

A Year of Results

FUNDRAISING UPDATE 2019

HUNTER NICHOLS/TNC

A Force of Nature

A lifelong adventure with nature started in the woods at her grandparents' farm near the small town of Winfield, Alabama. There she climbed trees (much to her father's chagrin) and built flat-roofed houses out of limbs. Forests, birds, and all the animals became Judy Crittenden's fascination at that young age, along with the clarinet. It seems nature stuck with her, not so much the clarinet!

Judy credits her late husband, Dr. Richard Crittenden, Professor of Mathematics at UAB, with furthering her passion for bird watching, camping, and nature in general. They traveled the world to expand their hobby. All the time, Judy, says, "While watching birds, we were also watching everything else ... nature was all around us." Dr. Crittenden died suddenly while on a trip home with Judy from an international birding trip.

As one of Alabama's foremost family law attorneys, Judith S. Crittenden is well known in many prestigious circles. She recently became "of-counsel" to the law firm that bears her name, after more than 45 years practicing as one of the first female attorneys in the state. Her passion for women's and family issues led her to the no-nonsense family law she practices. She says the things she felt as a young female attorney and the needs she saw, sparked her to help create a women's shelter, including a family violence center.

Long a supporter of The Nature Conservancy in Alabama, Judy and husband, Philippe Lathrop, are involved with a variety of environmental groups including Audubon and Birmingham Zoo. TNC recruited her to join its board just as Judy was considering what she likes to call, "Not retiring." She knew that time for her many passions would allow for making something "of consequence" happen. In 2019, Judy became the Chair of the TNC Philanthropy Committee. In this key role, she works closely with professional staff and other trustees to raise

the nearly \$2,000,000+ in private operating funds needed each year. Private support is essential to supplement public monies for conservation projects across the state.



Donor Judy Crittenden

Judy is a generous donor and leads by example. She and Philippe were about to supplement their personal gifts to TNC by hosting a cocktail party at their beautiful Mountain Brook mid-century modern home, when Covid-19 forced all of us to curtail normal life. They invited their personal, social network to attend and hear about the work TNC is doing around the state. We were all disappointed when the party had to be delayed but look forward to rescheduling.

TNC is fortunate to have donors like Judy Crittenden who share their wealth, time, and passion to conserve the land and water necessary for life, for both people and nature. One of her favorite conservation projects is one that helped set aside wild and scenic land along Little River near Mentone. Our science-based approach to conservation is effective, but expensive. That's why Judy invites you to join her in support of The Nature Conservancy in Alabama. "Preserving nature is the most consequential project possible. It has to be done!"

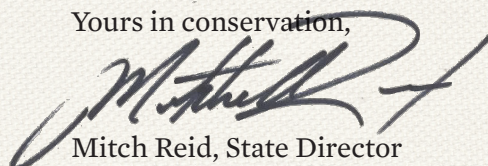
Letter from Our Director

With world class biodiversity, 23 million acres of timberland, 132,000 miles of rivers and streams, and the 4th largest estuary in the United States, Alabama is truly a place worth protecting. The Alabama Chapter is making this happen with a great team of conservationists; steadfast friends and donors; and longstanding and effective partnerships.

I am excited about the work we are doing and the potential before us. As we look to the future, our conservation program is steadily making progress on challenging but realistic conservation goals for land protection, river restoration, and coastal resiliency. With your help, protection efforts continue to add to our impressive portfolio of protected lands in strategic landscapes. Our fire program is leading the state towards a future where #GoodFire is once again a recurring part of our forest ecosystems, and we're implementing projects along the coast and in our rivers that mitigate ongoing disturbances while allowing communities to adapt to climate change. For these reasons, the Alabama Chapter has earned its reputation as a leader in conservation among our partners across the state and throughout the Conservancy. It is my pleasure and privilege to contribute to this exciting work.

