

FALL 2025



FIELD NOTES

MAGAZINE



CONNECTED TO THE LAND. COMMITTED TO CONSERVATION.



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GUIDING THE *Next Chapter* OF CONSERVATION



By Mike Morton, TRLT Board President



As 2026 quickly approaches and our 30th year comes to a close, our momentum is just beginning.

As we round out the 30th year of conservation at Three Rivers Land Trust, I'm honored to step into my first year as President of the Board. 30 years is a milestone moment not just for our organization, but for the many people, partners, and places that have shaped our work and contributed to our success since 1995.

Having served as Vice President of the Board, I have already had the privilege of watching this team work with great vision and purpose. And now, in this new role, I am honored to work even closer with our Board and Staff as together we guide TRLT, build on the progress of the past three decades, and look toward what's next.

This year has been one of celebration, but also of action. From protecting working farms and wildlife habitats to expanding public lands and access, we've continued our mission with the same purpose and heart that brought us here. Every conservation success this year has added another piece to the bigger picture: a North Carolina that's more connected, more resilient, and more rooted in the land we love. Regardless of your chosen activity, I encourage you to get outside, enjoy the cool, crisp mornings and evenings that fall brings. While doing so, contemplate just how critical TRLT's work is to ensure those who follow us have the same opportunities.

As 2026 quickly approaches and our 30th year comes to a close, our momentum is just beginning. On behalf of the entire Board of Directors, thank you for being part of our story. With your partnership in conservation, we will continue to permanently protect all the places that matter—for today, tomorrow, and for generations to come.



It's a
Wonderful
Life of Conservation

By Travis Morehead, TRLT Executive Director

Recently, one of the TRLT staff members said they had a tradition to watch “It’s A Wonderful Life” every Christmas morning.

If you're one of the few that may not have seen the 1946 Christmas classic, it's well worth the investment of time. The movie is based on the fictional character George Bailey, played by Jimmy Stewart. In the movie, George Bailey is offered a glimpse of life as if he had never existed. As we celebrate our 30th year of local conservation, let's look back and imagine what might have happened if Three Rivers Land Trust never existed.

Uwharrie National Recreation Trail

Since the trail's construction in the late 1970s, some of the private land that it was built on changed hands. This ownership change formed “gaps” along the route, where the new owners were not inclined to allow the public access. This made legally traversing the entire 40-mile trail impossible. Over many years, TRLT and other partners stepped in and purchased these “gap” properties, eventually transferring them into public ownership as a part of the Uwharrie National Forest. To date, TRLT has closed 4 out of 5 gaps along the trail, and we are hopeful that we will secure the last gap that will complete the trail to the Birkhead Wilderness Area.

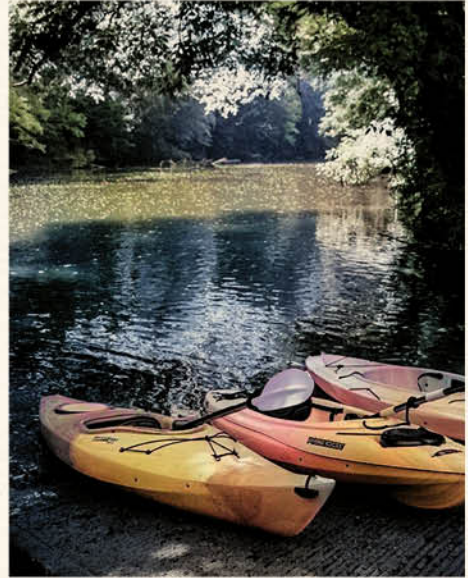


State and Local Park Expansions

TRLT purchased and transferred land that has been included in state and local parks across the region, including Morrow Mountain State Park (Stanly County), Forks of the Little River Park (Montgomery County), Eagle Point Nature Preserve (Rowan County), Dunns Mountain (Rowan County), and the Yadkin River Park (Davidson County). To date, TRLT has made over 8,000 acres available for public recreation.

Kayak Launches on the Uwharrie River

The North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) constructed three kayak launches on the Uwharrie River. Two of those three launches are on land currently or formerly owned by TRLT. The kayak launch located on Low Water Bridge Road is managed by the NCWRC, but on land owned by TRLT. The kayak launch on the Uwharrie River Gamelands off of Dennis Road was constructed by NCWRC after the property was transferred from TRLT. Paddlers and anglers now have great access to some of the most pristine waters in the Piedmont. This stretch of river is also known for being the easternmost river with a smallmouth bass population.

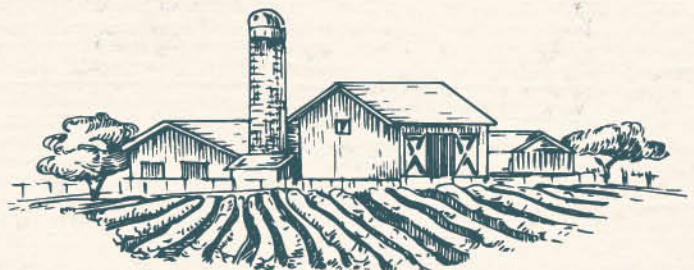


Uwharrie and Yadkin River Gamelands

Speaking of state-owned gamelands, TRLT transferred ownership of what would become the Uwharrie River Gamelands (300 acres) to the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) in 2014, and then worked with the NCWRC to help conserve 4,700 acres and 76 miles of shoreline along the Yadkin River that are now known as the Yadkin River Gamelands. Thousands of acres of hunting and hiking opportunities that could have been lost to development are now publicly accessible to residents and visitors alike.

Local Farms

The saying “There is no culture without agriculture” is a foundational truth. We often take our local farms for granted. We tend to focus on the middleman, the grocery store, and forget where our meat and produce originated—the farm. To date, TRLT has conserved almost 20,000 acres of local family farms. These farms provide our region with the rural character we love and the food, fiber, and timber we all rely on.



Local Waters

Another valuable resource we often overlook is water. The water quality of almost 400 miles of local rivers and streams has been safeguarded thanks to TRLT's conservation efforts. These streams will always have a natural buffer to help dissipate pollutants from reaching our streams, thereby providing municipal water users with a product that requires less chemical treatment before it leaves the faucet and enters their glass.



Wildlife Habitat

Talk of wildlife often fills the office here at TRLT. Whether it's songbirds, migratory birds, game animals, pollinators, or non-game species, there is always chatter about how to improve wildlife habitat on our conserved lands and throughout the region. In the past 24 months, TRLT has conserved two tracts that provide critical habitat for a state threatened species, the tiger salamander, and two species of freshwater mussels. Without our conservation efforts, these animals may have had their habitat destroyed.

Partnership with the Department of Defense

As someone who was stationed at Fort Bragg, I am proud of our relationship with our military partners. Our focus is to conserve important national defense lands around the installation to reduce the impacts of military training on nearby neighbors and vice versa. This relationship benefits both conservation and allows the Army to use as much of the existing installation as possible for training purposes.



These are just a few things that may not have happened if TRLT wasn't here. The Greek philosopher and "Father of Botany" Theophrastus, said, "Time is the most valuable thing a man can spend." This year, Three Rivers Land Trust will celebrate 30 years of local conservation. These past 30 years have only been successful because of you and the folks like you who financially support TRLT. Because of you, this organization has been able to focus its time on expanding public lands, saving family farms, protecting local waters and wildlife habitat, and conserving important national defense lands around Fort Bragg. These efforts, and the time spent, have proven to be incredibly valuable and worthwhile.

It is our hope that you will consider investing your time and financial support with us, again, so that we can continue the work to conserve the natural resources and rural lands in North Carolina's Piedmont and Sandhills. Here's to the next 30 years of conservation; may they be even more successful than our first 30 years!



*30 years of commitment.
A lifetime of conservation.*



*With conservation, you don't have
to wonder what could have been.
Scan here to support the land
you love.*





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Pam Abernathy

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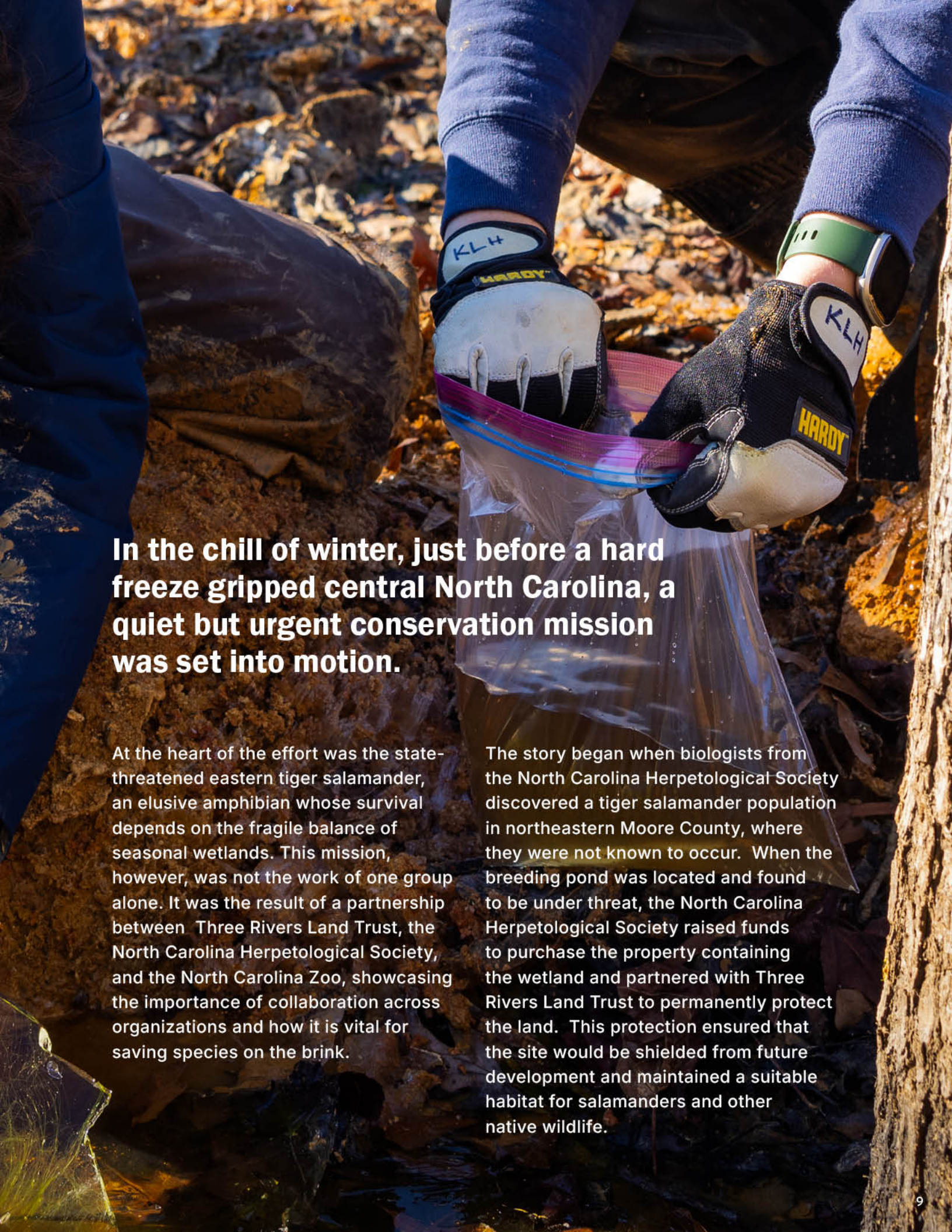
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A HEAD START

By Shaina Lampert & Betsy Roznik, North Carolina Zoo



In the chill of winter, just before a hard freeze gripped central North Carolina, a quiet but urgent conservation mission was set into motion.

At the heart of the effort was the state-threatened eastern tiger salamander, an elusive amphibian whose survival depends on the fragile balance of seasonal wetlands. This mission, however, was not the work of one group alone. It was the result of a partnership between Three Rivers Land Trust, the North Carolina Herpetological Society, and the North Carolina Zoo, showcasing the importance of collaboration across organizations and how it is vital for saving species on the brink.

The story began when biologists from the North Carolina Herpetological Society discovered a tiger salamander population in northeastern Moore County, where they were not known to occur. When the breeding pond was located and found to be under threat, the North Carolina Herpetological Society raised funds to purchase the property containing the wetland and partnered with Three Rivers Land Trust to permanently protect the land. This protection ensured that the site would be shielded from future development and maintained a suitable habitat for salamanders and other native wildlife.



With the wetland now under permanent protection, there's hope that future generations of salamanders will be able to return and breed safely.

But, it turns out that the tiger salamanders would need more help beyond protecting their habitat. Not long after securing the property, TRLT staff returned to monitor the site and spotted clusters of tiger salamander egg masses resting in the shallow water. It was a hopeful sign, but also a precarious one. With a severe cold snap in the forecast, the newly laid eggs were at high risk of freezing, with several egg masses already encompassed in ice. TRLT wasted no time in contacting their partners at the North Carolina Zoo. The Zoo's amphibian conservation team, already experienced in amphibian head-starting, responded quickly to the call. Carefully breaking through ice and collecting the vulnerable egg masses from the freezing pond, they transported them to an amphibian rearing facility at the Zoo, where conditions could be closely monitored and controlled.

