

Confluence

Spring 2019



Welcome /

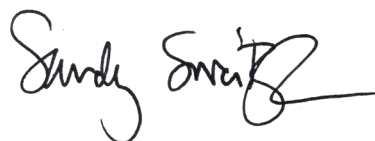
With as much rain as we've had this winter, it seems only right to be talking about water in this issue. As a supporter, you know that one of the main reasons TLC does land conservation is to safeguard clean water. Even a humanities student like me understands how forests, wetlands, and fields slow down runoff (unlike concrete or a building), giving water time to filter gradually through the soil.

Last quarter we hired four smart new staff and closed on almost 300 acres, among other things. And there are almost 1,000 acres of projects in the pipeline for the next year. I can't tell you much yet, but one of those projects will add 60 acres to the Brumley preserve and another will protect almost 300 acres adjacent to Falls Lake! Stay tuned for more details in coming months.

This frenzy of activity is helping us reach our aggressive conservation goals to conserve 25,000 acres by 2025.

This is a tall order we've created! We're committed to protecting the lands you love forever, so present and future generations benefit from the careful balance of rural and urban landscapes that makes our region extraordinary. Healthy land means healthy water, people, and communities. Wild and working lands that are protected, where all people and nature connect and thrive, are central to an increasingly healthy and vibrant Triangle.

Springtime will find our new employees continuing to settle into their new positions. We look forward to seeing the ways in which they will blossom and lead us to be a fuller, stronger land conservancy.



Sandy Sweitzer / Executive Director



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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.



Common goldeneye at the George and Julia Brumley Family Nature Preserve.
Photo by Mary Sonis.

Protecting Land for Clean Drinking Water

We need clean water to live: it sustains our lives and our community. Conserving the land that filters our water is one of the most cost-efficient strategies to protect drinking water; it lowers drinking water treatment costs, minimizes vulnerability and damage from natural disasters, sustains recreational and tourism opportunities, protects biodiversity, reduces the need for expensive restoration work, and supports job growth.

For over 13 years, the City of Raleigh has been a leader in the nation with its efforts to protect land that filters drinking water through its Watershed Protection Program. TLC is proud to be a partner in this collaboration

with the City of Raleigh, Eno River and Ellerbe Creek Associations, the Conservation Trust for NC, the Tar River Land Conservancy, and several other nonprofits and local governments.

In 2005, the Raleigh Watershed Protection Program (WPP) partners identified 260,000 priority acres and have since protected 10,000 acres in the Upper Neuse Watershed, along 100 miles of streams. The group now has a goal of protecting 30,000 acres in the next 30 years. These lands first and foremost protect water quality, but also provide other benefits such as farm land, park land, and wildlife habitat protection.

Raleigh, Wake Forest, Garner, and Knightdale water customers have invested \$13.9 million in the WPP through water fees to the program, and the value of the property protected is appraised at \$92 million. That's an extraordinary return on investment: **a 7 to 1 match in 13 years!**

We're thrilled that the City of Durham recently launched a similar program to conserve land that protects water flowing into the Lake Michie and Little River Water Supply Reservoirs. This same water eventually flows to Falls Lake, too.

If you trace your tap water from Durham or Raleigh, it may have come from Northeast Park, Little River Regional Park, or one of TLC's many conservation easements in northern Orange and Durham Counties, which protect headwater streams. These streams look small, but ensure that your water gets a good clean start.

The next time you turn on your tap or drink a refreshing beverage bottled in the Triangle, think about the journey to your glass. We like to think that the TLC office tap water started its journey at an easement TLC holds on a small tract at the mouth of the Little River Reservoir in Durham County. Water fees in Durham and Raleigh helped protect this land which filters water and also permanently protects a unique gorge that is a haven for bird species such as Great Blue Herons and Kingfishers, and on which we can all enjoy a paddle (pictured at right).

Or perhaps Fullsteam's Brumley Forest Baltic Porter, which includes not only walnut and hickories foraged from Brumley, but also a little water that had a great start on our 708-acre Horton Grove Preserve. Or that the Walnut Hill Saison, brewed by Trophy in Raleigh, included not only foraged wood sorrel, but also water that may have started its life at our Brumley Preserve, which has over 21,000 feet of stream (like the one shown on the right) and was funded in part by watershed protection funds.