Despite enduring success, we cannot rest on our laurels. The challenges we face are significant. Alabama remains at the top of the list for species loss and at the bottom of the list for public funding for conservation. Added to this is the historic disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, what inspires me is The Nature Conservancy's relentless drive to solve our planet's biggest challenges, and our ability to collaboratively work in new ways across boundaries despite the challenges. Together, we can ensure that The Nature Conservancy in Alabama continues to move towards that future where people and nature thrive.

Yours in conservation,



Mitch Reid, State Director



Mitch Reid, Judy Haner, Bradley Byrne and unidentified member of Congressman Byrne's staff.

Letter From Our President

Dear Friend,

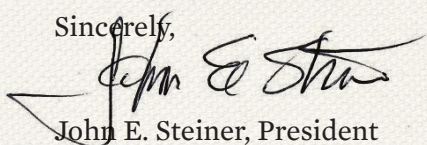
Conservation never stops. It can't. There are too many places in Alabama that are critical to life as we know it. So, even in a pandemic, conservation continues. Our staff is in the forest, on the rivers and streams, and out in the coastal waters doing the science that protects people and nature.

2019 and the first months of 2020 have been among the most successful of our 31-year history of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) in Alabama. Not only did we accomplish all the results listed in this update, but we changed leadership. Mitch Reid took the helm as Alabama State Director. We couldn't be happier with his selection and look forward to his leadership for our mission.

As President of The Nature Conservancy in Alabama, I join my fellow trustees and our staff in thanking you for your unwavering support of our conservation work. I have said it many times, we could not do this vital work without your encouragement and financial support.

Please remember TNC when you are planning your charitable giving in 2020. If you have a Donor Advised Fund, please direct a gift our way. If you are interested in tax-wise giving, give us a call and we can share the many gift options available. And, please, think of us when planning your estate. A legacy gift insures our future, and yours.

Sincerely,



John E. Steiner, President



Mary Kate Brown, Glenn and Jan Wilson, Olivia Alison, and John and Laura Steiner



Lightning Point, Bayou La Batre, AL

Leading Alabama's Largest Restoration Project

After 10 years of planning, fundraising, acquiring property, and coordinating with federal, state and local agencies and private landowners, The Nature Conservancy in Alabama launched its largest restoration effort ever. We are restoring and reconstructing 40 acres of marsh and tidal creeks at Lightning Point in Bayou La Batre. One-and-a-half miles of breakwaters and jetties now protect the Bayou La Batre Channel, a prime fishing port for Alabama and the Gulf of Mexico. This project will be transformational for this small fishing hamlet and will improve their community backyard while providing wonderful habitat for birds, bivalves, shellfish and fin fish. TNC has acted as a catalyst, forging partnerships and accessing funds from government, corporate and private sources to accomplish coastal conservation on a large scale.

2019 RESULTS

- **Lightning Point** The breakwaters are installed and the dredging for the marsh creation is completed. Tidal creek construction is underway with more than 1/2 complete. Planting of the new marsh area began in May and will continue through summer 2020. The team cataloged five tons of debris collected from a one-acre marsh site on the west bank of the channel; the records will be entered into NOAA's Marine Debris database. The restoration project will be completed in late August 2020.
- **Grand Bay** Substantial coordination with partners on the upcoming prescribed burn has been underway. Fire lane construction is complete. The burn of more than 1,200 acres is scheduled for fall or winter 2020."

- **Helen Wood Park** JACOBS Engineering was contracted to provide designs for the shoreline protection work. Initial designs will be complete in early April. Initial designs for shoreline protection are complete. Full designs are anticipated late summer. The permit should be secure in the fall and construction is anticipated in late 2020 or early 2021.”
- **Perdido Islands** Development of a comprehensive conservation plan for the islands (Bird, Robinson and Walker) is underway. The plan, which will include native vegetation and signage strategies, will serve as a guide for the protection and conservation of the fragile complex going forward.
- **Rabbit Island** Twenty-two buoys marking the no-motor zone for seagrass protection were deployed at Rabbit Island in conjunction with Alabama Marine Police. 50 additional buoys are needed.
- **Little Lagoon** The Conservancy partnered with Mississippi State University Extension Program and University of South Alabama to assist US Fish and Wildlife Service’s Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge to restore an eroding shoreline on their protected lands.



