



Conservation Connections  
Spring 2017



# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S NOTE

When I started working at TLC in 2013, one of my first questions was, “why haven’t you opened Brumley Nature Preserve yet?” Ignorance is bliss! Staff quickly schooled me in the careful documentation, planning, fundraising, and hard work involved in opening land to the public and owning it in perpetuity, and with a focus on safeguarding clean water, protecting wildlife habitat, and connecting people to nature.

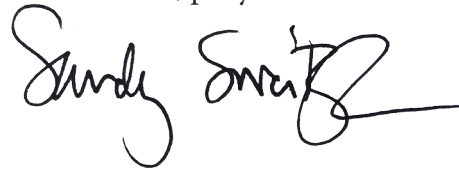
Having seen only part of the process, I am even more grateful for the hard work that TLC staff, volunteers, board members, and contractors have done for years to get us to Opening Day.

When you visit on Earth Day, April 22, you’ll see trails that won’t erode and that take you through lovely, diverse, and

interesting habitats. You’ll see beautiful and durable signs and helpful kiosks. What you won’t see is the 100-page Comprehensive Management Plan that guided our work or the blood, sweat and tears (literally!) that so many people put into implementing that plan.

There are hundreds of people you can thank for the Preserve – individual, governmental, foundation, and corporate donors, volunteers, and TLC staff who helped with the purchase, planning, and installation of trails, parking lots, signs, and removal of trash and dangerously unstable structures, like the silos pictured on the right.

If you were one of them, pat yourself on the back and come celebrate!



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**Our Vision** - We see the Triangle region as an increasingly healthy and vibrant place to live where wild and working lands are protected and everyone has access to open space, clean water, and local food.

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Hardwood forest at the George and Julia Brumley Family Nature Preserve. February 2017

# BRUMLEY NATURE PRESERVE OPENS ON EARTH DAY 2017

On April 22, 2017 Triangle Land Conservancy will open its seventh public nature preserve, The George and Julia Brumley Family Nature Preserve. The property is one of the largest undeveloped tracts of land in Orange County at 613 acres and will offer 15 miles of hiking and bicycle trails near Stony Creek, ponds, meadows, and forest stands. The preserve

is named in honor of its previous owners, visionary conservationists with deep ties to the Triangle community.

George and Julia Brumley were passionate about land conservation. George served on the board of many conservation organizations, including Triangle Land Conservancy, and when the land

was threatened with development, the Brumley Family saved it. Triangle Land Conservancy is honored to carry on this legacy with the help of our generous supporters. This process has been many years in the making. Christine Wilson, Director of Development at TLC explains, “From the earliest days when Julia and George Brumley worked to purchase this land and



on through today; vision, patience, and persistence have been hallmark qualities displayed by all parties and have resulted in this property being protected forever. And now, another important milestone is being realized—this gorgeous piece of land will be open for the public to treasure.”

In 1998, much of the property – which is within a 30-minute drive for many people living in the fast growing cities of Chapel Hill, Durham, and Raleigh – was owned by a developer planning a large mixed-use development. George and Julia Brumley purchased the property in order to protect it. After a tragic accident that took them, their children, and 8 other family members in 2003, the property was transferred to the Zeist Foundation.

Brumley Forest was purchased by TLC in 2010 from the Zeist Foundation at a bargain sale price of \$4.4 million dollars, about half of its full value. The other half of the property’s value was donated by the Foundation. The transaction would not have been possible without this significant donation.

The Brumley Nature Preserve is adjacent to the 500-acre Eno Division of the Duke Forest, a teaching a research forest for Duke University and home to the Stony Creek Spring Natural Heritage Area. Brumley Nature Preserve is also located less than 1.5 miles from the Eno River State park and 2.5 miles from conservation lands along New Hope Creek Corridor.

The Preserve is a compilation of mature and healthy hardwood forests, young pine forests, and alluvial forests surrounding streams, wetlands, four ponds, several small fields, areas of shrub and brush, and the ruins of several homes.

