

A Sprint to the Finish: The Final Days of the North Carolina Conservation Tax Credit



A Voluntary Incentive Providing Major Public Benefits

Conservation Trust for North Carolina
June 2014

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Executive Summary

The North Carolina Conservation Tax Credit was a ground-breaking public investment in protecting natural lands that provide clean drinking water, fish and wildlife habitat, fresh local foods, and recreation opportunities for North Carolina families. The income tax credit made it economically feasible for landowners to conserve their family land by donating either their property or a permanent conservation agreement (easement) limiting certain types of uses or preventing development. Landowners who sold their land or a conservation agreement for less than fair market value, known as a “bargain sale,” were also eligible for the tax credit. Over the years, private lands permanently protected through the tax credit have provided a multitude of public benefits.

The North Carolina General Assembly repealed the Conservation Tax Credit in 2013 as part of broader tax reform legislation, eliminating a popular incentive for landowners to conserve their land. Coupled with reduced funding for the state’s conservation trust funds over the last six years, this decision could significantly limit future voluntary conservation on private lands, slowing efforts to protect streams, farms, forests, and scenic vistas throughout North Carolina.

In response to the tax credit’s repeal, North Carolina’s 24 nonprofit land trusts intensified efforts in the final months of 2013, collaborating with interested landowners to conserve as many properties as possible before the tax credit expired on January 1, 2014. As a result, 2013 saw a significant increase in the number of acres that land trusts protected. Local land trusts protected 30,347 acres, an 80% increase over the 2012 total of 16,794 acres. Of the acres conserved in 2013, 80% were protected through donations or bargain sales during the second half of the year, after the legislature passed the tax reform bill¹. These numbers suggest the Conservation Tax Credit was a powerful motivator for private land conservation.

Another indicator of the tax credit’s importance is the success of the Conservation Trust for North Carolina’s (CTNC) grant program, the “Money in the Ground” initiative. To get the most out of the credit before it expired, CTNC created this initiative to help local land trusts complete tax credit-eligible projects with interested landowners. The grant funds paid for required “transaction costs” such as surveys, legal fees, and appraisals, which are often a significant hurdle to overcome in completing a land or easement donation. All told, CTNC granted \$1.06 million to 16 land trusts to conserve 63 properties totaling almost 7,400 acres of natural lands. The grants leveraged more than \$28 million in donated land value and other contributions.

The tax credit worked because it enabled voluntary private land conservation and provided important public benefits, at a bargain to the state. The Conservation Tax Credit helped bring in far more in benefits than was lost in tax revenue. We hope the General Assembly will consider reinstating this tax credit in the future, given the significant benefits it provides to the general public.

“I hope the General Assembly will bring the conservation tax credit back, to incentivize other landowners to save their farms and natural areas in the same way that I was able to.”

~ Richard Adams, Landowner
Cleveland, NC

“The conservation tax credit helped me protect more than 800 acres of farmland along the South Yadkin River in Rowan County,” said Richard Adams of Cleveland, NC. “I wanted to do my part to save farmland in the state, to make sure that in another century we have good farmland left to grow the food we need.”

The following report describes the NC Conservation Tax Credit, land trusts’ work to put the credit to use, and CTNC’s “Money in the Ground” grant initiative that was created in response to the tax credit’s elimination. It illustrates the importance of protecting critical private lands for their environmental, economic, cultural, health, and aesthetic values, and makes the case for future reinstatement of tax incentives for landowners to voluntarily conserve their land.

Introduction

The North Carolina Conservation Tax Credit was an important and successful incentive for private land conservation. It helped protect thousands of acres that provide diverse public benefits to the citizens of our state, including clean water and air, healthy forests, trails and greenways for recreation, and fish and wildlife habitat. When the NC General Assembly eliminated the tax credit in a broad tax reform measure in July 2013, North Carolina lost a powerful tool for voluntary land conservation.

Reaction to the impending end of the tax credit indicates how effective it was in encouraging private landowners to donate their land or an easement for conservation purposes. The majority of the acres land trusts conserved in 2013 were protected after July through tax credit-eligible donations or bargain sales (sales of land or easements at below fair market value). The Conservation Trust for North Carolina supported many of these projects through its “Money in the Ground” initiative, which was instrumental in helping complete about a third of the land trusts’ projects that closed between July and December 2013.

North Carolina Conservation Tax Credit

The NC General Assembly established the NC Conservation Tax Credit in 1983, the first of its kind in the nation, recognizing the importance of encouraging conservation to protect forests, farms, rivers and other natural areas, and public access to rivers, trails and parks. **As of December 31, 2012, roughly 238,000 acres had been protected using the program, with an estimated donated land value of more than \$1.3 billion** (final statewide numbers for 2013 have not yet been released by the NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources)². The program has been credited with generating a 20 percent increase in land conservation donations³, a huge boon to protecting priority lands and the benefits they provide.

