

Cumberland Forest

2024 IMPACT REPORT

nature**Vest**

The Nature
Conservancy



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All statements in this Impact Report other than historical facts are forward-looking statements, which rely on several estimates, projections, and assumptions concerning future events. Such statements generally are identifiable by the terminology used, such as "plan," "estimate," "expect," "budget," "believes" or such other similar words. These forward-looking statements are subject to risks and uncertainties, including risks and uncertainties outside the control of TNC. Actual events or results or the actual performance of Cumberland Forest, LP, may differ materially from those reflected or contemplated in such forward-looking statements and, as such, no investor should rely on any such statements. Such statements are also subject to several uncertainties and factors outside TNC's control. Such factors include but are not limited to, uncertainty regarding and changes in global economic or market conditions, including those affecting industries related to the material presented in this Impact Report, and changes in US or foreign government policies, laws, regulations, and practices. Opinions expressed are current opinions as of the date of this Impact Report. Should estimates, projections, and assumptions or these other uncertainties and factors materialize in unexpected ways, actual results could differ materially from the forward-looking statements in this Impact Report. While the assumptions underlying these forward-looking statements may be reasonable under current circumstances, readers should bear in mind that such assumptions are inherently uncertain and subjective, and that past or projected performance is not necessarily indicative of future results. No representation or warranty, express or implied, is made as to the accuracy or completeness of the information contained in this Impact Report, and nothing shall be relied upon as a promise or representation as to the performance of any investment in Cumberland Forest, LP.



INTRODUCTION



Greg Meade

Greg Meade
Cumberland Forest
Project Director
NatureVest
The Nature Conservancy

The Cumberland Forest Project (the Project) is an impact investment fund formed in 2018 to acquire and operate 253,000 acres of working forest land in the Central Appalachians. Backed by private investors, the Project seeks to provide positive conservation and community benefits alongside financial returns. The Project comprises two properties known as “Ataya,” located in Kentucky and Tennessee, and “Highlands,” located in Virginia. Together the properties represent one of The Nature Conservancy’s (TNC) largest conservation projects in the eastern United States. This report provides a summary of the conservation and community impacts delivered by the Project across its entire portfolio up to Dec 31, 2024.

In the following pages, we take stock of the Project’s progress toward long-term impact goals related to sustainable forest management, long-term protection, climate mitigation, recreational access, and support for local economic diversification.

Achievements to date include:

- » Secured permanent open space easements now cover over 121,473 acres across Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia, equal to 48% of the Cumberland Forest Project area.
- » Provided permanent public recreational access across 98,617 acres in Kentucky and Tennessee.
- » Managed the forested land continuously over 5 years according to the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) principles and criteria.

- » Achieved cumulative carbon sequestration of approximately 4.5 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e), verified through the California Air Resources Board.
- » Secured 22 solar energy generation and 4 storage project lease options with the potential to provide 179.4 megawatts of solar energy and 320 megawatts of energy storage.
- » Supported over 40 individual projects through the Cumberland Forest Community Fund, with over USD 700,000 in funding committed so far.

The following impact report provides additional details and metrics to aid in tracking progress over time, with a focus on our 2024 accomplishments. We also include qualitative updates from the field regarding the impact of the Project’s ownership and operation of the properties on the local environment and adjacent communities. To learn more, visit the [Cumberland Forest Project website](#) for the latest updates and a comprehensive archive of our achievements.

As we enter the sixth year of the Cumberland Forest Project, we have really hit our stride and understand the enormous potential and responsibility of managing this project. While this impact report demonstrates our significant accomplishments, we still have much progress to make and several years ahead to reach our goals.

It is our privilege to manage these assets for the benefit of people and nature, and we hope you find this report both informative and inspiring. We thank the fund’s investors and other supporters for making these positive impacts on the environment and local communities possible.



WHAT'S INSIDE THIS REPORT?