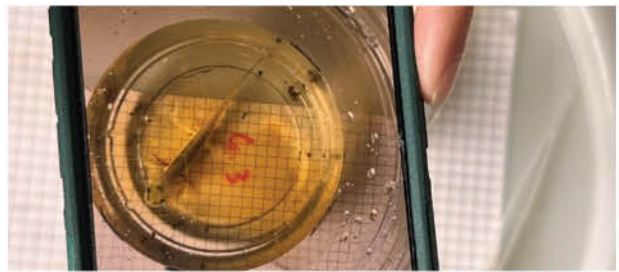
Due to factors such as predation, environmental degradation and disease, it is estimated that only 1 - 5% of larval amphibians survive through adulthood. To aid at-risk populations and mitigate the significant

loss that occurs through early life stages, many institutions utilize "head-starting" as a conservation strategy for a variety of amphibian species. The practice of "head-starting" is a well-established conservation technique, particularly for amphibians. It involves rearing offspring in a protected environment through their most vulnerable early life stages, when risks from predation, disturbance, and weather are greatest. Once the offspring reach a more resilient stage, they are released back into the wild. Head-started amphibians are typically released late in larval development or just after metamorphosis which increases their chances of survival to adulthood.

Over the course of four months, North Carolina Zoo staff provided intensive daily care to the developing tiger salamander offspring. From the moment they hatched, the larvae were closely monitored to ensure healthy growth and survival. Staff checked water quality and temperature each day and made adjustments when necessary to ensure that larvae were growing and developing. A varied diet of live aquatic prey, raised at the Zoo, was prepared

and fed daily to the larvae to meet their nutritional needs at each life stage throughout their development. Given the species' natural tendency toward cannibalism during the larval stage, each individual was housed in a specially designed enclosure that prevented contact with others. In early May, with the risk of freeze long past and the wetland teeming with life, the Zoo team returned to the site to release over 100 larval salamanders that had grown to about 3 inches in length and developed all four limbs. The larval salamanders were carefully acclimated to the water in the wetland to ensure individuals were properly adjusted to water quality and temperature before

As conservation challenges grow more complex, stories like this one offer a model for how science, stewardship, and shared purpose can come together to protect biodiversity. Through foresight, fast action, and a willingness to work across organizational lines, over 100 tiger salamander offspring were rescued from freezing conditions and released back to their natural habitat at a larger, more resilient life stage with better potential for persisting through adulthood. With the wetland now under permanent protection, there's hope that future generations of salamanders will be able to return and breed safely.



As conservation challenges grow more complex, stories like this one offer a model for how science, stewardship, and shared purpose can come together to protect biodiversity.

release. Watching the larvae swim into their natural habitat was a moment of full-circle achievement. The effort also highlights the importance of preserving ephemeral wetlands. These seasonal pools may appear insignificant, but they are lifelines for tiger salamanders and other amphibians, which return to them to breed year after year. As land development alters the landscape, many of these wetlands are lost or degraded, leaving species like the tiger salamander with few places left to go.





UWHARRIE

By Dane Shuckman, TRLT Member and Thru Hiker

North Carolina is rich in opportunities for those who love hiking and backpacking to explore the abundant ecological diversity and history of the state.

You can hike at the coast, following sections of the Mountains to Sea Trail on the sandy beaches of the Outer Banks. You can hike in the Piedmont along the gorgeous, historic Eno River. You can hike in the mountains, testing your mettle on the Art Loeb or cooling yourself in the water crossings of the Harpers Creek trail. I've hiked all of these trails and loved them. But to me, the trail that lays at a hiker's feet all the best that North Carolina has to offer its trails community is the Uwharrie National Recreation Trail. And to fully experience this natural wonder, nothing beats the experience that is the Three Rivers Land Trust's annual Uwharrie Trail Thru Hike.

I've had the privilege of participating in this event twice. In April of 2022 it was my first long backpacking trip after building

my skills doing day hikes and overnight trips. In April of 2024, with hundreds more miles of trail and more long trips behind me, I was at a very different level of experience. On each hike I met fellow adventurers who were brand new to backpacking and, like me in 2022, had never attempted such a challenging trip with so many miles between the starting and ending trailheads. I savored our shared excitement and anticipation. I met veteran hikers whose lifetime of trail experience outnumbered my miles exponentially. I learned from their wisdom. And across the entire spectrum of experience and skills, we found ourselves in a small traveling community, all treasuring the experience of a supported hike flawlessly organized by the TRLT staff.

THRU HIKE



Any thorough planning process before such an adventure involves research, and backpackers are geeks for numbers and stats, so let's look at those numbers. The Uwharrie National Forest is one of four National Forests in North Carolina. The Uwharrie National Recreational Trail is one of more than 1,300 nationwide that bear the NRT designation. The Uwharries are the oldest mountain range in North America. Archaeological evidence of human habitation goes back approximately 10,000 years. The four day, three night hike spans just over 42 miles in the Uwharrie National Forest between the southern terminus at the 24/27 trailhead and ending at the Tot Hill Trailhead on the northern edge of the Birkhead Mountain Wilderness. The highest point on the route is King Mountain, whose summit is 1,000 feet above sea level. Three Rivers Land Trust are stewards of this land, protecting more than 51,000 acres and 380 stream miles across 15 counties in central NC. The trail is impeccably maintained by the efforts of the Uwharrie Trailblazers, who ensure that everyone who sets foot on the trail has a safe and enjoyable experience. How's your planning spreadsheet looking?

What can't be quantified is the beauty of this land. In the spring you'll find trillium, irises, and mountain laurel in just the first few miles hiking north from 24/27. Climbing Dennis Mountain, you'll be surrounded by wild blueberries. You'll see chicken of the woods along Island Creek, find yourself in quiet contemplation on the start of the second day as you leave Yates Place and the rocky, stream crossed



trail closes in around you, reminding you that Dennis Mountain on the first day was only the beginning of a satisfyingly challenging elevation profile. You'll pass the remains of pit mines from America's first gold rush, make a mental note to plan a return trip for an overnight at Spencer Creek, look over your shoulder for the spirits that left behind the ghost stories and legends of Dark Mountain, and draw in a sharp breath as the brisk water of Barnes Creek cools you after setting up



"The trail that lays at a hiker's feet all the best that North Carolina has to offer its trails community is the Uwharrie National Recreational Trail."

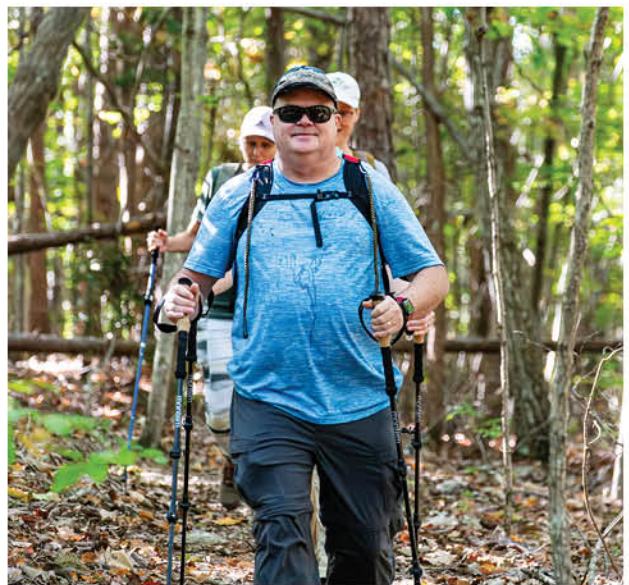
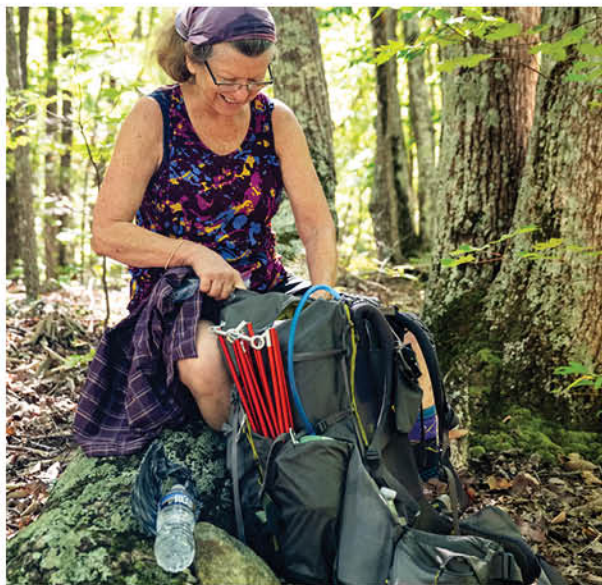
camp at Jumping Off Rock. Starting day three you'll be glad you made time for a hearty breakfast as you climb Little Long Mountain (don't let the name fool you). The view at the top is worth the climb. Plan on stopping to enjoy the view at the summit and appreciate the Boy Scout shelter, a legacy of scoutmaster Joe Moffitt, who in the late 1960s and early 1970s led a generation of Boy Scouts to build the trail. A picturesque Walkers Creek welcomes you to camp for night three, where you'll enjoy a catered dinner and gathering of the Land Trust to celebrate its accomplishments over the past year. Day four does start with a



road walk, but if you paid attention to the advance logistics emails you'll be prepared with good footwear and another hearty breakfast (notice a theme?). The road walk brings you to the southern border of the Birkhead Mountain Wilderness, rich in history and possibly some of the most beautiful woodlands of the entire trip. Enjoy one last stop at a relief station staged by the Land Trust, then head north for the last stretch of trail that takes you to the end of a victorious four days where the staff of TRLT welcomes and congratulates you on finishing strong. Thank goodness for that last gentle downhill and some level ground.

OK, you've finished the trail. Congratulations! But we need to start from the beginning again. I've alluded to

the exceptional logistical support offered by Three Rivers Land Trust, but I haven't given them full recognition yet for being subject matter experts in conservation, but also outreach and hospitality. It's an essential part of the TRLT Thru Hike experience. This is where both the novice and the experienced backpacker find deep appreciation for how well this adventure is planned and presented. It's hard to say there's a best part of this experience - the Land Trust staff will humbly insist that the real star of the hike is the trail itself, but we wouldn't be here if they hadn't provided a seamless registration allowing you to feel excited about supporting their conservation efforts. They welcome you on day one at the starting trailhead, as you arrive at camp at the end of each day's mileage, provide dinner every night,



set up relief stations staffed by local trail angels at one or two trail junctions or road crossings each day, and offer volunteer shuttles on the first morning and back to your car from Tot Hill on the last day. They have organized a masterful outreach opportunity that satisfies the craving for challenge in veteran backpackers and, speaking from experience, gives less experienced backpackers an opportunity to challenge themselves in a way that gives them confidence for the next mountain to climb while they eagerly await returning to that 24/27 trailhead year after year. When I finished my second thru hike in 2024, I was already counting the days till I start this year's fall thru hike on October 9th.

As Woody Guthrie sang, "This land is your land. This land is my land." At a time when conservation organizations are struggling more than ever, I encourage you to join an amazing trail community in supporting the conservation of these precious natural spaces by enjoying them responsibly under the expert guidance of Three Rivers Land Trust.



**"As Woody Guthrie sang,
'This land is your land.
This land is my land.'"**

CONNECT TRANSFORM PRESERVE

By Katie Stovall, TRLT Conservation Lands Manager





Three Rivers Land Trust is honored to announce the receipt of a grant from the Alcoa Foundation to support its transformative conservation initiative, Restoration and Resilience: Advancing Biodiversity and Habitat Connectivity in North Carolina.

This critical funding will empower TRLT to undertake essential habitat restoration projects spanning over 400 acres across the Piedmont and Sandhills regions of the state.

Increasing development pressure and land use change in North Carolina continues to degrade habitat quality for many wildlife species. These changes threaten biodiversity and lead to habitat fragmentation across the region. This grant, provided by the Alcoa Foundation, will allow TRLT to enhance ecological health by employing science-based land management techniques, including prescribed fire, invasive species control,

and native prairie restoration. This comprehensive project will implement needed prescribed fire treatments, restore native prairies, and control invasive plant species like kudzu and wisteria. Prescribed fire treatments will be implemented to mimic natural fire regimes and improve species diversity while reducing wildfire risk. Native prairie restorations will create habitat for at-risk wildlife species, improve habitat quality for sharply declining wildlife species, and remove invasive plants, which will restore native flora. These carefully implemented habitat management techniques will foster the recovery of ecosystem functions and improve food sources that are critical to wildlife survival.

Healthy ecosystems are the foundation of thriving wildlife communities. North Carolina has already seen the decline of too many rare plant and wildlife species. This grant from the Alcoa Foundation enables us to measurably improve habitat quality within critical wildlife habitat corridors that many of our region's declining species depend upon. Beyond benefiting wildlife, these efforts enhance wildfire resilience and maintain the natural processes that sustain clean air and clean water that people rely on every day.

These multifaceted efforts are poised to deliver tangible outcomes such as improved habitat quality across hundreds of acres, increased biodiversity, and enhanced habitat connectivity, thus creating conditions that support long-term ecological balances and resilience.



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GOING, GOING, BUT NOT GONE.

By Jessie Wilson, TRLT Land Protection Specialist



A person wearing a blue shirt is partially visible on the left side of the frame, holding a clipboard. The background is a dense forest with sunlight filtering through the trees, creating a bokeh effect of light and shadow on the ground and foliage.

When Katie Dunlap heard about the Auto Port planned for northwestern Moore County, she knew she had to act. Only a few miles from her rural home, 200 acres are slated for development into condos, garages, a 20,000 square foot clubhouse, a driving track, and more. She reached out to Three Rivers Land Trust and began the process of donating a conservation easement.