The NC Conservation Tax Credit (G.S. 105-151.12; G.S.105-130.34) enabled a landowner who donated land or a permanent conservation easement to claim a state income tax credit equal to 25 percent of the fair market value of the property or easement, up to a maximum credit of \$250,000 for individuals and \$500,000 for corporations and partnerships. The land or easement had to be donated in perpetuity to the State, a local government, or a qualifying non-profit organization such as a land trust.

The conserved lands also had to meet statutory criteria to be eligible for the tax credit. The NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources ensured that the donation or bargain sale qualified for the tax credit by verifying it provided at least one of the following public conservation benefits:

- 1) watershed protection
- 2) fish and wildlife conservation
- 3) farmland or forestland conservation
- 4) conservation of natural areas
- 5) conservation of natural or scenic river areas
- 6) conservation of natural parkland
- 7) historic landscape conservation
- 8) public beach access and use
- 9) public access to public waters or trails

From 2003 to 2010, the program leveraged donations of conservation land with an estimated value of over \$120 million per year, while reducing revenue to the state on average \$20 million per year. This 6:1 ratio represents a significant savings to the state (Figure 1).

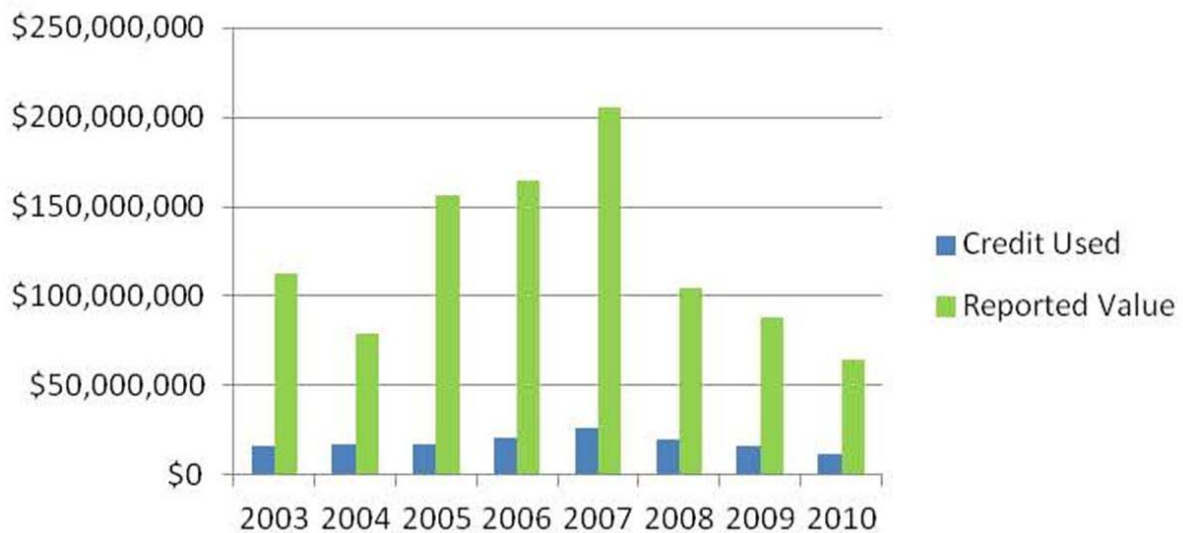


Figure 1. Reported value of Conservation Tax Credit donations vs. credit used⁴

In July 2013, the NC General Assembly passed, and Governor Pat McCrory signed, tax reform legislation that, among other measures, eliminated the NC Conservation Tax Credit effective January 1, 2014. It remains to be seen how this change will affect land conservation in North Carolina over the long-term, but its impact on conservation donations in 2013 was swift and significant, thanks to the state's strong land trust community and the Conservation Trust for North Carolina, which created an innovative grant program to help complete conservation donations before the credit's expiration.

North Carolina's Local Land Trusts

Land trusts are private nonprofit conservation organizations that work with interested landowners to voluntarily protect streams, forests, farms, scenic vistas, and unique natural and cultural places. Land conservation protects air and water quality, preserves farms and wildlife habitat, and improves quality of life for all North Carolina families. Land conservation benefits the state's largest economic sectors as well – agriculture, tourism, and the military.

