

# NORTH CAROLINA'S NATURAL HERITAGE AT RISK



**How Reduced Funding for Land  
Acquisition Threatens Open Spaces**

**NCPIRG**  
EDUCATION FUND

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Threatens Open Spaces**

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Education Fund  
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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

North Carolina is full of unique places. Residents and tourists flock to see historic sites, hike in the western mountains, visit state parks, and enjoy beautiful beaches. From historical Native American sites to the Smoky Mountains, from the Eno River State Park to the Outer Banks, there are special places across the state for families, nature lovers, and history buffs alike. Yet North Carolina's farmlands, urban green spaces, wetlands, and wild places are disappearing at the sixth-fastest rate in the nation. Thirty-four percent of North Carolina's coastal wetlands have been so altered that they no longer adequately protect water quality. With North Carolina's population projected to grow from 7.8 million in 2000 to 8.8 million in 2015, the pressure for new development – and the loss of open space that comes with it – is likely to continue.

To preserve waterways, wetlands, and forests in North Carolina, the state government has set up four trust funds to guarantee ongoing funding for preservation projects. Over the past 14 years, the Clean Water Management Trust Fund (CWMTF), the Natural Heritage Trust Fund (NHTF), the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF), and the Farmland Preservation Trust Fund (FPTF) have funded 1,298 projects that have provided permanent protection for almost 300,000 acres of land and waterways. The funds have also protected some of our important historic sites.

Much more remains to be done. The Environmental Finance Center at UNC Chapel Hill has estimated that in order to meet North Carolina's goal of protecting one million acres of open space by 2009, funding for open space preservation must increase by approximately \$125 million each year between now and 2010.

However even existing funding for these programs is in jeopardy. In February 2002,

Governor Easley cut the budgets of all four trust funds. The results were immediate: the CWMTF and FPTF had to reduce or delay funding for projects that had already been promised funding. The PARTF and NHTF were suddenly unable to fund as many projects as they had anticipated.

As a result of these budget cuts and the uncertain prospects for future funding, dozens of beautiful open spaces in North Carolina are already at serious risk of development.

- At least sixty-five proposed projects have not received funding from the CWMTF, NHTF, and PARTF – and may never receive funding – due to the reduced amount of money available to the funds.
- Thirteen projects that were promised funding by CWMTF will now have to wait until more resources are available.

Among the open spaces that have already been lost, or could be lost, due to reduced preservation funding are:

- The wetland forest and marshes of Roanoke Island, which provide habitat for numerous mammals, reptiles, and amphibians, including the green treefrog. Developers are planning to build a marina and multi-unit housing development on a 46-acre tract of land on the west coast on the Croatan Sound. As a result of the February funding cut, funding promised by the CWMTF is not available to protect this area from development and the land is still unprotected.
- The Biggerstaff Mountain tract in Rutherford County. There are several endangered plant species on the acreage, including the white irisette, which can only be found in three counties in North Carolina. Because there was no funding available to assist in acquisition of the land, the tract has been purchased by developers and is lost to future preservation efforts.

- The Moss Farm in Stanly County near the Yadkin River. This farm is especially important to the community because it is a scenic buffer to Camp Barnhart, a 1,000-acre lakefront Boy Scout camp on Badin Lake. Hoping to preserve his family's farm, Mr. Moss wanted to sell a conservation easement on his land rather than selling it to developers. But funding is not available from the FPTF, and Mr. Moss had little

choice but to put his farm up for sale in March.

To protect these and other natural places, it is necessary for North Carolina to restore funding to the trust funds and to create new dedicated sources of funding for land acquisitions. Without funding to cover the costs of land acquisitions and conservation easements, the state's goal of preserving a million acres will be unreachable.

# OUR NATURAL HERITAGE AT RISK

**N**orth Carolina is a unique state with diverse natural areas and ecosystems, from the pristine Outer Banks, to the lazy rivers of the Piedmont, to the peaks of the Smoky Mountains. These open spaces provide crucial habitat for wildlife, as well as human recreational opportunities.

The natural heritage that makes North Carolina so unique is at risk. North Carolina's population is projected to grow from 7.8 million in 2000 to 8.8 million in 2015.<sup>1</sup> Due to population growth and new development, North Carolina is losing open space at an alarming rate. North Carolina's farmlands, urban green spaces, wetlands, and wild places are disappearing at the sixth-fastest rate in the nation.<sup>2</sup> Open space in the Triangle region is disappearing at a rate of 200 acres per week.<sup>3</sup> If these trends continue, the Charlotte area will have lost an average of 41 acres per day between 1980 and 2020.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, development is speeding up. From 1982 to 1992, the rate of development was 93,580 acres per year.<sup>5</sup> From 1992 to 1997, the rate increased to 156,000 acres per year.<sup>6</sup>

Loss of open space has detrimental effects on the environment and our quality of life.

