



TAR RIVER LAND CONSERVANCY

17,116 ACRES
PROTECTED!

Annual Report 2012-2013

News for Members and Friends

CONSERVANCY ACQUIRES CRITICAL LAND ALONG FISHING CREEK IN HALIFAX AND NASH COUNTIES

Purchase Protects Drinking Water and Buffers Habitat for Endangered Species

In December 2012, Tar River Land Conservancy acquired 49 acres along Fishing Creek in Nash and Halifax Counties to preserve wildlife habitat and water quality. The land purchases were made possible by funding from the North Carolina Attorney General's Environmental Enhancement Grant Program, Eddie and Jo Allison Smith Family Foundation, Defenders of Wildlife, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. TRLC will manage the undeveloped properties to preserve floodplain forest habitat and enhance native plant communities.

"Fishing Creek has been a primary focus for us since our group was formed in 2000," stated Derek Halberg, TRLC's Executive Director. "This watershed provides the best remaining habitat in the United States for several endangered fish and wildlife species." Two notable species

(see *LAND PRESERVED ON FISHING CREEK*, page 4)



Above: Forested buffers on Fishing Creek now protected with recent acquisition by Tar River Land Conservancy. The creek is the boundary between Nash and Halifax Counties.

HOLT FAMILY PLACES CONSERVATION EASEMENTS ON 133 ACRES OF TIMBERLAND IN WARREN COUNTY

Donation Protects Headwaters of Bobbitt's Branch and View from Scenic Byway

Leon and Perri Holt of Wake Forest recently donated conservation easements on two tracts just outside Warrenton to Tar River Land Conservancy. Combined, the forested tracts total 133 acres. The addition of these conservation easements brings the total land area protected by TRLC over the last thirteen years to an incredible 17,116 acres.

Mr. Holt met with TRLC staff in early 2012 to discuss options for preserving his property in Warren County. The tracts were passed down from his parents, the late Dr. and Mrs. Thomas Holt of Warrenton. After evaluating available options, Mr. and Mrs. Holt decided to place conservation easements on the land to ensure that it would remain permanently undeveloped.

The Holt family has managed the tracts for decades as a tree farm. Thinning and harvesting of loblolly pine trees has provided periodic revenue for the family, and will continue to do so in the future. The conservation easements that now protect the land ensure that future generations of the family can continue to sustainably grow and harvest trees.

(see *HOLT FAMILY PROTECTS FOREST IN WARREN COUNTY*, page 5)

We're Saving the Places You Love for Future Generations
IN PERSON, GRANVILLE, VANCE, FRANKLIN, WARREN,
HALIFAX, NASH AND EDGECOMBE COUNTIES



TAR RIVER LAND CONSERVANCY

Tar River Land Conservancy (TRLC) was founded in September 2000 to preserve the natural and cultural resources of the Tar River Basin and surrounding areas by working in partnership with private landowners, public agencies and others to protect rural landscapes and riparian corridors. Our service area includes Person, Granville, Vance, Franklin, Warren, Halifax, Nash and Edgecombe Counties. We work directly with landowners throughout the region to protect drinking water, wildlife habitat, farms, forests and recreational open space. We achieve our objectives by acquiring conservation land and permanent conservation easements and by collaborating with other public and private entities on projects that achieve mutually beneficial land conservation objectives. The result of TRLC's work has been the permanent protection of 17,116 acres of land – 14,914 acres through perpetual conservation easements and 2,202 acres through fee-simple acquisitions of land permanently held for conservation by TRLC or a partner conservation agency.

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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Last November, the Board and staff of Tar River Land Conservancy gathered for a full-day retreat at the cabin of Dewey and Dottie Botts in Franklin County. Our main objectives for the meeting were to reflect on all that TRLC has accomplished over the last twelve years and to identify strategic goals for the organization for the next three years.

Although the economy has forced many non-profits to alter their missions over the last five years, we have largely "stayed the course" thanks to the leadership of our Board and perseverance of our members and staff. At the retreat, the TRLC Board again affirmed their commitment to our long-standing mission. Our approach will remain the **protection of land** to benefit the community and our environment. We recognize that protecting **land** must be increasingly linked with providing plentiful and clean drinking **water** across our region.

