

Confluence

Spring 2022



Puzzle Master or Master Juggler?

Did you become a puzzle master during the pandemic? If so, you will enjoy learning about the land protection work TLC staff do every day. There are many differences, of course: land protection puzzles are huge, three-dimensional, and sometimes the pieces change shape partway through a deal. For example, after months of negotiation with landowners and multiple funders, land prices go up. Or an attorney for one funder changes the language in a document and the other three funders need months to agree on it. Maybe it's more like juggling?

Either way, TLC land protection staff are experts at navigating the process, which is outlined on page 3. Thanks to their patience and persistence, and your support, TLC continues to protect land at a record pace.

If you've followed TLC for very long, you know that we are focused on meeting the goals in our Strategic Action Plan, not just protect 25,000 acres by 2025 (which is a big one!). As a result of our work to measure, report, and evaluate equity and inclusion efforts annually, we have enhanced some of our existing programs and launched new ones. For example, when recruiting new staff, we found that there were not enough people of color in the conservation field. So,

after some research and planning, we have launched the Pathways Into Natural Environments and Science program, (PINES, page 8), which is providing a new way for TLC to develop future leaders in conservation.

The Good Ground Initiative (page 7) was also inspired by the equity and farmland protection goals in our Strategic Plan, including a model for working lands to better understand and address the challenges faced by small farmers, especially minority farmers. This innovative program will be a model for land protection work not only in the Triangle, but across the state and country.

While the PINES Program and the Good Ground Initiative are recent programs, they are a direct result of the work we've done – with you – to implement the Strategic Action Plan.

Thank you!



Sandy Sweitzer / Executive Director

TLC EARNS REACCREDITATION

In February, TLC was reaccredited by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission. Our voluntary reaccreditation shows TLC's enduring promise of land and water protection in perpetuity and earns us a seal that demonstrates our fiscal accountability, strong organizational leadership, sound transactions, and long-lasting stewardship of protected lands.



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The Puzzle of Funding Land Protection:

How Diverse Funding Sources Made Conservation Possible at Williamson and Brumley Preserves

By Dr. Rachel Damiani

TLC's Brumley and Williamson Preserves host an estimated 60,000 visitors per year who embrace opportunities to walk, bike, and bird watch. But these preserves have not always been bustling with people. Only 10 years ago, each had just a few visitors, mostly family members who owned the land, a few farmers, and their friends.

"It's harder than you'd think to turn farms and forests into public preserves that inspire people with natural beauty, safeguard clean water, protect natural habitats, and support local farms and food," said Sandy Sweitzer, TLC's Executive Director.

To accomplish this transformation, TLC puts together a funding puzzle for land protection, made up of a variety of public and private funders and generous contributions from landowners.

Purchasing the Land—A Giant Puzzle

The hardest and most complicated part of protecting these two properties was finding sufficient funds to acquire the land. Brumley was valued at almost \$9 million and Williamson at \$7 million at the time of the transactions.

Putting the land protection puzzle together doesn't happen overnight or with a single funder. Rather, TLC began conversations about the vision for these properties with the landowners in the '90s. Once the landowners agreed to consider a sale and to donate a portion of the value, TLC staff submitted a variety of county, state, and federal grant applications.

"Brumley and Williamson were our first big projects that combined so many different funding sources," said Hammerbacher, TLC's Director of Land Protection and Stewardship (East). The generosity of the landowners was the first piece of the puzzle and catalyzed land protection. TLC was able to purchase what is now Brumley Preserve in part thanks to owners George and Julia Brumley's commitment to conservation. The Brumleys initially purchased this property in the late '90s to protect it from development. After George and Julia's tragic deaths from a plane crash in Kenya, the Zeist Foundation donated almost half of the land's value.

The purchase and protection of Williamson Preserve was feasible in part due to a sizable donation from the family. Owners Sarah and Bailey Williamson hoped their farm would become a public preserve.