ABOVE Coastal Staff and Ono Island Men’s Club make buoy anchors
LEFT Intern Cassie Eldredge launches buoy
RIGHT Rabbit Island no motor zone buoy



ABOVE Young longleaf pines, Splinter Hill Bog Preserve

BELOW Montane longleaf pine forest, Flag Mountain



Restoring Healthy Forests and Protecting Nature for the Long Term

An important part of our commitment to conserving Alabama's special ecosystems is the protection and restoration of our treasured forest systems. To support our vision of a world in which people and nature thrive simultaneously, our goals and objectives for forest habitat restoration across the state focus on increasing the amount of permanently protected lands, using prescribed fire to restore healthy forests and their natural ecosystems, working closely with private land owners and public land managers on thoughtful land management, and coordinating with other agencies to maximize significant longleaf pine restoration.

From expanding the footprint of our Ruth McClellan Abronski Splinter Hill Bog Preserve in Baldwin County to reintroducing prescribed fire to the historic montane longleaf pine forests of Coosa County and piloting the first voluntary carbon market opportunity in Alabama at our Sharp Bingham Mountain Preserve in Jackson County, the Conservancy's Alabama chapter is leading the way in providing, protecting, and preserving our state's most beautiful and ecologically significant areas for the use and enjoyment of future generations.

2019 RESULTS

- Successfully collaborated with partners to significantly increase permanent protection of Red Hills salamander habitat in Monroe County.
- Developing a "Working Woodlands" program

in northeastern Alabama to demonstrate how forest landowners can ensure sustainable forest management while generating revenue from improved timber management and the growing carbon market.

- Acquisition of 150-acre addition to the Ruth McClellan Abronski Splinter Hill Bog Preserve.
- Reintroduced prescribed fire management at Flagg Mountain and Coosa County Wildlife Management Area to restore critical montane longleaf pine habitat.
- FY20 prescribed burns across the state:
 - 14 burn operations covering 2,894 acres across four properties led by The Nature Conservancy in Alabama
 - Five burn operations covering a total 834 acres on three wildlife management areas led by Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources with TNC assists
 - 23 burn operations covering 33,067 acres across Four districts/forests led by the US Forest Service with TNC assists
 - Two TNC-led fire management operations across 223 acres in response to wildfire initial attacks
- FY20 fire crews:
 - Seven full-time staff members trained and qualified to perform prescribed fire
 - Four seasonal fire crews, with a total of 15 crew members implementing prescribed fire statewide

Red hills salamander





HUNTER NICHOLS/TNC

The Paint Rock River

Restoring Our Rivers and Streams

Boasting more than 132,000 miles of rivers and streams, it's no surprise that Alabama is the most biodiverse place in the United States when it comes to aquatic species. Although we have great aquatic species biodiversity, we also continue to see adverse effects on these species and their habitats due mostly to sedimentation caused by eroding streambanks and run-off. We continue to work with partners and private landowners to prioritize, prevent, and remediate sources of sediment, which also carry other pollutants into the water.

This work touches every part of the state, with projects underway in the Paint Rock River, Locust Fork of the Black Warrior River, Big Canoe Creek, and Cahaba River watersheds. Data collection and analysis on sediment input into these watersheds is underway and we have made significant progress. These analyses will aid TNC and partners in prioritization of streambank and riparian restoration projects. We have been very successful in leveraging federal, state, and private money to achieve our conservation goals in each watershed.

2019 RESULTS

- Completed more than 50% of assessment and prioritization planning in all priority watersheds.
- Awarded a \$100,000 National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant which will be used to leverage private funds to complete two top priority restoration projects in the Paint Rock watershed.
- Awarded a \$145,000 National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant which will be used to leverage federal funds for completion of a demonstration streambank restoration in the Locust Fork of the Black Warrior watershed.
- Awarded a \$1,000,000 Natural Resources Conservation Service's Regional Conservation Partnership Program grant which will be used to leverage private, state, and federal funds for implementation of streambank restoration projects on agricultural lands in our priority watersheds.