Land trusts' protection efforts can be accomplished through donations of land or conservation easements – permanent, legal agreements with landowners who retain ownership and use of the land while pledging not to develop it. Conservation easements stay with the land, passing on to subsequent landowners. Further, private lands under conservation easement remain on local tax rolls. All agreements are voluntary, and have to meet the preferences of both the landowner and the land trust.

North Carolina's 24 land trusts (Appendix A) are members of the Land Trust Alliance, a national association of conservation groups. As members, NC's land trusts have adopted the Alliance's standards and practices to ensure long-term protection of the state's treasured lands. Thirteen of NC's land trusts have earned accreditation from the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance that recognizes organizations for meeting national standards for excellence, upholding the public trust and ensuring that conservation efforts are permanent. With over 50% of our land trusts having earned accreditation, NC is among the leaders in the nation, and more of the state's land trusts are seeking accreditation every year. North Carolina's land trusts are effective community institutions essential to saving the places that provide clean drinking water, healthy food, recreation, and tourism.

Land trusts had protected 400,473 acres in North Carolina as of December 31, 2013. In 2013 alone, they protected 30,347 acres, an increase of 80% over the 2012 annual total of 16,794. **Of the 30,347 acres protected last year, 80% – 24,267 acres – were preserved through tax credit-eligible donations or bargain sales during the second half of the year.** It is a testament to the hard work and strong relationships that land trusts have built with landowners and partners that they completed so many projects in such a short period.

The Conservation Trust for North Carolina's "Money in the Ground" Initiative

In many cases, when land trusts and landowners are working together on donations of land or conservation easements, neither the land trust nor the landowner has funds available to pay for transaction costs such as surveys, appraisals, and title work. To help local land trusts complete as many donated easements and bargain sales as possible before the tax credit expired, CTNC's Board of Directors unanimously agreed in August 2013 to make some of its own funds available to support year-end land and easement donations. CTNC released up to \$1 million from its revolving loan fund, with the original donor's approval, to make grants to support land and easement donations in the mountains and outer coastal plain. CTNC's Board voted to allocate \$200,000 from the organization's reserves for similar projects in the Piedmont. Subsequently, a generous private donor pledged an additional \$300,000 to support projects in the Piedmont.

Thus began the “Money in the Ground” initiative. CTNC made up to \$25,000 available per project to land trusts for donated easements or bargain sales that would use the Conservation Tax Credit before January 2014. Eligible expenses included appraisals, surveys, baseline reports, legal fees, closing costs, project administration, and long-term stewardship and legal defense funds. The local land trusts jumped into action, contacting landowners that had expressed interest in the past about conserving their property, and encouraging them to do so before the tax credit expired. Because of the short four-month window to complete the transactions, applications were accepted and reviewed on a rolling basis. Conservation deals were closing up until the December 31 deadline.

As of January 1, 2014, **63 projects had been completed by 16 land trusts, using \$1.06 million from the “Money in the Ground” initiative, protecting almost 7,400 acres, and leveraging more than \$28 million** (Table 1). These are impressive numbers for a four-month effort, and while the conservation results of the initiative are unquestionably positive, the impetus for it – the repeal of the Conservation Tax Credit – is unfortunate.

Table 1. “Money in the Ground” Initiative: Accomplishments

	Mountain	Piedmont	Coast	Total
Amount available^(a)	\$1,000,000	\$500,000	(see Mountain)	\$1,500,000
Amount awarded^(b)	\$565,886	\$445,200	\$50,000	\$1,061,086
Amount leveraged^(c)	\$12,863,908	\$11,918,415	\$3,871,600	\$28,653,923
# Projects	31	30	2	63
# Acres Protected	3,063	2,379	1,953	7,395
# Land Trusts^(d)	9	8	1	16
# Counties^(e)	14	20	2	34
# Easements / Fee Simple Acquisitions^(f)	27 / 4	22 / 8	2 / 0	51 / 12

(a) Total amount CTNC could award

(b) Sum of all the grants awarded, which ranged from as little as \$5,370 on one project to \$25,000 on other projects

(c) Includes the donated value of the land or easement, as well as matching funds from the land trust and other donors or partners on the project

(d) Reflects number of land trusts awarded funds; total is not cumulative because three land trusts received grants out of both the Mountain/Coast and Piedmont funds

(e) Total number of counties in which projects were completed is not cumulative because there were two projects completed in McDowell County and two in Surry County; in each county one project was awarded a grant out of the Mountains-Coast fund and one project was awarded a grant out of the Piedmont fund

(f) Shows how many projects involved permanent conservation easements, in which the landowner retained title to the land but gave up specific development rights, and how many were fee simple acquisitions, in which the landowner donated the underlying property, and the land trust will own and manage it over the long-term for its conservation values

The Case for Restoring the Conservation Tax Credit

Providing meaningful incentives to landowners to permanently protect their land ensures long-term benefits to North Carolina's citizens in the form of clean water, clean air, fresh food, forest products, scenic views, recreational opportunities, cultural and historic preservation, and economic opportunity. It is likely that some landowners will donate land or easements even without a state tax credit, but for many others a donation may no longer be financially feasible. This could leave countless acres open to subdivision, development, and other land use changes that would undermine the environmental and economic well-being of our state.