After both had passed, their daughters, Sally Williamson Greaser, and Betty Brandt Williamson, donated more than 60% of the land's value to TLC. After both had passed, their daughters, Sally Williamson Greaser and Betty Brandt Williamson, donated more than 60% of the land's value to TLC.

The remaining funding for purchasing each preserve came from a variety of public and private funds. The puzzle pieces TLC staff put together to protect Brumley included NC Land and Water Fund (NCLWF, which was previously known as the Clean Water Management Trust Fund), Raleigh's Watershed Protection Program (previously known as the Upper Neuse Clean Water Initiative), and private donations to TLC's Our Water Our Land campaign.

For Williamson Preserve, TLC leveraged the landowners' donation with funding from Wake County Open Space Bonds, NCLWF, Johnston County, and the State's Environmental Enhancement Grant Program.

An important puzzle piece for both preserves, as well as many other TLC projects, was the NCLWF. This funding is provided by the NC State Legislature and supports land and water protection across the state. While NCLWF funding was slashed after the 2008 economic downturn, thanks to bipartisan support, the Fund has surged to \$60 million in the 2021 budget. This budget increase will support important land protection efforts across the state, including in the Triangle. TLC currently has 9 proposals to protect more than 1,100 acres pending with NCLWF.

In addition to state funding, county funding also plays a crucial role in land acquisition. For example, TLC received funding from Orange County and Raleigh's Watershed Protection Program, which helped purchase the original 613 acre Brumley tract in 2010, and to protect 60 additional acres to expand the preserve in 2019. At Williamson, both Wake and Johnston Counties made significant contributions to aid in land acquisition. These public funds work together with one another and with private donations to TLC to make these land protection projects possible. Bo Howes, TLC's Director of Land Protection and Stewardship (West) explained that many of these funding sources require matching funds.

"Sometimes they require a dollar-for-dollar match, sometimes less, often the match can be a combination of labor or cash," he said. For example, membership and other donations to TLC leverage each grant. Private donations, including those made during TLC's Our Water, Our Land campaign, often serve as one source of matching funds.

Remembering the Preserves' Histories

By: TLC Staff

Bringing to the forefront the longer history of both preserves' pasts provides important context for understanding this intricate puzzle of funding land protection. Williamson and Brumley Preserves' histories—what is known of them—follow a familiar Pre-Colonial Era path. It is suspected that both properties were once occupied by Indigenous communities, including the Eno, Lumbee, Occaneechi, Saponi, and Shakori people at Brumley Preserve, and the Tuscarora and Lumbee at Williamson Preserve.

Indigenous communities lived on and used these lands for sustenance or moved across the area as they journeyed to another location until white colonists took the land from them. During this time, the land that is now Williamson and Brumley Preserves was "given" to White families by the King. Across generations, these families forced enslaved Black people to work the land. After the Civil War, the land now known as Williamson Preserve was part of a family farm in a community where Black and White people owned land and farmed alongside one another.

Understanding the deeper connection the land holds in the community, TLC collaborates with a diverse set of partners—leveraging many funding sources—incorporating them into land stewardship. TLC staff members Leigh Ann Hammerbacher and Bo Howes, Directors of Land Protection & Stewardship (East and West, respectively), explain how they put together the funding puzzle to create awe-inspiring spaces for people, plants, and animals.

In addition, some private donations ignite conservation. For example, TLC's Catalyst Fund, which was established in 2018 by the Salamander Fund of Triangle Community Foundation and added to by other private donors, was a key source for ensuring TLC could acquire the Brumley Expansion.

"Sometimes state funding takes a while to be approved or is put on pause after it's been approved," Hammerbacher said. "So, with the Catalyst and Land Opportunity Funds, TLC can close on a project before we have the funding in hand." This is exactly what happened with both Brumley and Williamson in 2008 when the State committed the funds, but then delayed releasing them during the recession. TLC used its own Land Opportunity Fund to close the projects and then paid back the fund when the state released their grants.

