



LandMark 2015

20th Anniversary Edition



Eastern mud turtle

A publication of The Land Trust for Central NC

Events

Celebrate 20 Years of The LandTrust All Year!



A family enjoying Earth Day Jam last year.

The LandTrust has a wide variety of great events planned for this year to help celebrate 20 years of saving 25,000 acres of places you love in the Piedmont! We hope you can join us for one or more, as we reflect on all that we have accomplished together with your support! Below are a few upcoming and past events. Watch our website for more in the fall as we continue to celebrate our 20th anniversary all year long.

Uwharrie Naturalist Weekend May 9th and 10th
Uwharrie Trail Backpacking Thru-Hike May 28th - 31st
Uwharrie Trail Workdays - June 13th, September 12th, October 10th
Summer Paddle Series - June 20th, July 17th, August 23rd, September 12th
RiverDance 2015 at the Historic Salisbury Train Depot - August 15th

Land Protection

Forks of Little River Park Purchase Complete!



The Forks of the Little River on the newly preserved passive park property.

The Town of Star is now the owner of a beautiful new passive park and important paddling and fishing access to the Little River thanks to important state trust fund monies and a partnership between the Town of Star and The Land Trust for Central NC.

This 30-acre property acquired in February by the Town of Star is a critical access to the Little River for paddlers and anglers alike. Furthermore, it has beautiful mature

hardwood forests, with large rock outcrops and mountain laurel and galax. The natural communities throughout this property provide a mountainous feel uncommonly found in the Piedmont. It is a noteworthy natural area located at the confluence of the West Fork and the East Fork of the Little River on Okeewemee-Star Road. These streams are classified as Nationally Significant Aquatic Habitat by the NC Natural Heritage

(Continued on page 3...)

Letter from the Incoming Executive Director

Having spent almost the last 9 years with The Land Trust for Central North Carolina, I am so excited to share the news that I have been selected to be the new Executive Director of this phenomenal organization. I follow in the footsteps of our former leaders, Jeff Michael and Jason Walser, who both have been visionaries for this organization and professional mentors to me. They are dedicated individuals, passionate about the cause of land conservation in our region, and I aspire to continue the great work they have done over the past 20 years

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself, but first of all, I want to thank you for your support. Because of your generosity, we have preserved 25,000 acres in the past 20 years. Your gifts have made it possible for me to do something I love so much, which I passionately feel is some of the most important work on Earth.

Having been a part of The Land Trust for Central North Carolina for so long, I know how meaningful the work we do is to so many people. I am excited for this opportunity to direct this wonderful organization in this new leadership position and into a new era of land conservation.

Those of you who know me know that I'm as likely to be found in the woods as anywhere else, and I appreciate the outdoors from a wide range of experiences. Being from the area (Moore County originally) and an avid hiker, kayaker, birdwatcher, backpacker, hunter, and fisherwoman, it is very rewarding to me to be a part of our work preserving our special natural spaces and making these areas more open to the public.

I have undergraduate and masters degrees from Duke University, in Environmental Science, and Environmental Management, respectively. Though I was initially most



Crystal Cockman with a yellow lady slipper on a Land Trust protected property in the Uwharries.

interested in environmental health, an internship with The LandTrust between the two years of my master's program drew me into to land trust work. The internship focused on a conservation prioritization plan on the Uwharrie River. The project required extensive GIS and kayaking (both new to me at the time), and searching for endangered mussels. I've always had a strong conservation ethic and cared about our natural environment, and this job offered me the perfect opportunity to learn the skills necessary to preserve important places and unique species in an area very dear to me.

The mountains and the coast of North Carolina are special places, but there are many beautiful natural areas in the Piedmont that merit protection as well. Making these areas more easily accessible to the public provides us all with opportunities to challenge ourselves-- to have authentic experiences away from cell phones and computer screens, to exert ourselves physically and mentally, and to take time to explore and enjoy the outdoors with family and friends.

With your support, The LandTrust has already accomplished great things, but there is still much left to be done. We are a strong organization that has recently gotten nationally accredited and holds ourselves to high standards. The lands we preserve are protected in perpetuity, and we are uniquely able to leave this legacy of conserving our natural, scenic, historic, farmland, and outstanding water resources for future generations. I am very blessed to be a part of this important work, and I know it is only through the generous support of donors such as you that we are able to continue in our mission. Thank you for your continued partnership as we work hard to Save the Places We Love in the Piedmont.

Crystal J. Cockman



Nell Allen with the NC Zoo and Crystal Cockman at the Arnett Branch Nichols Langleaf Preserve

Forks of Little River Passive Park Continued....



Piedmont Indigo-bush, a state rare plant.

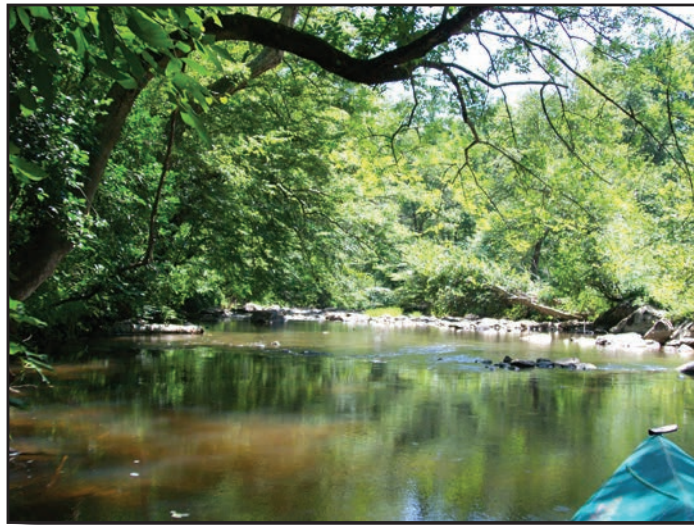
program, and eight species of rare or endangered mussels have been found in the river on this property. Rare plants including *Amorpha schwerinii* (Piedmont Indigo-bush) are found here, as well.

“This property is a real jewel in this region, both ecologically and aesthetically,” states Executive Director Crystal Cockman. “This is a truly gorgeous spot – perfect for a family picnic, where children can play on the rocks and in the



Yellow crowned night heron on this stretch of Little River.