Brumley Preserve, which is owned by TLC with a conservation easement held by the Eno River Association, puts open space to good use. At Brumley, we help to maintain clean water for Raleigh and help protect an important wildlife corridor between the Neuse and Cape Fear River Basins while thousands of

The Upper Neuse Clean Water Initiative has been so successful that it's being used as a model. Jordan Lake One Water is a burgeoning partnership between land trusts and municipalities to protect the Jordan Lake Watershed. Photo of Jordan Lake by Anthony Cileo.

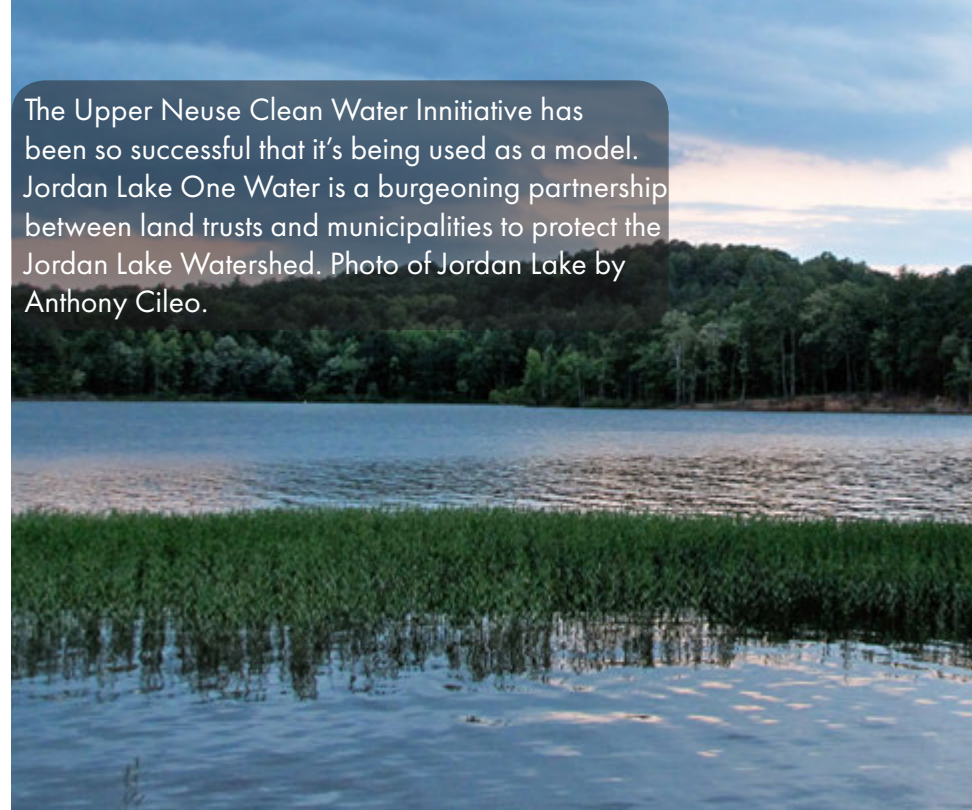
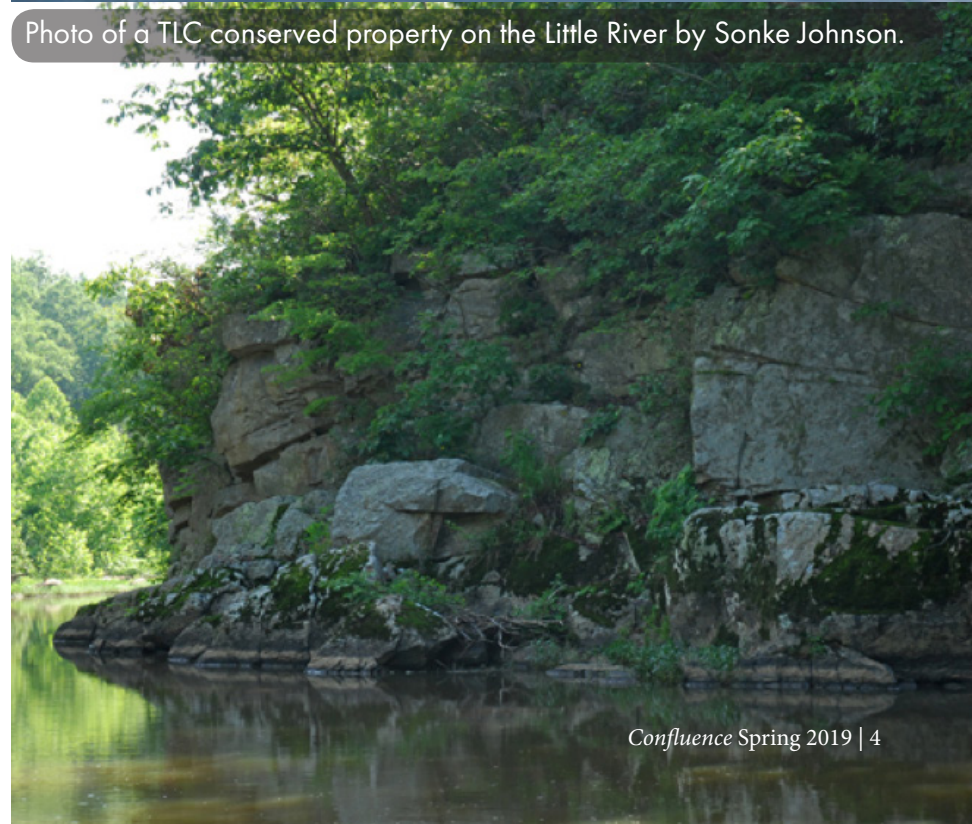
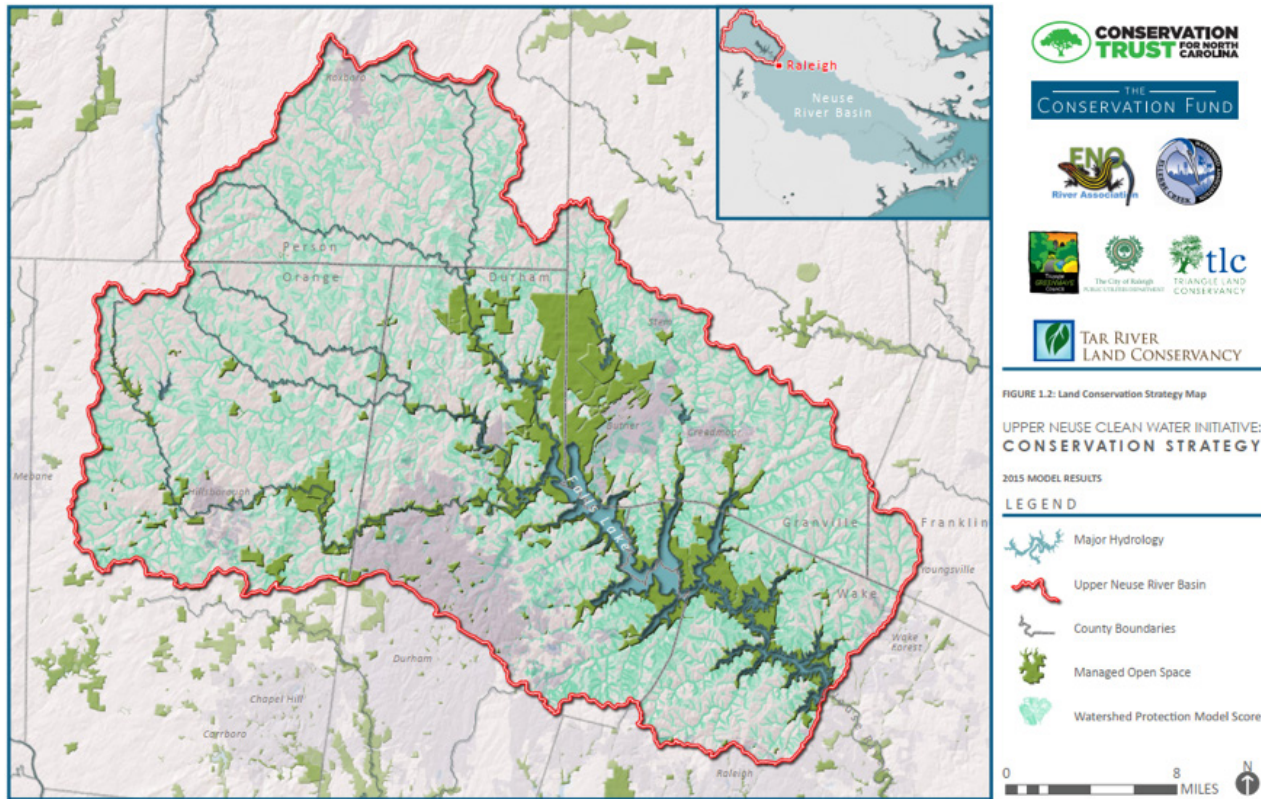


Photo of a TLC conserved property on the Little River by Sonke Johnson.