This example illustrates how the puzzle of land protection hinges not only on the appropriate funding sources coming together, but also on the timing and availability of these funds. This timing piece is becoming an increasingly important factor as the Triangle area experiences rapid growth and development. TLC's flexible reserves of funding facilitate TLC's ability to act quickly to protect land. Without private funds, the community might not be enjoying these preserves today.

Photo by Don Kinney



Preparing the Preserve for Public Use, from Trails to Parking Lots

After TLC acquires properties that will be open to the public, the next step, according to Hammerbacher and Howes, is to prepare and implement a plan for public use, including designing and constructing sustainable trails and beginning habitat restoration. Planning is a key aspect of land preparation to ensure TLC's efforts align with the overarching vision for the preserves.

For example, one of the goals at Williamson was to support farming efforts, including regenerative farming. Over the course of several years, TLC worked closely with a variety of stakeholders, including community members and the Walnut Hill Advisory Committee, to develop a detailed Agricultural Concept Plan. During the implementation stage, TLC partnered with Wake County for their NextGen Farm Initiative to hire a Farm Coordinator, and with NC State's Center for Environmental Farming Systems to support the farmers.

In addition, both Williamson and Brumley needed sustainable trail systems for public use. TLC received three grants from the State's Recreational Trail Program to design and construct 30 miles of trails (15 at each). These grants require matching funds and volunteer hours, which were provided by Triangle Off Road Cyclists, individuals, TLC's Conservation Corps, REI, and Johnston County. Howes emphasized that volunteer efforts are an invaluable asset in the puzzle of land protection.

"The sweat equity of our volunteers is a vital component for both opening and maintaining our preserves," Howes said. Volunteers assist with many other land stewardship tasks, including invasive species removal and tree planting.

With the trails constructed, signage and parking lots installed, the preserves were ready for public use. Brumley opened in 2017 and Williamson in 2020. "Getting out on the site and seeing the diversity of users—both human and wildlife—seeing so many people connecting with and enjoying nature is the most rewarding part for me," Hammerbacher said.

Land Protection is Greater than the Sum of its Parts

Hammerbacher and Howes express that being a part of this puzzle of funding land protection is both inspiring and meaningful to them. Howes said he is motivated by the commitment and support of such a diverse group of funders who are willing to invest in these preserves. “It’s a real validation about what we’re doing,” he said.

TLC staff are also inspired by knowing that land protection efforts have a cumulative and synergistic impact. Protecting Stony Creek at Brumley not only benefits this preserve’s water and wildlife habitat, but also helps provide clean drinking water for residents across the Triangle, including residents of the Raleigh, Wendell, and Clayton, all of whom draw their drinking water from the Neuse Watershed.

Expanding regenerative agriculture efforts at Williamson not only supports local farmers but also provides local food to the community.

“Even if someone never steps foot on a preserve, there are so many benefits beyond just the immediate recreation for these lands — the wildlife corridors they’re protecting, the water quality and the water they’re drinking,” Hammerbacher said. “They’re permanently protected. They’re helping create a legacy in the Triangle that will be here for generations to come.”

The funders who make this legacy possible have a combined impact that is greater than the sum of their parts. Because TLC can leverage one fund to fulfill the matching requirements of another, each dollar helps TLC raise another dollar for land protection. In this way, these funders help TLC put together the puzzle to conserving 25,000 acres by 2025. 🌱



Building Sustainable Partnerships

Creating Fertile Spaces for Communities of Color

The Good Ground Initiative, funded by a grant from the Z. Smith Foundation, is a TLC program that addresses racial disparities in land ownership by conserving critical agricultural land and then selling it at more affordable prices to People of Color. Last year, TLC hired a consultant to complete a feasibility study that involved listening to community leaders and advocates of just and sustainable agriculture. After hiring a Good Ground Associate last Fall, we are excited to move the program forward this Spring with its pilot project, a 50-acre farm in Orange County, comes with a 3-bedroom and 2-bathroom house. TLC will open applications to purchase the property at the conserved value in the next few months.