Inside, you'll discover project updates and photos of our activities and achievements in 2024. This report delves into our restoration and reforestation initiatives, sustainable forest management practices, recreation expansion efforts, renewable energy projects, wildlife reintroduction and tourism.

Join us in exploring these impactful stories and discover how our collective actions are shaping a better future in this area for people and nature.

PROTECTING NATURE, STRENGTHENING ECONOMIES

Since 2021, The Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) have been dedicated to protecting the Cumberland region's natural beauty and ecological significance. Through the Cumberland Forest Project, they have safeguarded over 44,000 acres in the North Cumberland Wildlife Management Area (WMA). This project, spanning 253,000 acres across Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia, showcases the power of collaboration and a commitment to preserving nature for future generations.

In late 2024, a significant milestone was reached, with the expansion of 2,613 acres, adding the Otey Mills Refuge Unit to the existing WMA. This land is now a sanctuary for wildlife and a haven for outdoor enthusiasts.

The Otey Mills tract is part of one of the most intact temperate hardwood forests in the world. It serves as a crucial migratory corridor for wildlife, especially as species adapt to climate change. Here, Tennessee's elk herd roams freely, and the endangered Indiana bat finds refuge. The rare Cumberland Gap cave beetle, found nowhere else on Earth, thrives in this unique habitat.

The economic impact of the North Cumberland WMA is profound. Valued at over USD 22 million annually, it supports more than 500 private sector jobs. Public access to this area fuels outdoor recreation, driving job creation, tourism, and local business growth. The newly protected tract will be managed for passive recreational uses, such as hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing, and hiking while prohibiting motorized access to protect sensitive habitats.

This acquisition aligns with multiple state and regional conservation plans, including TWRA's Tennessee Wildlife Legacy Plan and the Tennessee State Wildlife Action Plan. The tract's northern boundary abuts Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, and its preservation will protect the views of the Cumberland Trail, enhancing the area's scenic value.

The newly expanded North Cumberland Wildlife Management Area is a testament to what can be achieved through dedication and collaboration.

"We are thrilled to see the culmination of this multi-year, multi-partner project, where all partners shared a unified vision to protect these vital ecosystems for future generations. This acquisition is a testament to our collective commitment to forested habitat conservation and climate change adaptation."

LAUREL CREECH

State Director of Tennessee, The Nature Conservancy



Photo: A view of the rolling hills and sloped clearing at the Otey Mills Wildlife Management Area. © Gabrielle Lynch/TNC

TIMBER TALES: FORESTRY IN APPALACHIA

When The [Nature Conservancy's Clinch Valley Program](#) began sustainable timber harvesting in 2002, we knew they could make forests healthier, more diverse, and more resilient through active forest management and sustainable timber harvesting. The careful balance between sustainable harvesting, carbon projects, and recreational benefits are key parts of our Cumberland Forest Management Plans, with harvesting on the Cumberland Forest removing less than 25% of annual growth.

Through its innovative funding approach, the Cumberland Forest Project sustainably manages some of the forest resources through both commercial timber harvesting and non-commercial forest stand improvement activities such as controlling invasive species, crop tree release, and tree plantings. The Project's use of sustainable forestry—and commitment to the highest level of forestry excellence—has boosted local economies and created job opportunities in the local area.

The Project aims to achieve several key Sustainable Forestry goals, generating strong outcomes as of 2024:

- » **Improve forest health.** All timber harvesting areas include protective stream-side buffers and other “no harvest” retention areas to ensure habitat connectivity and water quality. Additionally, operations across the Project are audited annually by the FSC® to ensure adherence to strict sustainability standards. In 2024, the Project received high-performance marks from the FSC®, including special recognition for demonstrating “excellent examples” of stream crossings.
- » **Increase sustainable timber harvesting and carbon sequestration.** At its launch in 2018, the Project aimed to sequester 5 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) through improved forest management throughout the lifetime of the project. Progress towards this goal is measured via the third-party certification of our registered carbon offset projects under California Air Resources Board standards. Six years later, we are proud to share that efforts from our team and our partners have already resulted in an estimated sequestration of 4.5 metric

tons of CO₂e (90% of our total target). In addition, the Project team maintained all their logging contractors in 2024, sustainably harvesting 3 million board feet of sawtimber that was delivered to over a dozen different local and regional mills.