Conservation easements will remain a key instrument in our toolbox, but expect that more of our projects will result in outright acquisition of the land over the next three years. Owning the land will open the door to "value-added" conservation opportunities such as ecosystem restoration, scientific study, and creating public access to the land through guided nature walks and, where possible, hiking trails. Our priority will remain the preservation of land along the Tar River and its tributaries – namely Fishing Creek, Shocco Creek, Swift Creek, and Sandy Creek – because of the dual benefits of protecting habitat for endangered fish and wildlife and providing drinking water for growing communities. At the same time and for the same reasons, TRLC will take on more projects that will preserve critical areas within our territory that lie within the Upper Neuse River Basin.

Expect us to offer more frequent events and outings over the next few years, like the ones mentioned in this newsletter. Many of you have told us that you want more chances to experience the special places that your support has helped protect. Hikes, canoe trips, and social gatherings are a lot of fun, plus we get more chances to connect with you and to celebrate what we have accomplished together!

Look for new opportunities to get involved by volunteering your time and expertise to our worthy cause, whether it be once a week or once a year. Finally, the TRLC Board has asked the staff to find ways to assist more families and individuals who would like to protect their land through their estate plans, as we've been privileged to do with a number of you over the last decade.

As you read through this newsletter, please consider contacting us about volunteering, hosting an event, protecting your land now or through your will. We would be thrilled to talk to you. As always, it is an honor for all of us at TRLC to have your support as we go about our important work. It would not be possible without your generosity and friendship.

Derek E. Halberg
Executive Director

SUPPORTERS ENJOY FIELD DAY AT THE BRITTAIN FARM

Friends gathered April 20th at the Franklin County farm of Mary Ann and Bill Brittain for Tar River Land Conservancy's ninth Field Day on the Farm celebration. Cook Shack Catering provided a delicious lunch, which included pork provided by MAE Farm and produce from Vollmer Farm.

TRLC helped Bill and Mary Ann place 37 acres of their farm into a conservation easement in 2004, which ensures that towering hardwood forests along Lynch Creek and an adjoining stream are forever preserved for wildlife habitat and drinking water protection. Mary Ann is a retired environmental educator, formerly with the NC Museum of Natural Sciences, where she founded the Prairie Ridge Ecostation.



Above: TRLC supporters enjoy lunch by the cabin at the Brittain Farm on April 20, 2013.

The event featured music by singer-songwriter Marc Miller, children's activities, wool spinning demonstrations, and a silent auction and raffle. After lunch, kids and adults enjoyed a hike through a restored native prairie and along Lynch Creek. The hike was led by geologists Skip Stoddard and Randy Bechtel from the NC Geological Survey, Charles Yelton from the Prairie Ridge Ecostation, and hostess Mary Ann Brittain. Check out more pictures of this fun event at www.tarriver.org.



Above: Mary Ann Brittain leads a hike through hardwood slopes along Lynch Creek. Mary Ann and husband Bill placed 37 acres of their farm into a conservation easement in 2004.

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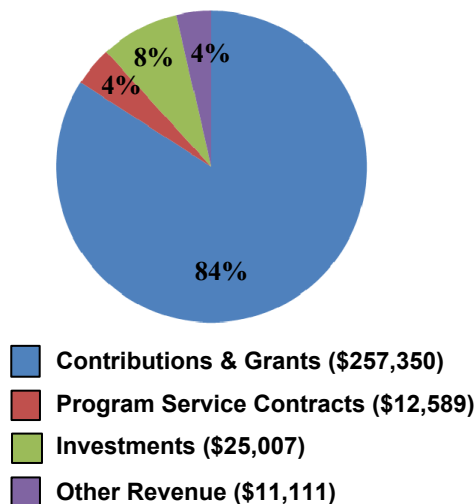


Financial Report

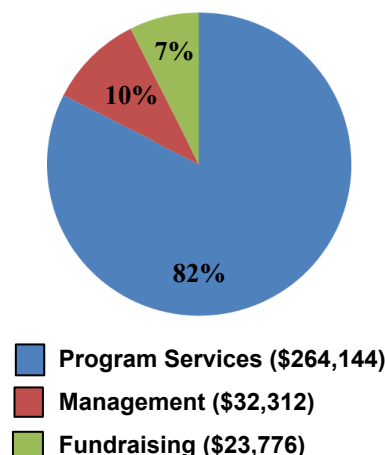
October 1, 2011—September 30, 2012

The following financial data was generated from TRLC's IRS Form 990. In addition to filing this form, each year TRLC also hires a professional accounting firm to conduct an independent audit of the organization.