A critical element of Good Ground's success will be the work of an Advisory Committee, made up of 9 individuals, mostly Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, with expertise in produce and livestock farming, law, food sovereignty, and business capital. Together, they will review applications and conduct interviews with interested candidates. Thanks to the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation funding, TLC is offering compensation for the time and experience they contribute to this project. Opportunities for applicants to visit the pilot property will begin this Spring.

In addition to the establishment of the Good Ground Initiative, TLC's equity-focused work has extended to strengthening our relationships with communities of color with whom we have had relationships for several years. To that end, we want to share the good work of Transplanting Traditions Community Farm and Urban Community AgriNomics in hopes that TLC members will support them too.

Transplanting Traditions Community Farm (TTCF) provides a cultural community space for adults and youth refugees to come together and create a place that reminds them of their home country. TTCF also helps build healthy communities through comradery while sustainably practicing agricultural traditions from their home country in the Piedmont and providing the community with fresh food.



Recently, TTCF announced Hsar Ree Ree Wei as the organization's new Executive Director. Since 2012, Ree Ree has served TTCF in various capacities from helping her parents, who are CSA farmers, to coordinating youth programs. Other inspiring changes happening on the farm include building a greenhouse extension for hardening off seedlings. TTCF is housed at TLC's Irvin Farm Preserve. TLC members can support them with donations by buying their produce at the Carrboro Farmer's market or by signing up on their popular CSA website at www.transplantingtraditions.org.

Urban Community AgriNomics (UCAN) is a nonprofit that engages the Northern Durham community with skills based in agriculture and provides a place for the community to have access to fresh fruits and vegetables. In the past couple of years, UCAN staff and volunteers have transformed an abandoned farmstead into a vibrant community garden with more than 40 raised beds, chickens, a well, and other infrastructure on land that TLC conserved more than a decade ago. UCAN has donated over 30,000 lbs. of fresh vegetables and fruits through local harvesting and gleaning events sponsored by the Society of St. Andrews. In February, the Durham Community Martin Luther King, Jr. Steering Committee presented UCAN with their Keeper of the Dream Award. TLC members can support UCAN by volunteering, renting a raised bed, or donating to their efforts at www.ucan.today. 🌱

Introducing the PINES Fellowship Program

By Reagan Jarrett

TLC is thrilled to welcome five students from Knightdale High School (KHS) into our inaugural cohort of the Pathways into Natural Environments and Science (PINES) Fellowship program. Please join us in welcoming Daniel Ivan Vargas, Zoe Grandy-Richardson, Raphael Mukondiwa, Hanna Campbella, and Quinten Jones into the TLC community! This year's cohort of PINES Fellows features three juniors and two seniors, each entering the program with a wide variety of interests - from landscape architecture to farm-to-table restaurants. Through honest conversations as an organization, TLC knows that we have a role in creating opportunities to increase diversity in the environmental profession. Lack of racial diversity in environmental organizations is a well-documented problem and one that TLC must actively address if we are to reflect the communities we serve and fulfill our promise of protecting land forever. Demographic shifts in the Triangle bring opportunities to harness the energy of younger and more diverse populations.

In conjunction with KHS, TLC developed the PINES Fellowship to open pathways of opportunity for a diverse group of high school students in the field of conservation and natural resources. Through weekly meetings all spring, Fellows are learning about career opportunities in conservation, building relationships with TLC staff, board members, and environmental professionals, as well as learning about conservation through immersive experiences.

Fellows explained that the PINES program is an outlet to finally do something with their interests in environmental conservation and advocacy. "Like most people, I understand the importance of conservation of our damaged planet - but I've never had the means to help out, the TLC Pines program is my opportunity," shared Raphael. When asked about their goals for the PINES Program, several Fellows expressed interest in gaining confidence in their career paths and are excited to have access to a community of professionals and mentors that share their passion for the environment.

The cohort has a broad range of post-graduation plans and each is finding value in the potential of building connections, confidence, and experience. "I don't really know what career path I want to take yet, but I think it's important to see what all these jobs can really look like before I decide what path I am going to take for the rest of my life," shared Hanna.