North Carolina is among the top ten fastest growing states in the country. One reason is the state's incredible natural assets that draw people and businesses here. It is imperative that we support landowners who want to voluntarily protect their land as the population grows, particularly with reduced state funding for land conservation. Without the tax incentive, we risk losing the very things that make North Carolina a great place to live.

While it is unlikely that the 2014 General Assembly will overturn any elements of the tax reform legislation enacted in 2013, this report demonstrates the value of the NC Conservation Tax Credit to landowners, and the public benefits that accrue to all North Carolinians from these conservation donations. The tax credit provided landowners with an opportunity to save the family land they love, and the lands they conserve help protect water quality, local sources of fresh food, wildlife habitat, and trails and greenways.

“The state income tax credit for conservation enabled me to protect my land, which has been in my family for generations.”

~ Thomas McCoy, Landowner
Charlotte, NC

“The tax credit didn't just benefit landowners, it benefitted the state,” said Thomas McCoy, who donated a 29-acre easement to Catawba Lands Conservancy last year. “The benefit to the state is acquisition of preserved land at a fraction of the cost, and having the stewardship costs not be borne by the taxpayer.” Truly, the tax credit provided the state with incredible savings – the credits were roughly six times less expensive than if the state had purchased the properties.

“It's unfortunate that the tax credit is gone now because it will make it a lot harder for other landowners to do what they want to protect the land they love,” said McCoy. “I hope the General Assembly restores this incentive in the future. It's good for landowners, and it's good for the state.”

We urge the legislature in a future session to consider reinstating this powerful and popular tax incentive that has produced so many health and quality of life benefits for all of our state's people.

Appendix A

Project Highlights

Mountains

Bill Mayes at one time considered building condominiums on the 166 acres his family owned along the French Broad River near Brevard. Retirement was approaching, and the property, home to rustic cabins rented to vacationing families, likely would draw a healthy sum. Along the way though, Mayes had a change of heart. The land, called Deerwoode, has mature stands of timber, cove forests, and streamside habitat; it is home to American bald eagles and has a pond that serves as a stopover for migrating waterfowl. Mayes decided the land was too valuable as it was – to him, to his family, to the families that rented his cabins – to see it changed, so he sought instead to protect it permanently from development. Working with his local land trust, the Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy, Mayes was able to place a permanent conservation easement over his property. The deal was enabled by the Conservation Tax Credit, the transaction costs grant from the Conservation Trust for North Carolina, and Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy’s hard work.



Photo credit: Deerwoode Lodge

Bob Moog is internationally known for inventing the synthesizer, but he is less well known for his passion for the outdoors and his love for birding, hiking, and camping – until now. In his will, Moog directed that the conservation values of his property in western North Carolina, Big Briar Cove, be protected for the future. Following his wishes, Moog’s widow Ileana Grams-Moog worked with the Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy to place a permanent conservation easement on their 105-acre property. Big Briar Cove is near the Sandy Mush farming community and the Newfound Mountains. The property contributes to the scenic and natural integrity of the area’s rural landscape. The rolling back roads and bucolic setting are a draw for bicycle enthusiasts, and the farming community draws tourists interested in wine tastings, berry-picking, Christmas trees and more. Ten tributaries of South Turkey Creek, including three headwater streams, flow through the property, making its protection significant for water quality in the creek and the French Broad River downstream.



Photo credit: Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy

Piedmont

Robert and Dorothy Kellogg own a 145-acre farm in Franklin County that is leased to a local farmer for cattle grazing and managed for loblolly pine production. Over the years, the Kelloggs have worked closely with the Franklin County Soil and Water Conservation District and NC Forest Service to practice best pastureland and timber management to protect water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, and recreational opportunities. Last fall, the Kelloggs decided to donate a working lands conservation easement over the whole farm to Tar River Land Conservancy. The tax benefits were not the primary motivator for the Kelloggs, but the December 2013 deadline became their goal once they learned the tax credit would expire after that. The farm will remain active, but will be permanently protected from future development – in turn protecting natural resources and the family’s multi-generational effort to conserve the land.



