



LAND *for* TOMORROW

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STATE'S LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION TRUST FUND SHORTFALLS TOTALED \$109.5 MILLION IN 2007

Coalition urges General Assembly to provide additional funding in short session to protect land and water

Raleigh, N.C. – Requests to North Carolina's land and water conservation trust funds exceeded the funding available in 2007 by \$109.5 million, according to the annual *Green Book* report released today by Land for Tomorrow at a news conference at the N.C. General Assembly. The *Green Book* details projects that the trust funds were able to support in 2007.

“As one of the most rapidly developing states in the nation, North Carolina's leaders have a responsibility to ensure our state's natural resources are preserved,” said Rep. Lucy Allen, who spoke at the news conference. “In 2007, we were able to make some progress, but our efforts must continue. I urge my fellow legislators to take the necessary steps during this short session to provide additional funding to protect North Carolina water and land, especially our family farms. By making this a priority, we are ensuring an environmentally and economically important investment is made for future generations of North Carolinians.”

According to the *Green Book*, the trust funds received more than 400 applications seeking a total of \$281.7 million last year from local governments, state agencies and conservation nonprofits, but were able to provide funding of only \$172 million for 256 projects. Since 1987, the trust funds have made 2,108 grants to fund projects in every county in the state. To view this year's *Green Book*, visit <http://www.landfortomorrow.org/page485.html>.

At the news conference, Land for Tomorrow asked the General Assembly to approve the following priorities this legislative session:

- Funding of \$150 million in new, direct appropriations and/or additional debt capacity to protect targeted stream buffers, watersheds and groundwater recharge areas critical to the protection of the state's water supplies. As North Carolina continues to face long-term challenges related to drought, protecting these lands has become even more important.
- Direct appropriation of \$20 million for the Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund to meet the growing demand for farmland preservation projects and to provide seed money for agricultural development.
- Direct appropriation of \$4 million for the first phase of Landing Jobs, a conservation-based affordable housing program linking conservation opportunities to community-based economic development.

In 2007, the N.C. General Assembly approved \$100 million in Certificates of Participation, or COPs, split equally between the Natural Heritage Trust Fund and Parks and Recreation Trust Fund. This helped to fund critical

projects such as land added to Haw River State Park, which had been slated for a housing subdivision and golf course. The legislature also provided an \$8 million appropriation for the Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund. All of that funding will be allocated by July 1, 2008.

“We still have time to protect our state’s critical land and water for future generations, but we must act now,” said Reid Wilson, Executive Director of the Conservation Trust for North Carolina and member of Land for Tomorrow’s Executive Committee. “We are losing more than 100,000 acres of family farms, forests and other open spaces every year, which imperils our drinking water, air quality, wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities.”

North Carolina has pushed past New Jersey to become the tenth most populous state. North Carolina continues to lead the nation in the loss of family farms, and the number of miles of streams that do not meet clean water standards has increased to 3,300.

Two especially noteworthy projects that received funding in 2007 were Chimney Rock State Park and Alligator River National Wildlife Preserve:

Chimney Rock State Park

- Chimney Rock in Rutherford County has always been a popular tourist site, providing rock climbers, hikers and other outdoor enthusiasts with one of the most spectacular scenic vistas in the state. With a view that stretches 75 miles out into the piedmont over Lake Lure and Hickory Nut Gorge, Chimney Rock is also the location of a network of hiking trails leading to a number of unique geologic features, as well as the 404-foot Hickory Nut Falls. In 2007, investments from many private and state supporters purchased 1,000 acres of magnificent natural resources to create the new Chimney Rock State Park.

Alligator River National Wildlife Preserve

- In the 1980s, a gift from Prudential Life Insurance Company helped create the Alligator River National Wildlife Preserve. At the time, Alligator River was the largest federal refuge in North Carolina and the donation of land was the largest conservation gift in our nation’s history. Investments from our state’s trust funds over a period of 25 years have led to the eventual acquisition of the river’s entire shoreline, protecting its fragile habitats and the rare species that call the Alligator River home.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the General Assembly created the Clean Water Management Trust Fund, Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund, Natural Heritage Trust Fund, and Parks and Recreation Trust Fund to support diverse environmental improvement projects. Funding for the trust funds comes through a combination of appropriations, personalized license plate sales and portions of the deed transfer tax.

ABOUT LAND FOR TOMORROW

Land for Tomorrow is committed to preserving and protecting North Carolina’s land, water and historic places. Its goal is to increase public awareness for the need to protect additional lands that are critical to the economic well-being and quality of life in North Carolina. Land for Tomorrow seeks to help the state reach its declared goal of conserving a million acres, and ensure that critical land will be available to provide clean air and drinking water, strengthen our communities, promote job growth and enhance the quality of life for generations to come. For additional information about Land for Tomorrow, visit www.landfortomorrow.org.

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