- » **Support local forestry jobs.** Mark, pictured on page 6, is the Central Appalachian Forest Manager for NatureVest, and he is just one of the nearly 60 direct local jobs—including loggers, truck drivers, carbon verifiers, and foresters—supported by this work. To date, we have worked with around 20 contractors to conduct sustainable timber harvesting and other forest management activities on approximately 5,500 acres, resulting in the delivery of forest products to more than 25 local and regional mills.



The Cumberland Forest is a vital ecosystem supporting robust tree growth, diverse wildlife, and clean water. © Daniel White/TNC



Photos from top: Mark Rogers, Central Appalachian Forest Manager, shares a timber harvest treatment plan, while leading a site tour. © Daniel White/TNC; Logger Brian Thomas discusses the silvicultural treatment he is implementing on a forest stand with TNC forester. Silvicultural practices are implemented to ensure future stands are resilient. © Jesse Achtenberg/TNC



Commitment to Forest Health

Healthy forests are essential for providing clean water, supporting wildlife habitat, enhancing climate resilience, and boosting economies. The trees of the Cumberland Forest don't just contribute locally; their impact resonates globally.

Healthy forests are not guaranteed. Many of our forest stands suffer from previous unsustainable management practices, such as overharvesting, poor logging techniques, and lack of reforestation efforts. These practices lead to soil degradation, loss of biodiversity, and weakened tree resilience. Modern threats to healthy trees include invasive species, as well as the impacts of climate change, which alter growing conditions and make trees more susceptible to pests and diseases.

Restoring and maintaining healthy forests requires active, sustainable forest management and a thoughtful harvesting prescription that can reset the stage for a more resilient forest in the future, addressing both past mismanagement and future threats.

Photo: Healthy trees in the Cumberland Forest are vital for maintaining robust ecosystems and ensuring the long-term health and productivity of our forests. © Daniel White/TNC

THRIVING TOGETHER: COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Cumberland Forest Community Fund (Community Fund) is a local grant program aimed at supporting nature-based economic and community development in Southwest Virginia, Tennessee, and Kentucky. The Cumberland Forest Limited Partnership provides funding for grants to implement exciting projects that support local jobs, outdoor recreation, nature-based economic development, and green infrastructure investment, while improving land, water, and air quality within the program area.

The Community Fund is primarily supported through mining and gas royalties. In 2024 alone we distributed USD 112,000 of mineral royalties to our community partners, bringing the total distributed to over USD 500,000 since the beginning of the Community Fund. Generous philanthropic donations to TNC made by individuals and organizations who care about our work in the Central Appalachians also contribute to the Community Fund. TNC’s philanthropic efforts contributed an additional USD 100,000 to the Community Fund in 2024, and over USD 300,000 philanthropic dollars since project inception.

Grant funding through the Community Fund is available for local projects that enhance economic diversification, build community capacity, and improve environmental quality within the program area. TNC partners with [UVA](#)



© Wilkinson Visual

[Wise](#) for the management of projects in Virginia, the [Clinch-Powell Resource Conservation and Development Council \(CPRCD\)](#) in Tennessee, and the [Mountain Association](#) in Kentucky.

2024 COMMUNITY FUND-SUPPORTED PROJECTS BY STATE

Tennessee	Virginia	Kentucky
Guardians of the Gap Tri-State Outdoors Fest, the Cumberland Gap Adventure Company, the Clearfork Community Institute Community Outdoor Interpretive Center, the Woodland Community Land Trust Trails, and Campbell County Litter Control.	New community composting program in Buchanan County, outdoor education programs in Wise and Russell Counties, trail enhancements across numerous trails, wildlife viewing opportunities in Buchanan County, support of a Clinch River aquatic research facility in Saint Paul, and a public pavilion in Lebanon.	Rooftop solar panels and battery storage for backup power at the Leslie County Animal Shelter, a solar installation for the Middlesboro Community Center, and upcoming solar projects at the Redbird Mission school in Bell County and the Knox County Economic Opportunity Center.