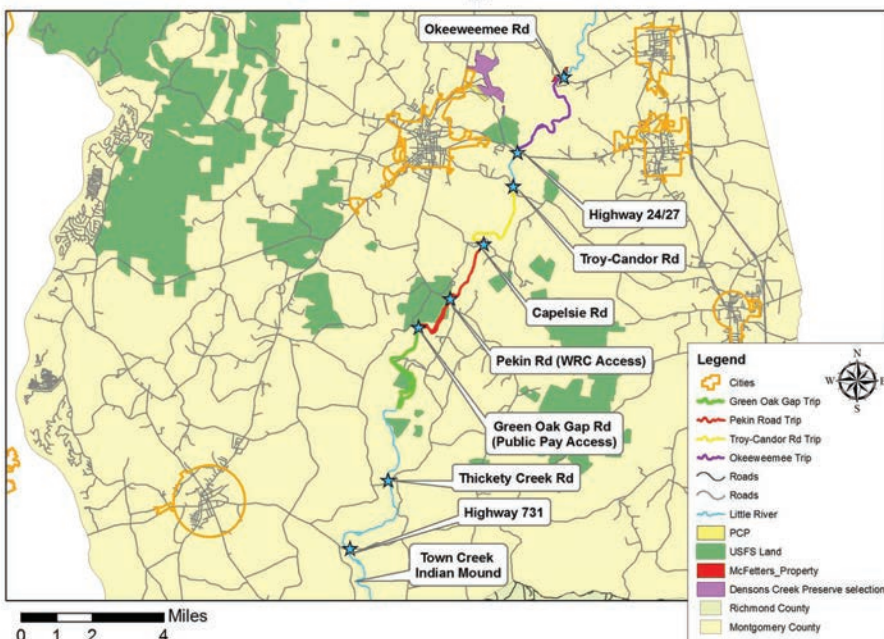
river, and enjoy the beauty that this area has to offer. The LandTrust is so excited to partner with the Town to protect this special place for all to enjoy.”



Scenic hardwood forest here makes for a popular kayaking spot.

The new park was purchased with a combination of NC Clean Water Management Trust Fund (CWMTF) monies and Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) monies. The LandTrust worked with the Town of Star to apply for CWMTF monies for half the purchase price of the property. These were awarded in December of 2013. PARTF required dedicated matching funds before being eligible for their funding, and securing the CWMTF funding made that application possible. CWMTF dedicated \$60,000 to the project for acquisition and transactional expenses, and PARTF awarded the remaining \$47,500 to purchase the site.

Little River - Paddling Access Points



The Town of Star and The LandTrust worked together to administer the grants and acquire the property, and will continue working to develop trails for hiking, fishing, picnicking, and more. The LandTrust, the Town and other partners hope to work together to develop parking and a more formal canoe access in the future as a second phase of the project. This builds off other public canoe access areas downstream, including the new Town of Troy owned access on Troy-Candor Road, the NC Wildlife Resources Commission owned access at Pekin Road, and a community pay access on Green Oak Gap Rd.

Further south still on the Little River is the NC Department of Cultural Resources owned and managed Town Creek Indian Mound. The archeological resources of this site are still in early exploration. Special thanks to the Norcross Wildlife Foundation for providing short-term loan funds for this project.

Cotton Creek Longleaf Preserve in Montgomery County Donated to The LandTrust!

Piedmont longleaf pine forests are few and far between these days. Finding one intact with remnants of the past in the form of cat-face stumps-- historic trees scarred for resin collection used in turpentine production-- is even more uncommon. When Jerald Saunders and his sister, Nancy Kohler, reached out to The LandTrust looking into options for conserving the unique longleaf stands on their property, our Board of Directors quickly saw the need to accept ownership of this special place.

This 30-acre property near Biscoe was donated to The LandTrust in December of 2014. "This unique property boasts some 90+ year old longleaf pine, and has more historic stumps and trees with cat-facing than any other site I've ever seen," said Associate Director Crystal Cockman. In just two casual site visits here, staff and volunteers found a wide variety of wildlife, including an ovenbird nest, a spotted salamander, and a rare baptisia plant.

Mr. Saunders remembers working in these trees when he was very young, helping gather pitch used to make tar and turpentine. His parents' and grandparents' love of the land, and his understanding of the special management needs of longleaf pine forests, resulted in his seeking out The LandTrust to conserve this property. Its unique location between known longleaf in the Sandhills and Uwharries may make it an even more significant site in the future.



One of the huge historic cat-face stumps located on the site.

Plank Road Slate Knolls Preserved in Stanly County!



Plank Road Slate Knolls on the left on the scenic Rocky River.

In our last newsletter we announced that we were seeking funds to preserve a significant natural heritage area in Stanly County known as Plank Road Slate Knolls. This 13-acre property possesses nearly 1000 feet of frontage on the Rocky River. It also has two rare natural communities (Basic Oak-Hickory Forest and Basic Piedmont Bluff Glade), three rare plants (Missouri rockcress, Piedmont aster, and Walter's violet), and one watch list species (bracted skullcap).

Thanks to funding from private donor Louis Eubanks in response to our previous newsletter, and to grant funding from the NC Clean Water Management Trust Fund, The LandTrust was able to purchase this property in December 2014!

The Rocky River corridor has long been a focus of The LandTrust. Less than half a mile upstream of this site is a 330-acre conservation easement we hold on the McSwain Farm. The Carolina Thread Trail is making the Rocky River a focus for their efforts as well, and they have purchased a new access between these two conservation lands on Plank Road. A formal access with parking and canoe launch is expected to open here in 2015. Thanks to all those who made protection of this site possible! We are proud to preserve this scenic stretch of river and the natural areas found here!

Shadow Lake Property Preserved by Unique Partnership



Shadow Lake on the newly protected property in Moore County.

The LandTrust is excited to announce the completion of a 215-acre conservation easement on a special property in Moore County through a unique partnership with Edwards Wood Products. For our first ever conservation partnership with a timber company, The LandTrust worked with Edwards to preserve a property known as “Shadow Lake.” Edwards Wood Products purchased the site from the Mac Baker family a few years ago. As one condition of the sale,

they made a promise to the family that they would conserve the site. They were hoping to work with the NC Forest Service to protect the site with a conservation easement, but the easement program they were developing never materialized. The LandTrust has a relationship with Edwards because we have property that adjoins them in other counties, so we were happy to be able to partner with them on this project.