Forests and wetlands act as "buffer zones" for waterways, removing sediment and chemicals from water flowing into rivers and streams. Without wetlands and other natural buffer zones along rivers and streams, sediment and chemicals flow directly into the water. Degradation of forests and wetlands is responsible for the contamination of 846 miles of North Carolina's waterways. Thirty-four percent of North Carolina's coastal wet-

lands have been altered so that they no longer adequately protect water quality.<sup>7</sup>

Development can lead to poor water quality as watersheds, forests, and wetlands are paved over. As runoff flows through streets, it picks up oil, anti-freeze, and other contaminants and eventually delivers these pollutants into our waterways. Urban runoff is responsible for the degradation of 894 miles of North Carolina's streams.<sup>8</sup>

When open spaces disappear, so do the species that dwell in them. With more than 50,000 species lost each year worldwide, our current rate of species extinction is the greatest since the time of the dinosaurs and is 10,000 times that which is considered "normal" or "natural." North Carolina is home to 63 federally listed endangered plant and animal species.<sup>9</sup> The North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources considers approximately 1,200 species in North Carolina to be rare or endangered.<sup>10</sup> These species need protected habitat to survive. The larger the habitat area, the better chance endangered species have of survival.

Open spaces provide important opportunities for people to relax and recreate. More than 12 million people visited state parks in 2001 to use the campgrounds, canoe along the rivers, view wildlife, or simply enjoy the outdoors.

Dozens of key open spaces in North Carolina are vulnerable to new development. Natural buffer zones are being destroyed, development is producing urban runoff, and available habitat for endangered species is rapidly shrinking.



# FUNDING PERMANENT PROTECTION FOR OPEN SPACES

Recognizing the value of preserving open spaces, the General Assembly enacted legislation on June 28, 2000 to permanently protect one million acres of farmland, open space, and conservation lands by December 31, 2009. If this goal is realized by the end of 2009, 12% of North Carolina's 31 million acres will be permanently protected.

Even prior to the enactment of this legislation, North Carolina had a history of funding permanent protection for open spaces. Beginning in 1986, the state established four trust funds that grant money to private land trusts, local governments, and state government agencies to protect and preserve open space: the Clean Water Management Trust Fund (CWMTF) in 1996, the Natural Heritage Trust Fund (NHTF) in 1987, the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) in 1993, and the Farmland Protection Trust Fund (FPTF) in 1986. The trust funds share a mission to permanently protect treasured places – from historic family farms to forests and wetlands – by granting money to private land trusts, local governments, and state government agencies to cover the costs of land acquisitions and conservation easements.\* The funding levels for these four funds have increased over the years, as have the number of acres per year that each fund protects. If the state continues these trends, the funds will be a critical component of the efforts to preserve a million acres of open space in North Carolina by the end of the year 2009.

In February 2002, the governor made significant cuts to the budgets of all four trust funds, reducing the total amount of funding available for open space protection by 45%

and leaving sixty-five threatened open spaces without permanent protection. These budget cuts have slowed the acquisition of conservation easements and land from willing sellers and will make reaching the million acre goal more difficult. The appendices to this report contain lists of land protection projects that are currently not funded. Without funding for protection, many of these areas will be sold to private developers or paved over instead of being preserved.

## The Clean Water Management Trust Fund

Established in 1996, the CWMTF is the largest of the four trust funds. Every year, CWMTF receives an allocation from North Carolina's General Fund. The CWMTF awards grants to land trusts, local governments, and state agencies to establish buffer zones along rivers and streams, to protect wetlands and floodplain lands, to restore degraded waterways, and to enlarge and repair insufficient or malfunctioning wastewater treatment facilities. Approximately half of the CWMTF budget goes to land acquisition each year. As of January 2001, the CWMTF has funded projects that have protected 1,560 miles of riparian buffers and have preserved 134,673 acres of land in North Carolina.<sup>11</sup> Because of the success of the CWMTF in protecting land and water, the 2000 session of the General Assembly committed to appropriate \$40 million to CWMTF in fiscal year 2001-02, \$70 million in fiscal year 2002-03, and \$100 million in fiscal year 2003-04 and subsequent years. The CWMTF estimates that over \$10.5 billion is needed to protect and restore water quality in North Carolina.<sup>12</sup>

\*A **conservation easement** is a legal agreement that limits how a property can be used. Conservation easements are used to protect land from development if the development is incompatible with conservation goals. A federal, state, or local government or an approved nonprofit organization must own the easement.