The forested property is located along Cabin Creek, a tributary to the Deep River. The permanent conservation of this property will provide critical wildlife habitat, water quality protection, and a host of other ecosystem benefits as development continues to change our state's rural landscapes.

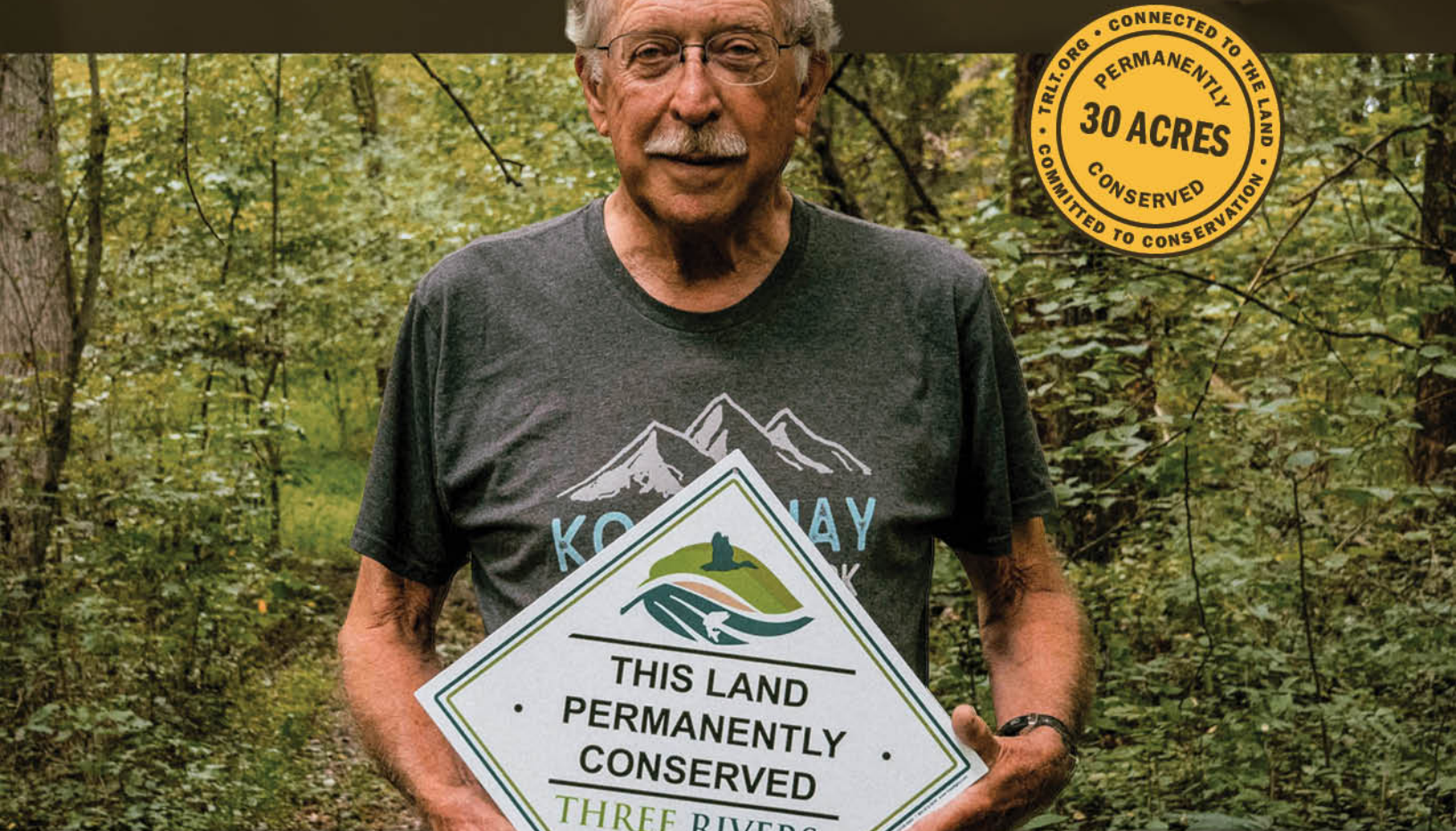
"This was the best outcome for my property. The ability to keep this parcel undeveloped in perpetuity gives me peace of mind," Katie Dunlap stated when asked about the project.

"Those who know Katie know how deeply she cares for the land and the community she calls home.

TRLT is honored to help her ensure the land she loves remains undeveloped forever," says Emily Callicutt, Director of Conservation for Three Rivers Land Trust.

"Population growth and development are changing the nature and character of the rural areas of our state," said Travis Morehead, Executive Director. "Katie's commitment to conservation demonstrates how landowners can make a difference. Without conservation-minded landowners like Katie, development will continue to dramatically impact our state's rural and working lands."

CONSERVING LAND TODAY



By Jessie Wilson,
TRLT Land Protection Specialist

FOR TOMORROW

"I wanted to do what it took to prevent the future development of this property," – Dr. Baranski

Dr. Michael Baranski has always known that he wanted to see his property permanently protected.

As a retired botany and ecology professor, Dr. Baranski understands the importance of conservation. That's why he worked with Three Rivers Land Trust to thoughtfully conserve his property from all future development.

"Conserving this property was important to me, and I especially wanted to ensure that the mature hardwoods on this tract would never be harvested. I wanted to do what it took to prevent the future development of this property," stated Dr. Baranski.

Situated along Forth Creek in Rowan County, this site consists of old hardwoods and remnant fields. Fourth Creek feeds into the South Yadkin River, the major drinking water source for the residents of Salisbury. In addition to the water quality resources, this woodland boasts over 80% prime or statewide important soils. Many species of wildlife call this well-managed forest home. Conserving this site and its resources will benefit the local community for future generations.

"The best time to conserve land was 100 years ago, the second best is today," said Jessie Wilson, TRLT Land Protection Specialist. "I am proud to see this wonderful property permanently

protected because the landowner understands the importance of conserving land in our rapidly developing county."

Rowan County is quickly developing. Residents will tell you that a new housing development seems to pop up every

"The best time to conserve land was 100 years ago, the second best is today."

– Jessie Wilson

other week. It is crucial that conservation rates increase alongside development. If our natural resources are not conserved today, they will be lost tomorrow. Without the forethought of willing landowners and land trusts, future generations may not have old-growth forests, wildlife habitat, and clear streams. Thankfully, the Baranski property will remain undeveloped for generations to come.

"Once land is developed, it is gone forever," said Travis Morehead, TRLT Executive Director. "That is why land use decisions are so important and why it is so important to conserve your land before it's too late."



LAND, LONGLEAF, LEGACY

BY JESSIE WILSON, TRLT LAND PROTECTION SPECIALIST



At the beginning of the summer, Three Rivers Land Trust protected a 298-acre farm in Robeson County, NC. This working forestland conservation easement not only protects the timber resources on the property, but continues the legacy started by the Caldwell- Dietzel Family over 200 years ago.

In 1811, John W. Caldwell and his wife, Nancy Hartfield, moved from Kinston, North Carolina to the Raft Swamp area of Robeson County near Lumberton. There, they purchased six hundred acres of land. Seven generations and 214 years later, 306 acres still remain in the family's ownership, stewarded by Joe and Rosalie Dietzel and their son, Charles Dietzel. Now, thanks to the landowner's foresight and TRLT, that land will always remain undeveloped. It will never become a neighborhood, covered in houses or asphalt, or developed as a commercial site. Instead, this property will continue to showcase the family's longstanding connection to agriculture and the land itself.

In the past, over two hundred acres of tobacco were cultivated on the property. Today, the land is covered in longleaf and loblolly pines. Pine trees and tobacco are important parts of NC history, it is extortionary that both crops have been watched over by the same family. Though the plants are different, they are no less valued or cared for. In fact, the landowners have been recognized

by the North Carolina Forest Service for their incredible efforts to steward the property. Additionally, the landowners received a unique distinction from the Longleaf Alliance by being the first from Robeson County to be included in the "Longleaf Honor Roll". "The Dietzel family are remarkable stewards of their land and are deeply committed to its permanent conservation," stated Emily Callicutt, TRLT Director of Conservation.

The Caldwell-Dietzel Family has a list of goals for their property, and key among them is keeping the land in the family. It is a rare thing to know that the soil under your feet carried your ancestors and will carry your family into the future. "We are deeply honored and humbled to be able to continue the agricultural legacy of John and Nancy, and to pass that legacy on to our descendants," stated landowner Joe Dietzel.

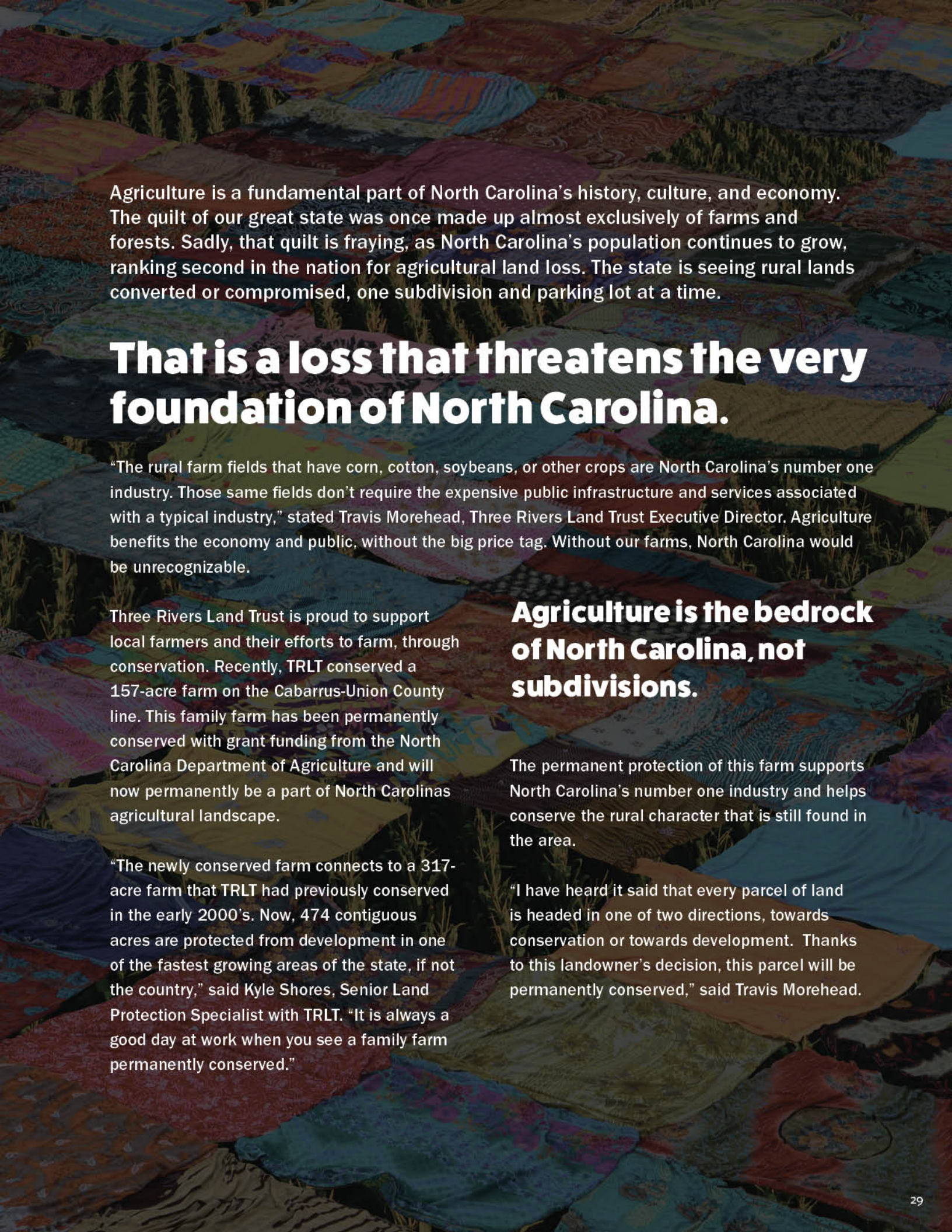
"Saving family farms is one of our core missions," stated Travis Morehead, TRLT Executive Director. "We understand the significance of agriculture in North Carolina and are proud to help this family conserve their land."





The Quilt

By Kyle Shores, TRIT Senior Land Protection Specialist



Agriculture is a fundamental part of North Carolina's history, culture, and economy. The quilt of our great state was once made up almost exclusively of farms and forests. Sadly, that quilt is fraying, as North Carolina's population continues to grow, ranking second in the nation for agricultural land loss. The state is seeing rural lands converted or compromised, one subdivision and parking lot at a time.

That is a loss that threatens the very foundation of North Carolina.

"The rural farm fields that have corn, cotton, soybeans, or other crops are North Carolina's number one industry. Those same fields don't require the expensive public infrastructure and services associated with a typical industry," stated Travis Morehead, Three Rivers Land Trust Executive Director. Agriculture benefits the economy and public, without the big price tag. Without our farms, North Carolina would be unrecognizable.

Three Rivers Land Trust is proud to support local farmers and their efforts to farm, through conservation. Recently, TRLT conserved a 157-acre farm on the Cabarrus-Union County line. This family farm has been permanently conserved with grant funding from the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and will now permanently be a part of North Carolina's agricultural landscape.