This unique property is located on the fault line between the Piedmont and Sandhills, and as a result has a diversity of forest and wildlife habitat. It has nearly 6,000 feet of river frontage on the Little River, which is fed by four tributaries also found on the site. As a result, wetlands, water, and related wildlife abound here. The site is comprised primarily of mixed hardwood and pine forest, with some very large and tall pine trees, particularly in areas around the lake. Other conservation lands nearby include the Eastwood Preserve owned by the NC Plant Conservation Program, several conservation easements held by The Sandhills Area Land Trust, and several hundred acres of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service safe harbor agreements. Special thanks to the Conservation Trust for N.C. for providing mini-grant funding to help with this important project.

Almond Farm Preserved in Stanly County

In September of 2011, the entire Almond Family, all six siblings and their mother Christine, gathered around their family table and met with LandTrust Associate Director Crystal Cockman to discuss conservation options for their family farm. Their father, Coy Almond, had instilled in them a conservation ethic by working hard to purchase, put together, and keep this 80-acre family farm going strong.

It seemed natural to them that they would agree with the need to preserve the farm to honor their father and mother’s wishes. LandTrust staff put together an application for the North Carolina Agricultural and Farmland Development Trust Fund (NCADFP) that December, followed by a grant to the U.S. Farm and Ranchland Protection Program (FRPP) that following spring. Funding was granted from both agencies, but the creation of a conservation easement that perfectly fit the needs of all took some time. All parties were glad to see it come to fruition in December 2014.

This beautiful farm, situated on gorgeous, rolling Stanly County farmland, is a small but diverse one. The farm contains some pastureland, which houses beef cattle, along with a couple of friendly mules. In addition, Earl has cultivated a blackberry orchard, and sells the fruit at the local farmer’s market, and has



N.C. ADFP director Dewitt Hardee, landowner Earl Almond, and Simm DeLapp standing in front of the beautiful farm during a site visit.

also started a small Christmas tree farm.

Thanks to this special family for coming together and preserving another wonderful piece of farmland in NC’s heartland. Thanks also to the NC ADFP Trust Fund, FRPP, and the Conservation Trust for North Carolina’s Farmland Forever Fund for contributing towards this project.

Past Events

Uwharrie Trail Celebration & Workdays - Thanks Volunteers!

On November 9th, The LandTrust led a 7-mile hike in the Birkhead Wilderness, followed by a cookout on the McArthur Property on High Pine Church Road, a future trailhead for the Uwharrie Trail. The fall colors were at their peak for this beautiful hike and celebration, a small way to thank all our volunteers who have spent countless hours working to restore the historic Uwharrie Trail.



Edward Teasley (center) in front of one sign he installed on the new section of Uwharrie Trail on the McArthur Property with other volunteers at our February 14th workday.

More than 100 volunteers have spent over 1000 hours restoring lost sections of the Uwharrie Trail for the past two years. This includes the involvement of three different Scout groups and three different Eagle Scout projects. Congratulations to Devon Poynter for completing his Eagle Scout project-- restoring and installing signage for the section of trail from the Joe Moffitt Trailhead over King Mountain to the Dewey Luther trailhead. Edward Teasley from Greensboro brought out a great group of more than 30 people on January 10th for the workday on the McArthur Property, and came back to finish up the trail and signage there at our February workday. If you have not made it out yet for a trail workday, these will continue the second Saturday of each month this fall. For more information, find our Facebook group "Uwharrie Trailblazers" or check The LandTrust website at www.landtrustcnc.org.

Past Events

Natty Greene's Brewing Company Earth Day Jam 2015

Thanks for supporting the 4th Annual Natty Greene's Brewing Company Earth Day Jam April 17-19! This year, the event was held at Dark Before Dawn Farm in Salisbury, NC. The 16-acre farm, just outside Salisbury, is owned by ardent LandTrust supporter, Susan Clonger.

In addition to Natty Green's Brewing Company, local breweries Morgan Ridge, Old Sarum, Foothills and Quest, were featured with our festival concessions. Musical guests Tim Reynolds/TR3, Dangermuffin, Dark Water Rising, and more than 20 other bands performed to enthusiastic crowds.

A Special Thanks to Our Sponsors!

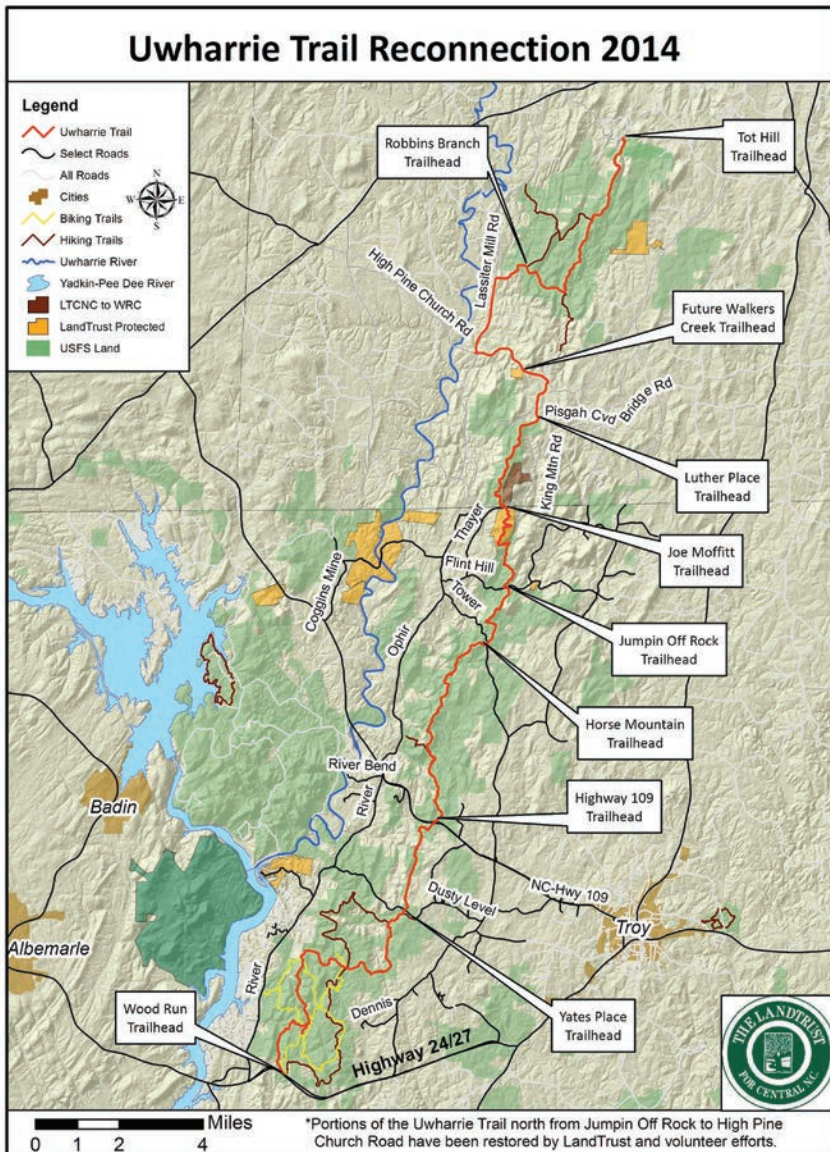


Become a Uwharrie Trailblazer, and thanks for making our 3rd Annual Uwharrie Trail Thru Hike a success!

