not daunt our staunch group, and we were fully able to explore the 110-acre park in Davidson County.

LandTrust staff led two groups of hikers. The first stop was the historic caves along the Yadkin River that are said to have been used by Daniel Boone himself. The caves were dim and damp but easy to climb up into, as the majority of our hikers did. We were impressed with how deep the caves really were.

Hikers then went up to the highest part of the park at the Yadkin River overlook. The overlook provided nice views of the wide river through the bare trees. In the lowlands, we scampered across the wooden boardwalks to check out the large eastern cottonwood tree. At 160 feet tall and with a circumference of 15'8", it is one of the largest cottonwoods in the state! Hikers also enjoyed checking out the log cabin, a replica of a small cabin built in 1752 with round logs.

Thanks to all who joined us to work off their Thanksgiving feasts with a nice hike in the woods! To those who missed out, we hope to see you next time.



*Hikers explore the caves and wetland area at Boone's Cave Park.*

# “Nature Inspires” Art Contest

In partnership with the Rowan-Salisbury School System and in honor of The LandTrust’s 20th anniversary, The LandTrust presented the “Nature Inspires” Art Contest during the fall of 2015. The art contest was an opportunity for local high school art students to express and share how their local environment inspired them through creative works of art.

Art and nature are inextricably related in a variety of ways. Nature has always been an inexhaustible source of inspiration for artists across all mediums, throughout the eras and around the globe. Although we rely on nature for necessities such as clean air, water, food, and personal well-being, our increasing isolation from our environment often appears as a barrier to accessing and enjoying it to the fullest. Art can be a crucial bridge between the need for nature and the lack of opportunities or impetus to explore it. The same feelings of fulfillment we get from experiencing nature can be had from experiencing art. It can also be a tool used to draw attention to the challenges we face in protecting our air, water, and land.

The “Nature Inspires” Art Contest was conceived by then LandTrust AmeriCorps member Alicia Vasto with the goal of encouraging students to explore the natural beauty that surrounds them in Piedmont North Carolina to gain inspiration for their works. Students then translated what they saw and experienced into creative works of art that were enjoyed by visitors to downtown Salisbury.

The Salisbury Business Center graciously hosted the gallery of students’ work in December and January. A panel of judges including Ed Norvell, Jenn Selby, and Darrien Staton selected the winners. With funding provided by the Rowan Arts Council, winners of the contest received Visa gift cards.

First place winner Kierstyn Buchanan of Jesse Carson High School also received professional framing of her winning piece. The second place winner was Krystal Rothermund of East Rowan High School, and Courtney Barron of West Rowan High School came in third. Honorable mentions were given to Kaila Wacker of Jesse Carson High School and Omar Abdulrub of North



Senior Kierstyn Buchanan with her framed winning artwork.



The “Nature Inspires” Art Contest was hosted at the Salisbury Business Center.

Rowan High School.

To celebrate the contest and students’ hard work, a reception and talk was held on January 21st at the Salisbury Business Center. The gallery was open for viewing and delicious hors d’oeuvres were provided by Divine Appetit. Special guest Jay Leutze, an author and conservationist, spoke on the intersection of nature with art and story-telling. Leutze is well-known for his book *Stand Up That Mountain*, the true story of a small town’s fight to protect a piece of wilderness along the Appalachian Trail from being destroyed by a mining operation. The event was free and attracted approximately 55 attendees.

Congratulations to the all of the winners and participants of the art contest for a job well done! And a very warm thank you to all of the partners and supporters of this project.

See pictures of the winning submissions on the back page of this newsletter!



Author and conservationist Jay Leutze spoke about the intersection of outdoor experience with art and storytelling.

# Thanks to our Donors!

Your donations allow us to continue “Saving the Places You Love” in the Piedmont. The following are new or renewing members from January 1, 2015, through December 31, 2015. Every effort has been made to ensure these names are correct. Should there be an error, or if you have questions or comments, please contact us at (704) 647-0302. Thanks for supporting The LandTrust!

Heartland 100  
Golden Oak \$5,000 and up

Mr. and Mrs. Brent Barnes  
Ms. Frances Cannon  
Mrs. Susan Cloninger  
Mr. and Mrs. David B. Craft  
Ms. Amy Grissom  
Mr. Peter Wilson Hairston  
Mr. Billy Joe Kepley  
Ms. Robin C. Mason  
Mr. and Mrs. Dwight Ferrand Messinger  
Mr. and Mrs. Mark C. Ritchie  
Mr. and Mrs. William C. Stanback  
Mr. Brad Stanback and Ms. Shelli Lodge-  
Stanback  
Mr. and Mrs. Fred J. Stanback  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert T. Tucker

Heartland 100  
Maple \$2500 - \$4999

Mr. Louis Eubanks  
Mr. and Mrs. John G. Lipscomb  
Mr. and Mrs. Joseph C. Morris  
Mr. and Mrs. Edward Proctor Norvell  
Mr. Rednecheck  
Mr. William Penn Wood  
Mr. and Mrs. Bill Webb

