

# FIELD NOTES

News for Members and Friends of Tar River Land Conservancy

Fall 2014

## 154 ACRES PRESERVED ON ROBERTSON CREEK IN GRANVILLE CO.

*Lingering Water Quality Threat Also Addressed by Removing Abandoned Hog Waste Lagoon*

The summer of 2014 brought closings of adjoining tracts of land totaling 154 acres in southern Granville County. The properties – known as the “Haynes Tract” and “Suitt Tract” – will someday be incorporated into a greenway system managed by the City of Creedmoor. Tar River Land Conservancy (TRLC) purchased these properties with generous support from the State of North Carolina’s Clean Water Management Trust Fund, the City of Raleigh’s Upper Neuse Clean Water Initiative, and the City of Creedmoor.

Robertson Creek flows through the newly preserved property just one mile upstream of its confluence with Falls Lake, the primary drinking water source for Raleigh and other Wake County communities. The land is forested except for wetlands along Robertson Creek that are maintained by a series of beaver dams.

Years ago, both the Haynes and Suitt tracts were farmed. “Since then, trees have reclaimed the open land, creating wildlife habitat and buffering streams from nearby residential growth,” notes Derek Halberg, TRLC Executive Director. “The large wetlands on Robertson Creek also provide prime habitat for migrating and resident waterfowl, including ducks and geese that move between Falls Lake to the south and Kerr Lake in northern Granville County.”

One sign of the land’s past use was a former hog waste lagoon that was abandoned in the late 1980s. TRLC staff worked closely with experts at the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and Granville County Soil & Water Conservation District to develop a plan to clean out the lagoon and restore the site to native vegetation. Weather cooperated this summer and a contractor was able to pump over 600,000 gallons of wastewater from the lagoon and spread it as fertilizer on nearby pastureland. Three large hog barns were also dismantled and removed from the property. Oak, hickory, and tulip poplar seedlings will be planted this winter to begin restoring the one-acre cleanup site to forest.

Interest in the project has been widespread. TRLC staff hosted a group of officials from Raleigh, Creedmoor, and other local land trusts in June to discuss the project and the benefits to Falls Lake and the local community.

Deed restrictions will ensure that the Haynes and Suitt tracts remain permanently off-limits to development. The land connects to other tracts of land previously preserved by Creedmoor and the Clean Water Management Trust Fund. Creedmoor’s long-term plan calls for greenway trails that will eventually provide public access to the protected properties from several residential neighborhoods and schools.



**TOP PHOTO:** The Haynes and Suitt tracts, acquired by TRLC in the summer of 2014, include impressive hardwood and pine forests that both buffer streams and provide wildlife habitat.

**MIDDLE:** A view of the expansive wetlands along Robertson Creek that are maintained by a series of beaver dams.

**BOTTOM:** TRLC staff provides a tour of the Haynes and Suitt tracts in June for officials from local land trusts, Creedmoor, and Raleigh.



Saving the Places You Love in  
Person, Vance, Granville, Franklin, Warren, Halifax, Nash and Edgecombe Counties

## SUPPORTERS ENJOY HISTORIC TOUR AND HIKE NEAR LOUISBURG

More than 80 people joined Tar River Land Conservancy (TRLC), the owners of Cascine Mill, and the owners of Cascine Plantation for an educational hike in June 2014. Participants enjoyed a beautiful summer day while learning about the conservation easement that protects five miles along Cedar Creek, the renovation of the ante-bellum grist mill, and the history of the plantation. Attendees were able to tour not only the original plantation house from the 1700's, but also the old doctor's office and the cemetery on the plantation. Additionally, participants viewed and learned about period furnishings preserved in each of the historic buildings. Visitors were also treated to a visit to the remnants of the original dry-stacked stone dam and the original inner workings of the mill. Overall, the event was a treat for those who are interested in history, architecture, antiques, and the natural world.

If you are interested in attending a similar event, please plan to join us April 18th, 2015, when TRLC holds its annual Field Day on the Farm at historic Heptinstall Place in Halifax County.



## INCLUDE TAR RIVER LAND CONSERVANCY IN YOUR ESTATE PLANS

All contributions to Tar River Land Conservancy (TRLC) are meaningful. We value every donation of time, money, in-kind gifts, and land. If you would like to make a legacy contribution to TRLC, but are concerned that you will need the money in your lifetime, there are several options available to you. For example, you can designate TRLC as the beneficiary of a portion of your IRA. Also, you can designate the Conservancy as one of the beneficiaries of your life insurance policy. Finally, consider designating TRLC as the recipient of a gift under your will. These methods all allow you to retain full control of your funds and property during your lifetime, while ensuring that at your passing you will leave a lasting legacy that protects the land and water that we love and cherish.

Please contact Derek Halberg or Amy Edge at 919-496-5902 if you have any questions or would like to discuss making a legacy gift. Thank you very much for your support!

## DAVID THOMAS COMPLETES STEWARDSHIP INTERNSHIP

David Thomas is a man of few words but great action. He joined Tar River Land Conservancy (TRLC) during the summer of 2014 to assist with the stewardship of conservation easements and TRLC-owned properties. His conscientious, diligent work ethic proven to be a vital asset to TRLC this summer.

David is currently a junior at NC State University working towards a degree in Natural Resources Ecosystem Assessment, with a strong interest in Geographic Information Systems. On the weekends, David is the Farm Manager for Thomas Family Farms, owned by his family near Centerville in Franklin County. His primary duty on the farm is managing the livestock. David is also an active member of the Franklin County Livestock Association.

The TRLC staff and Board greatly appreciated David's hard work and dedication to his internship. David is expected to continue in a part-time capacity with the organization as his studies and farm duties allow.



**ABOVE:** David Thomas with TRLC General Counsel Amy Edge.



## PLEASE SAVE THESE DATES IN 2015!

March 28, 2015: TRLC SPRING HIKE

Jordan Tract, Brogden Road, Granville County

April 18, 2015: TRLC FIELD DAY ON THE FARM

Historic Heptinstall Place, Halifax County

Look for announcements of upcoming outings and events on our website, in emails, and on TRLC's Facebook page!