REVENUE Total = \$306,057



EXPENSES Total = \$320,232



LAND PRESERVED ON FISHING CREEK (continued from page 1)



found in Fishing Creek are the Tar River Spiny Mussel and the Carolina Madtom – a small native catfish found only in a handful of North Carolina streams.

The December acquisitions included 29 acres purchased from Al and Sandra Wester of Red Oak, NC, and 20 acres from Bill and Linda Murray of Fayetteville, NC, and Marolyn and David Wilson of Hope Mills, NC. With the assistance of the NC Forest Service, TRLC is developing management plans to preserve mature hardwood trees along Fishing Creek and improve wildlife habitat in upland pine stands.

Since 2000, including the recent purchases, the Conservancy has protected 1,729 acres along Fishing and Little Fishing Creek through land purchases and conservation easements. Fishing Creek is the largest tributary of the Tar River, draining an 894-square mile area from its headwaters northeast of the Henderson in Vance County to its confluence with the Tar River near Tarboro in Edgecombe County. Fishing Creek supplies drinking water to the towns of Warrenton and Enfield along the way.

“It’s very gratifying to know that the lands we protect today will be preserved forever,” observed Ernie Averett, President of the Conservancy’s Board of Directors. “We are fortunate to have so many supporters in the community behind our work. It is not possible to preserve land these days without a strong and growing base of friends and contributors.”

Left: *Austin Harriett of the NC Forest Service extracts a core to determine the age and health of a loblolly pine (Pinus taeda) on the Wester Tract on Fishing Creek.*

BALD EAGLE AND MORE SEEN ON HIKE AT KEMP-BAKER PRESERVE

Fourteen adventurous souls ventured out on March 23, 2013, for a chilly spring hike at Tar River Land Conservancy’s Kemp-Baker Preserve located on the Tar River just outside of Louisburg.

The hike was led by naturalist Alvin Braswell of the NC Museum of Natural Sciences and Harry LeGrand of the NC Natural Heritage Program. Scientists with the museum and Natural Heritage Program have helped catalogue the plant and wildlife species found on the property, including the reclusive four-toed salamander.

Despite the cool morning, hikers saw a variety of wildlife, including a bald eagle, Northern cricket frogs, fairy shrimp, crayfish, marbled salamander larvae, and eggs of spotted salamanders and American toads.

“This hike marked the first time that the public was able to visit the Kemp-Baker Preserve,” noted Sheryl Munt, TRLC Development Assistant. “We hope to offer a guided hike on this beautiful property at least once a year going forward.”

The Kemp-Baker Preserve protects 102 acres of majestic forested floodplain and adjoining slopes along the Tar River. Susan Roberts and sister Joy Bolger donated 53 acres of the property to TRLC in 2008. TRLC purchased the remaining acreage from Donald and Eleanor Baker in 2011 with generous financial support from the NC Attorney General’s Environmental Enhancement Program, Cannon Foundation and the Eddie and Jo Allison Smith Family Foundation.

Above Right: *Alvin Braswell (orange hat) of the NC Museum of Natural Sciences shows salamander egg masses to visitors to TRLC’s Kemp-Baker Preserve on the Tar River in Franklin County during the March 23rd hike.*

Below Right: *Hikers gather at the base of the largest tree on the Kemp-Baker Preserve – a 40-inch diameter willow oak (Quercus phellos).*



HOLT FAMILY PROTECTS FOREST IN WARREN COUNTY (continued from page 1)

In addition to protecting the productive timber stands from future development, the conservation easements will preserve habitat and water quality in Bobbitt's Branch and scenic views from the adjoining NC Highway 58. The stretch of highway next to the Holt tracts is known as "Lafayette's Tour Byway", a NC Scenic Byway designated by the NC Department of Transportation. The byway follows the route taken by French General Marquis de Lafayette when he toured the area in 1825. The Holt conservation easements expand the footprint of protected lands along Lafayette's Tour Byway. Across NC Highway 58 is the Embro Game Land, state conservation land that is managed by the NC Wildlife Resources Commission for public hunting.