Photo credit: Tar River Land Conservancy

Catawba Lands Conservancy took advantage of the Conservation Tax Credit to partner with a residential developer in Union County to acquire 154 acres of a larger 350-acre tract, creating the Waxhaw Creek Preserve. This project is an example of the kind of conservation development that will be increasingly important to protect critical natural areas while the state’s population grows. The most environmentally-sensitive areas of the tract will be protected to preserve wildlife habitat, ensure water quality, and provide an opportunity for the public to connect with nature. The property, home to rare and endangered species, is recognized as a state Significant



Photo credit: Catawba Lands Conservancy

Natural Heritage Area⁵. Several tributaries of Waxhaw Creek flow through it, and a 1.5 mile segment of the Carolina Thread Trail is slated to cross the northern edge of the protected property. The Thread Trail is a system of trails and greenways that will ultimately connect 15 counties in North and South Carolina, strengthening ties in the region, promoting economic development, improving public health, and connecting diverse and underserved communities to nature.

Coast

The Currituck Marshes in Currituck Sound are one of the most significant marsh complexes and wildlife habitats along the southern Atlantic coast. The Currituck Shooting Club donated a conservation easement on 1,535 acres of this important land to the North Carolina Coastal Land Trust. The Currituck Club has a long history of protecting and managing this fragile marsh



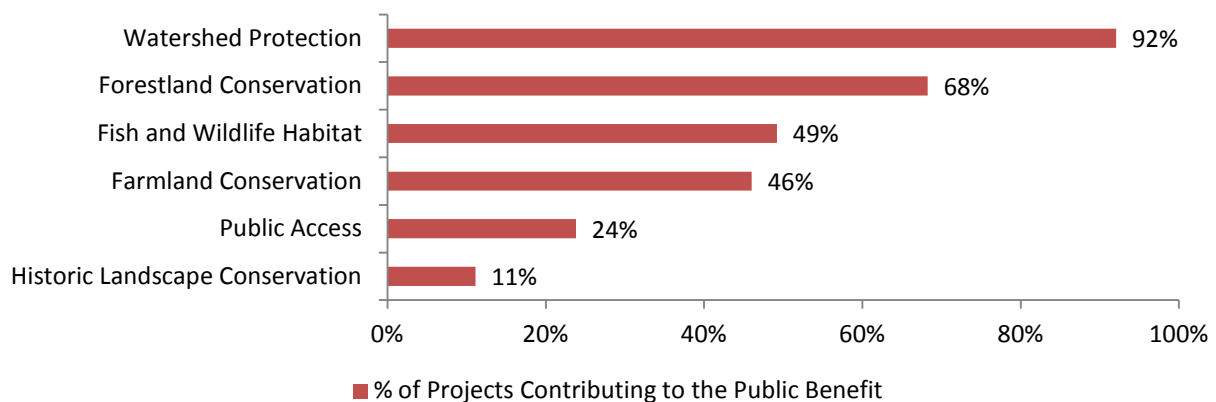
Photo credit: Walker Golder, Deputy State Director, Audubon North Carolina

habitat to benefit wildlife. These protections will continue under the permanent conservation easement, while still allowing fishing and limited hunting. The benefits of the property include prime waterfowl habitat, fisheries habitat, water quality value, and connectivity and protection for the adjacent Audubon Sanctuary at Pine Island. The tract also holds significant cultural value as a vestige of the historic hunt clubs that once dominated the region.

Project Benefits

Conservation values of the “Money in the Ground” projects, listed in Appendix E, are summarized in Figure 2. Note that most projects provide more than one public benefit.

Figure 2. Public benefits of the Money in the Ground Projects



Appendix B

North Carolina Land Trusts

Black Family Land Trust
Blue Ridge Conservancy
Catawba Lands Conservancy
Carolina Mountain Lands Conservancy
Conservation Trust for North Carolina
Davidson Lands Conservancy
Eno River Association
Foothills Conservancy of North Carolina
Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust
Land Trust for the Little Tennessee
LandTrust for Central North Carolina
Lumber River Conservancy
National Committee for the New River
North Carolina Coastal Land Trust
North Carolina Rail-Trails
Northeast New Hanover Conservancy
Pacolet Area Conservancy
Piedmont Land Conservancy
Sandhills Area Land Trust
Smith Island Land Trust
Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy
Tar River Land Conservancy
Triangle Greenways Council
Triangle Land Conservancy

