

# Sample Projects Funded by NC's Conservation Trust Funds in 2005

## 1 Pender County

**A Rare Spot for Shellfishing** The water in Foy Creek is still clean enough that it remains one of the last tidal creeks in Pender County open to shellfishing. Thanks to a \$1.3 million Clean Water Management Trust Fund to the NC Coastal Land Trust, the shellfish and the creek will be buffered from pollutants by 68 acres of beautiful pine forest at the Abbey Nature Preserve. The preserve will feature walking trails and is adjacent to the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Poplar Grove Plantation, a popular attraction for tourists and school field trips.

## 2 Carteret County

**Cherry Point Marsh** This 1300-acre pristine marsh, interspersed with hammocks of live oaks and pine trees, is excellent habitat for waterbirds and also a critical noise buffer for the Marine Corp's Piney Island Bombing Range. A \$3 million Clean Water grant, which leveraged additional federal funds, made it possible for the NC Coastal Land Trust to purchase this tract. NCCLT will soon transfer the land to the NC Wildlife Resources Commission for permanent protection as public game lands and to ensure that development does not limit the Marine Corp's ability to train naval aviators.

## 3 Camden County

**Great Dismal Swamp Visitor Center** Opportunities for learning and tourism will expand greatly when this visitor center opens on Highway 17 near the DOT Welcome Center in Camden County. Scheduled to open in summer 2007, the visitor center will have a classroom, auditorium, exhibit space, wildlife viewing decks and a canoe/kayak launch area. A \$624,716 grant from the NC Parks and Recreation Trust Fund is making construction possible.

## 4 Gates County

**Merchants Millpond Visitor Center** This new visitor center, scheduled to open to the public in the winter of 2006-7, will be an important hub for education and tourism in Gates County, with its indoor and outdoor classrooms, auditorium, and exhibit space. Construction was made possible by a \$3.1 million grant from the NC Parks and Recreation Trust Fund.

## 5 Lenoir County

**Kinston's "Retrofitting Green" Park** In 1996 and 1999, Hurricanes Fran and Floyd devastated several neighborhoods in Kinston when the Neuse River swelled out of its banks and flooded hundreds of homes and businesses. To ensure that such destruction never happens again, the City decided to "retrofit" 900 acres on the Neuse from vulnerable homes into a green park of forests, fields, trails, a children's garden, an arboretum, and ball fields to meet the diverse needs of the community while protecting water and air quality, flood storage, and habitat for wildlife. Much of the funding to buy damaged homes came from FEMA, but a patchwork of vacant lots remained in private hands and made it impossible to develop the park. A Clean Water Management Trust Fund grant for \$1.18 million is being used to buy about 180 acres of those remaining vacant lots so the "Retrofitting Green" Park can become a reality.

## 6 Wayne County

**Stoney Creek and the Air Force** The City of Goldsboro, with a \$3 million grant from the Clean Water Management Trust Fund, is working to protect land along Stoney Creek, a tributary of the Neuse River, that drains a large and densely-populated area of Goldsboro. Land protected along this creek will not only protect drinking water supplies and allow the city to extend its greenway trail system to the Neuse and the future Mountain-to-Sea Trail. It will also help prevent development in

“Accident Potential Zones” (APZ I and II) around Seymour Johnson Air Force Base which would make it difficult for the base to train soldiers and protect the nation.

### **7 Cumberland County**

**River Oaks Preserve** Steep ravines, high bluffs, majestic hardwoods and a flowing waterfall are not what usually come to mind when we think of the gentle landscape of North Carolina’s Sandhills, but all of these stunning features can be found at River Oaks, the new “flagship” nature preserve of the Sandhills Area Land Trust on the Cape Fear River near Fayetteville. A \$983,000 Clean Water Management Trust Fund grant provided the funds to purchase the land, and the Sandhills Area Land Trust is building walking trails so the public can visit this beautiful place. If you’d like to ride your bike rather than drive to the preserve, you’ll soon be able to do that too as River Oaks will be one of several stops on Fayetteville’s new Cape Fear River Bike Trail.