The LandTrust is excited to announce a new level of membership called the **Uwharrie Trailblazer!** This membership category is specifically targeted towards individuals who would like to support our Uwharrie Trail reconnection efforts. It is \$50 and includes all hikes, cookouts, work days, and other related Uwharrie Trail activities. Additionally, your contribution will go directly towards our efforts to reconnect the historic 40-mile Uwharrie Trail!

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.

Our third annual Uwharrie Trail Thru Hike backpacking trip took place on May 28 – 31, 2015! The backpacking trip took the



more than 30 participants through some of the oldest mountains in the world, paying tribute to the trailblazers and uncovering the secrets of the past.

We hope you have enjoyed following along with our adventure on Instagram and Facebook, as we posted photos and videos of the sights and sounds of the trail.

And if you missed the video from first hike, you can check it out here and see how much fun we had! <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iYSxEiOits0> (or scan the QR code).



The LandTrust Welcomes Five New Board Members!

The LandTrust is very excited to announce five new board members have joined our team to help guide and support The LandTrust in our efforts to preserve special places in North Carolina's Heartland. They are Terry Sharpe, Jane Lee Watson, West Hunter, David Craft, and a founding board member who has returned, Peter Hairston.

Terry Sharpe lives in western Richmond County along Big Mountain Creek. He is retired from the Wildlife Commission after working for thirty years as a biologist specializing in small game and land management. He now helps landowners with wildlife and forest management, and grows native grasses and wildflowers for seed production. Asked why he cares about conservation in central North Carolina, Terry says, "After hunting on several properties that were subsequently developed, sold, or leased, I decided that the best way to be sure to have a place to hunt is to own land. Subsequently, I have purchased several rural properties in Richmond and Moore Counties. I manage the properties for timber and wildlife and have a conservation easement on one property. I am an advocate for prescribed burning and regularly burn several of the properties." Terry enjoys hunting, fishing, gardening, foraging for wild foods, bird watching, traveling to wild places, and canoeing Southeastern rivers.



Peter Hairston was one of The LandTrust's founding board members, and his family also has the important distinction of donating the very first easement to The LandTrust, on the 1800-acre Cooleemee Plantation in Davie County. When asked about being the pioneer of easement donation in central North Carolina, Pete said that it was a simple decision for him. It was about preserving a family legacy, but more than that, it was about protecting our lifestyle in Piedmont North Carolina.

"Conservation easements are about giving us the ability to go down the highway and see stretches of road that are open land or forestland that are much better looking than strip malls. Land conservation protects our water sources, cleans our air, sequesters carbon, and protects our food sources. We drive through Piedmont North Carolina and we all say it's so beautiful, rolling hills...look at those beautiful animals in the field. Or that beautiful field of wheat. And it's because somebody is protecting that land. And the land trust movement gives people the opportunity to keep that land and to protect it. I've traveled to many places and there are beautiful places in this world, but there's no place that has that gentle, wonderful quality of life that Piedmont North Carolina has. And I think The LandTrust is very important to protecting that."

Jane Watson grew up on a farm in the Forks of the River area of southern Stanly County just outside of Norwood. The southern boundary of their farm is the Rocky River. She now lives on Lake Tillery near Norwood. Jane recently retired from a career in journalism at The Charlotte News and The Charlotte Observer and special events at UNC Chapel Hill and UNC Charlotte.

She is excited to have more time to focus on some of her passions: movies, gardening, historic preservation, small town revitalization and the local food movement. Jane says, "The farmland, forests, rolling hills, creeks and rivers of Stanly, Anson and Union counties have sustained the livelihood and spirit of my family for generations. I think many North Carolinians take for granted that this beautiful land will always be there. But with more and more people moving to the state and the increasing development pressures, we have to actively preserve these landscapes before it's too late. That's why I'm so honored and excited to be a part of The Land Trust for Central North Carolina."



David Craft joins us from Greensboro, North Carolina. He is the owner of Craft Insurance. Businessman, Eagle Scout, and one of the original Uwharrie Trailblazers, David has had the unique distinction of hiking the full length of the Uwharrie Trail early on, numerous times in the late seventies and early eighties. David remembers hiking over King and Little Long Mountains, two remote and underused parts of the National Forest, now preserved thanks to The LandTrust. David recalls, “In the late nineties, I returned to the area with the Scouts for more 50-milers. We tried to piece the route back together but could not. Thanks to the efforts of The LandTrust and Jeff Michael, Kevin Redding, and Crystal Cockman, we have made significant progress in opening up the historic length of the Uwharrie Trail. There is more to come, and I could not think of a better group to work with.”



West Hunter joins us from Iredell County, as owner of Hunter Construction Group and Hunting Creek Farms. West became familiar with The LandTrust when he purchased the historic Daltonia Plantation lands a few years ago. West has a great knowledge of farming and farming practices. He has worked hard to ensure the continued productivity of the lands he owns, on which he produces wheat, corn, soybeans, and other crops. Preserving farmland is an important aspect of The LandTrust’s mission, to ensure we have productive lands for food both now and for future generations.

Thanks to all of our new board members for your commitment to serving with us as we preserve special places we love in the Piedmont!

Stewardship and Outreach

American Chestnut Tree Planting

Volunteers and students from the Catawba College Center for the Environment recently spent a Saturday morning planting American Chestnuts at Frog Hollow in Rowan County. This planting has been a few years in the making, and the trees have now found their home on a property permanently protected and owned by The LandTrust. The tree planting effort was led by Tom Sieilli of the American Chestnut Foundation and Catawba College Professors, John Wear and Jay Bolin, on March 26th and 27th. The group planted hybrid trees generated by the ACF that are 15/16th American Chestnut and 1/16 Chinese Chestnut. The goal is to create an orchard of chestnut trees with relatively



Volunteers and Students from the Catawba College Center for the Environment helped plant over 700 blight resistant American Chestnuts at Frog Hollow in Rowan County.



