

HELPING BIRDS BY: JOINING A LAND TRUST AND PROTECTING HABITAT

Habitat, habitat, habitat. Much as people consider “Location, location, location” when they look for the best places to live, birds and other animals seek out the best habitat they can find to mate, raise young and just survive. Unfortunately as people convert more and more lands from good wildlife habitat into good people habitat the animals have a harder time raising their families.

The NC Public Interest Research Group published a report in 2003 called “Losing Our Natural Heritage: North Carolina’s Disappearing Open Spaces” that looked at trends in land-use in North Carolina. Here are some highlights:

Between 1982 and 2002 North Carolina has lost 2.8 million acres of cropland and forest land. During that same 20 year period North Carolina lost cropland and forest land at the rate of 383 acres every day while developed land grew by 2 million acres.

From 1982 – 2002 developed land has increased 77% in the mountains, from 475,000 acres to 840,000 acres. During the same time, forest land acreage decreased by 280,000 acres (8%) and 167,000 acres of croplands (43%) were lost.

If current trends continue, NC’s open spaces will disappear as vast tracts of land are developed into urban areas. Between 2002 and 2022:

- 9% of forest land, or 1.4 million acres will be lost.
- 32% of cropland will disappear, totaling 1.7 million acres.
- Developed land area will increase 55%, or 2.4 million acres, statewide.

North Carolina is fortunate to have an active Land Trust community with at least 40 conservation organizations working in the state, including several that work in northwest North Carolina. Using private donations and state funds (such as Clean Water Management Trust Fund, Parks and Recreation Trust Fund and Natural Heritage Trust Fund) these groups work with landowners to prohibit or reduce development on their lands. This preserves forests and open lands FOREVER, helping to make it available for wildlife to use.

If you want to take action that will preserve wildlife habitat it’s a great idea to become a member or donate to one of our local land trusts listed on the next page. Or if you have some spare time you can volunteer. Land trusts are almost always non-profits and are dependent on financial help and volunteers to do their important work.

“Losing our Natural Heritage: North Carolina’s Disappearing Open Spaces” is available at http://cdn.publicinterestnetwork.org/assets/r4ncil0ZGc4rXhq_XM9_TQ/Losing_Our_Natural_Heritage.pdf

For more information about land trusts you can go to www.lta.org

More good information about land-use trends is available at EnvironmentNorthCarolina.org in the Preservation section - <http://www.environmentnorthcarolina.org/reports/preservation>

HIGH COUNTRY CONSERVANCY

Mission - To protect the natural resources of Appalachia by conserving land with significant ecological, cultural, recreational, and scenic value in the North Carolina High Country.

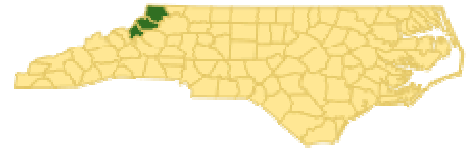
Geographic Area - Watauga, Ashe and Avery counties.

Contact Web: <http://www.highcountryconservancy.org/>

Email: info@highcountryconservancy.org

Address: 290 Queen St., Boone, NC 28607

TEL: 828-264-2511



NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE NEW RIVER

Mission – Land protection, restoration and advocacy for the New River.

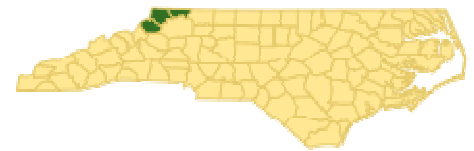
Geographic Area - The New River Watershed in North Carolina, Virginia and West Virginia, including Ashe, Alleghany and Watauga Counties in North Carolina.

Contact Info: Web: <http://www.ncnr.org/>

Email: info@ncnr.org

Address: PO Box 1480, West Jefferson, NC 28694

Toll Free: 866-481-6267



BLUE RIDGE RURAL LAND TRUST

Mission - Preserving rural communities and culture in northwestern North Carolina through the protection of the land resources upon which they depend.

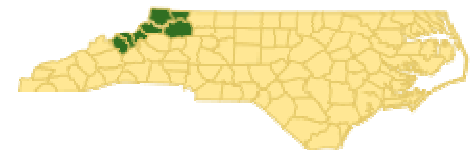
Geographic area - Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Mitchell, Watauga, Wilkes and Yancey counties.

Contact: Web: <http://www.brrlt.org/>

Email: info@brrlt.org

Address: One Jefferson Ave., Suite E; P.O. Box 699, West Jefferson, NC 28694

TEL: 336-846-2758



SOUTHERN APPALACHIAN HIGHLANDS CONSERVANCY

Mission - To conserve the unique plant and animal habitat, clean water, and scenic beauty of the mountains of western North Carolina and east Tennessee for the benefit of present and future generations. We achieve this by forging and maintaining long-term conservation relationships with private landowners, owning and managing land and encouraging strong, healthy local communities.

Geographic Area - Western North Carolina, focusing on Avery, Buncombe, Haywood, Jackson, Madison, Mitchell, and Yancey counties; and East Tennessee, focusing on Carter, Johnson and Unicoi counties

Contact: Web: <http://www.appalachian.org/>

Email: SAHC@appalachian.org

Address: 34 Wall Street, Suite 502, Asheville, NC 28801-2710

TEL: 828-253-0095