"The newly conserved farm connects to a 317-acre farm that TRLT had previously conserved in the early 2000's. Now, 474 contiguous acres are protected from development in one of the fastest growing areas of the state, if not the country," said Kyle Shores, Senior Land Protection Specialist with TRLT. "It is always a good day at work when you see a family farm permanently conserved."

Agriculture is the bedrock of North Carolina, not subdivisions.

The permanent protection of this farm supports North Carolina's number one industry and helps conserve the rural character that is still found in the area.

"I have heard it said that every parcel of land is headed in one of two directions, towards conservation or towards development. Thanks to this landowner's decision, this parcel will be permanently conserved," said Travis Morehead.

FARMLAND and FORT BRAGG

BY JESSIE WILSON, TRLT LAND PROTECTION SPECIALIST



Late this spring, Three Rivers Land Trust partnered with the Department of Defense and Fort Bragg to conserve a 25-acre farm located in southern Moore County. This equestrian farm is adjacent to Fort Bragg, one of the nation's most active military installations.

Fort Bragg is the largest military base in the country by population; over 53,000 troops live, work, and train at the base. This accounts for almost 10% of army forces. Additionally, the soldiers at the base may be called upon at any minute to protect our country; it is the only military base in the US with a Joint Strategic Deployment Platform that can respond to threats in mere hours if necessary. It is crucial that these soldiers have a safe, secure training area to practice the skills they use to defend our country.

"The primary purpose of this project was to permanently conserve the land next to the installation, so that future development and residents would not be impacted by military training," stated Barry Hull, Sandhills Conservation Coordinator for TRLT.

Conservation easements like the one used to protect this farm prevent subdivision and development, tall structures, and light emissions that can be a detriment to training activities on the installation. Additionally, creating buffers of conserved land around Fort Bragg provides greater flexibility to the units training there while minimizing potential disturbance to nearby neighbors. TRLT is proud to help protect the soldiers training to protect us.

"As residential development continues, projects like this one are becoming more essential. This conservation easement will have a far-reaching positive impact, across the Sandhills," stated Barry Hull. Thanks to the landowner, the Department of Defense, and TRLT, this farm will be conserved in perpetuity.

"Conserving important national defense lands around Fort Bragg is a core part of our mission. We are thankful that our partnership with the military allows us to conserve important natural resources while supporting the installation's training efforts," said Travis Morehead, Executive Director of TRLT. "As development increases, so too must our conservation efforts."



TRLT Regional Farm Report

**15
Counties!**



**95%
Family
Farms**

**#1 Economic
Driver**



**1.2 Million
Acres of
Farmland**



**\$
350,000
Average
Annual
Farm
Operating
Expense
\$**

**Our region
loses farms
at a rate of
almost 2 per
day!**

**14,353
Farmers**

**Value of AG
Products Sold:
\$3.1
BILLION**

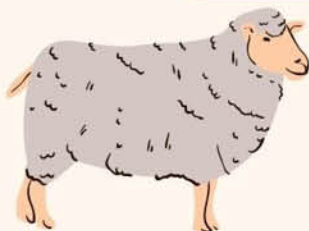
**1,549
Farmers have
Served in the
Military**

**Average
Farm is
173 Acres**

**38 Percent of
Farmers over
the age of 65**

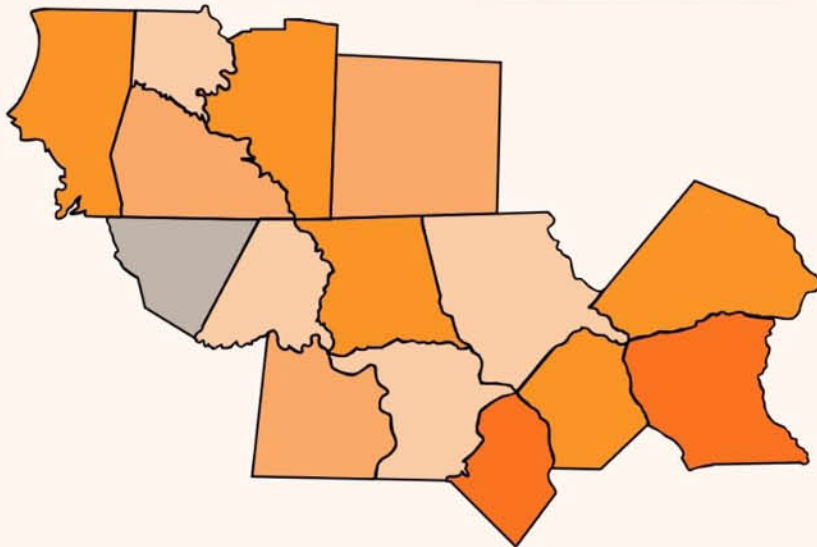
**4,964
Women
Farmers**

**\$ 11.1 Million
in Government
Grants**



Percentage of Farms Lost

Did you know Randolph County has the most cattle in NC?



Percentage of Farms Lost from 2007 - 2022

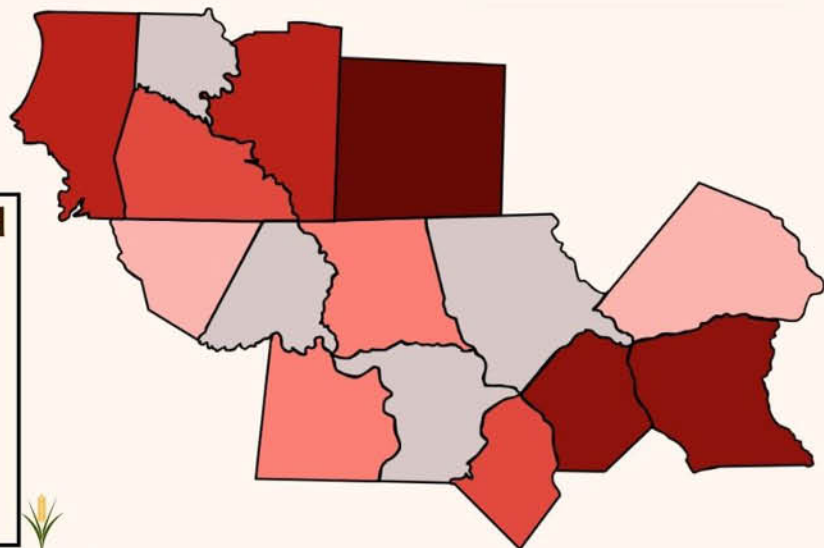
- Over 30 percent lost
- Between 20 and 29 percent lost
- Between 10 and 19 percent lost
- Between 1 and 9 percent lost
- No loss

Over 16 percent of farms were lost from 2007 - 2022

Acres of Agricultural Land

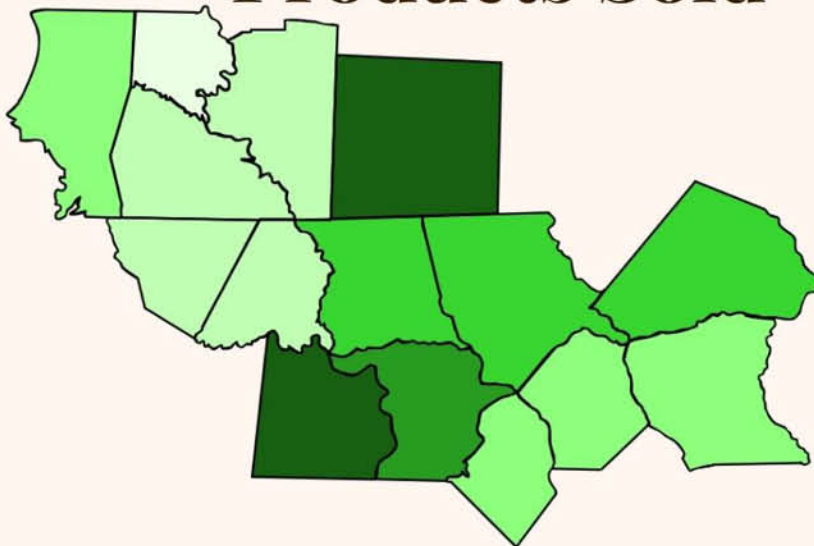
Acres of Agricultural Land Lost from 2007 - 2022

- Over 25,000 acres
- Between 20,000 and 24,999 acres
- Between 15,000 and 19,999 acres
- Between 10,000 and 14,999 acres
- Between 5,000 and 9,999 acres
- Between 1 and 4,999 acres
- No loss



Over 100,000 acres of agricultural lands were lost from 2007 - 2022

Market Value of Products Sold



Did you know Anson County is one of the top poultry and egg producers in the State?



Value in 2022

- Over \$400 million
- Between \$300 Million and \$399 Million
- Between \$200 Million and \$299 Million
- Between \$100 Million and \$199 Million
- Between \$50 Million and \$99 Million
- Between \$30 Million and \$49 Million

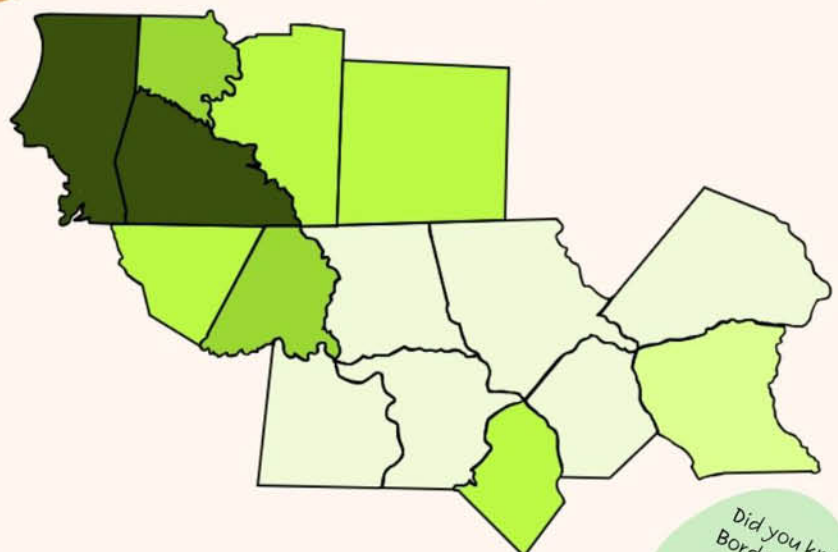
The demand for agriculture products is increasing, even though farmland is being lost

Farmland Conserved by TRLT



Acres of Farmland Conserved

- Over 4,000 acres
- Between 3,000 and 3,999 acres
- Between 2,000 and 2,999 acres
- Between 1,000 and 1,999 acres
- Between 500 and 999 acres
- Between 1 and 499 acres



Over 20,000 acres of Farmland Conserved, the time to act is now!

Did you know Border Collies and Australian Shepherds are the most popular farm dogs?



What Can You Do to Help?

1

Donate to Conservation! We can not do this without donor support. For every dollar donated to TRLT, we leverage it 16x for conservation.

2

Call your representative and let them know that you care about NC Farmers and Farmland Conservation!

3

Spread the Word! Do you know someone with a farm they would like to protect? Or who is interested in conservation? Tell them about Three Rivers Land Trust!

With Your Help We Can Save NC Farms!



****Data Notes****

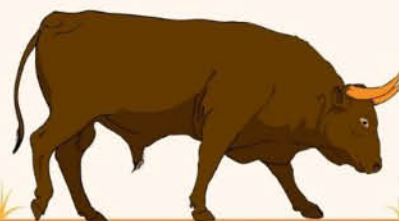
The data is from the USDA Agriculture Census. The AG Census is completely voluntary survey that occurs every five years and was last completed in 2022.

The survey may not capture all farmland loss as some farmers chose not to report. Additionally, some farmers lease their farm land, when that farm is no longer operational it shows as a farm loss but not an acreage loss. These factors result in some counties showing farm loss but not farmland loss.

If you have any questions about this report, please contact jessie@trlt.org



Did you know
Rowan County is
one of the top
countys for
young farmers?





HABITAT SUMMIT 2025

A LOOK BACK

By Katie Stovall, TRLT Conservation Lands Manager





Three Rivers Land Trust's Habitat Summit aims to provide practical land management advice to foresters, land managers, conservation professionals, and landowners.

This event hosts nationally recognized speakers with top-notch presentations on emerging research and applicable land management techniques. The objective of this event is to promote meaningful connections, foster the conservation ethic, and strengthen habitat and forest management on North Carolina lands.

The 2025 Habitat Summit hosted 14 information-packed sessions. Speakers traveled from across the Southeast to present new and emerging research related to the conservation field. Each session boasted tangible take-home messages that landowners and conservation professionals can implement.



HABITAT SUMMIT HIGHLIGHTS

The State of Conservation in North Carolina

TRAVIS MOREHEAD,
THREE RIVERS LAND TRUST

- “The first law of intelligent tinkering is to save all the parts”- Aldo Leopold. We can learn from Aldo in that we must retain all components of an ecosystem if we want to maintain a healthy, functioning ecosystem.
- It is incredibly hard, expensive, and often impossible to replace our resources once they are lost. Once we lose North Carolina’s prime soils, drive wildlife and plant species to extinction, or degrade our water quality, those resources may be gone forever.
- We cannot let the market drive natural resource decisions. We have learned these lessons from decimated populations of many species during the 1800s. Conservation laws in the early 1900s placed protections on species and allowed them to be a resource held in the public trust. These same conservation laws allow us to responsibly enjoy these resources today.
- “Regular” people have to get involved to make a difference. You and I control the fate of tomorrow.