Bobbitt's Branch, a tributary of Fishing Creek, originates on one of Mr. and Mrs. Holt's properties and flows through the second. The conservation easements ensure that hardwood stands along a mile of the stream are permanently preserved for wildlife habitat and water quality.

Because of the multiple benefits generated by the project, TRLC received grants from three funders to survey the properties and cover other costs of the easement transactions: the NC Clean Water Management Trust Fund, the Conservation Trust for North Carolina's Farmland Forever Fund, and the NC Department of Transportation's Scenic Byways Program.

"We can't thank the Holt family enough for their generosity and vision," said Derek Halberg, TRLC Executive Director. "We hope their actions will inspire other landowners to work with us to protect this beautiful area of Warren County."

Right: *A managed loblolly pine stand on land in Warren County recently protected with a conservation easement by Leon and Perri Holt of Wake Forest.*



CONGRESS RENEWS ENHANCED TAX BREAKS FOR EASEMENT DONATIONS BEFORE DECEMBER 31, 2013

Congress recently renewed an income tax incentive that enables farmers and other landowners to get a significant tax benefit for donating a conservation easement on their land. This invaluable conservation tool has helped Tar River Land Conservancy work with willing landowners to protect 5,960 acres since it was first enacted in 2006. Landowners who act quickly to conserve their land can now enjoy these benefits, but they're currently set to expire December 31, 2013.

Generous landowners who donate voluntary conservation easements to TRLC are inspired by many things, including their connection to their land and their wish to leave a legacy for future generations. This inspiration is central to our work to permanently protect valuable natural resources. But for almost all of our donors, donating a conservation easement is a major financial decision, and the federal income tax deduction that comes with a donation helps make easements possible for landowners in our community.

The legislation recently passed by Congress allows easement donors to:

- ◆ Deduct up to 50% of their adjusted gross income in any year (previously limited to 30%);
- ◆ Deduct up to 100% of their adjusted gross income if the majority of that income came from farming, ranching or forestry; and
- ◆ Continue to take deductions for as long as 16 years (previously 6 years).

"We encourage folks who have been thinking about placing a conservation easement on their land to contact us soon to start a conversation," urges Derek Halberg, TRLC Executive Director. "With the very favorable tax benefits for conservation easements set to expire at the end of 2013, now may be the time for many landowners to work with the Conservancy."

To learn more about the enhanced incentive visit www.tarriver.org or www.lta.org/easementincentive. To schedule a time to meet with Derek to discuss placing a conservation easement on your family's land, please contact him at dhalberg@tarriver.org or (919) 496-5902.

Stewards are landowners who have donated land to TRLC or who own property protected by TRLC using permanent conservation easements.

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MAJOR DONORS (\$5,000 and above)
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REGISTER TODAY FOR FISHING CREEK HIKE AND CHERRY HILL TOUR ON JUNE 15TH

Join TRLC members for a guided nature hike along Fishing Creek and a tour of the historic Cherry Hill plantation home in Warren County on Saturday, June 15. Fishing Creek provides the best remaining habitat in the United States for numerous fish and freshwater mussel species. The nature hike will take place on land protected by a conservation easement and owned by TRLC member Lynn Capps Martin of Warrenton. Cherry Hill, built in 1858, is the home of the Cherry Hill Historical Foundation and the venue for several classical music concerts each year (www.cherryhillconcerts.com).

Misty Buchanan of the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program will guide us on a walk through a preserved forest along Fishing Creek. After the hike, Mary Raiford, Executive Director of the Cherry Hill Historical Foundation, will lead the tour of this exquisitely preserved plantation home. Participants will meet at Cherry Hill and then carpool a few miles to our Fishing Creek hike site. Please bring a picnic lunch to enjoy on the grounds of Cherry Hill before our house tour. Wear sturdy shoes and field clothing and bring a camera.

This event site is approximately 1 hour from Raleigh and 1 hour 20 minutes from Durham. Optional afternoon side trip: Explore the antique shops and cafes in historic downtown Warrenton just 10 miles north of Cherry Hill!

Tickets are \$15.00. All proceeds go to support Tar River Land Conservancy and the Cherry Hill Historical Foundation. For more information or to register, please go to www.tarriver.org or contact Sheryl Munt at **919-496-5902**.

Photos: *The historic Cherry Hill plantation home (above) and TRLC supporter Richard Rogers (below) with a mature cherrybark oak along Fishing Creek.*



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