Volunteers and students planting American Chestnuts in protective sleeves.

good Chestnut Blight resistance. The planting

efforts will be an important test of the blight resistant tree for Piedmont North Carolina and could provide seeds for future restoration efforts. The Center for the Environment at Catawba College worked in partnership with The LandTrust and The American Chestnut Foundation to conduct these test plantings, which will be studied and monitored for many years.

The LandTrust is excited to have the opportunity to provide a protected land for this important ongoing research to bringing back a true American icon in the American chestnut tree.

Letter from Outgoing Director Jason Walser

In October, 1999, I moved to Salisbury to join The Land Trust for Central North Carolina. Jeff Michael hired me and I was given a new email account that I could use 3 times per day. (We would use our phone lines to dial up to the internet and download email, so we had to be strategic in when we downloaded emails so as not to tie up the phone lines and miss any calls!) Speaking of phones, my “cellular” phone was in a bag, and I could carry it between cars so long as the cigarette lighter worked.

The furniture industry had downsized, but was still plugging along, with thousands employed in High Point and Lexington. Cannon Mills in Kannapolis had also downsized to just a few thousand employees making towels. A new interstate interchange had just opened in Cabarrus County where a new mall (“Concord Mills”) was recently completed.

The LandTrust bought its first large tract of land, the “Catawba College South Yadkin Wildlife Refuge” which spawned the idea of creating a larger preserve around the confluence of the Yadkin and South Yadkin Rivers. North Carolina was home to just over 7,500,000 residents, and a new search engine called “Google” was on the horizon, although not many people had ever heard of it. The Land Trust for Central North Carolina had already protected 5000 acres, spread out over more than 25 projects.

Dunn’s Mountain was an active quarry, the Low Water Bridge tract was being assessed for its timber value, and Spencer Woods was being marketed for development as a new subdivision. The old growth longleaf pines owned by the Nichols family were unknown to almost all conservationists, and the Clark Creek wetlands complex was just beginning to be recognized as a significant natural area.

That was just 15 ½ years ago.

Since that time, The LandTrust has quintupled its protected footprint to more than 25,000 acres. The population of North Carolina has grown by 1/3 since that time, furniture manufacturing and textiles are all but gone from our local economies. And I now have a phone with more computing power than the computer that I first began working with in 1999!

June 30 of this year will be my last day with The Land Trust for Central North Carolina. What a wonderful ride it has been! This has truly been the most amazing job that I will ever have. I have met people who clean up trash at properties, protect their own land, and give money to protect other people’s land. I have gotten to

work with dedicated staff and board who believed that conserving a few special places for future generations was the noblest of callings. I have been inspired by naturalists who worked hard to improve habitat for rattlesnakes, and built bird houses for birds I had never even heard of.



In short, I have been privileged to work with the most amazing people in North Carolina. And at a critical time in our state’s history.

It sounds cliché’ to say that change is occurring more rapidly than ever. But the truth is that our shared landscape has changed more in the past 15 years than in any 15 year period since the glacial period. We, as a society, have buried land beneath asphalt, removed trees, and polluted some waterways.

Yet we – YOU – have also restored landscapes, bought land to set aside as preserves and parks, and encouraged private landowners to steward their land appropriately. We have helped shape a shared vision for conservation for this region that will outlast us all.

The time we all have to do this work is short. Each of us is only here for a short time in the grand scheme of things. But our work here is permanent. Perpetual. And meaningful. Perhaps our collective work will be most appreciated when we are all long gone, and others come behind and ask the question, “how was this place preserved?”

The pace of change is ever-quickening. Demographers tell us that in 20 years, another 3 million people will move to North Carolina. The need for conservation has never been greater. And after twenty years of successful work, The Land Trust for Central North Carolina has never been stronger or more important.

Thanks for continuing your support of The Land Trust for Central North Carolina during my tenure here, and please join me in welcoming and supporting in every way our next leader for this organization. Crystal Cockman is the right person to lead this organization as we prepare for the next fifteen, twenty, and even two hundred years of change to come. As a board member of The LandTrust so eloquently says, “Onward!”

Reflections on 20 years of The Land Trust

From The LandTrust's first Executive Director, and former 9-year long board member, Jeff Michael

As The Land Trust for Central NC celebrates its 20th anniversary, perhaps we can all be forgiven for focusing on the land; after all, that's what the organization was created to preserve. After twenty years, we can point to the protection of over 25,000 acres of Piedmont forests and fields, places whose subtle beauty is so familiar to us that we sometimes forget just how remarkable they are.

But as we reflect on two decades of conservation, it's the relationships that keep coming to mind for me – how a disparate group of people from different walks of life coalesced around the idea that the places they loved should be preserved, and in order to do so, agreed to entrust a new organization with their time, money, and for many, their most important possession, their land.

Those kinds of commitments are not easily made to new and unproven organizations, which The LandTrust certainly was in 1995. In fact, we usually reserve that sort of trust for our churches only, and even then it must be earned after decades, sometimes centuries, of dedicated community service (not to mention generations of families buried in the local churchyard). So how did The Land Trust for Central North Carolina earn the confidence and loyalty of so many people in such a short period of time?

I believe it's because of the relationships that quickly took root among people who, without realizing it at first, shared a common ethic of conservation that had never been tapped. The LandTrust was like one of those divining rods used in the past to find a water source, invisible to the eye but essential to the siting of a new home place. But instead of water, The LandTrust guided us to a deep wellspring of shared passion for the land, and a latent desire to protect that land in the face of change that was sometimes obvious, often imperceptible, but always real.

The LandTrust provided the means for tapping and harnessing that collective passion by making connections between people who had never considered the possibility that their communities had much in common. The organization's geographic scope was vast, loosely defined as a subset of watersheds feeding the great Yadkin-Pee Dee River, drained by tributaries like the South Yadkin, Uwharrie, Rocky and Little Rivers. Identity, however, is more local than that, rooted in communities that grew up along the banks of creeks with names like Grants, Bear, Dutch Buffalo, Barnes, and Hitchcock.

People weren't all that connected with folks across the next ridge, much less those who were thirty miles away; it would certainly take more than a well-crafted mission statement

to build the sort of relationships necessary to sustain an organization like The LandTrust over time.