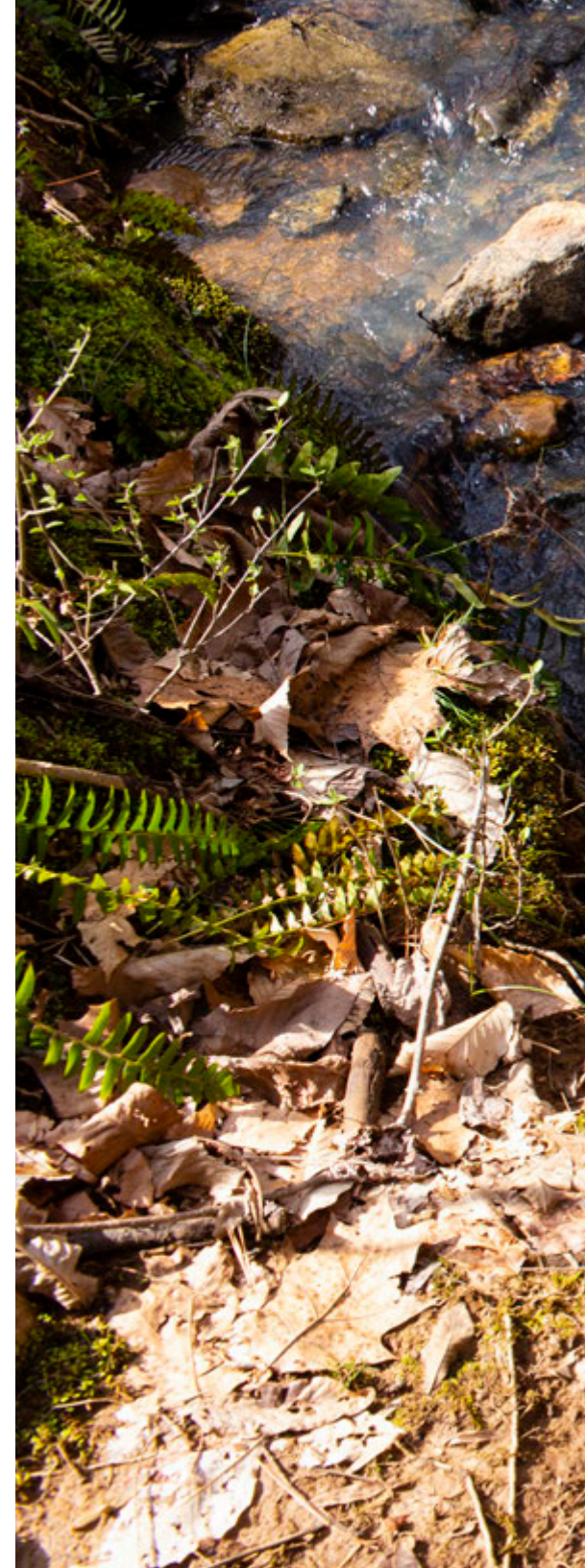


people a year enjoy 15 miles of hiking and mountain biking trails.

If you're drinking water in Pittsboro, Cary or anywhere else in the Cape Fear watershed, you'll be pleased to know that TLC is working with partners to develop a similar program in your watershed as part of Jordan Lake One Water. In the coming years, we hope these efforts in the Upper Cape Fear will provide all of our water in the Triangle the best start possible.

There are a lot of people at nonprofits, universities, and government entities working to safeguard clean drinking water: from keeping pollution out to cleaning up after, and everything in between. What TLC does is just one piece of that puzzle, but we think it's important because we protect watersheds and support local farmers to grow your food, protect wildlife habitat, and provide you with beautiful places to hike, bike and play.

We are proud to look back at our work with many partners over the past 13 years and realize that our combined efforts have helped permanently protect over 10,000 acres and 100 miles of stream in the Upper Neuse. 🌿





The George and Julia Brumley Family Nature Preserve contains ephemeral streams and Stony Creek. This land filters water that flows into both the Upper Neuse and Upper Cape Fear Watersheds.



Coral honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*) at one of the Johnston County easement projects. Photo by Leigh Ann Hammerbacher.