Market hunters took a heavy toll on North America’s game before regulations were passed in the early 20th century. This provides evidence that we cannot let the market drive our future conservation efforts. We must protect our rural lands before the “market” drives development in North Carolina to a point where we have lost resources that we cannot reclaim. Photo credit: Ducks Unlimited

Managing Habitat to Increase Turkey Productivity

DR. MARCUS LASHLEY,
UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

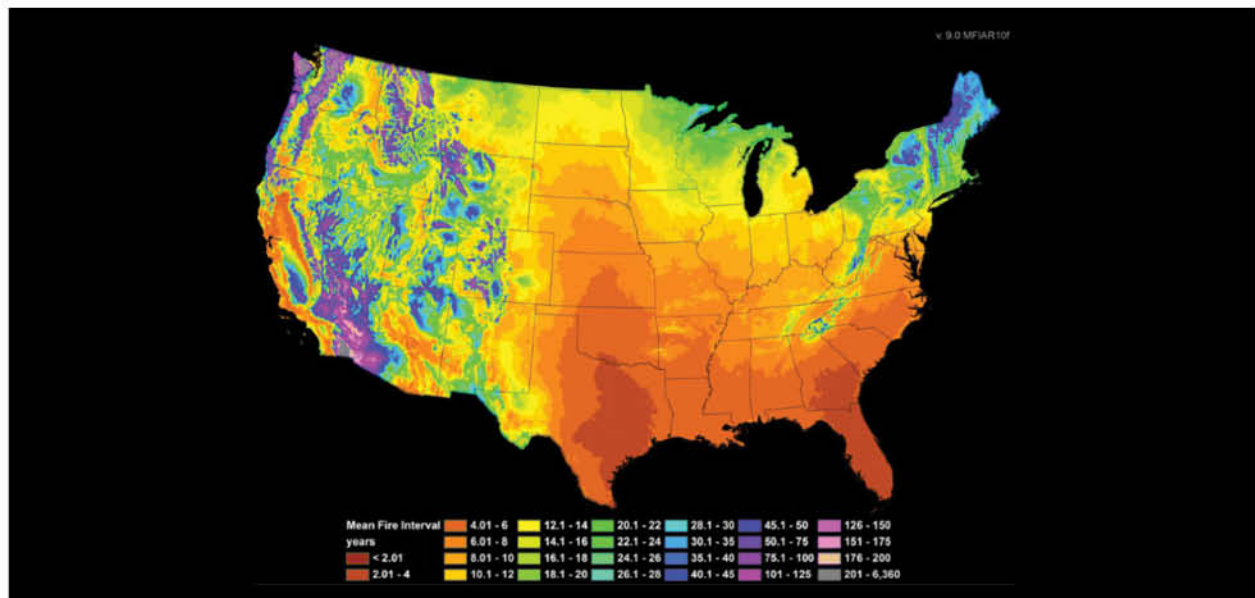
- Turkeys evolved with fire!
- Recent studies reveal that 7% of the surveyed landscape included early succession or young, regenerating forests. However, 46% of turkey nests were in early succession or young forests. Therefore, ensuring your property includes high-quality early succession or young forests can be an excellent way to improve turkey productivity.
- Avoiding mowing during the nesting season is one of the easiest ways to improve turkey productivity.
- Only 36% of hens successfully raised one or more chicks to reach 28 days old. The first 28 days of a poult's life are the most vulnerable. Creating appropriate vegetation communities that are dominated by forbs is essential to increasing survival.



A French map of the Carolinas from 1718. Notice NC with a large region labeled "Grande Savane" in the Piedmont of North Carolina (Photo Credit: Guillaume de L'Isle 1718). This map indicates that NC looked significantly different and included expansive grasslands.



Juxtaposing nesting cover beside brooding cover can significantly reduce poult mortality. Poults that are required to move more than 500 yards to brooding cover face a much greater risk of mortality.



Using Fire Season to Manage Deer Habitat: Research Highlights and Management Implications

Historical fire interval estimates in the United States. Many areas in North Carolina experienced fire every 2 to 6 years. Photo credit: Guyette et al. 2012

LUKE RESOP, MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY

- Modern prescribed fire regimes are seasonally mismatched from historical regimes.
- Forage quality and nutrition are often declining when nutritional demands for deer are increasing. This inverse relationship can be alleviated by implementing growing-season prescribed fires.
- Research revealed that May and June fires were 3.5 times more likely to result in a dead midstory tree than September and October fires.
- September and October fires proved to be the best way to increase forb coverage.
- One fire seasonality isn't necessarily better than another. Each seasonality has its place to meet specific goals. Fire regimes should be fine-tuned to meet desired plant responses.



Drivers of Mesophication in Oak Landscapes and Implications for Fire Management

DR. HEATHER ALEXANDER, AUBURN UNIVERSITY

- The majority of forests in the Southeast were historically savannas, open forests, and prairies before European settlement.
- Closed canopy, homogenized forests lose ecosystem services and biodiversity.
- A mosaic of forest ages and types on the landscape is critical for improved biodiversity.
- Oak regeneration is declining and will result in the loss of oaks as a foundation species, and will have economic impacts. Getting sunlight to the forest floor is key to reducing homogenization and increasing biodiversity.

Fire exclusion has allowed mesophytic species like sweetgum and red maple to establish. This increase in the presence of mesophytic species has created a transition to non-oak-dominated forests.

Can You Kill It with Fire? Invasive Plant Management Strategies in the Southeast

DR. DAVID COYLE, CLEMSON UNIVERSITY

- Growing season prescribed fire can stress invasive plants more than dormant season fire.
- It is important to realize that successful invasive control will require a multi-year commitment and multiple treatments.
- Cogongrass is one of the world's worst noxious weeds. Cogongrass has been previously found in NC.

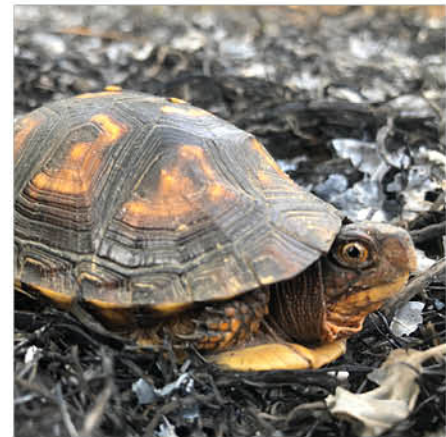


Winter photo of Cogongrass infestation. Photo credit: Alabama A&M and Auburn University Extension

Fire Effects on Wildlife: Severity, Season, and Frequency of Fire

DR. CHRIS MOORMAN, NC STATE UNIVERSITY

- There are winners and losers for every management action, regardless of action or no action.
- "Priority" animals and plants are often dependent on prescribed fire. "Priority" species are those that are threatened in terms of long-term survival.
- Variability in management regimes benefits a wide array of species.
- Varying fire timing across a property or landscape can provide high-quality forage throughout the year and increase nutrition during nutritionally stressful times.



Many animals, even slow-moving reptiles, have adaptations to reduce the negative direct effects of prescribed fires.

Managing Your Land for Wildlife

JOHN ISENHOUR, NORTH CAROLINA WILDLIFE
RESOURCES COMMISSION

- Management should be based on your objectives as the landowner, not pressure from contractors, tax offices, or cost-share availability.
- Defining clear and specific objectives and working to make sure those objectives are feasible and realistic for the property is important.
- Objectives should be based on the values of the landowner. Landowners must balance monetary concerns with intrinsic values when defining values and objectives.



Timber Markets: Where We are at Today and What May the Future Hold?

JEREMY KESSINGER, RESOURCE WISE

- Many pulp mills in the southeast have closed. There is no quick fix to remedy this change in the market. New, emerging markets are slow to establish. North Carolina is experiencing a reduced capacity to merchandise pulp products.
- Changes in forest practices, including reducing planting density, can be a way to adapt to changing forest markets.
- 2021 and 2022 were unprecedented in softwood lumber markets. Log prices have seen declines compared to the 2021-2022 lumber price height.



Integrating Silviculture and Habitat Management in North Carolina Forests

JORDAN NANNEY, COMPASS SOUTH FORESTRY

- Forest disturbance is vital to enhance and maintain habitat quality for the majority of North Carolina's primary game species.
- Traditional silviculture creates better habitat quality for most game species than no forest disturbance!



Birds Like Your Forest – Let's Make Them Love It!

CURTIS SMALLING, AUDUBON, NORTH CAROLINA

- Birds are a useful tool in connecting people to conservation.
- 83% of forests are privately owned. Most forests are contained in parcels less than 50 acres. Therefore, management of private land is critical for retaining bird populations.
- Maximizing horizontal and vertical diversity across the landscape helps maximize bird diversity.
- North Carolina is one of the only states not seeing a decline in brown-headed nuthatches.
- Patch clearcuts are a technique to improve habitat quality for many bird species.



One in five prothonotary warblers live in North Carolina.



Photo credit: Katy Perry

Fire Weather Tips for Prescribed Fire Practitioners

THOMAS CRATE, NC STATE PARKS

- Burning index relates to fire behavior and the ability to contain a fire. The difficulty of containment is directly proportional to the fireline intensity.
- Doubling the burn index indicates that twice the effort will be required to contain a fire, provided all other weather parameters remain constant.
- BehavePlus is a computer software that fire managers can use to assist with prescribed fire planning. Modeling capabilities include predicting surface fire spread and intensity, fire containment, tree mortality, and probability of ignition.



Restoring and Managing Native Early Successional Plant Communities in the Eastern United States

BONNER POWELL, WILDLIFE INVESTMENTS

- A desirable forb component is usually an objective when managing early successional plant communities. Forbs provide forage, seed, cover, and nectar resources for a wide variety of wildlife species. Forbs provide floral resources for pollinators, which have experienced extreme population declines
- Disturbance is required to maintain early successional communities, regardless of how they are established.
- Two years of research revealed that burning is recommended, instead of mowing, to set-back succession and maintain plant communities that are dominated by forbs. This is especially true if landowners are interested in increased food for bobwhite and deer, enhanced cover for deer, wild turkey, and bobwhite, and if pollinator resources are a management objective.
- Consider using seedbank response and natural colonization of plants instead of planting native grasses and forbs to stretch conservation dollars and more effectively and efficiently promote and enhance habitat for bobwhite, wild turkey, and deer.



Leaving a Legacy – An Introduction to Conservation Easements

EMILY CALLICUTT, THREE RIVERS LAND TRUST

- A conservation easement is the only way a landowner can ensure their land isn't developed in the future.
- A conservation easement is a perpetual and legally-binding agreement that is tied to the land, regardless of successive owners.
- A landowner can still sell or pass down the property to whomever they wish, but the easement goes with the land.
- The restrictions within an easement can be flexible. The overarching goal of an easement is to prevent development.

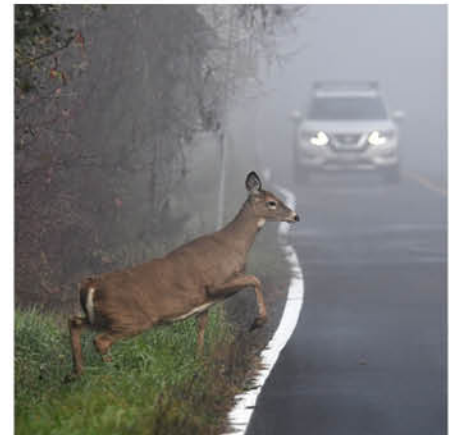




From Forest to City – How Urbanization Shapes Deer Movement and Survival

DR. CHRIS MOORMAN NC STATE UNIVERSITY

- This presentation presented the result of a three-year telemetry study in North Carolina to examine how urbanization influenced white-tailed deer movement, resource selection, survival, and causes of mortality including hunting
- Urbanization in the southeastern United States is projected to increase by 101% to 192% over the next 40 years.
- North Carolina is projected to become the 7th most populous state within the next five years.
- Urban deer adjust activity to avoid humans.
- Neonate predation increases with urbanization.
- Fawn survival declines with urbanization.