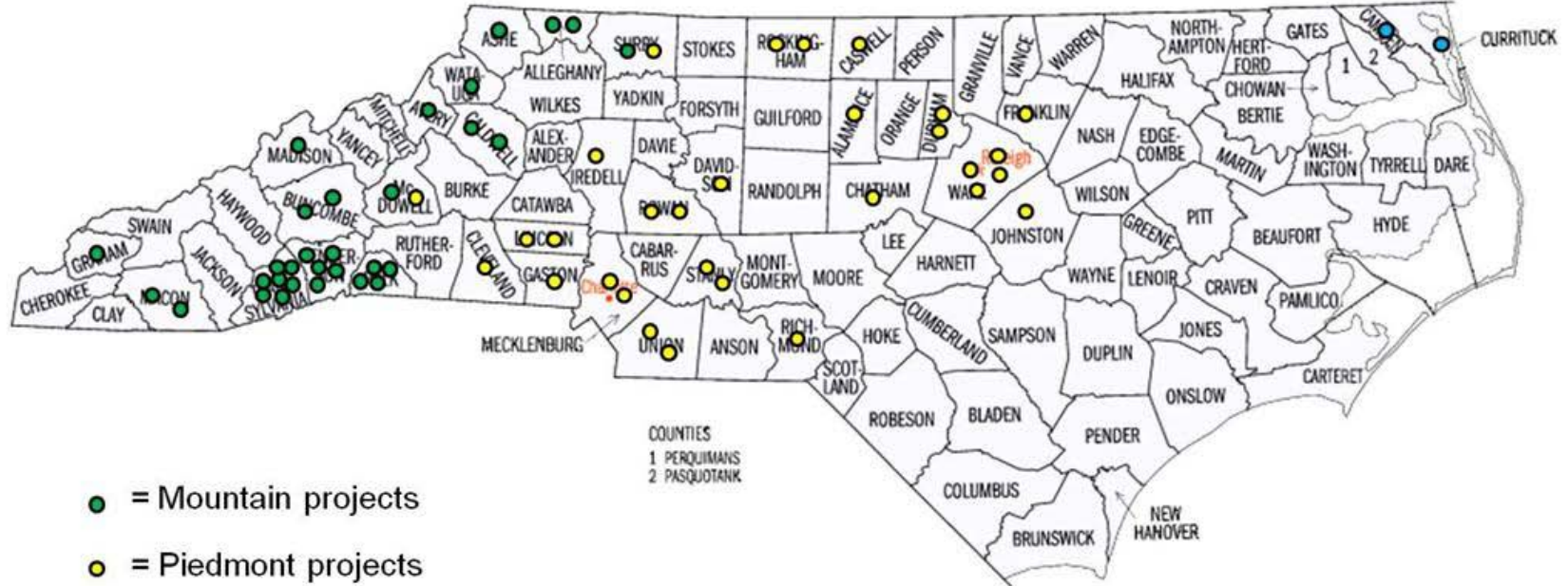
Web Address

www.bflt.org
www.blueridgeconservancy.org
www.carolinamountain.org
www.catawbalands.org
www.ctnc.org
www.davidsonlands.org
www.enoriver.org
www.foothillsconservancy.org
www.hicashlt.org
www.ltlr.org
www.landtrustcnc.org
www.lumberriverconservancy.org
www.ncnr.org
www.coastallandtrust.org
www.ncrailtrails.org
n/a
www.pacolet.org
www.piedmontland.org
www.sandhillslandtrust.org
www.bhic.org
www.appalachian.org
www.tarriver.org
www.trianglegreenways.org
www.triangleland.org

Appendix C

Project Locations

This map depicts the “Money in the Ground” project counties. The locations of the dots do not correspond with the exact locations of the projects, only the counties in which the projects are located.



Appendix D

Farmland Protection

A breakout of farmland projects funded through the “Money in the Ground” initiative is provided in the table below. Farmland preservation is a priority for many land trusts, given the state’s high quality farmland and the importance of protecting the \$77 billion per year agricultural economy. Farmland projects made up a little less than half of all the projects completed (46%) and acres protected (41%) through the initiative. All 28 of the farmland projects were protected with permanent “working agriculture lands” conservation easements, allowing agricultural activities in the future. It is important to note that the 3,036 acres reported for farmland protection is the total number of acres under easement, not necessarily the total number of acres available for farming. On many properties, landowners retained agricultural rights on areas in pasture or cropland, but relinquished such rights in areas near streams or in woodlands. Almost two-thirds of the farmland projects (17 of 29) are currently being farmed.

	Count	Percent (Count) of Total Awards
# Farmland Projects	29	46% (63)
Farmland Projects in Piedmont	18	60% (30)
Farmland Projects in Mountain	10	32% (31)
Farmland Projects in Coast	1	50% (2)
Amount Awarded	\$477,284	45% (\$1,061,086)
Amount Leveraged	\$11,666,471	41% (\$28,653,923)
# Acres Protected	3,036*	41% (7,395)
# Actively Farmed	17	59% (29)

* Reflects total number of acres protected by the easement, not the number of acres under easement available for farming.