### **8 Sampson County**

**First Sampson County Park** Sampson County created a parks and recreation department only three years ago and is already developing its first park on 20 acres near Roseboro with the help of a \$500,000 grant from the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund. Citizens helped develop the plan for the \$4.2 million park which, in the first phase of development, will include a walking trail, playground, multi-purpose ball fields, restrooms, and picnic shelters.

### **9 Vance/Warren Counties**

**Kerr Lake Boat Ramps** These new ramps on Nutbush Bridge Road will have courtesy docks, a large picnic shelter with an enclosed area for fishing tournament weigh-ins, restrooms and a parking lot. Funded through a \$2.3 million Parks and Recreation Trust Fund grant, the ramps are scheduled to open to the public in the winter of 2007-2008.

### **10 Alamance County**

**Clean Water, History and Nature on the Haw River** Substantial headway was made on implementing a plan to improve water quality and protect important historic sites, forests and farms on the Haw River when the Clean Water Management Trust Fund and the Tobacco Trust Fund Commission gave three grants totaling \$502,000 to help protect a 370-acre tobacco, cattle and strawberry farm and to create local parks at Glencoe Mill and at Carolina Mill, two important historic sites on the river. When open, these two parks will also serve as important links in the statewide Mountains-to-Sea Trail.

### **11 Orange County**

**Safe Drinking Water** The Orange Water and Sewer Authority provides drinking water to 80,000 people in Carrboro and Chapel Hill, and one of its principal tools for guaranteeing pure water is acquisition of critical lands around its two reservoirs. An \$130,000 grant from CWMTF is helping OWASA protect 168 more acres, bringing the total acreage protected since 1998 with CWMTF’s help to 1,011.

### **12 Rowan County**

**Farms, Wildlife and Water Quality** will be protected forever with the purchase of 2,843 acres of forest and prime farmland on Second Creek near Mooresville by The LandTrust for Central North Carolina, thanks to two grants totaling \$4.2 million from the Clean Water Management and Natural Heritage trust funds. The tract, a secondary drinking water source for Kannapolis, includes one of the most significant natural areas in North Carolina as well as 1,000 acres of some of the best farmland in the state in the core of western Rowan County’s agricultural community. As The LandTrust completes the \$8.5 million purchase over the next five years, the land will be transferred to the NC Wildlife Resources Commission. The Wildlife Resources Commission will protect the forests for water quality and wildlife and lease the prime farmland to local farmers.

### 13 Gaston County

**Jack Moore Nature Preserve** In 1789 French botanist Andre Michaux visited the farm of his friend Bennett Smith near the banks of Hoyle Creek and noticed trees unlike any he had witnessed before. He declared the tree a new species of magnolia, *Magnolia macrophylla*, commonly known today as bigleaf magnolia. Michaux made his important find within the boundary of Catawba Lands Conservancy's pending 92-acre Jack Moore Nature Preserve, made possible by a \$461,000 grant from the Clean Water Management Trust Fund. To walk the site is to step back in time. Bigleaf magnolias, some 50 and 60 feet tall, thrive on the north-facing slope, surrounded by wildflowers such as bloodroot, trillium and silverbell.

### 14 Mecklenburg County

**Restoring Four Mile Creek** High levels of bacteria and sediment have placed Four Mile Creek, a tributary of the Catawba River, on the state's list of impaired waterways. A CWMTF grant for \$542,000 will help Charlotte and Mecklenburg County stabilize and reshape the creek banks and reforest land along almost a mile of the creek to reduce flash flooding and keep pollutants from entering the water.