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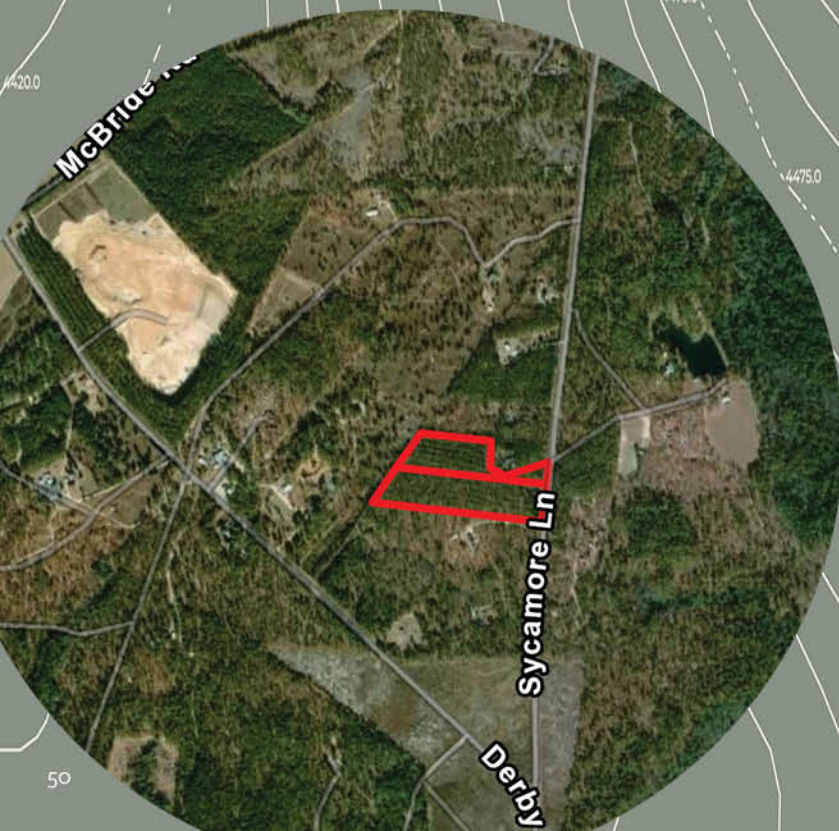
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FOREST & FARMS FOREVER

BY EMILY CALLICUTT,
TRLT DIRECTOR OF CONSERVATION





On August 21, 2025, Three Rivers Land Trust conserved 87 acres of working farm and forest land in Montgomery and Richmond Counties, adding to the network of nearby conserved lands. These parcels are adjacent to over 350 acres of land previously conserved by TRLT.

As development pressure continues to grow in the region, conserving working land and forests is more important than ever before. According to the American Farmland Trust, Montgomery County is projected to lose 44% of its working land by 2040 to low-density residential development, while Richmond County is projected to lose 12%. Thanks to forward-thinking landowners like Lori and Richard Greene, their family farm will not be part of that statistic.

“Dedicating this conservation easement in memory of my parents, Carl and Gail Gallimore, is a small gesture of appreciation

to recognize the important life lessons I learned while growing up on a family farm. My mom’s wish was to conserve the land for future farmers and their families. Family farms like ours are disappearing and being developed for homes and businesses. It’s a sad realization that future generations will grow up with concrete and asphalt and not know the treasure of working in peach and tobacco fields or walking through green pastures and forests teeming with wildlife. I want to conserve a small remnant of our farm, as my mom wished, so that the next generation can have those experiences,” said Ms. Greene.

In addition to productive agricultural land, the property contains several stands of longleaf pine. These remaining stands increase the value of conserving this property by providing the necessary habitat for the plant and animal life that inhabit the longleaf ecosystem.

“By working with willing property owners through conservation easements, we efficiently safeguard rural economies, water quality, and wildlife habitat. We are so thankful the landowners chose to work with TRLT to conserve their important working lands in the Sandhills,” stated Emily Callicutt, TRLT Director of Conservation.

Travis Morehead, Executive Director of TRLT, shared, “Since 1995, TRLT has conserved over 50,000 acres in the Piedmont and Sandhills of North Carolina thanks to the support of members and landowners like Lori and Richard Greene. Without that support, important projects like this don’t happen.”

FOR THE BIRDS



BY KATIE STOVALL, TRLT CONSERVATION LANDS MANAGER

The project will implement science-based land stewardship practices to improve habitat quality for identified bird species.

Three Rivers Land Trust is pleased to announce it has been awarded a \$25,000 grant from the March Conservation Fund to advance habitat restoration projects targeting sensitive and declining bird species across six designated management areas in North Carolina. This grant is a pivotal investment in reclaiming and enhancing declining vegetation communities that support biodiversity and improve habitat quality for key bird species throughout the Piedmont and Sandhills regions.

The project, titled *Restoration and Resilience: Creating and Improving Landscapes for Sensitive Avian Species in Central North Carolina*, will implement science-based land stewardship practices to improve habitat quality for identified bird species. Applied habitat management techniques will include implementation of prescribed fire on over 400 acres,

prairie restoration, and non-native, invasive species control. Invasive species control will focus on removing kudzu and wisteria, which will restore healthy and resilient plant communities. These essential habitat management techniques will improve nesting cover and increase food availability, which is critical to a suite of bird species that are facing steep population declines.

“Thoughtful habitat management with clearly defined objectives directly correlates to healthier wildlife populations and resilient ecosystems,” said Katie Stovall, Conservation Lands Manager at TRLT. “By restoring natural fire regimes, removing invasive plants, and expanding native prairies, we are creating the essential conditions needed for species like northern bobwhite quail, eastern meadowlarks, and prairie warblers. These efforts not only support songbirds but also improve habitat quality for a suite of other species like reptiles, bats, and pollinators.”

Specific planned activities include the careful implementation of prescribed burns across five preserves. These prescribed burns will be conducted to rejuvenate wildflower growth, improve nesting cover for shrubland songbirds, and reduce wildfire risk. Additionally, this grant will facilitate a two-acre native prairie expansion. Prairie restoration work will include reducing the coverage of encroaching loblolly pines in highly diverse plant communities. This project will also have a strong focus on controlling invasive plant species. Removing these non-native plant species will restore the biodiversity within native riparian buffers.

These management efforts will be closely monitored, providing invaluable data on bird community responses and the effectiveness of restoration practices. TRLT aims to deliver measurable ecological benefits, including improved habitat quality across hundreds of acres, increased bird species richness and diversity, and enhanced habitat connectivity within the landscape. The long-term ecological benefits of this grant-funded work extend far beyond the boundaries of TRLT’s preserves.





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CELEBRATING 30 YEARS

On Saturday evening, August 23rd, guests gathered at the Cedar Hill Venue on Clark Rd to celebrate Three Rivers Land Trust's 30 years of conservation efforts. The evening featured a catered meal provided by Roland's Backyard Cooking, along with dancing and music by Virtual Sounds Entertainment and Productions. Attendees enjoyed an impressive array of silent auction items donated by businesses across our fifteen-county region. All proceeds from Riverdance help support our local conservation initiatives.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to our Riverdance sponsors:



Mike and Kathryn Mabry · John Monroe · Ed & Susan Norvell · Leon Huneycutt
Twisted Sweetgum Farms LLC · Barnes Family Ag LLC · GW Smith

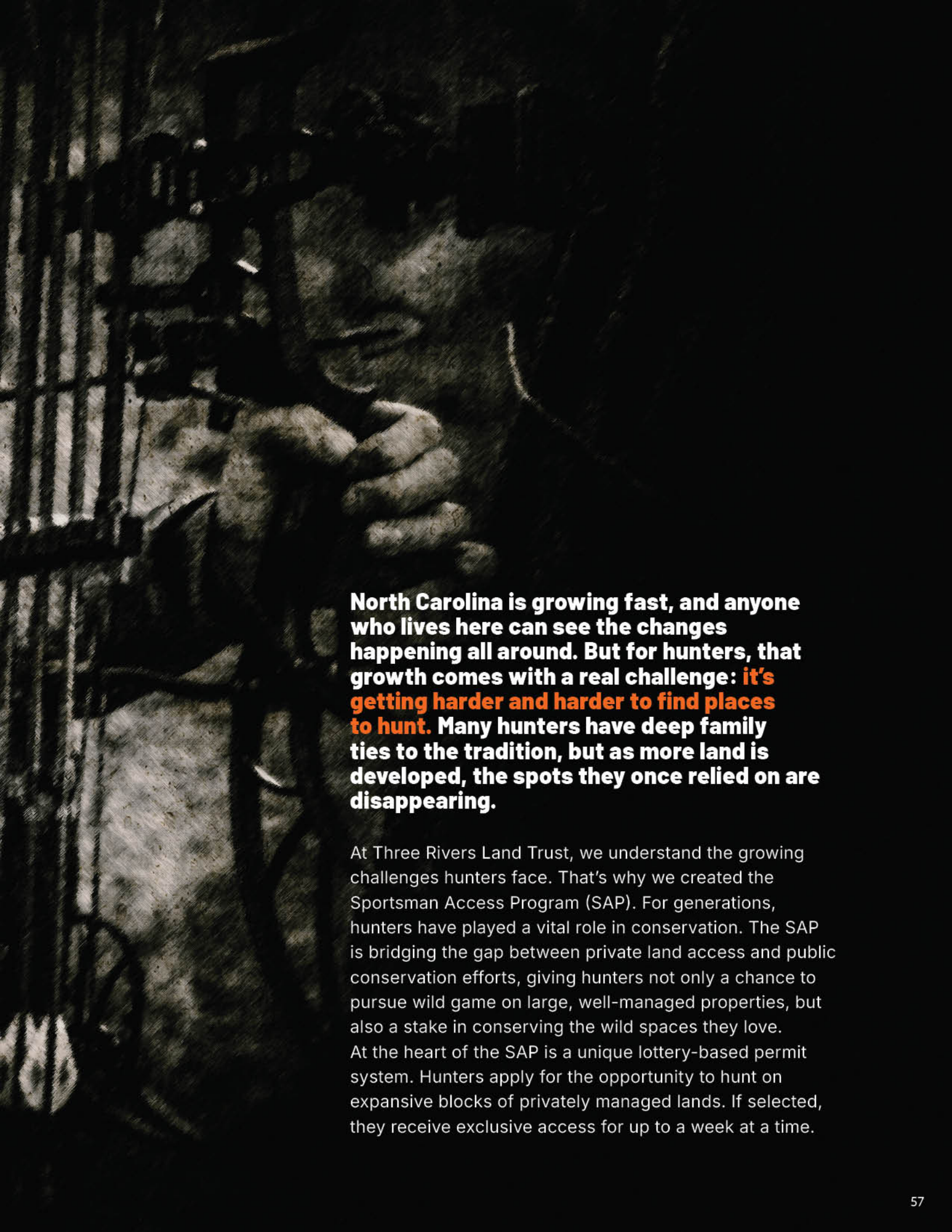


Larry & Jennie Hale · Sam Howard Farm, Inc. · Bob Fox
The Law Office of Ben C. Morgan · Affordable Insurance LLC of Salisbury

A high-contrast, black and white photograph of a soldier in camouflage gear, aiming a rifle. The soldier's face is partially obscured by the rifle and the texture of the camouflage. The background is dark and grainy, suggesting a night or low-light environment. The text 'NEED A PLACE TO HUNT?' is overlaid in large, bold, white capital letters on the lower half of the image.

NEED A PLACE TO HUNT?

BY MICHAEL CHUPITA, TRLT OPERATIONS MANAGER



North Carolina is growing fast, and anyone who lives here can see the changes happening all around. But for hunters, that growth comes with a real challenge: it's getting harder and harder to find places to hunt. Many hunters have deep family ties to the tradition, but as more land is developed, the spots they once relied on are disappearing.

At Three Rivers Land Trust, we understand the growing challenges hunters face. That's why we created the Sportsman Access Program (SAP). For generations, hunters have played a vital role in conservation. The SAP is bridging the gap between private land access and public conservation efforts, giving hunters not only a chance to pursue wild game on large, well-managed properties, but also a stake in conserving the wild spaces they love. At the heart of the SAP is a unique lottery-based permit system. Hunters apply for the opportunity to hunt on expansive blocks of privately managed lands. If selected, they receive exclusive access for up to a week at a time.

These properties are carefully managed to support healthy habitats and thriving wildlife populations. And unlike typical public land hunts, if you're awarded a block, you'll have exclusive access to it for the entire week.



The SAP includes five properties totaling nearly 4,000 acres across Davie, Rowan, Montgomery, and Moore counties. Each property is divided into individual hunting blocks, averaging about 200 acres per block, offering plenty of space and opportunity for a quality hunting experience.

But the SAP isn't just about access. It's also about impact. Every dollar generated through the program feeds directly back into our local conservation efforts. That means when a hunter draws a permit, they're not just securing a week in the woods, they're investing in the future of North Carolina's wild spaces.



YOU GAME?

To learn more and sign up, scan here or contact michael@trlt.org.

GETTING STARTED WITH THE SAP IS SIMPLE.

HERE'S HOW IT WORKS



Create an Account

Head to trlt.recaccess.com and set up your SAP RecAccess login.



Buy your first set of entries

Starting at \$100 for four entries. Additional entries can be purchased to increase your odds.



Choose Your Blocks and Weeks

Use your entries to apply for the blocks and weeks you're most interested in. You can enter for as many blocks and dates as you like.



Wait for the Draw

If selected, you'll receive exclusive access to the block(s) and week(s) you were drawn for. Each hunting period runs Monday through Sunday.



Boost Your Chances with Friends

Want to hunt with a buddy? You can link your entries with up to two friends to improve your chances of being drawn together.

FIVE PROPERTIES. TOTAL ACCESS.



THE POINT

1,700 ACRES - DAVIE + ROWAN COUNTIES

Located where the Yadkin and South Yadkin Rivers meet, this massive property features a mix of wooded areas and active agricultural lands, making it exceptional wildlife habitat for a variety of game species.



LOW WATER BRIDGE

1,500 ACRES - MONTGOMERY COUNTY

The beautiful Uwharrie River runs throughout this expansive parcel, and its native hardwoods and pines provide excellent wildlife habitat.



HARRINGTON

600 ACRES - MOORE COUNTY

This huge property features two massive hunting blocks, each of which is 250+ acres across.



PETTY

350 ACRES - MOORE COUNTY

This property provides two hunting blocks across almost a mile of frontage on McLendons Creek.



SMITH BRANCH LONGLEAF

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Surrounded on three sides by the iconic Uwharrie National Forest, this scenic property is ideal for hunting deer and small game. Small-game hunting with dogs is permitted.