## At Risk: Roanoke Island Coast

Roanoke Island is the site of the one of the earliest European settlements in North America. The disappearance of the Roanoke colony remains one of the greatest mysteries of American history. Today, visitors find that the tiny island is home to many of the same natural areas discovered by the first colonists. The wetland forest and marshes provide habitat for mammals, reptiles, and amphibians, including the green treefrog. Birds that live or nest on the island include the great blue heron, the endangered black rail, and several species of hawks.<sup>19</sup>



CWMTF

Along the west coast of the island lies the Croatan Sound. Urban runoff and pollution from septic tanks and marinas have already damaged the quality of water in the Croatan Sound so badly that it can no longer support large populations of shellfish. New development presents a further threat. Developers hope to build a marina and multi-unit housing development on a 46-acre tract of land along the Sound.<sup>20</sup> As part of a multi-stage development project to protect Roanoke Island and the Croatan Sound from further water pollution and habitat degradation, the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission applied for and was granted up to \$2.7 million by the CWMTF to purchase the 46 acres before it could be developed. As a result of the February funding cut, the promised funding is no longer immediately available for this project, increasing the likelihood of the property being sold to developers in the near future.

## Protected: Edenton Bay Watershed

Edenton, home of the oldest courthouse in North Carolina, has been called the South's prettiest town. Waterfront parks line Edenton Bay. Cypress trees shelter the bay's tributary creeks, where locals and visitors alike enjoy kayaking and canoeing. The creeks are also an important spawning area for herring. Commercial herring fishing, once a centerpiece of the local economy, started in Edenton before the American Revolution and is a significant part of Edenton's heritage.<sup>16</sup>



USDA

**Pembroke Creek**

Having witnessed a severe depletion of the herring population since the 1970s, the town sought to revitalize the herring industry by reducing water pollution and restoring damaged habitat. By protecting lands bordering Pembroke Creek, Filbert Creek, and Queen Ann Creek in the Edenton Bay watershed, Edenton had an opportunity to simultaneously improve water quality and create new public open space. In 1999, Edenton officials applied for and received funding from the Clean Water Management Trust Fund to purchase 1,885 acres along the creeks, including a former family hog farm, wetlands from three other farms, and an unused fish hatchery.<sup>17</sup> Today the acreage provides camping and resting places for canoeists. Its new use has contributed to significant improvement in water quality, leading authorities to predict a significant increase in the herring population within the next fifteen to twenty years.<sup>18</sup>

On February 5, 2002, the Governor froze more than half of the \$40 million allocation to the CWMTF. As a result of this funding cut, the CWMTF has been forced to delay funding of grants that have already been approved.<sup>13</sup> In November 2001, the board approved thirty-nine grants. Fourteen of these projects have had their funding pulled.<sup>14</sup> In addition, fifty-five land acquisition projects have been submitted for future funding. These projects also may never receive funding.<sup>15</sup>

## The Natural Heritage Trust Fund

The NHTF was established in 1987. The trust fund awards grants to state agencies for the purpose of acquiring land for state parks, reserves, and recreation areas.<sup>27</sup> The fund received a dedicated source of funding in 1989 when the current system of funding via annual fees for personalized license plates was established.<sup>28</sup> The fund also receives 25% of the deed stamp tax as income.<sup>29</sup> As of December 2001, the NHTF has participated in



CWMTF

### At Risk: Apex Nature Park and Wildlife Habitat

On the west side of the town of Apex is a 100-acre tract that contains wetlands, floodplains, forest, and open space. The wetlands are important for removing sediment and pollutants and protecting water quality. The tract is one of very few large parcels of land remaining in Wake County that represent typical wetlands and forests in an area with increasing rates of development. The citizens of Apex have prioritized protecting

their open spaces, and a recent poll of citizens showed a demand for more natural parks.<sup>21</sup>

The proposed I-540 outer loop will be located less than one mile away from the land.<sup>22</sup> New roads are often precursors to new development, and the town is anticipating increased development rates in the near future. Currently, there is a hold on all new development in Apex while the town obtains more wastewater infrastructure. Within a few months, however, new development will be approved to begin in Apex. Because of the proximity of sewer and water lines to the 100-acre tract, the land is very desirable to developers.<sup>23</sup>

The town of Apex has already obtained fifty-six acres of the land and hopes to purchase forty-three more acres. They plan to begin work on a 100-acre nature park that will be enjoyed by Apex and Wake County residents. The park will be an educational resource for students as well as an attraction for local residents and visitors. Preserving this area presents a rare opportunity to achieve three goals: protecting water quality, establishing a corridor of open space that will stretch from the center of Apex to Jordan Lake, and responding to demand from Apex citizens for more natural park land.<sup>24</sup>

The town of Apex has requested \$387,000 from the CWMTF to purchase the remainder of the property.<sup>25</sup> With the backlog of projects waiting for funding from the most recent funding cycle, it is unlikely that a grant will be awarded to the town of Apex for this project in the near future. In the meantime, the town is scrambling to obtain sufficient funds for the project.<sup>26</sup>

the protection of 145,000 acres of land in North Carolina.<sup>30</sup>

In February 2002, the NHTF had its \$11.8 million budget reduced by 25%.<sup>31</sup> This \$3 million cut reduces funding to below its 1997 level. Even at previous funding levels, the trust

fund was only able to fulfill half of the \$23.2 million in annual requests made for land acquisition funds.<sup>32</sup> Reducing the funding to levels below those of 1997 will result in an even greater percentage of fund requests being denied.