Heartland 100  
Dogwood \$1000 - \$2499

Mr. and Mrs. Gregory M. Alcorn  
Ms. Amy Pitsner Barnhardt  
Mr. and Mrs. Michael Stephen Bauk  
The Reverend Kellie and Mr. Richard  
Browne  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert L. Cook Jr.  
Mr. Gene Ellis  
Dr. and Mrs. Scott W. Firczak  
Mr. and Mrs. Jimmy S. Forrest  
Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Fuller  
Ms. Ruth Ann Grissom and Dr. Marcus  
Plescia  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert G. Hazen  
Mr. and Mrs. West Hunter  
Mrs. Geraldine T Hurley  
Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Pannill Hurley  
Mr. and Mrs. William Charlie Latham  
Mr. and Mrs. Owen Barbour Norvell  
Ms. Florence B. Peck  
Mr. Pence and Dr. Carla Pence  
Mr. Chris Phelps  
Mr. John K. Robertson

Mr. and Mrs. James F. Rollans  
Mr. Bruce Rufty  
Mr. and Mrs. Richard W. Shaver  
Mrs. Banks D. Shepherd  
Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Hayes Smith  
Mr. and Mrs. Tom E. Smith  
Mr. and Mrs. Leo Wallace III  
Mr. and Mrs. John Michael Walter  
Mr. and Mrs. Dan R. Williams

Benefactor \$500 - \$999

Mr. and Mrs. Andrew James Abramson  
Mr. and Mrs. Tony Almeida  
Mr. Charles W. Broadwell  
Mr. and Mrs. Ronald O. Bryant  
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Childress  
Mr. and Mrs. Edward Clement  
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# Dunn's Mountain New Year's Hike

A group of 40 intrepid LandTrust members and friends made their way to Dunn's Mountain Park near Salisbury on January 2nd to help kick off the New Year with a refreshing view of the Piedmont landscape. The park, now owned and operated by the Rowan County Parks and Recreation Department, was made possible by the generosity of Bill and Nancy Stanback and the conservation wherewithal of The LandTrust for Central North Carolina.

Following several days of cold and rainy weather, the first outing of 2016 was greeted with sunshine and low humidity, allowing extended views from atop one of Rowan County's highest elevation points. Hikers were welcomed by LandTrust board member and Rowan County Parks and Recreation naturalist Bob Pendergrass.

Our guide for the afternoon was Dr. Jay Bolin, a professor of biology at Catawba College. Dr. Bolin expertly led the group on a short hike to several granite outcroppings that are usually inaccessible to the public. These sensitive areas are protected due to the unique plant communities, including mosses, lichens, and delicate plants, which grow within fissures and shallow soil deposits found on the rock surfaces. The granitic rock microclimate, as Dr. Bolin explained, is extreme and complex, and is suited only to plants that are adapted to a very hot, dry, and nutrient-deficient environment. The LandTrust hikers were particularly impressed by the range and beauty of the succulents, cacti, and juniper growing in the unique geological formation.

The beautiful, clear day provided commanding views of the surrounding landscape, with unobstructed vistas to downtown Salisbury and the skyscrapers of Charlotte, Winston-Salem, and Greensboro. These manmade structures served as landmarks that helped visually orient our group, but paled in comparison to the sublime immensity of the Blue Ridge escarpment, Pilot Mountain, the Yadkin River Valley, and the full breadth of the Uwharrie mountain range.

Helping people spend time on the land is a key component of the mission of The LandTrust for Central North Carolina. Our New Year's outing was just one of the many ways we seek to achieve this objective. We hope to see you at our next hike!



*Dr. Jay Bolin led the hikers to see the unique plant communities of Dunn's Mountain.*



*Hikers of all ages enjoyed the beautiful day just outside of Salisbury.*

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## Save the Dates!

### Annual Meeting - June 12th

This year's annual meeting will be held on June 12 at Gold Hill Mines Historic Park at the Russell-Rufty Shelter (755 St Stephens Church Rd, Gold Hill, NC 28071). The annual meeting is an opportunity to meet our board members and discuss the past and future activities of The LandTrust. This year we will also introduce our new Executive Director, Travis Morehead. All friends and members of The LandTrust are welcome. The meeting will commence at 3 PM. Light refreshments will be served. Dress is casual. We will have a chance to explore the Gold Hill Rail Trail and the historic town of Gold Hill. We hope you can join us!

### RiverDance - August 20th

Be sure to mark your calendars for August 20th for RiverDance 2016! Plans are being made for what has become The LandTrust's signature, end-of-summer celebration. As in years past, this benefit for The LandTrust has welcomed members, new and long-standing, to this annual celebration of our conservation efforts across our 10-county region. While music, food, refreshments and, of course, dancing are the hallmarks of RiverDance, we are making plans for the silent auction and other opportunities to raise awareness and funds for our important land protection work. If you'd like to participate as a sponsor, host, or planning committee member, please let us know! Contact Joe Morris at [joe@landtrustcnc.org](mailto:joe@landtrustcnc.org) or 704-647-0302. It is a lot fun and a great way to meet people who share a passion for land protection. More information to come!



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### “Nature Inspires” Art Contest Winners!



Second place winner: “Cerulean Warbler” by Krystal Rothermund, senior at East Rowan High School.



Third place winner: “Circle” by Courtney Barron, senior at West Rowan High School.

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Honorable Mention: “Scenic Piedmont North Carolina” by Omar Abdulrub, freshman at North Rowan High School.



Honorable Mention: “Wood Ducks at High Rock Lake” by Kaila Wacker, sophomore at Jesse Carson High School.