EXPANDING COMMUNITY ACCESS. David Gabbert, the Garden Manager with Groundwork (Tazewell) and Appalachian Sustainable Development (ASD), is one of this year's award recipients. This grant will be used to install a waterline in the community garden. This improvement will ensure that the garden remains a thriving, inclusive space for the entire community.

© Appalachian Sustainable Development

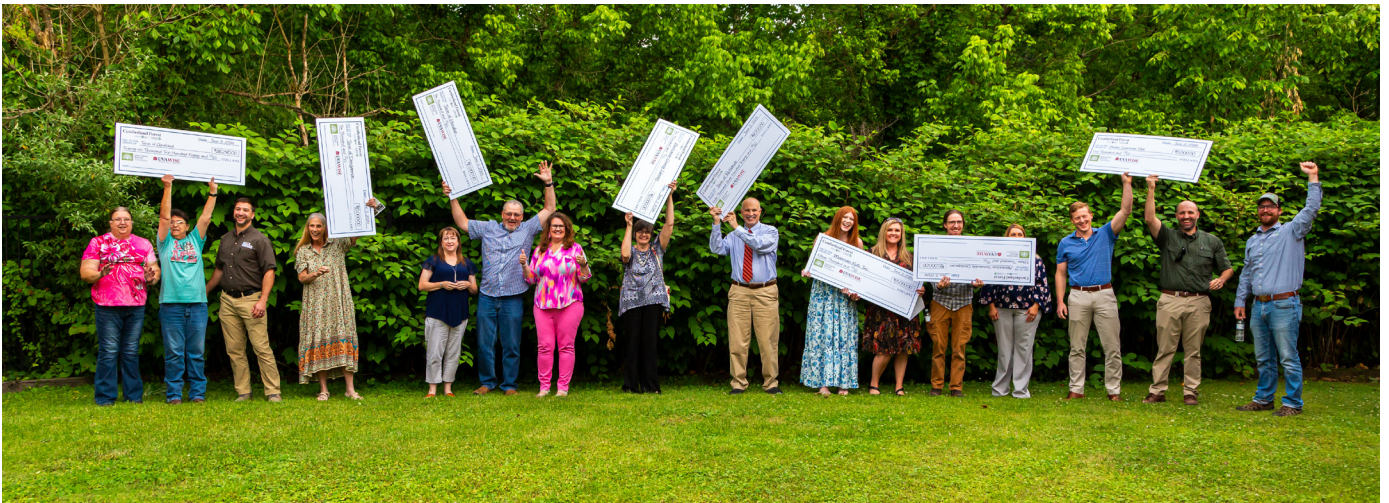
COMMUNITY TREE PLANTING. Community members of Cleveland, VA join town employee Thomas Cooke to plant the first tree of the native tree planting project.

© Nick Proctor/TNC



2024 GRANT AWARDS. TNC Community Outreach Manager Nick Proctor embraces Debra Horne, Mayor of Dungannon, VA, as she accepts a grant award during the ceremony in June 2024.

© SWVA Photography



2024 GRANT RECIPIENTS. Cumberland Forest Community Fund grant recipients celebrate the power of the community during the awards ceremony in June 2024.

© SWVA Photography

Empowering Communities Through Solar Energy

The Nature Conservancy and the Cumberland Forest partnership recently supported a second community solar installation in eastern Kentucky. The Cumberland Forest Community Fund, which previously provided the largest grant for a solar installation at the Middlesboro Community Center, has now funded rooftop solar panels for the Leslie County Animal Shelter.

In this latest project, the Community Fund, along with the Appalachian Solar Finance Fund, General Motors Resiliency Fund, and the Leslie County government, provided the necessary funding.