Looking towards the future, TLC will increase the number of Fellows reached and deepen the experiences gained. Additionally, we're committed to continue helping Fellows reach their career aspirations, even after completing the program. As a paid Fellowship, the PINES program not only helps students build a better resume and skillset for their post-graduation plans but supports them in funding these plans as well. We are incredibly fortunate to be able to support the students at KHS and make an impact on the future of conservation. Thank you to Protolabs Foundation for their generous support for this program. 🌱



Photo: TLC Staff

Portofino: Coursing Through Layers of History to a Forward-thinking Future

By Madeline Joslin

The earth is quick to envelop human structures when no one is around to maintain them and stave off decay, and yet the landscape keeps evidence of our shared history. These traces give us clues to the past and how humans and the landscape have influenced each other throughout time.

TLC believes a landscape's history is invaluable to understanding its present. Learning how the land once was used and by whom shapes our knowledge of its present-day ecological niches and allows us to appreciate those who have stewarded the land long before us. Each TLC preserve and easement has its own layers of history that can inform us in better conserving it for the future.

Sometimes, when TLC decides to protect a landscape, we already know much of its shared history and past. During the conservation process, we learn from both the landowners and the land itself that not only do our projects protect critical natural features, they also preserve

remarkable cultural assets that development could have easily erased. The Portofino Lowlands conservation easement is one such case. Protected by TLC at the end of 2021, this easement safeguards 46 acres along the Neuse River in Johnston County. The project protects the important cultural traces of the land's past and will provide a critical corridor for the future Mountains-to-Sea Trail.

A connection to the land

It's a damp February morning along the Neuse River as Norwood Thompson tours around his private property in Johnston County. In 2014, he decided to place an easement on 46 acres to preserve the property's ecological integrity, historical importance and to reduce flooding on his upland properties. Thompson jokes that the tax incentive didn't hurt either, although this is an important motivator for many landowners considering conservation.

We stop at a spot where the Neuse River ripples across rocks placed there centuries ago to form an eddy. Early European explorers named the river after the Neusiok people, a tribe indigenous to present-day Lenoir, Carteret, and Craven counties. The Tuscarora people, who inhabited this TLC easement as well as much of the inner coastal plain, referred to the river as *Neyuherú·kẹ̀?kì·nẹ̀?* which in English translates to “loblolly pine in water.” The Neuse totals approximately 275 miles (443 km) in length, making it the longest river entirely contained in North Carolina.

Canadian geese bathe unbothered in the river as Poppy and Coco, Thompson’s spritely dogs, race around the muddy property with wild abandon. In contrast to these gleeful creatures, an historical artifact, likely forged through suffering and cruelty, lies mere yards away. It could almost be mistaken for a creek, but its sheer banks, rigid form, and still water are at odds with most creeks. Thompson states that it’s not a creek at all, but a mile-long, hand-dug canal dating back to the 18th century.

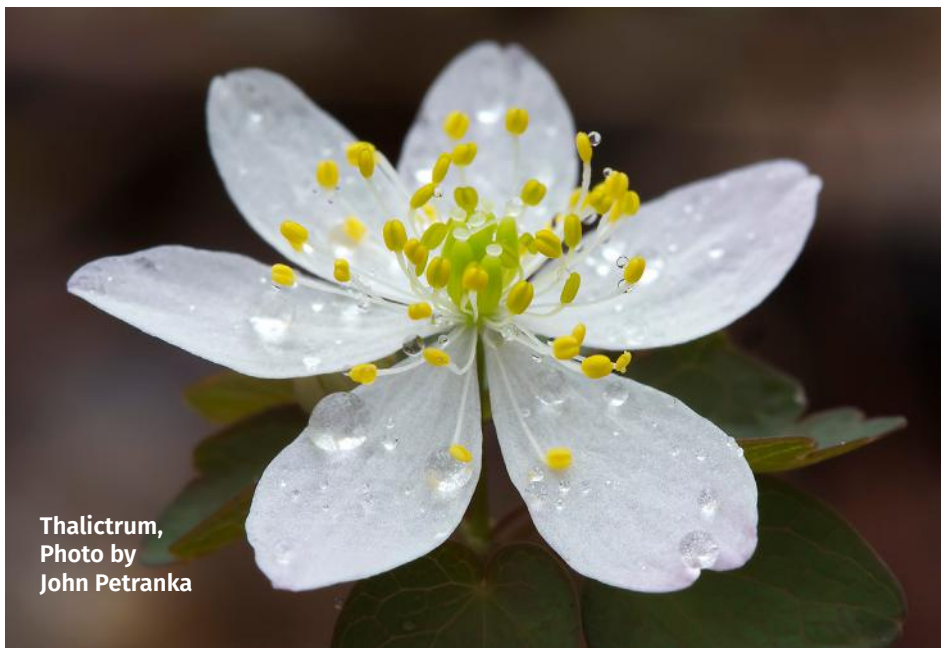
According to Todd Johnson of The Heritage Center of Johnston County, the ten-foot deep, twenty-foot-wide canal was built by enslaved people between 1786 and 1789. This was a grueling process that took years as the labor was done completely by hand. The canal was used as a mill race,