## Protected: Little River Regional Park

A pine and hardwood forest covers most of a 391-acre tract shared by Orange and Durham counties. The forest was clearcut in the 1960s and replanted with pines. Today, the pine trees are the tallest trees in the forest, but the native hardwoods that have grown in the area over the last forty years will someday surpass them in height.<sup>45</sup> The forest is on its way to becoming a fully mature hardwood forest that will support a diversity of wildlife in another fifty years. Animals making their homes there today include deer, beavers, turkey, quail, rabbits, and hawks.<sup>46</sup> Visitors to the forest find themselves far from dense development and busy roads. Deep in the forest, the only sounds that can be heard are birdcalls and the wind whistling through the trees. The Little River, which runs through the forest, is a source of drinking water to the Durham community and is one of the cleanest waterways in the Piedmont region.<sup>47</sup>



CWMTF

The Little River area is historically important as well. Pieces of stone tools found during an archaeological survey indicate that Native Americans camped along the river 8,000 to 12,000 years ago.<sup>48</sup> Archaeologists have also discovered the foundations of an old mill and home that they think stood on the site in the mid-1800s. There are many unanswered questions about the site, and archaeologists are eager to continue to study the remains of the mill.

The 391-acre tract will soon be the Little River Regional Park, scheduled to open to the public in the summer of 2003. The counties plan to build picnic shelters and a children's play area in a 15-acre open meadow.<sup>49</sup> The forest will be left in its natural state so that the hardwood forest can continue to develop. Pedestrian trails will lead visitors deep into the woods and down to the river. There will also be trails for bicycles and horses.

Last year, a 180-acre tract adjacent to the forest was considered for use as a landfill. The landfill proposal was rejected and local residents purchased the property to protect it from development. The possibility of having a landfill next to the forest and so close to the Little River raised awareness among local residents about the vulnerability of their local open spaces, in particular the forest itself. This public awareness set in motion the fundraising and planning process that led to the purchase of the 391-acre tract.<sup>50</sup>

Little River Regional Park was purchased jointly by Orange and Durham Counties with a \$250,000 grant from the PARTF, a \$337,000 grant from the CWMTF, and funds from the Triangle Land Conservancy, the Eno River Association, and a federal grant.<sup>51</sup> The trust funds provided more than half of the necessary funding for the park and were essential to the success of the project.

NC DPR



**Princess Ann Swamp**

### Protected: Princess Ann Swamp and Big Sandy Ridge

Located near the entrance to Lumber River State Park, the Princess Ann Swamp is the best example of bottomland hardwood forest along the Lumber River.<sup>33</sup> Bottomland hardwood forests usually occur in floodplains that are seasonally flooded. Typical species in a bottomland hardwood forest include a variety of oaks, sweet gum, green ash, cottonwoods,

willows, river birch, and occasionally pines.<sup>34</sup> The swamp is currently accessible to visitors who wish to enjoy the Spanish moss-draped cypress forest.

Also near the park is the Big Sandy Ridge – the largest sand ridge on the Lumber River – which contains one of the largest populations of the rare plant species in North Carolina, the woody goldenrod.<sup>35</sup> It contains pine habitats once common to the area. The Sandhills region, with its flat-topped sandy ridges separated by valleys, is also home to the federally endangered red-cockaded woodpecker.

Until 2001, International Paper Corporation owned both the Princess Ann Swamp and the Big Sandy Ridge, both of which had once been heavily logged, but have recently been allowed to grow back to a more natural state.<sup>36</sup> In April 2001, the NHTF awarded \$500,000 to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Division of Parks and Recreation to purchase property from the paper company to add to Lumber River State Park.<sup>37</sup>

CWMTF



**Rutherford County forest**

### Sold to Developers: Biggerstaff Mountain Tract

The Biggerstaff Mountain tract, a 2,200-acre area in Rutherford County, contains a unique combination of vegetation from both the mountain and Piedmont regions. Characteristic of the southern mountains, elevations range from 1,300 to 2,200 feet in the area. The hardwood forest is full of wildlife, including the black bear and a range of other mammals and birds. There are several endangered plant species on the acreage, including the white irisette, which is found in only three counties in North Carolina.

The North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission requested funding from NHTF and CWMTF to add the Biggerstaff Mountain tract to their managed Game Lands Program. The acquisition would have provided opportunities for hunting and fishing, as well as preserving the forest and non-game wildlife for hikers, bird-watchers, photographers, and ecologists.

Unfortunately, neither NHTF nor CWMTF had sufficient funds to award the requested grants to fund the land acquisition. The owners of the land were on a tight timeline to sell their property. Because there was not sufficient funding available to assist in the land acquisition, the 2,200-acre tract has been sold to developers and is lost to future preservation.

