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### Impact Investment Takes Conservation to New Heights

Supporters like you have been critical to every conservation success The Nature Conservancy has ever achieved, and I'm excited about the new ways we're leveraging your generosity to solve the complex environmental challenges we now face. Harnessing the power of impact investment, our historic Cumberland Forest Project epitomizes innovation in how we accomplish conservation at an unprecedented scale for our state and region. It uniquely positions TNC to change the way people think about nature's value and to put private capital to work in solving some of our most pressing conservation challenges. We aim to use this project and future ones to enhance management across millions of acres of forest land. Thank you for helping forge a brighter future for nature and people!

Locke Ogens, Virginia Director



View from Cumberland Gap NHP overlooking Cumberland Forest Project's Ataya Tract © Byron Jorjorian



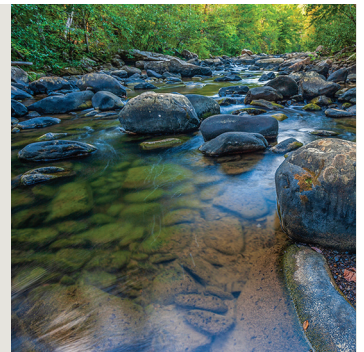
## A New Era of Conservation

### Quarter-million acres acquired in the Appalachians

The Nature Conservancy's Cumberland Forest Project has acquired a quarter-million acres of working forest land in the Central Appalachian coalfields of Virginia, Kentucky and Tennessee. The project represents one of the largest land conservation and ecological restoration efforts that TNC has ever undertaken in the eastern United States. Larger than Shenandoah and Acadia national parks combined, the property covers 153,000 acres in Virginia plus 100,000 acres spanning Kentucky and Tennessee. TNC will implement sustainable forestry practices to protect and restore wildlife habitat, secure clean water for people and nature, and sequester atmospheric carbon to mitigate climate change. See our video and learn more at [nature.org/cumberland](http://nature.org/cumberland).

### Governor Announces Record Easement

On the heels of TNC completing our Cumberland Forest Project acquisitions, Governor Ralph Northam announced in August that the commonwealth's largest-ever open-space easement will permanently protect nearly 15% (22,856 acres) of the Virginia portion. In his statement, Governor Northam says, "This unique partnership ... will allow for sustainable forestry, improve access to outdoor recreation, and increase protection of wildlife habitat and water quality."



Tackett Creek, Ataya Tract © Byron Jorjorian



Trio of piping plover chicks © Dottie Dowling; oystercatcher with chick © Jessica Kirste; TNC's Alex Wilke © Peter Frank Edwards

1,553

Eastern Shore students enrolled in grades 5, 7 and 10—and eligible for TNC's preserve-based science programs.

Statistic: Virginia Department of Education

Living Laboratory



Students study a marsh © TELEDUCTION

Our Virginia Coast Reserve protects not only a vast coastal wilderness, but also a living laboratory that's a magnet for researchers from around the globe. Recognizing that scientific literacy and a conservation ethic begin at home, The Nature Conservancy works with Eastern Shore schools toward our goal of making these extraordinary outdoor classrooms accessible to more than 1,500 local students enrolled in grades 5, 7 and 10. TNC collaborates with teachers on crafting SOL-based (Standards of Learning) science curricula, including hands-on, sensory experiences with technical instruments, data collection and analysis at our Brownsville and Parramore Island preserves. Six of the seven local elementary schools completed programs at Brownsville this past school year, and we expect increased participation this coming year, especially from middle schools.

Plover Trouble?

Research guides global bird conservation

In the aftermath of Hurricane Dorian and its devastating toll on the people of the Bahamas, the science and conservation communities also are concerned about ecological consequences that may compound the human tragedy. From habitat loss to climate change, birds face a host of perennial and unprecedented challenges, and now scientists fear that Dorian may have hastened the extinction of one species clinging to survival, the endemic Bahama nuthatch. Here in Virginia, meanwhile, Alex Wilke reflects on the end of another nesting season at The Nature Conservancy's Virginia Coast Reserve and wonders about the fate of Atlantic Coast piping plovers—listed

federally as threatened—that depart Virginia in late summer to spend winter in the Bahamas. "When nesting season rolls around again next April, I'll be scanning our beaches with a mixture of anxiety and hope, always hope," Alex says. For two decades, TNC's annual

“When nesting season rolls around ... I'll be scanning our beaches with a mixture of anxiety and hope, always hope.”

Alex Wilke, Virginia Coast Reserve

monitoring of nesting plovers and oystercatchers has tracked the breeding success of these key indicator species, and, recently, researchers from Virginia Tech have been banding plovers on the Eastern Shore and in the Bahamas to help keep tabs on individual birds. All of this valuable data is leading to a better understanding of these birds and the challenges they face, as well as helping guide international conservation efforts throughout their range. Learn more about our bird conservation work across the state in our 2019 Virginia Impact Report and online at nature.org/virginia.