DEVAN KING/TNC

The Cahaba River

Creating a Greener Birmingham

We began the task of creating a Watershed Management Plan for Shades Creek, the most populated creek in the Cahaba River Basin. Subcontracting the public meetings and intense GIS web site for the project, the TNC Urban Conservation team has been busy talking with partners and interested parties to gather data. A recent publication by the Birmingham Historical Society documents the cultural and historical history of Shades Creek, and we view our data gather of stormwater outfalls, past scientific studies and identification of potential stream restoration sites as the scientific equivalent.

What could be our next ‘green opportunity’ in Birmingham? According to preliminary results from Greenprint Birmingham, a cumulative data mapping program developed by our Urban Conservation office, it could be in a public park, a downtown street or an under-utilized green space. Imagine layering GIS data that shows the location of the hottest nighttime summer temperatures, the lowest tree canopy cover, the most impervious surfaces, most flood prone and poorest air quality. This overlapping area highlights the best places for “cool green opportunities.”

Could it be in North Birmingham where a recent plan for the Collegeville open spaces envisioned using green infrastructure to highlight a new social space for North Birmingham?

According to the EPA, a green Collegeville would include mitigation for urban heat islands, create public park space and community amenities, enhance

pedestrian safety, improve air and water quality and manage stormwater and flooding. TNC Urban Conservation program hopes to bring the first green infrastructure project to fruition in this historic area.

2019 RESULTS

- Supporting a community effort for a full scientific evaluation of Shades Creek in the Cahaba River Basin for stream restoration priorities.
- Piloting new retrofit techniques for large commercial parking area for stormwater treatment and decrease urban heat
- Ongoing discussion with the City of Birmingham to build a stormwater park in the Civil Rights District in North Birmingham.
- Ongoing reforestation of Birmingham City Parks for improved stormwater management and urban heat island relief.
- Creation of the Cool Green Story Map to influence reforestation and stormwater management in high-risk urban centers.
- Working closely with World Games 2022 to add forest canopy to the area around The Birmingham CrossPlex (a \$46 million indoor track and aquatic facility developed by the City of Birmingham,

These generous donors contributed to The Nature Conservancy in Alabama during fiscal year 2019 (July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019) and the first half of fiscal year 2020 (July 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019). Thank you.

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Eyewitness to Fire

BY JESSICA MITCHELL

I'd never seen a prescribed burn before and had no idea what to expect. Chuck Byrd, Land Steward for the Alabama chapter of TNC, invited me to tag along and see for myself.

The Nature Conservancy has a 20-year history of fire management in Bibb County and other areas of Alabama, maintaining TNC owned property, as well as private and federal lands through fire management assistance.

"It's really starting to change," Byrd said. "When we first started burning here, the briars, sweet gum, and hardwood shrubs were so densely packed that fire crews could hardly walk through the undergrowth. Burning cleans it out and allows the sunlight to get to the understory, one of the most biodiverse ecosystems on earth."

Hours later, with temperatures closing in on 90°F, every crew member I talked with was smiling through the stinging smoke and the heavy heat. Each person told me, in their own way, how happy it made them to know they were making a difference for this rare and important ecosystem.



Igniting fire in Kathy Stiles Freeland Bibb County Glades Preserve

We Can All Make a Difference For People and Nature

Just like our conservation crews, all of us can make a difference for Alabama's land and waters. Please step up today and help us fulfill the mission to conserve the important ecological treasures of our state by making a financial contribution today.

Giving is easy!

You can help conserve the wild Alabama you love while at the same time, achieving your financial objectives. Giving options include funding your gift with cash, stock or real estate, making a bequest or giving a gift that pays you income for life. Some gifts provide favorable tax advantages (see your tax advisor for details).

It's easy to give to TNC in Alabama. Contact us today to learn more about your options.

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Conservancy 
Alabama

nature.org/alabama

PHONE 205-732-6507

EMAIL philanthropy.alabama@tnc.org

MAIL The Nature Conservancy
2100 First Avenue North, Suite 500
Birmingham, Alabama 35203