



LAND *for* TOMORROW

PRESS RELEASE

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Report: NC conservation trust funds bring \$4 for every \$1 invested

Report can be downloaded from www.landfortomorrow.org

RALEIGH, N.C. (Feb. 23) – North Carolina’s investment in conservation brings a return of \$4 for every \$1 spent, according to a new study of the state’s four conservation trust funds and the economic impact of projects they have helped to finance.

The study by The Trust for Public Land looked at the economic ripple effect of grants issued over the past 20 years by the Clean Water Management Trust Fund (CWMTF), Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund (ADFPTF), Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF), and Natural Heritage Trust Fund (NHTF).

“Our state constitution calls for North Carolina to protect natural resources ‘for the benefit of all its citizenry’ in the form clean air and water, and parks and scenic areas,” said Reid Wilson, executive director of the Conservation Trust for North Carolina and a member of Land for Tomorrow’s steering committee. “This study shows that conservation has a definite, tangible economic return – a clear and substantial payoff for North Carolina’s investment.”

The report was issued Feb. 23 at “Conservation Economics 2011: Keeping North Carolina in the Green,” hosted by Land for Tomorrow. The conference featured speakers and a panel of business, government and community leaders who discussed specific ways in which state-supported conservation has helped North Carolina’s economy and quality of life.

The 4:1 return on the state’s investment, the report said, is based solely on the value of natural resource goods and services such as water quality, clean air and flood control. The state’s investments over the past 10 years will ultimately return more than \$3.6 billion.

The report also noted that land conservation generates additional economic benefits above and beyond natural goods and services, meaning that the state’s return on investment is actually better than 4:1. Unquantified benefits – economic and otherwise – include job creation, public health, outdoor recreation, military preparedness and support for the state’s top two industries, agriculture and tourism.



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“Land conservation and sustainability were George Vanderbilt’s guiding principles when he created Biltmore Estate in the 1890s,” according to Steve Miller, executive vice president of The Biltmore Co. and a speaker at the conference. “Today, the scenic beauty of Biltmore and the surrounding mountains of Western North Carolina attract millions of visitors each year, making tourism a major driver of our region’s economy.”

The TPL report is the first to study in detail the economic benefits of investments by the four conservation trust funds, which make up the foundation of spending by the State of North Carolina on projects that protect drinking water, farmland, public parks and greenways, unique natural areas, wildlife habitat and other natural resources.

“We live in a state with a proud tradition of conservation and we have done as much or more than any other to protect our water and preserve our beauty,” said Lt. Gov. Walter Dalton, who spoke at the conference. “It’s more important than ever to understand that a clean environment is integral to a strong economy – from tourism and agriculture to green jobs.”

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About Land for Tomorrow

Land for Tomorrow is a coalition of conservation, agriculture, wildlife, and hunting/fishing groups, business organizations, local governments and other concerned citizens. The members of the Land for Tomorrow coalition support and promote the value of the state’s four conservation trust funds – Clean Water Management Trust Fund (CWMTF), Natural Heritage Trust Fund (NHTF), Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) and the Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund (ADFPTF). For more information, visit www.landfortomorrow.org.