But one of the joys of land conservation work is its tendency to elicit amazing stories from people about the land, and here in the South, few things have the power to build relationships quite like storytelling. Ask anyone who has ever worked for The LandTrust to tell you about their favorite projects, and the answer will inevitably begin with a story. Just a couple of my favorites include the 90-year old judge who, as the 8th generation of his family to own the legendary Cooleemee Plantation, didn't want to see that remarkable property along the banks of the Yadkin carved into subdivisions like so many others upstream; and the soft-spoken potter in Randolph County who wanted to preserve the land around the historic Pisgah Covered Bridge, where her family had long gathered herbs for medicinal purposes, and where local churches had regularly come for healing of a different sort in the cool baptismal waters of the Little River's west fork; and many, many more.

Woven through all these stories is a clear and powerful connection to place, one that reflects a regional conservation ethic that existed long before The LandTrust was established. I recall writing an article myself in one of our early newsletters, and in the hubris of inexperience, I clumsily said something about how we were hoping to do more than protect land, we were also "creating a regional conservation ethic." Many years and stories later, I now see more clearly the arrogance of that statement.

These stories, and the relationships they have helped us forge on the way to creating a legitimate conservation movement, have proven that there has always been something enduring about the natural beauty of this region that has inspired people to want to preserve it, whether in words, a painting, or the legal nuances of a conservation easement. The LandTrust's role today is more like that of an heir to a great legacy – a legacy of conservation that had already found early expression in the creation of Morrow Mountain State Park, the Uwharrie National Forest, and the Pee Dee National Wildlife Refuge, long before we came on the scene.

But none of that diminishes the accomplishment of what The LandTrust has achieved these past twenty years. Like the seedbank of a forgotten Piedmont prairie, suddenly awakened by a prescribed burn, our regional conservation ethic was merely waiting for something like The LandTrust to come along and ignite our collective passion to protect the places that make this part of North Carolina so special. And now, two decades later, look what we have accomplished together!

Past Events

Uwharrie Naturalist Weekend - May 9th and 10th



The LandTrust hosted our 3rd annual Uwharrie Naturalist Weekend on May 9 and 10, 2015 – a weekend of nature exploration in the Uwharries. This naturalist weekend is the only one of its kind in the area and showcased the 1,300-acre Low Water Bridge Preserve on the Uwharrie River. John Gerwin, ornithologist at the N.C. Museum of Sciences in Raleigh, led hikes in the morning and afternoon on Saturday – pointing out

unique bird species by sight and sound along the way. New this year, we also had local rattlesnake expert, Zach Orr lead us on the 10th. Zach describes himself as “a country boy that’s had a life long passion for critters, especially pit vipers or crotalids.” He has spent time tracking and monitoring rattlesnakes and identifying their habitat in the Uwharries since 1993. On the side in his spare time he has been expanding Randolph Rattlesnake Refuge and Research Center.

The Boy Scouts from Troop 442 in Salisbury organized a canoe trip for us down the Uwharrie River on Saturday afternoon. Paddlers enjoyed the cool water of the river and the unique wildlife that can be found along the 7-mile stretch of river we traversed. The Uwharrie National Forest was gracious enough to host some campers for our weekend event on Saturday night. We led a late evening hike listening for owls and nightjars in the Forest. Check out this recap and picture gallery from our amazing adventures at last year’s Uwharrie Naturalist weekend: <http://ui.uncc.edu/story/naturalist-weekend-uwharries-birds-herps-flowers>



Upcoming Events

Save the Dates for More Upcoming Events!

Summer Paddle Series - June 20th, July 17th, August 23rd, September 12th

We are excited to announce our new Summer Paddle Series! This series of kayak and canoe paddles will feature a different course each month, designed to showcase the beautiful water resources of the Uwharries. Adventurers and water lovers of all levels are welcome to join us for any or all of the paddles. Find details on our website!

RiverDance 2015 - August 15th

The Land Trust for Central North Carolina’s annual summer fundraising event, RiverDance, is set for Saturday, August 15, 2015 at 7:00 PM until midnight at the Historic Salisbury Train Station. While the event serves as The LandTrust’s primary fundraiser and celebration of our conservation success, RiverDance is also a great way to wind down the summer season with a top-notch band, ample refreshments, delicious food, and the exceptional company of people who are dedicated to preserving the places we love! Visit our website to learn more and purchase tickets!

Announcing LTNC's SUMMER PADDLE SERIES

JOIN THE LANDTRUST FOR CENTRAL NORTH CAROLINA AS WE PADDLE THE MOST OUTSTANDING WATER RESOURCES IN THE UWHARRIES!

SCHEDULE:
 JUNE 20: ROCKY RIVER
 PUT IN: 2494 PLANK ROAD, NORWOOD, NC
 TAKE OUT: HIGHWAY 52 BRIDGE, NORWOOD, NC
 JULY 17: MOUNTAIN CREEK
 PUT IN AND TAKE OUT: NCWRC BOAT ACCESS AT 2063 GRASSY ISLAND RD ELLERBE, NC
 AUGUST 23: DANIEL BOONE HERITAGE CANOE TRAIL
 PUT IN: BOONE'S CAVE PARK
 TAKE OUT: HANNAH'S FERRY
 SEPTEMBER 12: NARROWS/FALLS RESERVOIR
 PUT IN AND TAKE OUT: AT THE END OF FALLS ROAD, ALBEMARLE, NC

RSVP IS REQUIRED!

THESE PADDLES COUNT TOWARD LTNC'S PADDLE CHALLENGE! SIGN UP AT [HTTP://GOO.GL/GFBGZJ](http://goo.gl/gfbgzj), COMPLETE 8 PADDLES, AND RECEIVE A UNIQUE COMMEMORATIVE BADGE!
TO RSVP OR LEARN MORE, VISIT [HTTP://GOO.GL/J6WQXQ](http://goo.gl/j6wqxq) OR EMAIL ALICIA AT ALICIA@LANDTRUSTCNC.ORG



Organizational Development

Meet our first AmeriCorps Member and new intern!

The LandTrust is excited to announce its first ever AmeriCorps member, Alicia Vasto. Thanks to the Conservation Trust for North Carolina for overseeing the Project GEOS AmeriCorps program, making this position possible. Alicia worked with The LandTrust as our Stanback Intern in summer of 2012, and completed her master's project as a comprehensive management plan for our Low Water Bridge Preserve. Alicia is an Iowa native, and a graduate of Notre Dame and Duke Universities. Of this experience, Alicia says "I look forward to the opportunity to engage with other environmental professionals and volunteers, perform valuable service and outreach projects in an underserved area, and return to central North Carolina, an area that holds a special place in my heart."