The solar installation at the Leslie County Animal Shelter is designed to save 40,000 kilowatt hours annually, amounting to an annual savings of USD 5,600. This represents about 70% of the shelter's energy bill. Additionally, battery storage has been installed to provide backup power during outages, ensuring the shelter remains operational even during power disruptions.

This project exemplifies how the region can continue its legacy of energy production while embracing new solutions. By distributing mining royalties to local communities, the Cumberland Forest Project is helping to lower utility bills, reduce carbon emissions, and support economic development. The next community solar project is planned for Redbird Mission in Bell County, with further projects being identified to continue this impactful work.



Photos, from top: Rooftop solar installation at the Middlesboro Community Center, funded in part by The Cumberland Forest Community Fund. © Mike Wilkinson; New solar installation at the Leslie County Animal Shelter. © Mountain Association



A BALANCED ECOSYSTEM: RESTORATION AND REFORESTATION

In March 2024, the Cumberland River Compact, a land trust dedicated to improving water quality in the Cumberland River Basin, completed an ambitious reforestation project in East Tennessee, planting over 30,000 native tree seedlings on a previously mined site, known as “Hurricane Ridge.” As part of the Cumberland Forest Project, the site aims to restore ecological balance and promote healthy aquatic habitat on 40 acres that have been heavily impacted by mining activities.

In early August 2024, a tree count at Hurricane Ridge revealed an impressive density of approximately 790 trees per acre, including native species like white oak, shortleaf pine, sycamore, cedar, and black cherry. This number includes surviving planted seedlings and additional native species that naturally germinated from existing seed stock. The Compact planted at a rate of 700 seedlings per acre, with the expectation that only 70% would reach maturity due to deer and elk browsing, climatic conditions, and natural thinning.

The reforestation project also saw an abundance of flowers and groundcover, including goldenrod, blackberry, passionflower, and red clover. Although invasive species like lespedeza were present, the amount of autumn olive and royal paulownia, two problematic invasive species, was greatly reduced.

The Compact’s Working Lands Program Coordinator, Kaela Walton-Sather, and Urban Forestry Operations Manager, Brock Rovenstine, conducted the tree count. Their expertise ensured accurate measurements and highlighted the project’s success. The sudden appearance of a rattlesnake on their worksite was a clear reminder of why safety measures are so crucial in these remote regions.

The Compact’s reforestation efforts are driven by the goal of improving water quality in the Cumberland River basin. The Cumberland River provides drinking water and habitat

to 3 million people and thousands of species. Reforesting previously mined land helps mitigate water contamination and habitat degradation, contributing to healthier ecosystems for the benefit of people and nature.

The Hurricane Ridge Project is part of a larger effort to reverse habitat decline and water quality degradation in Appalachia. The Compact collaborates with partners like the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation and the United States Department of the Interior to achieve these goals.

As the 40-acre forest at Hurricane Ridge continues to mature, it will serve as a model for successful reforestation projects that can be replicated and scaled in countless areas. The Compact, along with TNC and other partners, will continue to monitor the site to ensure lessons learned are applied at a wider scale. The reforestation at Hurricane Ridge stands as a testament to what can be achieved through collaboration and dedication to environmental conservation.



Professional tree planters fill their packs with native tree species as part of the restoration project on Cumberland Forest Project’s Ataya property. © Link Elmore/TNC

NATURE'S PLAYGROUND: EXPANDING RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

Creating recreation opportunities in natural areas offers a multitude of benefits, ranging from enhancing health and well-being to fostering economic growth, promoting social cohesion, and encouraging environmental appreciation.

To improve access to recreation in the area, in 2024, TNC collaborated with the Southwest Regional Recreation Authority (SRRA) on several recreation projects in Southwest Virginia. One project was the creation of the first non-motorized trail, the Dante Miner's Trail, on the Spearhead Trails system. An additional 8-mile trail connecting the towns of St. Paul and Dante, Virginia was also opened as part of the Mountain View System.