CONSERVATION EASEMENTS & FOREST MANAGEMENT

The Perfect Pair

BY JEANNE HARMOR / DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS, NC FORESTRY ASSOCIATION

A Family Legacy Rooted in the Land

In southeast Bertie County lies a plot of farmland that has been in the same family since 1797— and Chuck Daniels plans to keep it that way.

Daniels, a committed landowner at heart and procurement forester at Domtar Paper Company, knows all about what it means to uphold a family legacy.

“I learned a lot from my grandfather—he always talked about managing the land and doing things the right way,” said Daniels. “He inspired me to pursue forestry, and so when I went to college, I knew this was my calling. I’ve never looked back.”

A Career Close to Home

Daniels’ career path has exposed him to many facets of forestry, and through it all, he has mostly worked close to home. He held land management positions at several companies before moving into procurement. Since 2007, Daniels has worked at Domtar, which allows him to stay near his farmland while giving him the flexibility to engage in his community. He is active in several organizations, including the North Carolina Forestry Association (NCFA).

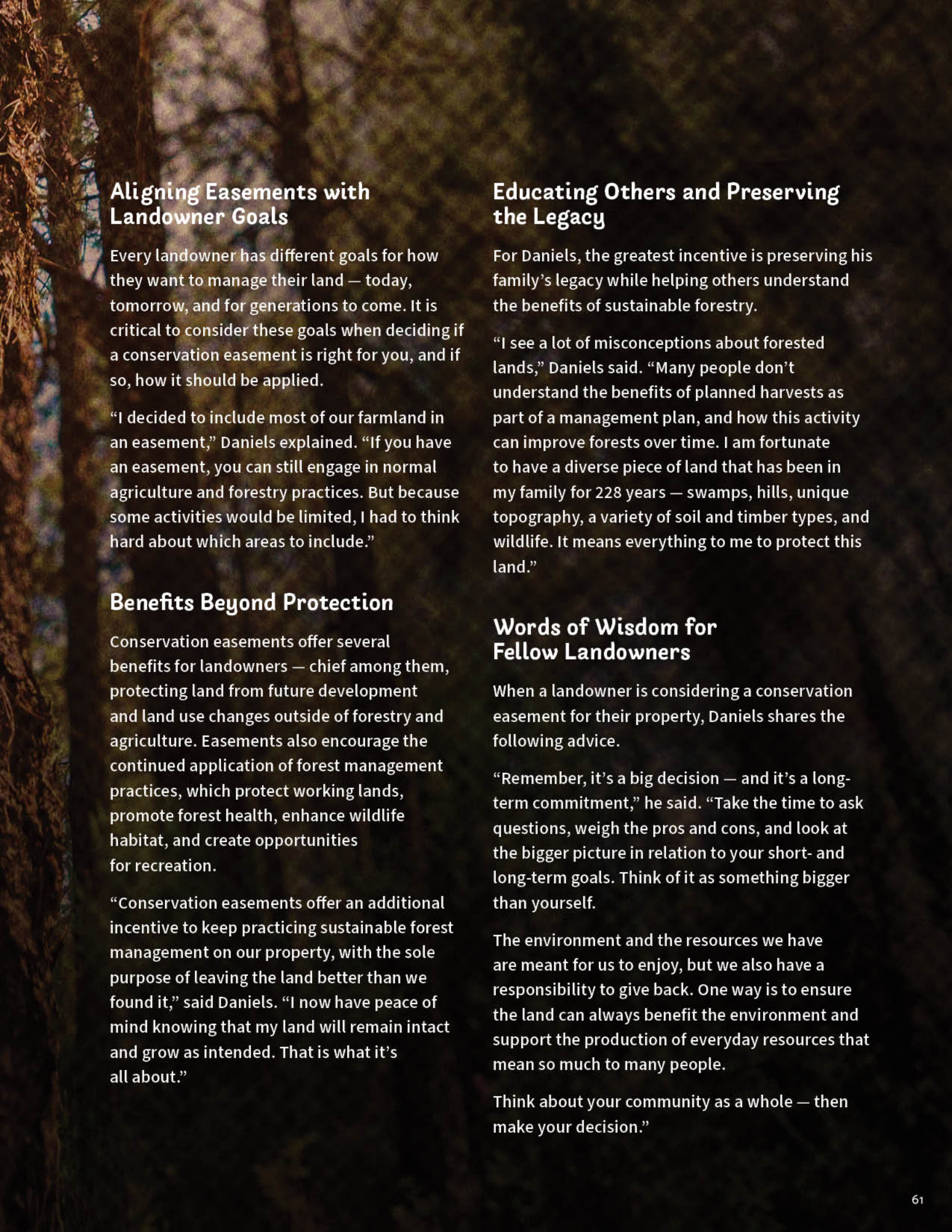
It was through his involvement with the NCFA that Daniels learned about conservation easements — a discovery that would shape the future of his family’s land.



Finding Purpose in Conservation Easements

“Sustainability is very important to me,” said Daniels. “As a landowner, I am constantly learning new things every day. When I first learned about conservation easements, I did my research and spoke to many landowners who had experience with them. Given my passion for forest management and my desire to preserve my family’s land, just made sense.”

Establishing conservation easements for his land didn’t happen overnight. Daniels attended several meetings with a local land trust and soon found himself making important decisions about how and where easements would apply to his property.



Aligning Easements with Landowner Goals

Every landowner has different goals for how they want to manage their land — today, tomorrow, and for generations to come. It is critical to consider these goals when deciding if a conservation easement is right for you, and if so, how it should be applied.

“I decided to include most of our farmland in an easement,” Daniels explained. “If you have an easement, you can still engage in normal agriculture and forestry practices. But because some activities would be limited, I had to think hard about which areas to include.”

Benefits Beyond Protection

Conservation easements offer several benefits for landowners — chief among them, protecting land from future development and land use changes outside of forestry and agriculture. Easements also encourage the continued application of forest management practices, which protect working lands, promote forest health, enhance wildlife habitat, and create opportunities for recreation.

“Conservation easements offer an additional incentive to keep practicing sustainable forest management on our property, with the sole purpose of leaving the land better than we found it,” said Daniels. “I now have peace of mind knowing that my land will remain intact and grow as intended. That is what it’s all about.”

Educating Others and Preserving the Legacy

For Daniels, the greatest incentive is preserving his family’s legacy while helping others understand the benefits of sustainable forestry.

“I see a lot of misconceptions about forested lands,” Daniels said. “Many people don’t understand the benefits of planned harvests as part of a management plan, and how this activity can improve forests over time. I am fortunate to have a diverse piece of land that has been in my family for 228 years — swamps, hills, unique topography, a variety of soil and timber types, and wildlife. It means everything to me to protect this land.”

Words of Wisdom for Fellow Landowners

When a landowner is considering a conservation easement for their property, Daniels shares the following advice.

“Remember, it’s a big decision — and it’s a long-term commitment,” he said. “Take the time to ask questions, weigh the pros and cons, and look at the bigger picture in relation to your short- and long-term goals. Think of it as something bigger than yourself.”

The environment and the resources we have are meant for us to enjoy, but we also have a responsibility to give back. One way is to ensure the land can always benefit the environment and support the production of everyday resources that mean so much to many people.

Think about your community as a whole — then make your decision.”



THE FUTURE OF OUR LANDSCAPES

BY EZZY BALTIERRA

SPENDING THE SUMMER AS AN INTERN AT TRLT HAS BEEN AN INCREDIBLY REWARDING EXPERIENCE,

offering me the chance to immerse myself in the everyday work of land conservation. Starting my internship as a rising college sophomore studying Environmental Science and Computer Science, I was eager to apply my skills and found myself immediately involved in projects that demanded a genuine passion for stewardship. From my first day, I was given the opportunity to participate directly in fieldwork, reports, and problem-solving tasks that showed me just how hands-on and dynamic conservation can be.

A defining aspect of my internship was working closely with Katie Stovall, the Conservation Lands Manager. Katie's expertise and guidance were invaluable as she lent me practical insight into building rapport with landowners, identifying local flora, and improving native habitat. Through her mentorship, I was

able to further my practical understanding of conservation work and gain a deeper appreciation for the land we protect. During property visits across the region, I played an active role in documenting conservation easements, capturing site photographs, and implementing necessary land management techniques.

One of the most rewarding technical projects I undertook was the integration of Survey123 into TRLT's monitoring process. Recognizing the limitations of paper forms and the challenges of managing disparate data, I helped design and implement custom digital surveys tailored to TRLT's needs. These surveys allow us to log GPS coordinates in the field and securely upload

**I WAS EAGER TO APPLY MY
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GREAT PICS TAKEN BY EZZY!

and store field data like forest composition and tree density, an advancement in how TRLT tracks its conservation efforts. The streamlined digital process not only reduces human error but ensures that each monitoring visit results in comprehensive, well-organized records that the whole team can access.

*I EXPERIENCED FIRSTHAND
HOW A DEDICATED
NONPROFIT TEAM WORKS
TOGETHER TO OVERCOME
CHALLENGES BOTH BIG
AND SMALL.*

Throughout the summer, what stood out most was the remarkable support and camaraderie among the Three Rivers Land Trust staff. Work at TRLT is fast-paced and diverse, with work looking different every day. While acclimating to the work environment was an adjustment, I found immediate support and a welcoming community from the dedicated team of staff.

Working with people invested in the landscapes they protect made the often-unpredictable work rewarding and deeply meaningful. The skills and insights I've gained in just 11 weeks will continue to shape my approach to conservation in the years ahead.



The Gift that Keeps on Giving

By Tonya Judge, TRLT Partnership Coordinator

We all make plans—perhaps for tomorrow, next week, or next year. But what about for the next generation, or generations to come?



North Carolina is projected to lose 1.2 million acres of farmland by 2040. If we continue to lose land at this rate, what will happen to the farms that supply our food and the cotton for our clothes? What if all we had left was a photograph to remember the places we love?

There are so many what-ifs. But what if we all pulled together and made a conservation plan?

At Three Rivers Land Trust, our mission is to expand public lands, save family farms, protect local waters and wildlife habitats, and conserve important national defense lands around Fort Bragg.

Over the past 30 years, TRLT has conserved more than 50,000 acres in North Carolina—land now protected from development in perpetuity.

Imagine how much more we could conserve if we all made plans to protect the valuable resources we love. Generations to come would have more than just a photograph. They would be able to explore natural areas, enjoy native wildflowers and wildlife, and take in the scenic views of farm life that make our state so special.

**Learn more about
how to give your gift. ►**



Ways to support the future of conservation:



Donate Today

Visit trlt.org to make a one-time gift. Any gift can have a big impact.



Donate Monthly

Sign up for recurring giving. Even \$10 per month makes a meaningful impact.



Legacy Gifts

Name Three Rivers Land Trust as a beneficiary of your insurance policy or estate.



Gift of Land

A land donation can offer significant tax benefits while protecting important natural resources.



Gift of Stock

Avoid capital gains taxes by donating appreciated stock to TRLT.



Matching Gifts

Check with your employer to see if they offer a matching gift program—your gift could have twice the impact.



Donor Advised Funds

Work with your financial advisor to direct a gift to TRLT through your donor-advised fund.



IRA Gift

If you're 70½ or older, you can make charitable contributions directly from your IRA, potentially reducing your taxable income.

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Joseph Melton
Sierra Melton
Christopher Merrifield
Jaxon Merrifield
Sean Meyers
Micky & Janet Silvers
Clayton Miller
Larry Miller
Matt Miller
Michael Miller
Nick Miller
Cody Millikan
Michael Mills
Tavin Minter
Aaron Misenheimer
Danny Mitchell
Paul & Vicki Mitchell
Nicholas Mlakar
Mindy Mock
Stephen Monsees
Casey Moore
Christopher Moore
Hunter Moore
Judy Moore
Jennifer Morehead
Brian Morgan

Daniel Moss
Keith Moss
Denis Moulton
David Mudd
Patick Mulloy
Arlene J. Mulrooney
J R Murr
Jonathan Murray
Ryan Murray
Elizabeth Muska
Jim Myers
Kenny Myers
Will Myers
Cyndie Mynatt
Tom Navaroli
Josh Nelson
Max Newell
Robbie Newton-Rodriguez
Ashley Nichols
Robert Nicholson
Mary Nieminen
Ryan Norbeck
Tray Norman
Robert Norton
Ben Nuckols
Dakota Nuckols
Robert Nuckols
Tim Nussman
Christopher Nuzzi
Hope Oliphant
Charles Olmeda
Tanner Orders
Kerry Ossi-Lupo
Justin Overcash
Brandon Owens
Trevor Owens
David Page
Susan Paholsky
Anne J. Palmer
Jason Pannell
Dakota Paris
Brenton Parker
Martha Parker

Fred Parks
Gary and Marcia Parks
Rowan Parris
Joe Partin
Adam Pate
Patricia Pate
Roger Pate
Steve Patterson
Thomas Patterson Jr.
Blain Peckmann
Aaron Peeler
Kaley Perdue
Austin Perkins
Miranda Perkins
Jonathan Perry
Barbara T. Perzel
Bradley Peterson
Cade Petrey
Dustin Petrey
LeAnne Petrey
Winston Petrey
David Petroski
Thomas Pham
Christopher Phares
Blake Phillips
Mary Pinson
Gavine N. Pitner
Mark Plott
William Poe
Gregory Pomper
Jonathan Poquette
Kirk Port
Jaleen Postell
Michele Potter
Brandon Powell
Bryan Powell
Jennifer Powell
Sammie Powers
Katie Proctor
Matthew Proctor
Jim Pruett
Mary Joan Pugh
Tom Pugh