## The Parks and Recreation Trust Fund

The PARTF was established in 1994 and receives its income from the state's portion of the real estate deed transfer tax for property sold in North Carolina. The PARTF allocation is distributed so that 65% of the funds are allocated to the state park system, 30% to matching grants for local governments' parks and recreation projects, and 5% to the Public Beach and Coastal Waterfront Fund.<sup>39</sup> PARTF has provided funding for the addition of 10,927 acres to the state park system and for the addition of over 1,400 acres to local parks.<sup>40</sup>

The Public Beach and Coastal Waterfront Fund was established in 1981. Originally it was funded by appropriations from North Carolina's General Fund but now receives the 5% of PARTF funding and is managed by the Division of Coastal Management. From 1982 to 2001, the Division of Coastal Management approved funding for 270 public waterfront projects.<sup>41</sup>

The February funding cut also affected PARTF, removing almost 40% of its \$12.7

million budget.<sup>42</sup> In the first funding cycle after the cuts, sixty-two local governments requested \$10.6 million.<sup>43</sup> The Parks and Recreation Authority awarded grants to only 28 of these projects.<sup>44</sup>

## The Farmland Preservation Trust Fund

In 1986, the state legislature set up the FPTF to preserve farmland. The FPTF was not funded until 1999, but has been funded for the past four cycles. The FPTF does not have a dedicated source of funding but instead depends on yearly allocations from the state. Over the past four grant cycles, funds have been awarded primarily to assist with conservation easements.<sup>52</sup>

North Carolina's farms have historical value as well as significance as open space. Many farms have historic buildings on their land and have been owned by the same families for more over 100 years. Family farms also represent a way of life that is fast disappearing, as family farmers are pressured to sell their property to developers. Over the past four years, the FPTF has funded permanent con-

### At Risk: Additions to South Mountains State Park

The South Mountains Park, the second largest state park in North Carolina, is a favorite spot for hikers. The forest that visitors hike through is made up mostly of oak, hickory, and poplar trees. Trails lead up to high ridges with scenic overlooks. The natural areas in Burke County both in and around the park are examples of what the entire area used to look like. In a recent inventory of Burke County, scientists found 97 rare plant and animal species.<sup>38</sup> Currently, development is not restricted in most of these natural areas, and the region has become more urban in recent years.

In an effort to protect some of the most rare ecosystems, the Division of Parks and Recreation applied for grants from NHTF and CWMTF to add 1,000 acres of unprotected land to the South Mountains Park. The proposed addition contains rare plants, streams, and high ridges that could be added to hiking trails. Due to lack of funds available for the Spring 2002 funding cycle, neither NHTF nor CWMTF were able to fund the addition to the park.



South Mountains State Park

South Mountains State Park

servation easements on 4,275 acres of farmland on thirty farms in North Carolina, including thirty-two acres of wetlands and 485 acres of natural habitat.<sup>53</sup>

In fiscal year 2001-2002, FPTF was awarded \$200,000, only 14% of the \$1.5 million it received in fiscal year 2000-2001. The allocation was cut back further to \$192,000 in February. This funding cut resulted in one grant award being reduced and several preservation projects being turned away because of lack of funds. The maximum grant in 2002 was only \$25,000, 10% of the \$250,000 maximum grants awarded in the 2001 cycle.<sup>54</sup> According to the North Carolina Commissioner of Agriculture, there may not be any funds allocated to the FPTF next year due to the current budget situation.<sup>55</sup> A lack of funding for conservation easements on farmland means that many farmers may have to sell their properties to developers. In fact, the historic lack of funding for the FPTF has discouraged land

trusts from even applying for funds for small farmland projects.

Lower funding for the FPTF will also result in lost opportunities to receive federal funds for farmland preservation. The recently enacted federal farm bill provides more matching funds for farmland preservation than ever before. The program will make \$50 million available to local governments and non-profit conservation organizations that can match half of the funds. Thus, for every dollar put into the FPTF, two dollars could be contributed from the federal government. Since North Carolina has more threatened farmland that qualifies for this program than do many states, the potential for bringing millions of dollars into the state for farmland preservation from the federal government is high. Even if the FPTF could be funded at its 2000-2001 level of only \$1.5 million, more than 3,500 acres of prime farmland could be saved.<sup>57</sup>

Piedmont Land Conservancy



**Hickory Grove Dairy Farm**

### At Risk: Sutphin Mill Farmland Community

The Sutphin Mill Community in South Alamance County is comprised of family farms. While farming communities were once common in the Piedmont region, the farms in Sutphin Mill represent a type of community that is rarely found today. One community member, the Hickory Grove Dairy Farm, has been in the Newlin family since 1904, when the family raised chickens to support themselves.<sup>62</sup>

In 1996, when neighborhood residents learned that the nearby Bolton Farm was on the market and that a trailer park development was its fate, the farmers of Sutphin Mill partnered with the Piedmont Land Conservancy and the American Farmland Trust to protect their farmland and open space.<sup>63</sup> They were able to preserve the Bolton farm with a conservation easement. The groups then set a goal to permanently protect 1,500 contiguous acres of farmland in the community.<sup>64</sup> To date, five farms – including Hickory Grove – have been protected, encompassing approximately 484 acres.<sup>65</sup> The FPTF has been instrumental in these efforts. Without funding for the trust fund, however, the community will not be able to progress toward the goal of protecting 1,500 acres of farmland.<sup>66</sup>