In Tennessee, we added 3,000 acres of trails for non-motorized use, including hiking, biking, and horseback riding. TNC and SRRA plan to connect this trail with a non-motorized trail system that is being constructed on an adjacent landowner's property and funded by the Community Fund. Further, there are also plans to construct a parking area for this trail system in the spring of 2025.

In 2024, the Cumberland Forest Project received additional funding from the Yamaha Outdoors Access Initiative (YOAI) and the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) to improve over 10 miles of OHV trail conditions and reduce their environmental impact, by improving creek crossings and stabilizing the trail. This funding will help increase trail safety while minimizing negative effects on sensitive, high-conservation value streams and riparian habitats.

The Cumberland Forest Project team also collaborated with both the Spearhead Regional Recreation Authority, which operates in Virginia, and TWRA to update several maps and provide the public with online versions showing real-time information on open and closed trails.

Mountain bikers racing through the autumn leaves on a new non-motorized trail in Dante Miner's Trail, Virginia. © Nick Proctor/TNC; Rock climber on the Project property in Southwest Virginia. © Charlie Ritter/TNC; UTV riders take a break on the Project's Ataya Property. © Branden Marlow/TWRA



ANTLERS IN APPALACHIA: ELK REINTRODUCTION

The Project's properties sit in the epicenter of elk reintroduction efforts in Tennessee, Kentucky, and Virginia. Eastern elk were originally native to the area but were hunted extensively as Europeans spread west into the Appalachians; sadly, elk were eventually declared to be locally extirpated in the 19th century. Reintroduction efforts in the region began in the late 1990s, and today there are viable elk herds in all three states. The herds have become a tourist attraction for wildlife viewing and hunting.

Hunting: In Kentucky, the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources (KDFWR) estimates that elk hunting on the Ataya Property helped generate up to USD 100,000 in direct spending in 2024. The total economic impact of elk hunting in the state's portion of the Project is estimated at over USD 200,000 annually.

Population Research: In 2024 we continued to assist the elk population research efforts of KDFWR on Ataya. Research on the Cumberland Forest property involves fitting elk with radio collars, releasing them back on site, and monitoring movements, survival, birth rates, and following up with calf survival as part of ongoing elk research.

Elk Viewing: Elk-based tourism is a popular draw for the Project in all three states. In Virginia, Breaks Interstate Park organizes elk viewing tours with stops on the Project's property. According to estimates by park officials, elk tourists in 2024 numbered 746, with an estimated total economic benefit of USD 349,000. A majority of the tour participants are not local and spend an extended amount of time in the area during their visit. In addition to the Breaks Interstate Park tours, there are numerous other elk viewing tours held by the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources, The Nature Conservancy, and the Southwest Virginia Sportsman. The combined economic benefits of these Virginia tours totalled more than USD 500,000 in 2024.



Elk (*Cervus canadensis*) near Breaks, Virginia. © Steven David Johnson/TNC

Continued Habitat Restoration: In Tennessee, elk habitat restoration efforts are currently underway on approximately 542 acres of previously mined lands on Ataya in partnership with Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) and in cooperation with the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. Restoration activities in 2024 included invasive species control, woody vegetation removal, and revegetation.

In Kentucky, collaboration between The Nature Conservancy, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, and the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, has begun on restoring grassland habitat and removing invasive herbaceous and shrub species. Cumberland Forest WMA was once intensively mined resulting in large amounts of grassland habitat loss that was incredibly important to elk and other grassland species. A management solution of aerial herbicide application and prescribed fire treat invasive species and restore early successional habitats.

In Virginia, the Cumberland Forest Project team continues to work with the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Southwest Virginia Sportsman, Buchanan County, and the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) to increase quality elk habitat and expand opportunities for public elk viewing on several areas of the Highlands property in Buchanan County. These partners were awarded an Abandoned Mine Land (AML) Pilot (now AMLER) grant for USD 2.25 million to implement vegetation management on several large tracts within the Highlands property that aim to improve elk habitat on former mined lands.