Michael Pusillo
Celeste Queen
Christopher Queen
Greg Queen
Greg Quiel
Greg Quoeo
Donald Rabon Jr.
Angel Randazzo
James F. Randolph
Owen Reed
Thomas Reed
Alyssa Reid
Roger Reynolds
George Rhodes
Nora Rhyne
Richard and Linda Angstreich
Alexander Richardson
Cameron Richardson
Cregg Richardson
Dalton Richardson
Jake Richardson
Lee Riddle
Wayne Rider
Hilary Rimel
Ana Risano
Jeff Ritchie
Jennifer Roach
Charlie Robbins
Larry Roberson
Hap Roberts
Kenneth Robertson III
Dustin Robinson
Thomas Rochefort
Jesse Rodahaver
Ken Rodes
Rod Rodriguez
Ann Rogers
Adrian Rollans
William Rooker
David Roseman
Melissa Rossi
Tony Rouse

Betsy Roznik
Thomas Rudd
Andrew Ruggles
Elizabeth Ryle
Steven Ryle
Carolyn Sakowski and Alton Franklin
Emily Saler
Dirk Samples
Mike Santucci
Mark Sartori
James Sasser
Tracey Saunders
Josh Scarborough
Bailey Scarlett
Alan Schaefer
Scott Schneider
Joan Schneier
Dane Schuckman
Eric Schwind
Stefan Scopoulis
Barry Scroggs
Jerry Seabold
Matt Sechler
Madeline Seganish
Alex Shafer
Sean Shanahan
Bryan Sharp
Brenda Sharpe
Garrett Sharpe
Thomas Sheehan
Michelle Shelton
Randy Shepherd
Jeff Shinn
John Shipley
Adam Shirley
Gracen Shoffner
Pam Westmoreland Sholar
Jonathan Short
Catherine Shuler
Joshua Simpson
Gerald Sinclair
Bethany Strong Sinnott

Jim Sitts
Brandon Sklenicka
Eric P. Slipp
Norman R. Sloop
Al Smith
James Smith and Jennifer Tuten
Jerry and Aurelia Smith
John Smith
Kimberly Smith
Marsh Smith
Paul Smith
Rhu Smith
Patrick Smithson
Elizabeth Snider
Aaron Sollenberger
Meng Yi Song Lee
James Souter
Davis Spencer
Joseph Spicer
Caleb Srackangast
Earl Stanfield
Landon Stanfield
Henry Starnes
Matt Staton
Mary Stauble
Jared Steele
Thomas Steelman
Sue S. Stevens
Carter Stinman
Kyle Stinman
William Stockhausen
Brandon Stone
Canon Stone
Christy Stoner
Frank Stooksbury
Katie Stovall
Kenneth Stovall
Nicholas Stowell
Jay Strider
Connor Stroup
Eric Stroup
Stuart and Natalie Tuffnell

Anthony Stubits
Ruby Sturcey
David and Marianna Swaim
Austin Swann
Jacqueline Swift
Danny Swinney
Chris Szafrajda
Wallace Tarry
Nick Tassan
Daniel Taylor
Holden Taylor
Thomas Taylor
Timothy Taylor
Traci Taylor
Zachary Taylor
Andrew Tedder
Brandon Tedder
Kevin Terry
Tyler Tew
The Goins Family
Stanley Thies
Bryan Thomas
Shayne Thomas
Taylor Thomas
Alan Thompson
Angel Thompson
Kay Thompson
Kevin Thompson
Molly Thompson-Hopton
Matt Threatt
Tim & Jada Anderson
Tim and Janice Truemper
Tim and Patricia Daniel
Eric Tindall
Everett Titus
Charlie Todd
Daniel Todd
Paul Todd
Joseph Tomcho
Tommie and Ann Jessup
Tony & Lori Vertin
Gordon Townsend Jr.
Austin Travis

Thomas Tuccillo
Alison Tucker
Clinton Tucker
Landon Tucker
Sarah Tucker
Dale Tweedy
Dave Tyler Jr.
Kathryn Tyler
Charles T. Upchurch
Macayla Upright
Trey Upright
Peter & Pat Valenti
Phillip Vang
Michael Vanhoy
Avery Varley
Dan and Anita Vasto
Matthew Vaughan
Brandon Vaughn
Forrest Vaughn
Bud Vazquez
Eric Viburs
Caridad Vicente
Ronald Vigil
Darryl L. Wagoner
Kenneth Wagoner
Kelly Wainscott
Devin Walker
Cassidy Wallace
Brad Walser
Dana Walser
Jason and Tracy Walser
Tracy Walser
Bryan Walsh
Annie and Bill Ward
William Ward
Derek Ware
Anne and Andrew Waters
Dudley Watts
Sean Weaver
Donald and Betsy Webster
Laura Webster
Branden Weeks
Patrick Wefel

Kristina Weiss
John Welch
Brian Wershonski
Reed Westra
Jayden Whaley
Kyle Scott Wheeler
Amber White
Bruce White
Chris White
Delaney White
Jason White
Mark White
Ethan Whitehurst
Ian Whitehurst
Pat Whitley
Ehren Wiechert
Jim Wiertel
Jesse Wigent
Adam Wilcox
Ciara Wilder
William Wilke
Ben Wilkins
Philip Wilkinson
Rich Wilkinson
Cayce Will
James Willamor
William and Jan Truitt
Alexander Williams
Jamie Williams
Matthew Williams
Sam Williams
Trent Williams
Warner Williams
Don Williamson
Don Williamson
John Willis
Henry Willoughby
John Willoughby
Clayton Wilson
Ethan Wilson
Jonathan Wilson
Lynette Wilson
Steve Wilson

Brett Wimmer
Chris Wingfield
Morgan Wingo
Louisa Witten
Donald E. Wolfe
Stephen and Luda Wolfe
Marcus Wood
Penn Wood
Casey Woodie
Brittany Woods
Greg Woody
Connor Wright
Jerrid Wright
Sam Wright
Sienna Wright
Jean M. Wurster
Amber Wurtz
Kendall Wurtz
Anna Yeatts
Patti York
John Young
Jonathan Young
Marie Young
Morgan Young
Zack & Charlotte Gardner
Laurel Zeng
Amy Zuckerman
Juan Zuluaga

Memoriams

Tom Deans Sr.
Harry J. Huberth
Vernon R. Ketron
Anthony R. Cimaglia
Marcus F. West, Jr.
Bill Cresswell
Joe Creswell
Charles Wallace
Ann Koontz
Edward Corr
Thomas P. Marsh
Joseph R. McDonald

Carol Robertson Kline
Jean Longfellow
Walt Bilous
Jack Russel Lee &
Hazel Ross Lee

Honorariums

Monarch Butterflies
Hall Family Cemetary -
Uwharrie
Buford and Mary Newport
Poole
DC Jones
Shaina Lampert
Derick Shular
Ed Clement
Brodie Andrews
Vernon "Cricket" Ketron
Curtis Howard
Burton Keck
Boon Chesson
Jason Walser
Tony F. Clark
Andrew Kaufman
Charles Broadwell
Richard Broadwell
Dohn and Sherri Broadwell
Fred Stanback
Duke Grimstead
Mary Eva Knight
Pam Hall
Jim Craddock, CESI
Dr. John Q. Reynolds
Brandon Ratliff
Joe Doub
Mark Bost
Travis Morehead
Bo Baker
Steve Chase Uwharrie
Trailblazers
Delaney White
Crystal Cockman

Ed & Susan Norvell
Josh Shope
Rodney Keck
Carlton and Myrtle McCallum
Corporate, Foundation and

Corporate, Foundation, and Community Partners

\$10,000 AND UP

Alcoa Corp
March Conservation Fund
NWTF North Carolina State
Chapter
OnXmaps Inc
Richard Wainwright Barber
Farm Preservation Trust
S.C. Johnson & Son, Inc.
The Dowd Foundation Inc.
The Nature Conservancy
Uwharrie Bank

\$5,000-\$9,999

California Community
Foundation
F&M Bank
Fuel Outdoor Gear
Save Our Sandhills, Inc.

\$1,000-\$4,999

AgSouth Farm Credit
ArborGen
Benevity
Carolina Land Specialists, LLC
Carrol Fisher Construction
Company
Catawba College
City Of Rockingham
Clayton Homes
Cumberland Community
Foundation
Doosan Bobcat
Eagle Creek Renewable

Energy
Energy United
First Flight Archery
Fisher Realty, INC.
Foster Farms Inc.
Global Contact Services
Grafton Archery & Outdoors,
LLC
H. W. Culp Lumber Co., Inc.
J T Gladden Tire Disposal Inc
Leopard Stone Farm, LLC
Mellow Marsh Farm
Mooresville Convention &
Visitors Bureau
North Carolina Community
Foundation, Inc.
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North Carolina State Grange
Novant Health Rowan Medical
Center
Nutrien
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Roundstone Native Seed
Tallent & Associates, Inc.
The Mary and Elliott Wood
Foundation
The Woodson Law Firm
Twisted Sweetgum Farms LLC
United Country/Carolina
Properties
Walser Technology Group,
Inc.
Weyerhaeuser NR Company
Yarak Archery

\$500-\$999

Affordable Insurance, LLC
Appalachian Mountain
Brewery
Ben Mynatt Dealerships
Brent Parks CPA
Charity League Of Salisbury
County Of Montgomery

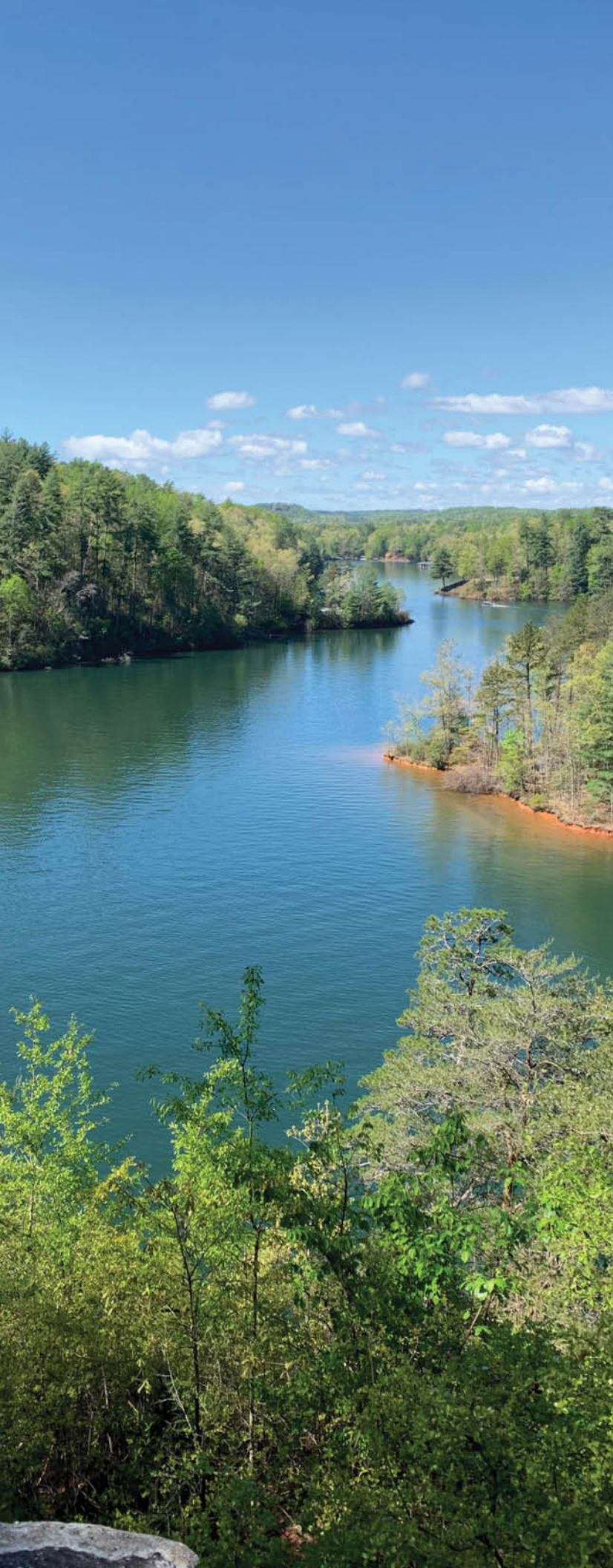
Dr. JH Carter III & Associates
Duke Energy
Eldorado Outpost
Eli Beverly and Associates
LLC
James River Equipment
Moto Camp Nerd
Stanly County CVB
Union Power Cooperative
Vulcan Materials Company
Well of Mercy

\$35-\$499

Bank of America
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EarthShare NC
Environmental Federation of
North Carolina
Give Lively Foundation Inc
Goofy Foot Taproom and
Brewery
Grace Lutheran Church- Men
In Mission

Wilson and Nancy Graham
Kendra Scott
Mocksville Women's Club
Mogensen Mitigation Inc.
PayPal Giving Fund
RE/MAX Central Realty
Seven Lakes Garden Club
Stevens Family Fund
Tart & Tart, Inc.
TC Archery & Outdoors





Connected
to the land.
Committed
to conservation.



THREE RIVERS LAND TRUST

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