### 15 Alexander/Burke/Caldwell/Catawba Counties

**Recreation and Economic Development** The Western Piedmont Council of Governments is using a \$68,000 CWMTF grant toward a \$132,000 study to help Alexander, Burke, Caldwell, and Catawba counties develop a plan to create jobs based on existing and potential recreation areas such as trails, rivers and parks. CWMTF's grant is helping the planners look specifically at water protection measures and strategies for selecting buffers and greenways.

### 16 Alleghany County

**Blue Ridge Vistas** and water quality in a pristine trout stream are being protected through Conservation Trust for North Carolina's purchase of a 201-acre forested tract on the Blue Ridge Parkway near the Virginia state line at Cumberland Gap. The buildable ridge tops and a gravel access road made this tract a prime candidate for residential development, but a Clean Water Management Trust Fund grant for \$512,000 will ensure that visitors to the Parkway see only the natural beauty of the mountains.

### 17 Watauga/Ashe Counties

**Elk Knob State Natural Area** grew substantially with the acquisition of several tracts totaling more than 1000 acres on the slopes and peak of this extraordinary mountain. Elk Knob is one of the most biologically significant sites in western North Carolina because of its unusual forest communities and diversity of native plants and wildlife. These acquisitions were made possible by a million Natural Heritage Trust Fund grant for \$1.372 million and a Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) grant for \$1 million. In addition, PARTF provided a \$313,000 to begin developing facilities to allow people to visit this special place.

### 18 Avery County

**Grandfather Mountain**, named "Tanawha" which means "fabulous hawk or eagle" by the Cherokee, and later renamed "Grandfather" by European settlers who recognized the face of an old man in the cliffs, is recognized as an *International Biosphere Reserve* by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization. It is also the 20<sup>th</sup> most visited tourism spot in North Carolina. The Clean Water Management Trust Fund awarded \$712,000, matched with a 50% donation from the owner, to The Nature Conservancy to protect forever the land along the popular profile trail up the mountain.

## **19 Rutherford/Henderson Counties**

**Hickory Nut Gorge State Park** A waterfall plummets 350 feet, splashing and tumbling over rocky outcrops. The land drops away, revealing views that some say are the most beautiful in North Carolina. This is World's Edge—1,568 acres of sparkling creeks, sheer cliffs, forested slopes and dramatic scenery. World's Edge is nestled in Hickory Nut Gorge, overlooking Lake Lure. The gorge's 10-mile-long canyon overflows with rare flowers, forest communities, bats, salamanders, peregrine falcons and flocks of songbirds migrating to and from the tropics.

The Nature Conservancy and the Carolina Mountain Lands Conservancy helped secure the property, and funds from three trust funds in addition to private donations will allow the NC Division of Parks and Recreation to create a new state park at Hickory Nut Gorge State Park. In 2005, the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund awarded \$5.9 million, the Clean Water Management Trust Fund \$3.9 million, the Natural Heritage Trust Fund \$3.9 million toward the \$16 million cost of this project.

## **20 Buncombe County**

**Restoring the Swannanoa River** RiverLink is working with the Town of Black Mountain and Montreat College to reverse the recent degradation of water quality in the Swannanoa River by stabilizing the stream banks and restoring buffers in the town's Brock Regional Park and on land recently purchased by Montreat College. A CWMTF grant for \$550,000 will help pay for work to reduce sediment in the river from 219 to less than 30 tons per year.

## **21 Macon County**

**Cowee Mound** In the 7<sup>th</sup>-century, Native Americans built a mound on which to hold council meetings at the center of their village on the Little Tennessee River. This mound has remained at the heart of the community as it has changed over the last 1400 years, into the principal commercial and diplomatic center of the 18<sup>th</sup>-century mountain Cherokee, to the target of the first military campaign of the American Revolution in the South, and now into a peaceful agricultural community. The mound and surrounding land, threatened by second home development, will be protected for future generations thanks in part to a grant of \$471,000 from the Clean Water Management Trust Fund to the Land Trust for the Little Tennessee.