The property contains about 5 miles of streams and is part of the Neuse River Basin. Approximately 261 acres of the property lie within 300 feet of a stream. Stony Creek and several unnamed tributaries flow through the land and drain into Eno River and eventually Falls Lake. Overall, the property contains four ponds and 20 acres of wetlands and a sizable beaver impoundment.

The forests on the property range from bottomland hardwood to upland



Stewart Bryan building trail at Brumley Nature Preserve. Feb. 2017.



Conservation Corps member, Jean Hodder, planting oak trees at Brumley Nature Preserve. Nov. 2016.



dry mesic hardwood stands. Some former pasture was planted in Loblolly Pine over the last 30 years. Most of these loblolly stands are in the northern section. The long-term goal is to move away from a loblolly pine monoculture that has little benefit for wildlife, and rather promote a more mixed hardwood forest, which may still have a pine component. TLC has begun to restore a mixed oak-hickory forest on these upland stands that includes shortleaf pine, a native species in serious decline. It is important to note that restoration is a long-term and ongoing process.

The purpose of the thinning was to open up the stand to more light in order to benefit additional species, in addition to removing pine trees that would have started to die naturally in the near future. The increased light has made it possible for more species to germinate and grow in the understory. To make use of this additional light and jumpstart the restoration process, TLC volunteers recently planted several thousand acorns and hickory nuts in the thinned pine stands. The property contains several small fields totaling about 15 acres.

Julia Brumley's mother, Nancy Preston of Chapel Hill, recently related "We are quite thrilled to see George and Julia's wishes for the land coming to fruition and knowing that it will afford many people - young and old - the great pleasure of the outdoors for the foreseeable future. A wonderful legacy and we are so grateful that it will open for enjoyment very soon."

Triangle Land Conservancy extends gratitude to the many organizations and individuals who made significant contributions towards the 2010 purchase of the property including the Zeist Foundation, NC's Clean Water Management Trust Fund, the Warner Foundation, City of Raleigh's Clean Water Protection Program, Orange County, Nancy and Edwin Preston, and private donors to the Pearson Stewart Land Opportunity Fund established through TLC's *Our Water, Our Land* campaign.

We are also very thankful for generosity displayed by community partners and all TLC members whose contributions have made possible the work to steward the property since purchase and prepare it for public opening including Bertsch Family Foundation, Blue Heron Asset Management, Blue Cross Blue Shield NC, Preston Gardner Brown, Burt's Bees Greater Good Foundation, CE Group, members of TLC's Conservation Corps, Duke Energy Water Resources Fund, F. M. Kirby Foundation, Pam and Brad Hemminger, J. Davis Architects, Johnson Subaru of Cary, Martin Marietta, McAdams Company, Murphy's Naturals, Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI), NC State Parks Recreational Trails Program, Shelli and Brad Stanback, Triangle Off-Road Cyclists (TORC), Wells Fargo Foundation, Wind Point Foundation, and hundreds of TLC members.

TLC is thrilled to open this beautiful preserve to the public and looking forward to seeing many of you at our Earth Day opening celebration beginning at 9am on April 22, 2017. 🌱







North side of Brumley Nature Preserve  
February, 2017.





# Conservation Project Updates

TLC recently closed four new conservation projects: The Earthseed Project (Durham County) pictured above, The Farm at Lake Benson (Wake County), Mike Lindley Farm Project (Chatham County), and the Reimer Preserve Expansion (Orange County).

## Earthseed Project:

TLC partnered with the Earthseed Land Cooperative to conserve 33 acres of land north of Durham in the headwater region of the Eno River Watershed. The property has two forested headwater streams that flow to the Eno. The conservation easement establishes a permanent 100-ft buffer on these tributaries as well as protects a mature hardwood forest and additional mixed forest and meadow areas.

The property is owned by the Earthseed Land Cooperative who aim to permanently protect the water quality, forest, and agricultural properties of the site. The collective describes itself as a group of black and brown Visionaries who walk out their belief in abundance by collaborating to acquire land for shared affordable housing, sustainable food production, environmental stewardship and community ritual and education space. The group is engaged in creating alternative models for sustainability, equity, and cooperation within communities of color.