## Protected: The Rhyne Farm

The Rhyne farm in Gaston County is one of thirty-three Bicentennial Farms in North Carolina, which means that the same family has farmed it for over 200 years. The property was given by King George III to the Rhyne family in the mid-1700s and includes a historic home built in 1799.<sup>57</sup> The farm is home to a hardwood forest with wildflowers, ferns, and the rare bigleaf magnolia.<sup>58</sup> Seventy-six acres of the farm were identified as being a “significant natural heritage.”<sup>59</sup>



CTNC

The Catawba Lands Conservancy purchased a conservation easement for 179 acres of the farm in 2001 with the help of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Farmland Preservation Trust Fund.<sup>60</sup>

## At Risk: The Moss Farm

The Moss Farm is in Stanly County near the Yadkin River. The hundred-acre farm has been in the same family for more than one hundred years. It is especially important to the community because the farm is a scenic buffer to Camp Barnhart, a 1,000-acre lakefront Boy Scout camp on Badin Lake. The Moss family grew crops and raised livestock there, but as is the case with many family farms, in recent years the income derived was not quite adequate for the family’s needs. Many other local farms in the area have been sold and converted to mobile home parks in the past few years. Not wanting to sell the family farm to developers who would install mobile homes or build subdivisions on the land, the property owner hoped instead to sell a conservation easement to the Land Trust for Central North Carolina.

Unfortunately, Mr. Moss learned that the prospects for significant funding from the Farmland Preservation Trust Fund for the conservation easement were not promising. He was not able to afford the \$40,000 annual cost of nursing care for his chronically ill mother and could not wait for funding to be available. Realizing that he had no choice but sell the family farm, Mr. Moss put a “For Sale” sign on the property in March. He is still looking for a buyer.<sup>61</sup>



## CONCLUSION

**N**orth Carolina's open spaces are in danger. We are losing precious wetlands, forests, and family farms to development at alarming rates. The recent budget cuts have disrupted our most effective land preservation mechanisms - the four trust funds.

The Environmental Finance Center at UNC Chapel Hill has estimated that in order to meet North Carolina's million-acre preservation goal, funding for open space preservation must increase by approximately \$125 million each year between now and 2010. By

committing to the funding levels already promised to the CWMTE, \$25 million to \$30 million of this increase will be covered.<sup>67</sup> Fully funding the trust funds, in addition to creating new dedicated sources of funding for land acquisitions, is critical to preserving North Carolina's natural heritage. Without funding for land acquisitions and conservation easements, not only will the long-term goal of preserving a million acres be unreachable; as this report shows, we actually stand to lose precious places in the short term.



# APPENDIX 1: PROJECTS AT RISK IN THE MOUNTAIN REGION

Preservation projects that have applied for but not received funding from CWTMF, PARTF, and NHTF. Some of these projects may be funded in future grant cycles. No additional grant applications have been submitted to FPTF since the funding cut. CWTMF received additional grant applications on June 3, 2002.

Catawba Watershed	Establish Catawba River Riparian Land Opportunities Fund that will provide resources for preserving riverside land in the Catawba River Basin	n/a	Catawba Lands & Foothills Conservancy (704) 342-3330	CWTMF
Catawba Watershed	Purchase forested land along the South Fork Catawba River	75.6	Catawba Lands Conservancy (704) 342-3330	CWTMF
Avery County	Purchase the Gersing Tract near Newland to create area for hunting, fishing, and trapping.	837	NC Wildlife Resources Commission (919) 733-3391	CWTMF
Avery County	Purchase land between Grandfather Mountain and Roan Mountain for hunting and other recreation	594	NC Wildlife Resources Commission (919) 733-3391	NHTF
Burke County	East Burke County Park Development - Phase II	n/a	Burke County	PARTF
Burke County	Purchase land in Upper Jacob Fork watershed to add to South Mountain State Park	1,000	NC Division of Parks & Recreation (919) 715-8694	CWTMF, NHTF
Caldwell County	Purchase development rights on private land near Blowing Rock to protect water quality and wildlife of Phillips Creek	114.25	Foothills Conservancy of NC (828) 437-9930	CWTMF
Henderson County	Purchase Wilson property and Brevard Community Church property along Mud Creek	26.51	City of Hendersonville (828) 697-3000	CWTMF
Madison County	Purchase land in Mars Hill to prevent development	197	Richard L. Hoffman - White Oak Creek (828) 689-4599	CWTMF

