



LAND *for* TOMORROW

Conservation Funding: Critical Projects at Risk

North Carolina's four conservation trust funds are at serious risk. These funds (Clean Water Management, Natural Heritage, Parks and Recreation and Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation), have successfully invested in preserving our state's unique natural areas, and have boosted economic development throughout North Carolina. **As decisions are made about continued investments in conservation funding, critical projects are at stake. If adequate funding is not provided, North Carolina will lose these valuable resources.**

Land and water conservation supports all of our major economic drivers – the military, tourism, hunting/fishing/recreation and agriculture. It also lessens the local tax burden by reducing expenditures on drinking water protection and flood control. North Carolina's four conservation trust funds are:

- Benefitting military bases
 - *Military buffers protect our military's investment in North Carolina to ensure that land use adjacent to bases does not impede the Armed Forces' ability to fulfill their mission.*
- Providing public access to promote tourism
 - *Scenic areas boost the state's tourism economy.*
 - *Game lands, trout streams and estuaries are critical to small businesses in the hunting, commercial and sport fishing, and outdoors industries.*
 - *Parks and trails enhance North Carolina's quality of life and ability to attract new families and businesses by protecting water supplies, benefiting local economies and improving public health.*
- Protecting drinking water supply headwaters or watersheds
 - *Conserved land along waterways prevents polluted runoff and sedimentation, reducing the cost of water treatment for local governments, and saving money for business and residential customers.*
- Protecting our vital agriculture industry
 - *Farmland protects and sustains working family farms under significant population pressures, ensuring a continued supply of fresh local foods and fiber.*

Conservation also means jobs, especially in agriculture and tourism. Last year was a record year for tourism, with the industry contributing \$17 billion to North Carolina's economy. People come here to visit our uniquely beautiful natural areas, many of which exist thanks to investment from the conservation trust funds.

Without sufficient conservation funding, critical projects will be lost. Below are just a few examples of projects at risk:

- **Brown's Creek (Carteret County)** – Acquisition of approximately 678 acres of wetlands, longleaf pine and mixed loblolly pine-hardwood forest along Brown's Creek, a tributary of the Neuse River. This tract is a high priority of the US Marine Corps Air Station at Cherry Point, adjoins public game lands and is adjacent to a state natural heritage site at Piney Island. A grant from CWMTF (\$1,022,700) is pending. This funding will be matched by the Department of Defense (\$1,152,600).
- **Roan Mountain National Trails (Avery County)** – Protection of the remaining 175 acres of the Roan Mountain National Trails Tract, bounded by the Appalachian National Scenic Trail and the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail. This land is open to public fishing, available for hunting and other recreational activities, and is a prime habitat for game and non-game species. A grant from CWMTF is pending (\$737,133 – less than half of the appraised value).

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- **Chimney Rock State Park/Rumbling Bald (Rutherford County)** – Addition of 1,222 acres to Chimney Rock State Park through the purchase of the King Tract and additional acreage on Rumbling Bald. These acquisitions would create ideal outdoor recreation areas for tourists and residents alike with accessible climbing areas, public hiking and biking trails, and primitive camp sites. Funding has been requested from the Natural Heritage Trust Fund (\$4.2 million).
- **Columbus County Game Lands/Waccamaw River (Columbus County)** – Addition of 18,600 acres – the missing link to more than 40,000 acres of existing game lands and state park lands. This land offers significant hunting, fishing and other recreational opportunities that will increase tourism in this part of the state. An application for funding from the Clean Water Management Trust Fund (\$14.8 million) is pending.
- **Blue Ridge Parkway/Heffner Gap (McDowell and Mitchell Counties)** – Conservation of the 128-acre tract will preserve the view along a popular section of the Blue Ridge Parkway and critical sections of the historic Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail. Water quality in Honeycutt Creek/North Fork Catawba River will be protected by the acquisition of this forested tract. A request from the Clean Water Management Trust Fund is pending (\$160,000 – less than one fourth of the total cost).
- **Arnett Branch Longleaf Pine Forest (Montgomery County)** – Preservation of the largest remaining tract of privately owned old growth longleaf pine in Montgomery County. A funding request from the Clean Water Management Trust Fund is pending (\$123,375).
- **Green Swamp Game Lands/Pinch Gut Ridge (Brunswick County)** – Protection of this unique expanse of land – home to thousands of diverse wildlife and providing the public with hunting and other recreational opportunities – would prevent it from being converted to a residential development, and would ensure that a large unbroken block of land remains open to hunters and other members of the public. Funds to complete the third phase of the project are pending from the Clean Water Management Trust Fund and the Natural Heritage Trust Fund.

As critical decisions are being made, we urge you to maintain current funding levels for the Clean Water Management Trust Fund (\$50 million) and Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund (\$2 million), and to oppose HB 574 and SB 462, which would permanently divert half the funding from the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund and the Natural Heritage Trust Fund.

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