Ashley Duncan is a student at Rowan-Cabarrus Community College and a native of Salisbury who currently lives in Rockwell with her husband, Bryan. She is interested in land conservation because she enjoys outdoor activities such as hiking, swimming, canoeing, and more. She says, "I want these types of activities to be around for my future children, future grandchildren, and so on. I want them to have the freedom to enjoy the land by disconnecting from the 'real world', even if just for a weekend of camping or a night of stargazing, and we need land to do these things. I believe land conservation is equally important not only to humans, but the animals and plants that live on the land. I want others to be able to walk outdoors and enjoy beautiful native flowers and songbirds." She decided to work with The LandTrust through this internship in hopes of gaining knowledge to educate others of sustainable environmental practices and the importance of land conservation to the future of our state.



Alicia by a white pine on a LandTrust preserve.



Ashley Duncan is a student at RCCC.

Outreach

Levon Pitner Completes our Hike Challenge!



Levon at the Fall Mountain Loop at Morrow Mtn State Park.



Levon and Latte at Spencer Woods Stanback Educational Forest.

We are excited to announce that the second completer of our Hike Challenge is of the canine variety - Levon Pitner! Levon lives in Salisbury with his parents, Andrew and Theresa, and loves to hike and spend time outdoors. He also recently earned his official Therapy Dog certificate from Therapy Dogs International and occasionally works with Theresa at Hospice and Palliative Care of Cabarrus County. His buddy Latte shown in the picture at the Spencer Woods Stanback Educational Forest is available for adoption through Faithful Friends (www.faithfulfriendsnc.org or 704-633-1722).

If you haven't heard about our Hike and Paddle Challenge, learn more on our website at <http://landtrustcnc.org/get-involved/hike-paddle-challenge/>. Find a list of 20 hikes and 12 paddle trips here along with all the information needed to complete them. Pick your favorite 8 and report them online - any hike or paddle competed after January 1, 2014 counts!



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, 2014, through January 1, 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

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Mr. and Mrs. David B. Craft
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Ms. Amy Grissom
Mr. Peter Wilson Hairston
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Mrs. Janice Hager
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by Mr. Angelo Capparella

In memory of Tessie Cockman
by Miss Crystal Cockman

In memory of former County Commissioner,
Billy Joe Kepley, who truly had Davidson
County's best interests at heart
by Guy Cornman

In memory of B.B. Smith
by Dr. W. Max Walser

In memory of Judge Peter Hairston
by Arlene Edwards Thompson

In memory of Walter P. Wagoner
by Mr. Ralph Wagoner

In memory of Lucius Perry Bell, III
by Mrs. Annette Bell Roberts

In memory of Jennie Sparks
by Mr. Andy Sparks

In memory of Afton and Oliver Koontz
by Dr. and Mrs. Robert Nesbit

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by Mr. K. Reid Walters, Jr. and
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In honor of Jason Walser by Mr. and Mrs.
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In honor of Mrs. Sue Walser
by Pat S. Ebert

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by Mrs. Jennifer Hubbard and
Mr. Steve Cobb

In honor of Rob Watts and Family by Dr.
and Mrs. Boyd Watts

In honor of Breanna and Natalie Lusk
by Mr. and Mrs. Carl Repsher

In honor of Alice and Fred Stanback
by Mr. and John Laughlin

In honor of the staff and volunteers of the
Land Trust for Central NC
by Mr. and Mrs. James A Dunn, Jr.

In honor of Tracy and Jason Walser
by Mr. Phillip Conrad

In honor of Jim and Kathy Carlton by Mr.
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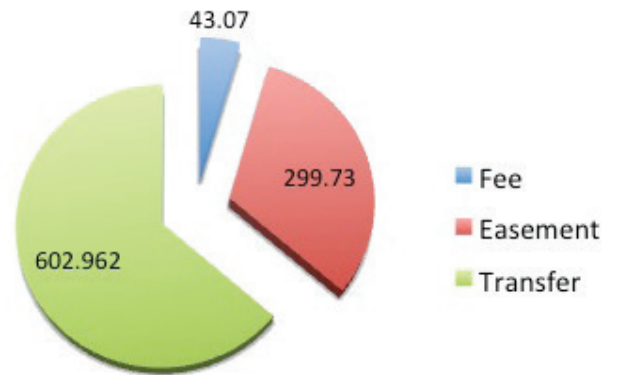
Land Protection Report

As a recap of our land protection work in 2014, The LandTrust completed nine different conservation projects, reflecting just under 1,000 acres. This included three conservation easement projects protecting just under 300 acres total, the acquisition of two fee title properties totaling 43 acres, and the transfer of two of our properties to the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission totalling 603 acres. These projects come from five different counties across our region, and protect a wide variety of important natural areas, agricultural lands, scenic viewsheds, and rivers and streams. As most of our projects are complex, multi-faceted, and take many years to complete, the particular projects that close in any given year are only a small sampling of our ongoing projects, which are only possible thanks to your continual support.

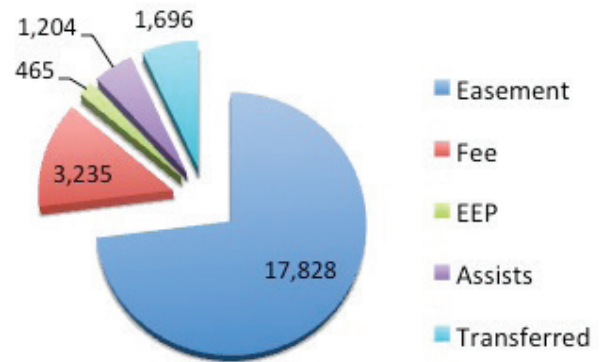
As our organization has grown and matured over the past 20 years, land protection work has remained a strong focus for us, but we have also continued to expand other efforts including our outreach and stewardship programs. We are now an organization that has protected just under 25,000 acres, with 121 conservation easement projects and 32 properties we own in fee. Our organization has transferred ten properties to other conservation agencies, including the US Forest Service, the NC Wildlife Resources Commission, Cabarrus Soil and Water Conservation District, and more. We have assisted other agencies by securing options and helping to raise grant funds on three other properties totalling more than 1,200 acres.