Newly acquired tract that protects Little Beaverdam Creek Slopes Natural Area. Photo by Leigh Ann Hammerbacher.

Bold Conservation Goals

In late December, TLC launched its new Strategic Action Plan, which outlined the organization's goal of conserving 25,000 acres by 2025. This effectively doubles the pace of conservation in our region.

We hit the ground running. By the end of December, TLC closed three projects protecting 220 acres and 8,130 stream feet in the Neuse Basin. Of the three year-end projects, TLC now owns one outright and the two others were protected in perpetuity by conservation easements. The tract TLC owns is located less than a quarter mile from Falls Lake and protects the Little Beaverdam Creek Slopes Natural Area in Wake County. This tract includes a designated NC Natural Heritage Area and several rare plants. This area is home to unique plant communities as well as a mature mesic mixed hardwood forest, several Piedmont waterfalls, and six

tributaries leading to Falls Lake, the main drinking water resource for the City of Raleigh and surrounding communities.

The other two conservation easements protect several tributaries and wetlands along the Neuse River in Johnston County. A conservation easement is a legal agreement that permanently restricts uses of the land in order to protect the conservation values of a property and limit future development.

We kept that momentum going into 2019 by closing on an additional 70-acre tract along the Neuse River and Buffalo Creek in Johnston County. This is the missing puzzle piece that connects all of TLC's conservation efforts along Buffalo Creek to the Neuse River. This property is primarily



Spodnick Longleaf Pine Forest. Photo by Caroline Durham.

a managed loblolly pine forest, but there is a small section of longleaf pine and several riparian corridors along Stoney Branch and Barns Creek (the two main tributaries on the property) that lead to the Neuse. These riparian corridors have several nice cane breaks and a lovely mix of tulip poplar, oaks, and even some beech bluffs.

On March 6, 2019, TLC closed a conservation easement on The Spodnick Longleaf Pine Forest, which is located in the southeast corner of Wake County within the community of Willow Spring, approximately one mile southeast of Fuquay-Varina. The conservation easement encumbers one parcel of land, owned by The Spodnick Family Trust, totaling just over 17 acres. Approximately 8 acres of the property has been planted in longleaf pine (*Pinus palustris*) and associated warm season grasses, such as little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*) and

wiregrass (*Aristida stricta*). The longleaf pine forest has been converted from an open field and is being actively managed for restoration and stand health. Southern Wake County is within the northernmost range for natural longleaf pine forests, and the Spodnick property serves as model for private landowners restoring land to productive habitat. There are approximately 1,000 feet of a small unnamed tributary that leads to Black Creek flowing through the mixed hardwood portion of the property. The stream originates on the property and the easement provides critical headwater stream protection.

TLC is thankful for the generosity of these landowners who have made donations that permanently protect wildlife habitat and local drinking water. The property by Falls Lake was also funded in part by the City of Raleigh's Watershed Protection Program.

On all of our conservation easement projects, Triangle Land Conservancy works with landowners to develop strategies that meet their long-term conservation and land management goals while realizing potential financial benefits including tax incentives and available funding sources. When appropriate, TLC may partner with other conservation organizations, both public and private, to conserve and steward land. Our involvement may range from facilitating the protection of a property to monitoring conservation easements held by other entities. All of TLC's work with landowners is voluntary.

Acquiring land or a conservation easement is just the first step in protecting its conservation values. Beyond is the long-term responsibility of ensuring the conservation integrity of the property. Future stewardship is considered prior to protecting a site, taking into consideration the resources that are being protected, specific management needs, as well as potential costs. 🌲



For the Love of Longleaf

*Here's to the land of the long leaf pine,
The summer land where the sun doth shine,
Where the weak grow strong and the strong grow great,
Here's to "Down Home," the Old North State!*
— North Carolina State Toast

TLC partnered with Appalachian Mountain Brewery (AMB) and the Longleaf Alliance to host 'For the Love of Longleaf,' a volunteer tree planting event in Wake County on February 13, 2019. TLC staff were joined by the AMB team, representatives from the Longleaf Alliance, and sixty-one volunteers to plant the first 3,500 longleaf pine seedlings of 7,000 that will be planted at the Sarah and Bailey Williamson Preserve at Walnut Hill, a future 405-acre nature preserve owned by Triangle Land Conservancy. The event began with the North Carolina State Toast before the tree planting kicked into high gear.