McDowell County	Purchase development rights on forest and riverside land at the headwaters of the Catawba River to create wildlife habitat and improve water quality	n/a	Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy (828) 253-0095	CWMTF
McDowell County	Cross Mill Community Park	n/a	Marion	PARTF
Polk County	Saluda Recreation Area	n/a	Saluda	PARTF
Polk County	Purchase land along North Pacolet River and Horse Creek to improve water quality	n/a	Pacolet Area Conservancy (828) 894-3018	CWMTF
Rutherford County	Purchase land 16 miles northwest of Rutherfordton for species habitat and recreation.	3,969	NC Wildlife Resources Commission	CWMTF
Rutherford County	Park renovation	n/a	Bostic	PARTF
Rutherford County	Crestview Park	n/a	Rutherfordton	PARTF
Watauga County	Fund the purchase and cover the costs of surveys for development rights on six properties.	474	Blue Ridge Rural Land Trust (828) 263-8776	CWMTF
Watauga County	Purchase or cover the costs of surveys for development rights on ten properties between Blowing Rock and Boone	n/a	Middle Fork Greenway Association (828) 264-3754	CWMTF
Watauga County	Purchase riverfront land, wetland, and forested land that is under threat from a proposed residential development.	43.64	National Committee for the New River (336) 246-4871	CWMTF
Wilkes County	Cub Creek Park Expansion	n/a	Wilkesboro	PARTF
Wilkes County	Purchase development rights on several parcels of land including the Whittington Cattle Farm, the Perry Lowe Orchard, and the Carlton Cattle Farm.	755	Blue Ridge Rural Land Trust (828) 263-8776	CWMTF

## APPENDIX 2: PROJECTS AT RISK IN THE PIEDMONT REGION

Preservation projects that have applied for but not received funding from CWTMF, PARTF, and NHTF. Some of these projects may be funded in future grant cycles. No additional grant applications have been submitted to FPTF since the funding cut. CWTMF received additional grant applications on June 3, 2002.

Yadkin Watershed	Purchase properties and development rights on properties to add to the "Two Rivers Preserve"	1626	LandTrust for Central NC (704) 647-0302	CWTMF
Neuse Watershed	Acquire land along Eno River	161	NC Division of Parks & Recreation (919) 715-8694	CWTMF
Lumber Watershed	Purchase land adjacent to water along Drowning Creek and Naked Creek	n/a	Sandhills Area Land Trust (910) 695-4323	CWTMF
Alamance County	Purchase six contiguous properties on the banks of the Haw River	22	City of Graham (336) 570-6700	CWTMF
Caswell County	Purchase land from International Paper	227	NC Wildlife Resources Commission (919) 733-7291	CWTMF
Caswell County	Purchase land along South Country Line Creek	72	NC Wildlife Resources Commission (919) 733-7291	CWTMF
Cumberland County	Town of Wade Park Phase 1	n/a	Wade	PARTF
Franklin County	Purchase properties for town park in floodplain	50.39	Town of Louisburg (919) 496-4145	CWTMF
Guilford County	Purchase wetlands and stream in Greensboro	15.91	Piedmont Land Conservancy (336) 691-0088	CWTMF
Mecklenburg County	Rockwell Neighborhood Park	n/a	Mecklenburg County	PARTF
Mecklenburg County	Purchase development rights for a portion of Mountain Lake Island	7	Trust for Public Land (704) 376-1839	CWTMF
Montgomery County	Purchase land adjacent to Denson's Creek and Little River	57.7	Town of Troy (910) 572-3661	CWTMF
Randolph County	Creekside Park Expansion	n/a	Archdale	PARTF
Robeson County	Purchase development rights on land adjacent to Lumber River	21	City of Lumberton (910) 671-3816	CWTMF
Stanly County	Albemarle Middle School Park	n/a	Albemarle	PARTF

Surry County	Purchase forested land adjacent to water in Mitchell River Watershed	83	Piedmont Land Conservancy (336) 691-0088	CWMTF
Wake County	Morrisville Community Park, Phase 2	n/a	Morrisville	PARTF
Wake County	Bass Lake Park	n/a	Holly Springs	PARTF
Wake County	Centennial Park Phase 1	n/a	Garner	PARTF
Wake County	Rolesville Park (Acquisition only)	n/a	Rolesville	PARTF
Wake County	Purchase land adjacent to White Oak Creek and Bachelor Branch	197	Town of Cary (919) 469-4344	CWMTF
Wake County	Purchase land to protect water and wildlife habitat	98.7	Town of Apex Director of Public Works and Utilities (919) 362-8166	CWMTF
Wake County	Purchase land along Neuse River	185	City of Raleigh (919) 890-3293	CWMTF

## APPENDIX 3: PROJECTS AT RISK IN THE COASTAL REGION

Preservation projects that have applied for but not received funding from CWTMF, PARTF, and NHTF. Some of these projects may be funded in future grant cycles. No additional grant applications have been submitted to FPTF since the funding cut. CWTMF received additional grant applications on June 3, 2002.