channeling water from the Neuse River to a grist mill on James Lockhart’s plantation. His will names 11 enslaved people: Nann, Gincy, Harry, Pat, Ritter, Julius, Ned, Phil, Sal, Esther, and Rose. It’s unknown whether these names are of the people who built the canal. The list, however, is a reminder of those who had an intimate knowledge of this land.

During the Great Depression, Percy Flowers, a notorious moonshiner, foxhound breeder, and savvy businessman amassed 5,000 acres of land in Johnston County some of which now make up Thompson’s property. Upon purchasing the land in the early 2000s, Thompson discovered twelve old still sites. Flowers grew tobacco and corn to make illegal alcohol, of which he was the state’s number one producer. In 1958, The Saturday Evening Post dubbed Flowers “King of the Moonshiners” and while some referred to him as a local Robin Hood for donating generously to White Oak Baptist Church, others thought of him plainly as a criminal.

After Watson died in 1852, the land was divided between multiple family members, leading to a significant dispute documented in the Supreme Court of North Carolina’s “Cases of Equity” in the Dodd vs Watson in 1858. Dodd accused the defendant, Watson, of stealing the millstone, and “wantonly and deliberately” destroying a building frame attached to the mill dam and taking timber from the Gully tract. Watson was found not guilty of “destructive waste” and it is unknown whether the mill was ever reconstructed. Archival documents label the plantation as Pineville, owned by Dr. Josiah Watson, an original benefactor of Ravenscroft School, owner of the NC Railroad, and one of the largest slaveholders in the state.

This land easement and many others hold difficult truths within their soils. As land stewards and conservationists, we need to recognize those who have sustained the land before us because acknowledging the past is critical to creating a sustainable future. In reflecting upon the history of this easement, we also imagine the legacy TLC will leave on this land as it joins the many layers of the past. 🌱



Thalictrum,
Photo by
John Petranka



Little River & Buffalo Creek

57 Conservation Easements cover 622 acres

By Brenna Thompson

In eastern Johnston County just outside of Micro and Kenly, is an ecological oasis, the Little River, that abounds with wildlife of all kinds, from common species like beaver, white-tailed deer, and great blue heron, to incredibly rare and endangered species found almost nowhere else, like the dwarf wedgemussel. This past year TLC worked to conserve a string of 57 conservation easements that cover around 622 acres of some of the least touched stretches of Buffalo Creek and the Little River. The trees growing along the riverbank are so large that they create a closed canopy in many spots along the river. The water teems with fish, mussels, rare salamanders, and other aquatic species that rely on clear water and a rocky stream substrate. In total, TLC is helping to protect the 18 miles of stream bank along this critical aquatic habitat.