Appendix E

“Money in the Ground” Grants Awarded by County

County	Land Trust	Acres	\$\$ Leveraged	Money in the Ground Grant	Conservation Values
Alamance	Piedmont Land Conservancy	61	\$250,710	\$10,000	Farmland; watershed protection
Alleghany	Blue Ridge Conservancy	34	\$252,500	\$20,000	Forests; watershed protection
Alleghany	Blue Ridge Conservancy	46	\$295,465	\$24,100	Farmland; forests; watershed protection
Ashe	National Committee for the New River	61	\$125,814	\$21,486	Forests; watershed protection
Avery	Blue Ridge Conservancy	287	\$1,645,858	\$24,000	Farmland; fish and wildlife habitat; forests; watershed protection
Buncombe	Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy	105	\$386,900	\$24,900	Forests; historic landscape; watershed protection
Buncombe	Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy	121	\$269,800	\$24,500	Farmland; forests; wildlife habitat
Caldwell	Foothills Conservancy of North Carolina	248	\$305,000	\$21,000	Fish and wildlife habitat; watershed protection
Caldwell	Foothills Conservancy of North Carolina	51	\$295,000	\$21,000	Fish and wildlife habitat; forests; watershed protection
Camden	North Carolina Coastal Land Trust	418	\$1,536,600	\$25,000	Farmland; watershed protection
Caswell	Piedmont Land Conservancy	34	\$98,036	\$10,000	Watershed protection
Chatham	Triangle Land Conservancy	152	\$613,700	\$20,000	Farmland; fish and wildlife habitat; forests; watershed protection
Cleveland	Catawba Lands Conservancy	57	\$155,050	\$10,000	Farmland
Currituck	North Carolina Coastal Land Trust	1535	\$2,310,000	\$25,000	Historic landscape; public access; wildlife habitat
Davidson	LandTrust for Central North Carolina	63	\$368,628	\$23,372	Farmland; watershed protection; wildlife habitat
Durham	Triangle Greenways Council	19	\$216,910	\$6,150	Forests; public access; watershed protection

County	Land Trust	Acres	\$\$ Leveraged	Money in the Ground Grant	Conservation Values
Durham	Triangle Land Conservancy	27	\$141,265	\$20,000	Farmland; forests; watershed protection
Franklin	Tar River Land Conservancy	147	\$293,000	\$25,000	Farmland; forests; watershed protection; wildlife habitat
Gaston	Catawba Lands Conservancy	49	\$96,015	\$25,000	Farmland; forests; watershed protection; wildlife habitat
Graham	Land Trust for the Little Tennessee	300	\$690,998	\$25,000	Fish habitat; forests; watershed protection
Henderson	Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy	25	\$100,000	\$25,000	Fish and wildlife habitat; historic landscape; watershed protection
Henderson	Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy	22	\$123,350	\$4,500	Farmland; forests; watershed protection; wildlife habitat
Henderson	Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy	50	\$274,500	\$7,500	Forests; public access; watershed protection
Henderson	Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy	103	\$1,027,000	\$20,000	Fish and wildlife habitat; forests; historic landscape; public access; watershed protection
Henderson	Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy	45	\$158,380	\$25,000	Fish and wildlife habitat; forests; watershed protection
Iredell	Davidson Lands Conservancy	27	\$840,000	\$25,000	Forests; watershed protection
Johnston	Triangle Land Conservancy	97	\$1,341,977	\$6,100	Farmland; forests; watershed protection; wildlife habitat
Lincoln	Catawba Lands Conservancy	136	\$559,500	\$25,000	Forests; public access; watershed protection; wildlife habitat
Lincoln	Catawba Lands Conservancy	33	\$98,250	\$10,000	Farmland; forests
Macon	Land Trust for the Little Tennessee	87	\$256,278	\$14,000	Farmland; forests; fish and wildlife habitat; watershed protection
Macon	Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust	2	\$51,000	\$2,200	Watershed protection
Madison	Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy	44	\$125,000	\$23,000	Farmland; wildlife habitat; watershed protection
McDowell	Foothills Conservancy of North Carolina	73	\$369,840	\$10,960	Forests; fish and wildlife habitat; watershed protection