We have continued to do great things to save special places in the Piedmont, even in the light of decreasing federal and state funding, and as we reflect back on 20 years, we want to thank you, our supporters, for making this work possible. Our region will forever have very special natural and open spaces thanks to your support, and we will continue to do our best to save the places you love in the Piedmont for the next 20 years and beyond.

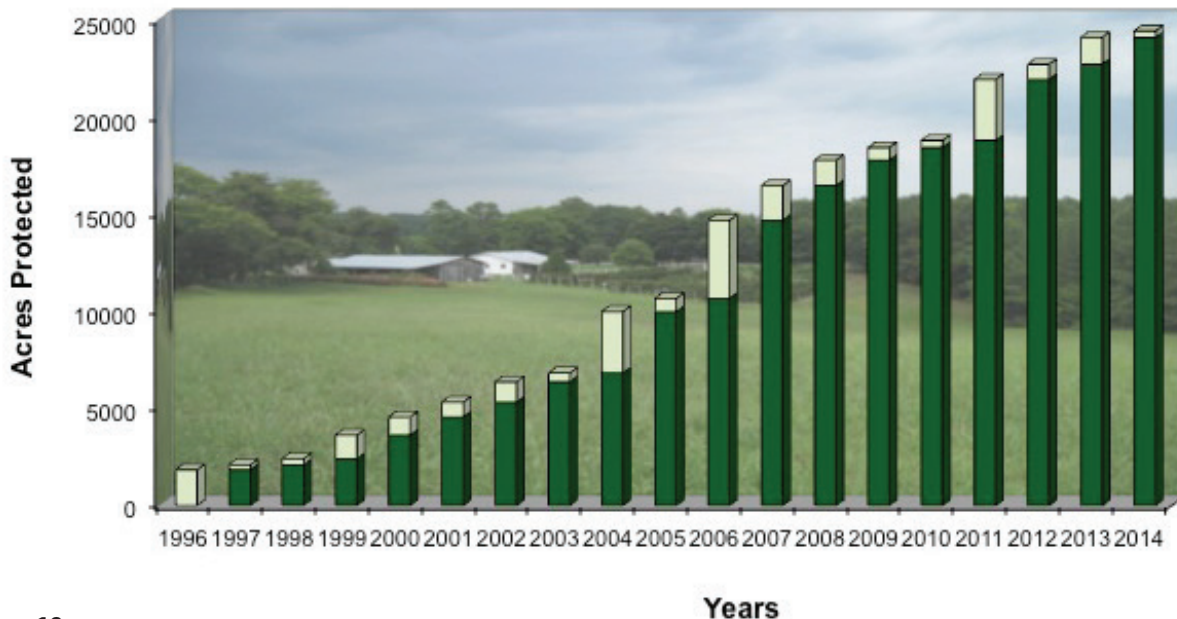
Lands Protected in 2014 by Type



Total Lands Protected Overall by Type



Cumulative Land Protection Totals over the Years



Preserving Lands for Creatures Great and Small

Steve Hall, invertebrate zoologist, recently conducted a landscape survey in the Uwharries, with a main focus on insects. This was part of a joint effort by the NC Natural Heritage Program and the NC Wildlife Resources Commission in 2010 and 2011. Insects are small organisms but key in determining the overall health of the larger ecosystem. Because a large number of them are habitat specialists and need to be able to move between habitat patches fairly frequently, their presence is indicative not only of



Gomphus parvidens at Low Water Bridge

individual high quality habitats but also of a larger high quality habitat system.

Steve’s study focused on three particular insect groups – Lepidoptera (moths and butterflies), Orthoptera (grasshoppers and crickets), and Odonata (dragonflies and damselflies). The LandTrust was fortunate to have Steve visit a number of our preserves while conducting this survey.

He found several rare and watch list species at our Low Water Bridge Preserve. This included three dragonflies,



Celithemis elisa at Capel Property

**Photo credit and special thanks to Steve Hall.*



Gomphus septima at Low Water Bridge

Septima’s clubtail (*Gomphus septima*), Piedmont clubtail (*Gomphus dilatatus*), and Blackwater clubtail (*Gomphus parvidens*). In the wet hardwood forest on the site, Steve found a moth that is a new genus, Notodontid New Genus 1. He also found a rare species of moth associated with the canebrake ecosystem on our Low Water Bridge Preserve (*Protampamea danieli*). The Calico Pennant dragonfly (a common species) was found on our Capel Property, recently transferred to the

NC Wildlife Resources Commission. Steve also found a really rare moth, *Bleptina sangamonica*, on both our Little Long Mountain property, and the King Mountain property we transferred to the US Forest Service in 2012. Our efforts to preserve key lands linking Uwharrie National Forest lands benefit not only recreation efforts, such as the Uwharrie Trail reconnection, but also provide important wildlife corridors for species large and small, from black bear and bobwhite quail, to moths and grasshoppers.

20th Anniversary Compendium and “Down to Earth – 20 years Celebrating the Land” Videos



If you enjoyed Jeff Michael’s story on page 10, look for our 20th anniversary compendium to come out later this year with the full version of this article, and a variety of other fantastic stories from the people and places that have made The LandTrust what it is today. Thanks to the efforts of volunteers Virginia “Gin” Wall (retired NC Zoo Curator of Horticulture) and Ellen Greer (retired NC Zoo Curator of Design), we are also excited to announce we will be releasing a series of videos documenting the various people The LandTrust has successfully worked with in preserving special places in the heartland of North Carolina. Look for these on our YouTube channel soon. Our newly designed 20th anniversary logo celebrates three predominant themes that The LandTrust has always focused on preserving: the Yadkin-Pee Dee River, local farms and food, and the beautiful and biodiverse Uwharrie Mountains. Thanks to Miller Davis studios for designing the logo free of charge.



To protect and preserve the land—
natural areas, rural landscapes,
family farms and historic places
within North Carolina's heartland.

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THE LANDTRUST FOR CENTRAL NORTH CAROLINA

The LandTrust is a private, nonprofit organization working with private and public landowners to protect the special natural areas, family farms and rural landscapes of Anson, Cabarrus, Davidson, Davie, Iredell, Montgomery, Randolph, Richmond, Rowan and Stanly Counties. With 501(c)(3) status, all donations to The LandTrust qualify for maximum tax deductions.



Devon Poynter (right) was awarded Eagle Scout for his work on the Uwharrie Trail!



Catesby's trillium, one spring wildflower you are likely to spot on our upcoming hikes.



We hope you can join us for our annual fundraiser, RiverDance, on August 15th!

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