“This land means we have a home that we will never have to leave. We have a place to grow our businesses, and our children and grand-children. This land means that our community has access to land in order to grieve and heal. It also means we can offer small-business incubation and a model for alternative economies,” explained Kifu Faruq, a founding member of the cooperative.



## **The Farm at Lake Benson:**

The iconic 40-acre farm sits on the shore of Lake Benson adjacent to the historic Rand-Bryan house. Until recently the farm was a popular destination during the holidays as one of the only places to buy a locally grown Christmas tree in the Piedmont. Although the Christmas tree operation has ceased, giant Leland cypress trees still dot the property. TLC now owns and manages the land. As part of the transaction process TLC granted an easement to Wake County Open Space. The property is one of the largest remaining tracts in the Swift Creek Watershed and was identified as a priority in the Watershed Protection Plan updated in 2014. The permanent protection of the Liles property will buffer the Swift Creek Watershed from further degradation and will help enhance water quality. TLC will work with non-profit and local government partners to provide environmental education opportunities on the site. The adjacent land owned by the City of Raleigh around Lake Benson also opens up future possibilities for education, outreach, and trail connectivity. The Wake County Board of Commissions appropriated \$410,000 towards this project and the Liles family donated a significant portion of the value of the property in order to protect it for generations to come.

## **Mike Lindley Farm Project:**

TLC protected a 204-acre historic farm in the Silk Hope Region of Chatham County through conservation easement. Mike Lindley's property is a cattle farm that has been in the Lindley family for hundreds of years. The property includes pasture, cropland (corn and wheat), woodland and over 1.5 miles of South Fork Cane Creek and intermittent streams. The easement is TLC's 5th project in the Silk Hope Area and brings our total protected area of land in Silk Hope to almost 750 acres.

TLC partnered with Chatham Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) on the project who received funds from both the NC Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund and the USDA's Farm and Ranchland Protection Program (FRPP) to purchase the conservation easement through a bargain sale. TLC holds the conservation easement and will be responsible for annual monitoring and stewardship.

The conservation easement encumbers four parcels including several agricultural structures and barns. Stream buffers will be designated along South Fork Cane Creek and the unnamed tributaries. TLC is working with Wildlands, Inc. on a restoration project along these waterways.

## **Reimer Preserve Expansion:**

The 39.5 acre Reimer Nature Preserve Expansion is a beautiful mix of upland forest and riparian areas. The property contains two headwater streams of the Little River and over 750 feet of frontage on the South Fork of the Little River. In total, this project protects 16.7 acres of stream buffer and 2,125 feet of stream.

TLC worked with the City of Raleigh's Watershed Protection Program and the Merck Corporation, and used funds from our Land Opportunity Fund to close the project. The Byerly family made a generous donation of the value of the property not funded through these conservation resources. TLC will seek reimbursement of our Land Opportunity Fund from The City of Durham's Water Management program when that program is operational this spring.

This addition brings the Reimer Nature Preserve to a total of 140 contiguous acres. The initial approximately 100 acres were donated to TLC in 2010 by Susan Reimer, in memory of her husband, Keith Reimer, in 2010. Mrs. Reimer remarked that originally "we bought it because we wanted to save it...we fell in love with the place." 🌿





# Prescribed Fire

By Walt Tysinger



The first signs of a forecasted gentle northwest wind rolls across the tawny grass as forecasted, sending downy seeds floating into the cool morning air. The Burn Boss gives the order to light the southeastern edge of a large meadow at Temple Flat Rock, a TLC preserve in Wake County. Someone clad in dark green pants and bright yellow shirt begins to walk up the edge of the dirt road dripping flaming fuel onto the dry broom sedge. The grass quickly ignites and the flames slowly back into the gentle northwest breeze. While the drip torch makes its way up the road edge, several others also in the fire resistant green and yellow clothing attentively watch the fireline, tools in hand ready to quickly extinguish any attempt of escape by the newly lit fire. Establishing this fireline is the crucial part of

conducting a prescribed burn and is always exciting even though we have burned this meadow a half dozen times over the past 10 years.

