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**CONSERVATION VOICES**



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FALL 2023



## DEAR CTNC FAMILY,

Thank you all for your continued support for conserving the most beautiful and inspiring parts of North Carolina. In this quarterly update, you will see how our staff, community partners and AmeriCorps service people have made 2023 one of CTNC's most productive years in conservation and climate-change mitigation. As of this writing, CTNC just protected its 76th property – "Stella's Acres" – along the Blue Ridge Parkway. In the eastern part of our state, the Town of Princeville remains innovative and forward-looking as it adapts its community's long-term needs to the historic reality of periodic flooding of the Tar River. In both places, our staff have offered its expertise on the ground, while learning North Carolina history and empowering local communities to chart their own destiny in the 21st century.



As Board President, I sincerely believe that CTNC's vital strength lay in its goodwill in local communities across the state, where trust has been built over a quarter-century of utilizing partnerships and legal instruments to achieve conservation-minded ends. Our donors, board, staff, volunteers and colleagues in the land trust community make all of this happen. We are truly a thriving family of environmentally conscious citizens.

Thank you all, and many joys to you during this North Carolina autumn.

**Brandon A. Robinson** | President, CTNC



## Conservation Celebration Sets New Record for Investment

**T**hanks to the support and commitment of CTNC's supporters, our Conservation Celebration raised over \$38,000 this year and brought together more than 80 individuals who are passionate about working together to build resilient, just communities. Every year, we look forward to gathering at the beautiful Gideon Ridge Inn to celebrate the land we are conserving, the resilience we're building, and the people who make it all possible. We're able to lead with our values and accomplish our goals because of the steadfast commitment of everyone who joins us at Gideon Ridge and those who support us in so many more ways. Thank you.

This year's celebration marked the last time that Chris Canfield would attend as Executive Director. **His remarks reminded us that his six-year tenure with CTNC was a continuation of work that came before him.** The work that began with him will be carried on in a new iteration through the next Executive Director. We will greatly miss Chris' leadership and are grateful for the very strong foundation he has helped lay for the next phase of conservation in this state.





## Gardens Spring Up Across Princeville

**W**ith increases in heavy rainfall, communities across our state are experiencing flooding that disrupts activities, strains infrastructure systems, and causes property damage. The Town of Princeville community members feel those effects. Their elected leaders are invested in building natural stormwater capture devices while enhancing once-vacant land throughout the community. Over the summer, CTNC spearheaded a project to install green infrastructure with wetland enhancement projects that created 6,000 square feet of stormwater retention strategies, including bioretention cells and rain gardens designed to hold 27,740 gallons of water per rain event.

**By turning these sites into managed wetland areas with trees, shrubs, and pollinator plants, each site can now absorb stormwater and address standing water issues.** This is all while beautifying each plot with seasonal colorful blooms and leaves, supporting native wildlife, including birds and other pollinators.

**Read more about this exciting project on our blog: [ctnc.org/gardens-spring-up-across-princeville](https://ctnc.org/gardens-spring-up-across-princeville).**



## Why We Need the Resilience Service Network

**N**orth Carolina has seen an unprecedented investment in building resilience against the effects of our changing climate and that investment will only continue to grow. Communities across the state are ready to address the threat of climate change, but they're hindered by a lack of capacity to mobilize an effective response.

CTNC commissioned a study to gather information and input on what role service programs might play in building needed capacity. The resulting case of support affirms that existing and new service programs are well-positioned to play a vital role in assisting communities seeking to leverage the climate resilience investments being made, but service has to be expanded to realize that potential.

**Now, CTNC alongside Conserving Carolina and Conservation Corps NC are rising to the challenge to meet this need.** This month, we will begin a year-long investment to place service members throughout the state where the need to address climate change impacts is great.

North Carolina is primed to lead the nation on creative and innovative solutions for climate action. We're proud to help seed a movement to empower investment, implementation, and coordination of activities that will build resilient, just communities across our state.

**Read the study on our website: [ctnc.org/resilience-service-network-need](https://ctnc.org/resilience-service-network-need).**



## Stella's Acres Joins Another CTNC-Protected Parkway Property

In June, CTNC secured another 36 acres of pristine protected views along the Blue Ridge Parkway, a full circle moment for Blue Ridge Parkway land protection. **The property, known as Stella's Acres abuts, the very first property CTNC ever conveyed to the Parkway.** This land holds ecological value, protects clean water, and augments climate solutions to Western North Carolina communities. "We're thrilled to announce this success and look forward to celebrating the transfer of the property to the Blue Ridge Parkway in the very near future," said Rusty Painter, CTNC Land Protection Director.

Thank you to the National Park Service, previous landowners Charles & Donna Bryan, and our corporate donor for making this project possible. The property will be donated to the National Park Service in the next few years and is the 76th property CTNC has protected along the Blue Ridge Parkway.

**Read more about this stellar property: [ctnc.org/stellas-acres](https://ctnc.org/stellas-acres).**



## A Few Key Updates

**T**hank you for your generous investment in CTNC programs; we raised \$1.7 million in the past 12 months. Thank you. Our state thanks you. We have so much planned for the rest of this year. Here are a few key updates to share with you that we know will only make CTNC stronger:

- The search to fill the Executive Director role after Chris Canfield's departure is underway and the Board is on track to have the new Executive Director in place by the end of the year.
- To help carry CTNC through the leadership transition and beyond, Mary Alice Holley has been promoted to Associate Director and Community Innovation Officer.
- Amy Smith left CTNC for an executive director position in the area. Our new Philanthropy Director is Erin Witcher and we're grateful for her willingness to step into this position.

**Learn more about CTNC's future: [ctnc.org/key-updates](https://ctnc.org/key-updates).**