The Little River/Buffalo Creek Conservation Easements protect 300-foot buffers along the riverbank, providing habitat for a multitude of imperiled aquatic species. TLC worked with the state and other partners to support the protection of 300ft buffers, which is six times greater than the 50ft buffers typically acquired for mitigation. These stretches of Buffalo Creek and the Little River have been designated as exceptional Natural Heritage Areas by the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program and are home to federally threatened and endangered aquatic species such as the dwarf wedgemussel (*Alasmodonta heterodon*), yellow lance (*Elliptio lanceolata*), Tar River Spiny mussel (*Elliptio steinstansana*), Carolina madtom (*Noturus furiosus*), and Neuse River waterdog (*Necturus lewisi*).

The Neuse River Waterdog, a large and long-lived aquatic salamander, shown in the image below, is found exclusively in the Neuse and Tar-Pamlico River Basins in North Carolina. In July 2021, it was officially listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Over the last five years, NCSU graduate student Eric Teitsworth and his team have conducted stream surveys to search for the elusive Neuse River waterdog, and Teitsworth says “the Little River probably harbors the best population in the Upper Neuse. The Little River is an interesting place where a lot of the rarer aquatic species we have still occur. Historically, the Carolina madtom was native to this area, and one of the last recent sightings was in this area.” The Carolina madtom is a small species of catfish that was listed as endangered on the federal Endangered Species List in July 2021.

The presence of these species is due in large part to the fact that the Little River is largely undeveloped and does not have the problems with erosion and sedimentation that are impacting so many other stream systems in the upper Neuse. “We need to preserve the places we still have because so many of these habitats are being impacted. Waterdogs are so special to just us, and people should take pride in it” says Teitsworth, referring to the fact that these enigmatic salamanders are found in only the Neuse and Tar-Pamlico River Basins, and nowhere else on earth.



These easements were acquired with funding from the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) and are the result of a lawsuit and 2019 settlement agreement with Sound Rivers, Inc., Center for Biological Diversity, Clean Air North Carolina, and the Southern Environmental Law Center. This settlement agreement required NCDOT to offset the environmental impacts associated with the final phase construction of the I-540 loop around the greater Raleigh area. This



was accomplished by investing in land acquisition projects in the Neuse and Tar-Pamlico River Basins that will provide habitat benefits for certain imperiled aquatic species. This project was completed in partnership with two mitigation banks, Wildlands Engineering and Restoration Systems Inc. and included the restoration of some areas that were formerly crop fields. These areas have been planted with a diverse mix of native riparian trees and shrubs that in time will provide habitat and food for wildlife.

In permanently protecting the hardwood bottomland forests surrounding the Little River and Buffalo Creek, TLC is helping to ensure that these waters continue to provide quality habitat for these highly vulnerable species. These easements will also provide other important benefits, such as safeguarding water quality, mitigating flooding, and protecting a wildlife movement corridor. Although all impacts from the I-540 expansion can never truly be mitigated, TLC is thankful to be able to work with partners in finding solutions to help protect this remaining refuge for these rare species in the Neuse River Basin. 🌳



Horsing Around

Celebrating Williamson's New Residents

A few new additions are joining us at Williamson this spring—including our new Farm Coordinator, Heather Szaro, while horses are not allowed on any TLC trails, these will be living on the property. We are delighted to welcome CORRAL (Centered On Riding, Rehabilitation, And Learning) and their three horses, Ruth, Cap, and Starbuck to their temporary home at the preserve. Corral works around Wake County, specifically with at-risk girls, providing academic support, individualized equine-assisted psychotherapy, family counseling, mentorship, vocational and life skills training, college and career preparation, and community support to create lasting life change in young women in the Triangle. They reached out to TLC after losing their last lease at the nearby Neuse River campus. During the next year, TLC hopes to help them identify a longer-term location for their program.

In the same breath, other farmers at Williamson, Archer Flowers, Newbold Farm, Fraise Roots, and partner organizations (Leaf & Limb and Bee Downtown) are gearing up for the new season. We are honored to be able to host CORRAL as well as all the new developments at Williamson and welcome you to stay in the loop by following us on social media. 🌱

Trading Residential Property for Conserved Land

At the onset of the pandemic, when many people were updating their wills, TLC received a call from a long-time member. Upon her death, she wanted to leave TLC a 5-acre lot in Chapel Hill with the intention that we sell it to raise money for the purchase of a larger property. She knew that her land, while beautiful, would not be appropriate for conservation.