County	Land Trust	Acres	\$\$ Leveraged	Money in the Ground Grant	Conservation Values
McDowell	Foothills Conservancy of North Carolina	285	\$464,250	\$20,000	Farmland; forests; watershed protection
Mecklenburg	Catawba Lands Conservancy	15	\$355,958	\$21,542	Forests; public access; watershed protection
Mecklenburg	Catawba Lands Conservancy	7	\$123,348	\$21,652	Farmland; forests; historic landscape; wildlife habitat; watershed protection
Polk	Pacolet Area Conservancy	18	\$162,400	\$19,930	Forests; wildlife habitat; watershed protection
Polk	Pacolet Area Conservancy	9	\$84,590	\$15,000	Forests; historic landscape; wildlife habitat
Polk	Pacolet Area Conservancy	137	\$191,610	\$22,000	Forests; watershed protection; wildlife habitat
Polk	Pacolet Area Conservancy	33	\$116,430	\$13,500	Forests; watershed protection; wildlife habitat
Richmond	LandTrust for Central North Carolina	114	\$239,417	\$19,583	Watershed protection; wildlife habitat
Rockingham	Piedmont Land Conservancy	142	\$318,851	\$10,000	Farmland; forests; watershed protection
Rockingham	Piedmont Land Conservancy	78	\$106,000	\$10,000	Farmland; watershed protection
Rowan	LandTrust for Central North Carolina	128	\$554,500	\$20,000	Farmland; watershed protection
Rowan	LandTrust for Central North Carolina	141	\$415,592	\$11,000	Farmland; watershed protection; wildlife habitat
Stanly	LandTrust for Central North Carolina	24	\$57,268	\$12,757	Forests; watershed protection; wildlife habitat
Stanly	LandTrust for Central North Carolina	229	\$520,600	\$5,400	Farmland; watershed protection; wildlife habitat
Surry	Piedmont Land Conservancy	152	\$1,103,450	\$22,000	Fish and wildlife habitat; forests; historic landscape; watershed protection
Surry	Piedmont Land Conservancy	47	\$143,079	\$9,000	Farmland; watershed protection

County	Land Trust	Acres	\$\$ Leveraged	Money in the Ground Grant	Conservation Values
Transylvania	Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy	45	\$291,272	\$15,000	Farmland; public access; watershed protection
Transylvania	Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy	54	\$302,500	\$21,000	Farmland; forests; watershed protection
Transylvania	Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy	24	\$128,940	\$13,790	Forests; public access; watershed protection
Transylvania	Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy	6	\$106,500	\$5,000	Watershed protection
Transylvania	Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy	25	\$190,940	\$1,795	Farmland; public access; watershed protection
Transylvania	Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy	99	\$392,033	\$24,500	Farmland; watershed protection
Transylvania	Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy	175	\$899,795	\$24,500	Forests; public access; watershed protection; wildlife habitat
Union	Catawba Lands Conservancy	152	\$1,103,450	\$22,000	Forests; public access; watershed protection; wildlife habitat
Union	Catawba Lands Conservancy	60	\$808,100	\$22,000	Forests; watershed protection
Wake	Triangle Greenways Council	34	\$205,067	\$7,233	Forests; public access; watershed protection
Wake	Triangle Greenways Council	1	\$74,593	\$9,837	Forests; public access; watershed protection
Wake	Triangle Greenways Council	6	\$379,800	\$2,720	Forests; public access; watershed protection
Wake	Triangle Greenways Council	14	\$1,000,500	\$4,870	Forests; public access; watershed protection
Watauga	Blue Ridge Conservancy	46	\$232,560	\$19,380	Farmland; forests; watershed protection

Endnotes

- ¹ Figures regarding the number of acres protected during the second half of 2013 do not take into account land protection efforts by other conservation organizations or the state that utilized the Conservation Tax Credit.
- ² North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources, 2013. “Conservation Easement Program Annual Report to the Environmental Review Commission.” Raleigh, NC: NC DENR. http://portal.ncdenr.org/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=bd0f1379-d0f1-4638-8307-b241262e9706&groupId=5118328
- ³ Conservation Resource Center, 2007. “State Conservation Tax Credits: Impact and Analysis.” Boulder, CO: The Conservation Resource Center. <http://www.taxcreditexchange.com/documents/StateConservationTaxCreditsImpactandAnalyses.pdf>
- ⁴ NCDENR, 2013. “Conservation Easement Program Annual Report to the Environmental Review Commission,” pg. 7. Raleigh, NC: NC DENR.
- ⁵ Significant Natural Heritage Areas are identified and inventoried by North Carolina’s Natural Heritage Program. They are terrestrial or aquatic sites of special significance due to the presence of rare species, exemplary or unique natural communities, or other important ecological features. More at <http://www.ncnhp.org/web/nhp/significant-natural-heritage-areas>



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