The backing fire continues to slowly push its way into the wind leaving behind tufts of burnt grass. Once this blackened area extends a good ways from the dirt road the Burn Boss' voice crackles over the walkie-talkies instructing the drip torch carrier to walk directly into the wind. As she does she leaves a line of fire that begins to fan out on either side. The flames fed by the dry grass and pushed by the wind quickly grow and spread, engulfing the field in 20 foot flames. The smoke billows into the winter sky, forming a gray column rising to the southeast.



Grasshoppers and birds disturbed by the crackling flames quickly flutter away out of harms reach. Even though the fire has temporarily displaced these critters they will quickly return once the flames are gone and the cycle of growth begins again this spring. In fact, it is the fire that has created their home, a meadow of warm season grass, flowering herbaceous plants and thickets of blackberry and Chickasaw plum. The meadow supports many birds, insects and other wildlife.

Two hours after the first torch was lit, the 15 acre field of dry grass and plants has been reduced to a smoldering landscape. To the untrained eye this may look like devastation and destruction but to the ecologist it is a beautiful site. Nutrients have been cycled back into the soil and will feed the new plant growth that will appear in a few short weeks. The ever encroaching sweet gum and loblolly seedlings have been burned away—making room for a diversity of plants that will provide nutritious food and cover to white tail deer, turkey, bobwhite quail, meadow voles, grasshoppers, bumble bees, and a plethora of other birds, mammals, insects, reptiles and amphibians. The rejuvenating power of prescribed fire can help restore damaged and compromised landscapes to highly productive and diverse habitats.

As the burn crew cleans up, making sure the fire is extinguished, the blackened landscape begins to cool. In a few short months the only evidence that this field has been burned will be the charred remains of a few sweet gum and pine seedlings. Through prescribed burning we are establishing meadows full of native plants, improving the health and vigor of forests and reducing the danger of uncontrolled wildfires. The results of our efforts will be evident as clumps of warm season grass and native forbs sprout and grow. The grasshoppers, rabbits, and deer will be back to feed on the new lush growth and the birds will be looking for nesting sites to raise their young. If you're lucky you will hear the bobwhite calling out its name as it weaves its way between the clumps of grass in search of seeds and insects. 🌿



Meadow at Temple Flat Rock. February, 2017



(L-R) Brandon Price and Walt Tysinger working the prescribed burn at Temple Flat Rock. February



# Remembering Fred White

By Cléa Major



There's no way for any of us to fully grasp the legacy we'll leave behind. I am reminded of this when members of our community pass away and inspire their loved ones and fellow community members to graciously support TLC in their memory. Last fall, the Triangle lost Fred White, a pillar of the forestry and conservation community and a longtime friend and supporter of TLC. He inspired dozens of people, all over the country, to connect with us for the first time, and the true impact of these new connections can't be measured.

Fred devoted his career and his life to land stewardship and his immense passion for the outdoors. Throughout his 60-year career as a forestry professional, he fostered innovation, mentored new generations of foresters through his time at Duke University as Director of the Duke Forest and later as North Carolina Forest Service as Section Chief for Management and Development, and stood out not only as a leader within his field, but as a crucial advocate for conservation and environmentalism in North Carolina.

Fred's son, Bruce White, is also a forester and frequently collaborates with Triangle Land Conservancy to help the organization achieve its land stewardship obligations

through active management. He spent his childhood playing in Duke Forest and watching his father work with students there. When asked why he decided to become a forester himself he explained, "what really clinched it was a summer spent in the Dixie National Forest in Utah, when I went with him and several graduate students to do a spacing study on ponderosa pine stands for the USFS, camping out every night, using forestry gear, getting to hang out with cool college kids. I was 11 years old, and it was an adventure."

Bruce takes seriously the complexity of forest ecosystems and explains that his father's example guides his work today, "he taught me to take a humble approach towards forests, and to consider all aspects involved, because the actions a forester takes have long lasting consequences." Most recently Bruce worked with TLC at the George and Julia Brumley Family Nature Preserve. His efforts there have been instrumental in readying the property for the grand opening on Earth Day, April 22, 2017.

It is our sincere hope that our community's efforts to conserve land will provide opportunities for exploration and adventure for generations to come. 🌱







Bruce White working at  
Brumley Nature Preserve,  
March 2017.