Chowan Watershed	Purchase portions of the Chowan River Swamp	6,446	NC Wildlife Resources Commission (919) 733-3391	CWTMF
Lumber Watershed	Purchase land in floodplain along Waccamaw River and Juniper Creek	2,530	NC Wildlife Resources Commission (919) 733-3391	CWTMF
Bertie County	Bertie County Park	n/a	Bertie County	PARTF
Carteret County	Purchase coastal land from North River Farms	5876	NC Coastal Federation (252) 393-8185	CWTMF
Carteret County	Purchase land along Pettiford Creek	408	NC Coastal Land Trust (910) 790-4524	CWTMF
Craven County	Purchase Cool Springs Tract between Vanceboro and New Bern from Weyerhaeuser	785	NC Coastal Land Trust (910) 790-4524	CWTMF
Columbus County	Elizabeth Brinkley Memorial Park	n/a	Lake Waccamaw	PARTF
Columbus County	Purchase floodplain land along White Marsh	474	Nature Conservancy (919) 403-8558	CWTMF
Cumberland County	Purchase land adjacent to Cape Fear River to protect from development	660.6	NC Wildlife Resources Commission (919) 733-3391	CWTMF
Dare County	Add dunes and wetlands to Jockey State Park	39.1	NC Division of Parks & Rec. (919) 715-8694	CWTMF
Dare County	Purchase oceanfront land and fishing pier	5.2	NC Aquarium Society (919) 733-2290	CWTMF
Johnston County	Purchase land in Lowgrounds to add to Mountains-to-Sea Trail State Park	1139	NC Division of Parks & Rec.	CWTMF
Onslow County	Purchase land in the White Oak River Basin to prevent development	2500	NC Wildlife Resources Commission (919) 733-3391	CWTMF

Pender County	Protect rare natural community and rare plants at Rocky Point	59	DOA	NHTF
Pender County	Purchase a portion of the Pridgen tract from International Paper	40	Nature Conservancy (919) 403-8558	CWMTF
Pender County	Purchase Bear Garden and Angola Bay tracts from International Paper	29,216	Nature Conservancy (919) 403-8558	CWMTF
Pender County	Purchase development rights on land on land along Shelter Creek and Corbington Branch	76	NC Coastal Land Trust (910) 790-4524	CWMTF
Pender County	Purchase development rights on land on land along Shelter Creek and Angola Creek	82	NC Coastal Land Trust (910) 790-4524	CWMTF
Perquimans County	Purchase land adjacent to water along Perquimans River to add to Newbold-White House Historical & Natural Heritage Site	n/a	Perquimans County Restoration Association (252) 426-7567	CWMTF
Sampson County	Purchase tracts along the Black River from International Paper	180	Nature Conservancy (919) 403-8558	CWMTF
Sampson County	Purchase floodplain tract along Great Coharie Creek	4858	Nature Conservancy (919) 403-8558	CWMTF
Tyrell County	Purchase portion of Scuppernong River Swamp Forest	990	Nature Conservancy (919) 403-8558	CWMTF



## APPENDIX 4: PROJECTS PROMISED FUNDING BY CWMTF AND DELAYED INDEFINITELY BY BUDGET CUTS

Ashe County	Protect the waters of New River Basin through acquisition of land adjacent to waters	78	Conservation Fund and NC DENR Parks & Recreation	Mr. Richard P. Ludington (919) 967-2223
Beaufort County	Purchase land that borders Goose Creek Game Land	519	NC Wildlife Resources Commission	Mr. Wib Owen (919) 733-7291
Carteret County	Purchase Sugarloaf Island	n/a	Morehead City	Mr. Randy Martin (252) 726-6848
Cabarrus County	Purchase land adjacent to Lake Don T. Howell	104.25	Carrubus County Water & Sewer Authority	Mr. Ray Furr (704) 788-4164
Columbus County	Purchase land adjacent to Waccamaw River	3,228	Nature Conservancy	Mr. Hervey McIver (919) 403-8558
Dare County	Acquire land on west coast of Roanoke Island	174	NC Wildlife Resources Commission	Mr. Wib Owen (919) 733-7291
Lenoir County	Purchase development rights on land to protect Tulls Millpond	100	Conservation Fund	Ms. Mikki Sager (919) 967-2223
Mecklenburg County	Purchase development rights on land to protect Mountain Island Lake	36	Mecklenburg County	Mr. Steven Law (704) 336-8798
Orange County	Purchase development rights and purchase land near Cane Creek Reservoir	360	Orange Water and Sewer Authority	Mr. Ed Holland (919) 968-4421
Pasquotank	Purchase Circle Properties Tract for wetlands conservation	5,401	NC Wildlife Resources Commission	Mr. Wib Owen (919) 733-7291
Stanly County	Purchase development rights for land on Badin Lake	142	Environmental Impact RC&D	Mr. Don Thompson (910) 572-3126
Watauga County	Purchase land on the headwaters of the Johns River bordering Moses Cone Park.	192.27	Town of Blowing Rock	Mr. Don Holycross (828) 295-5200

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