Photos by Modern Opus Productions

The tree planting event launched the second year of the brewery's 'Pints for Pines' program, through which AMB plants one longleaf pine seedling for every case of flagship Long Leaf IPA sold during the year. Based on sales from 2018, AMB and the Longleaf Alliance will plant 40,000 seedlings this year across North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee—communities where AMB beer is sold.

"The restoration of the longleaf pine ecosystem depends on great partnerships like the one we have with AMB," said Robert Abernethy, President at the Longleaf Alliance. "The 'Pints for Pines' program brings beer and nature lovers together with the state wildlife agencies and forestry commissions to plant longleaf pines and restore this rare ecosystem for wildlife and future generations. Thank you, Appalachian Mountain Brewery, for making a great beer and helping to restore the longleaf pine ecosystem." 🌲



TLC's stewardship vehicle died recently and we're in critical need of a reliable replacement for easement monitoring & property visits.



Can you help us get there?
It's easy, and you may qualify for a tax deduction.
Please contact Christine Wilson, (919) 908-0059



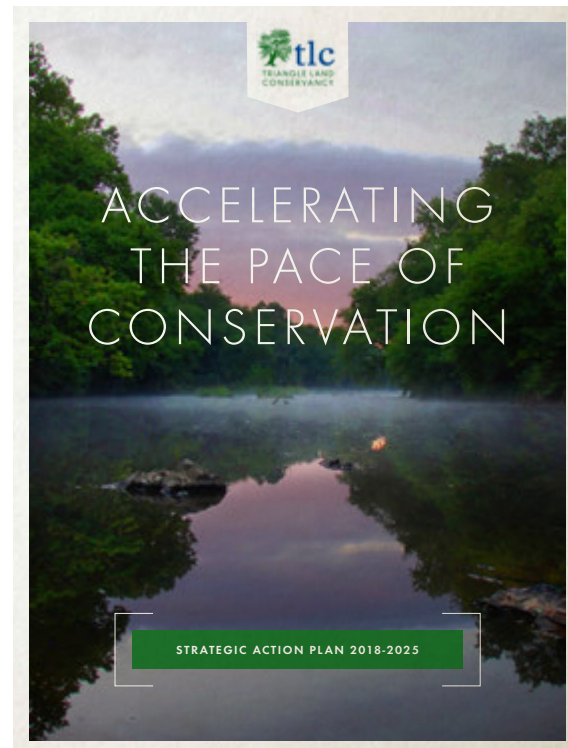
Accelerating the Pace of Conservation: We're Growing!

Last year it became clear that TLC was about to surpass the conservation goals laid out in our 2014 strategic plan, even though it was supposed to take us into 2020. Motivated by current and projected population growth and inspired by the community's enthusiastic support of our work, TLC staff and board developed a Strategic Action Plan to accelerate the pace of conservation. Building on TLC's powerful mission and vision, board and staff participated in a facilitated process to determine what it would take to increase our conservation efforts.

The ultimate goal is to conserve 25,000 acres across the Triangle by 2025, a goal that means TLC must double the pace of conservation.

TLC's Strategic Action Plan (SAP) continues the focus on the four reasons we do conservation: safeguarding clean water, supporting local farms and food, connecting people with nature, and protecting natural habitats. TLC staff and board targeted specific outcomes in each focus area and developed strategies to meet these outcomes, the result of which was a target of protecting an additional 7,000 acres by 2025.

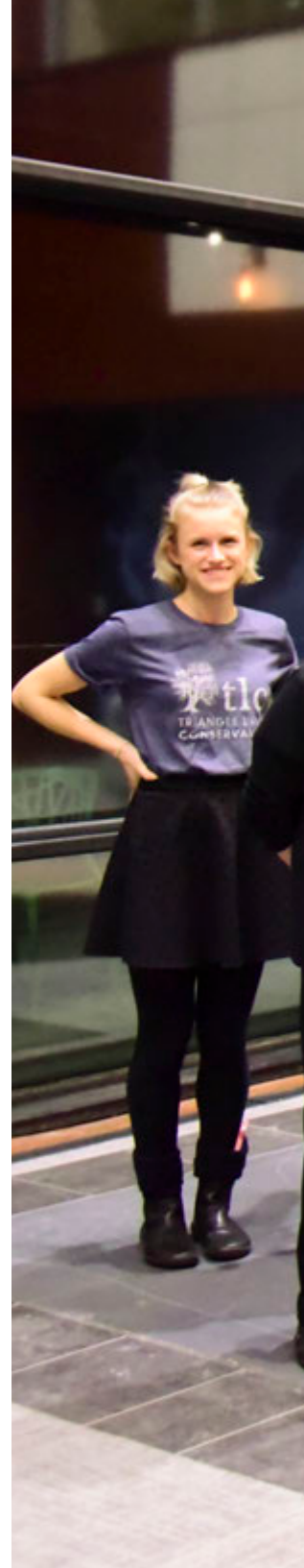
It was imperative for us to strengthen the organizational infrastructure in order to achieve these conservation goals.