Referred to as trade-lands in the conservation community, this is an important tool in our fundraising efforts. For this kind of project to succeed, the donated property must be of value and be a property that can be effectively marketed for sale. TLC recorded her information and forgot about it.

A year later, she called us again. **Alarmed by the growing demand for real estate in the Triangle, made even greater with the arrival of higher-paying tech jobs, she realized that a trade-land donation to TLC could not wait until her death; that could be as long as 30 years from now when there might not be any land left to conserve!**

She reviewed her finances and retirement plan and decided that she could afford to make the donation now. So, in August 2021, she donated the land to TLC. As this newsletter goes to print, TLC is under contract to sell the property and will close shortly.

When discussing how the sale proceeds might be earmarked, she decided that supporting TLC's Good Ground Initiative would be perfect. She had purchased the land many years earlier after her parents shared a portion of a bequest they had received. Her parents, long-time TLC members, were very active in the Civil Rights movement. She thought it a fitting tribute to them that their gift could support racial equity efforts in the conservation world. And she loves that in addition to conserving land and supporting minority farmers, Good Ground will be helping to put food on our tables.

Donations to TLC like Naomi's can be very impactful to accelerating conservation. If you are interested in learning more about donations of property, bequest gifts, or other ways you can support TLC, please contact Christine Wilson, Director of Advancement, cwilson@triangleland.org or (919) 908-0059.

WELCOME NEW TLC STAFF!



Letengus Tesfamichael
Business Manager

As part of TLC's Finance and Administration team, Letengus helps with managing and recording daily business transactions. She has an MBA from North Carolina Central University and has over 15 years of experience in Audit and CPAs firms.



Heather Szaro
Farm Coordinator | Bailey and Sarah Williamson Preserve

A former Peace Corps volunteer, Heather loves to “dream ways that TLC can be at the forefront of intersecting conservation and agriculture.” In her role, she provides local farmers access to equipment and facilities they need while fostering partnerships with their fellow farmers as well as the greater community.

Luke Whiteside

Land Stewardship Associate, West

Luke comes with broad experience that includes native plant propagation in the Bay Area, as well as work with North Carolina State Parks. He's an avid woodworker who developed his passion for conservation exploring the mountains around his home in east Tennessee.



Umar Muhammad

Land Stewardship Associate, East

As a land steward, Umar is an integral part of land conservation at TLC's team at Sarah and William Baily Preserve. His interest in conservation was ignited in his teens after a visit to a conservancy in Chattanooga where his brother worked.



Musolé Kambinda
Communications Manager

With over 11 years of experience, Musolé intuitively sees the threads of opportunity that wind through an organization, combining them into a coherent whole while acting as a thought catalyst. Prior to joining TLC, Musolé was Snr. Communications Manager at a nonprofit in Zambia.



Kierra Hyman
Good Ground Associate

Kierra works on TLC's Good Ground Initiative, aimed at offsetting the rapid loss of farmland, and supports the creation of opportunities for BIPOC individuals to become successful stewards of the land.

Hannah Royal

Stewardship Associate

Resident snake charmer, Hannah manages and does monitoring of conservation easements for TLC. A graduate of Duke University School of Environment, and a Master's in Environmental Management, Hannah's role centers on the conservation management of wildlife habitats and geospatial analysis for TLC.



Kayla Ebert

Education and Outreach Associate

Kayla's love of the outdoors began as a kid in Winston-Salem where she explored her backyard. She majored in Biology at the UNC and completed an environmental education internship at North Carolina Botanical Gardens in Chapel Hill. Before joining TLC, Kayla worked as a naturalist teacher for an outdoor school outside of Yosemite National Park.



TLC events are back in full swing!

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\$60,000 MATCH ON APRIL 22, 2022



Photo by Don Kinney

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