# Wild Ideas

TLC hosted 450 people and 51 partner organizations at Wild Ideas for Farms and Food on October 11, 2016 and Wild Ideas for Getting Outside on March 7, 2017. Each of these exciting free events took place at the Frontier at RTP and featured dynamic presentations on topics ranging from conservation-centric farming to outdoor astronomical observation, local eats from Vimala's Curryblossom Cafe and local beers from Fullsteam Brewery and Deep River Brewing Company. In June TLC will host Wild Ideas for Clean Water. Full details at [triangleland.org](http://triangleland.org). Join us! 🌱

Thanks to our Wild Ideas sponsors!



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of North Carolina**

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# Upcoming Events

Registration for many TLC events is limited and required. Please register and reserve your spot online at: [triangleland.org/events](http://triangleland.org/events).

## April

### **1 En Plein Air (Landscape Painting) 2:00pm-5:00pm at Multiple Locations | \$180**

Multiple class dates, beginning April 1. Other dates include April 8, April 22, April 29, May 6, and May 13. We will explore what makes an exciting composition and work extensively with mixing color. Individual expression is encouraged, and students are free to work with either acrylic or oil. The class will take place in various picturesque locations around the Chapel Hill, Carrboro and Durham area.

### **8 WIGO Nature Journaling with Jeannine 10:00am at Brumley Nature Preserve | Free for TLC Members**

Jeannine's journal makes a memorable record of inspirations and images caught while traveling or investigating locally the nature in her home environment. She will provide each student with a journal to start building their own collection of creative observations. Stops along the way will provide opportunities for instruction on technique, plant and animal species of note, and prompts for inspiration.

### **5 Picnic with TLC 4:00pm-9:00pm at Picnic Durham**

Join us on **April 5th and again April 19th** for dinner at Picnic Durham and 10% of the evening's proceeds will be donated to Triangle Land Conservancy! Not only is this a fun way to support your local land trust, it's also a great way to show your support for local farms and food. Picnic gets pigs from nearby Green Button Farm which is permanently conserved under a Triangle Land Conservancy easement.

### **9 WIGO - Women in Nature 2:00pm-5:00pm at Walnut Hill Nature Preserve | \$15**

Multiple dates, including April 23. This immersive and reflective class is designed to help women find their center through meditation and Shinrin-

Yoko (forest bathing), express themselves through writing and art, and understand feminine powers to create change in the world. The class also encourages environmental stewardship by highlighting the features of the bioregions of which we are a large part.

### **15 Trail Crew 9:00am-12:00pm at Brumley Nature Preserve | FREE** This work day will be focused on finishing a multi-use trail system that will be available for hiking and mountain biking.

### **22 Earth Day Grand Opening 9:00am-5:00pm at Brumley Nature Preserve | FREE**

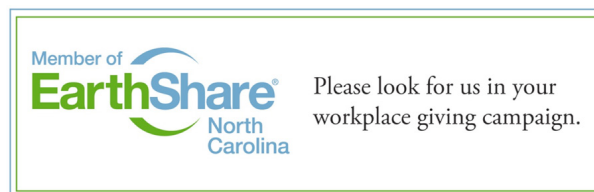
Spend Earth Day helping TLC to celebrate the opening of our 7th public nature preserve, The George and Julia Brumley Family Nature Preserve. Join us for a day of guided hikes, mountain biking tutorials, nature activities for kids and adults, artistic demonstrations, food trucks, local beer and more!

### **29 Birding with John Gerwin 7:00am at Walnut Hill Nature Preserve | Free**

Join John Gerwin, Research Curator of Ornithology at the NC Museum of Natural Sciences, for an instructive walk at this TLC preserve in Wake County that is not yet open to the public.

### **29 SONAM Concert in the Pines for the Pines 3:00pm-5:00pm at Chapel in the Pines | \$10**

SONAM will perform their beautiful arrangements of new and ancient choral music centering around the theme of the 4 elements of nature at the beautiful Chapel of the Pines in Chatham County. All proceeds benefit TLC.







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