Visit triangleland.org/ar to view the plan.

TLC has increased the number of staff and volunteers, and added additional space for them to work and tools for them to do their jobs.

This fall we established three new positions based on careful analysis of staff capacity as we move toward our new, ambitious goal. We have created four new positions: Conservation Manager, Development Associate, Senior Finance Associate, and Executive Assistant. Some familiar faces have moved into two of these roles. Margaret Sands transitioned from her role as Membership and Outreach Manager to Conservation Manager, and Laura Smith, a longtime TLC volunteer, was hired as Executive Assistant. We're thrilled to have added the talents of Kelsey Vermeer, Development Associate, and Ryan Williams, Senior Finance Associate, to our team. Additionally, TLC is pleased to introduce our newest member of staff, Ayanna Smith, as Director of Finance and Administration. 🌿





Wild Ideas

Triangle Land Conservancy's Wild Ideas series provides a unique venue for experts and the community to share their innovative ideas to improve lives through conservation by safeguarding clean water, protecting wildlife habitat, supporting local farms and food, and connecting people with nature.

On December 4, 2018 at *Wild Ideas for Tomorrow, Today* we focused on the future of conservation in our region. We unveiled TLC's new Strategic Action Plan designed to accelerate the pace of conservation in the Triangle, debuted the documentary *Bikes, Water & Soul* (now available online at triangleland.org/bikes-water-soul), and explored the predicted impact of population growth and climate change to our region as we explored the possibilities for protecting land for tomorrow. Special thanks to our speakers Kevin Hicks, Jen Schmitz, Dr. Anita Brown-Graham and the event emcee, Toni Wyche Jones.

SAVE THE DATE: Wild Ideas for Getting Outside at Marbles Kids Museum on May 8, 2019 from 5:30-8:30pm. Come learn about the many ways to explore nature in the Triangle: learn more about TLC preserves (and our newest one that will open in April 2020); imagine how you can be a citizen scientist; and connect with your outdoor community. And as always, you'll be able to connect with our partners and network with friendly folks who love to get outside. Join us for fast-paced talks, free food, and local beer as we celebrate the excellent open space the Triangle has to offer. 🌿



Photos from Wild Ideas for Tomorrow, Today by Caroline Gilmore

Thanks to our Wild Ideas sponsors!



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Upcoming Events

Registration for many TLC events is limited and required. Please register online at: triangleland.org/events.

APRIL

22 **#TLCGivingDay #NatureNeedsTLC** | Join us this Earth Day for TLC Giving Day – 24 hours to #accelerateconservation and UNLOCK \$40,000 for land conservation. Mark your calendar, recruit your friends, and visit us online www.triangleland.org/donate to achieve bold conservation goals!

28 **Rhodo Ramble Flower Hill Nature Preserve** | Join us for our annual nature walk led by local naturalists and TLC Board Member Jack Blackmer at this Johnston County jewel to view the magnificent blooms of Catawba rhododendron and other wildflowers.

MAY

08 **Wild Ideas for Getting Outside Marbles Kids Museum** | 5:30-8:00pm | Join us for fast-paced talks, free food, local beer, and dozens of outdoor partner organizations and businesses as we celebrate the excellent open space the Triangle has to offer!

01 **Walnut Wednesday 9:00am-12:00pm at Walnut Hill Nature Preserve** | Join us for our monthly Walnut Wednesday workday. We need your help to prepare the preserve for opening. Browse all volunteer opportunities at <https://triangleland.volunteerhub.com/>



Wild Ideas for Tomorrow, Today presenters L-R Kevin Hicks, Jen Schmitz, Sandy Sweitzer, Dr. Anita Brown-Graham

TLC GIVING DAY



EARTH DAY • APRIL 22, 2019

24 Hours - \$40,000 #NatureNeedsTLC

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 **tlc**
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CONSERVANCY
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