



LAND *for* TOMORROW

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Contact: Kate Dixon
Office: 919-403-8558 ext. 1009
Mobile: 919-698-9024

LAND FOR TOMORROW URGES GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO PRESERVE AND PROTECT NORTH CAROLINA'S GOODLIEST LAND

State losing 100,000 acres of land annually; Group says lawmakers must act now

Raleigh, N.C. – Land for Tomorrow, a diverse partnership of businesses, preservationists, farmers, environmental groups, health professionals and community groups, today asked the General Assembly to support a five-year plan designed to preserve and protect areas critical to clean water, farming, forestry, the state's historic properties, tourism, jobs and quality of life in the state.

The coalition recommended passage of a 2006 bond initiative that would generate \$200 million per year for five years to expand preservation of critical lands and historic places, provide jobs, and strengthen communities.

“North Carolina is losing 100,000 acres of forests, farms, and stream banks per year due to growing development pressures. Once these areas are gone there's no replacing them,” said Kate Dixon, director of Land for Tomorrow. “If we do not act to protect these areas, it will be devastating to our economy, drinking water quality, communities and the natural beauty that makes North Carolina such a special place to live and work.”

Saving the Goodliest Land, A Five-Year Plan for Investing In North Carolina's Land, Water, History and Future recommends that the state spend an additional \$200 million annually for five years on protecting nine different categories of land. Based on recent history, the partnership estimates that state funding at this level will generate an additional \$400 million in federal, local and private funds per year.

Five-year goals of the plan include protection of:

- **Rivers, Wetlands, Floodplains and Coastal Waters**
 - 6,000 miles of stream banks and flood plains
- **Working Farms**
 - 50,000 acres of prime farmland
- **Legacy Forests**
 - 25,000 acres
- **Local Parks and Trails**
 - 35,000 acres of trail, recreation and park facilities
- **State Parks**
 - 60,000 acres
- **Game Lands and Other Natural Areas**
 - 150,000 acres, including land bordering military bases
- **Historic Places**
 - Restore 350 historic landmarks for public use
- **Land Visible from Scenic Highways**
 - 50,000 acres along the Blue Ridge Parkway and other scenic highways

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Page 2/Land for Tomorrow Launch...

The plan's recommendations are based on nearly two years of research and assistance from more than 100 experts in various fields, according to Kate Dixon, the primary author of the plan.

"Through public education, Land for Tomorrow wants to help the state reach its goal of conserving a million acres, and ensure that the goodliest land will be there to provide clean air and drinking water, strengthen our communities, promote job growth and enhance the quality of life for generations to come," said Dixon.

The funds initially will be administered by conservation trust funds already established by the General Assembly, including the Clean Water Management Trust Fund, Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, Natural Heritage Trust Fund, and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund. Those trusts will then distribute most of the funds through local land trusts, local governments and other organizations for purchase of land or lasting conservation agreements on land.

These state conservation trust funds are seriously under funded, according to Land for Tomorrow. For example, this year the Clean Water Management Trust had more than \$300 million in applications but only \$62 million available. The General Assembly has not funded the Farmland Preservation Trust Fund for two years in a row.

Land for Tomorrow is working to increase public awareness for the need to protect additional land and historic places that are critical to the economic well being and quality of life in North Carolina.

Land for Tomorrow is recruiting Ambassadors to help take the message for conservation to the public. Twenty four state leaders, including three former governors and many business leaders, have agreed to serve. Land for Tomorrow has also had fifty-seven organizations sign on already to be Land for Tomorrow Partners.

For additional information and a complete list of Land for Tomorrow Ambassadors and Partner Organizations visit www.landfortomorrow.org.

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