Photos, clockwise from left: Burn Crew implementing prescribed burn to restore elk habitat on Cumberland Forest’s Ataya property in Kentucky. © Chris Garland/TNC; While on an elk viewing tour, TNC volunteers use spotting scopes to watch the Virginia elk herd below. © Nick Proctor/TNC; Kids in the Woods is an annual event where school age students come to learn about fresh water, forestry, elk reintroduction, and a number of other nature-based topics. Regional partners come together to put on the event, sponsored by the Big Sandy Soil and Water office. © Nick Proctor/TNC





A NEW LEGACY: WRITING APPALACHIA'S NEXT CHAPTER TOGETHER

Appalachia has long been perceived as “the other America,” a region distinct from the mainstream narrative of American progress and prosperity. In recent years, however, there has been a resurgence of interest in Appalachia, both politically and culturally. The region has become a focal point for discussions about economic inequality, environmental protection, and the impacts of globalization. This renewed interest in Appalachia presents an opportunity to reframe the conversation about the region, moving beyond stereotypes to acknowledge its resilience, creativity, and potential for growth.

Historically Speaking

The earliest people in the Appalachian region were Indigenous peoples of North America, including the Cherokee, Shawnee, and Iroquois. Their deep connection to the environment was evident in their sustainable practices and respect for nature.

The landscape of Appalachia started to change in the 18th century with the arrival of European settlers who relied on agriculture until the discovery of coal began to transform the region. By the 19th century, the Industrial Revolution was in full swing, and the demand for coal skyrocketed. Appalachia, with its abundant coal reserves, became a focal point for industrial development. Coal was the economic lifeblood, despite the challenging working conditions that came with it.

Industrial Devolution

Despite the initial boom, the region suffered from a lack of economic diversification due in part to reliance on the coal industry. As the industry declined throughout the late 20th and early 21st centuries, communities in Appalachia suffered from economic challenges and population decline, underscoring the need for economic diversification.

Renewed Energy through Collaboration and Community

Efforts to promote tourism, education, and healthcare have been part of this economic shift. The team at the Cumberland Forest Project is proud to be playing a role in this shift through the investment and initiatives you have read about throughout this report.

Seeing first-hand the shift in Appalachia's story, we see a return, in many ways, to the Indigenous peoples of North America's principles of sustainable practices and respect for nature. This journey has progressed through the phases of industrialization and economic development, leading to a global shift toward less extractive methods. Locally, this shift is reflected in approaches that both respect and restore nature, while also providing economic benefits and fostering community development. These efforts are helping to shape the next chapter in Appalachia's story.

Sunset on the Cumberland Forest Project's priority elk habitat area on Highlands property in Virginia. © Daniel White/TNC

Looking forward

The Cumberland Forest Project is part of Appalachia's broader ecosystem, both literally and metaphorically. This initiative showcases what local communities, strategic partnerships, philanthropists, investors, developers, conservationists, and government can achieve by working together. The Cumberland Forest Project is a story of pioneering land management and land conservation, renewable energy, public access, sustainable forestry, habitat restoration, and going from mines to megawatts with solar installation on former coal mines. That is true transformation.

With the help of our supporters, we have made significant progress. We can't wait to write the next chapter, together.



APPENDIX

PROJECT OBJECTIVES ACHIEVED TO DATE

Desired Outcomes 2021–Fund Exit		Outcomes to Date
Investment Management & Community Impact	Demonstrate viable financial returns of the Cumberland Forest Project (the Project) as a sustainably-managed forestry investment model. Establish a Community Fund and invest 100% of mineral-related revenues into local projects.	Supported over 40 individual projects through the Cumberland Forest Community Fund, with over USD 700,000 in funding committed so far. 100% of royalties have been earmarked for distribution.
Protection	Secure long-term conservation protections (above the carbon commitment baseline) on 56% or more of the Project property, achieving conservation and permanent public access in a portion of each of the 3 states by 2029.	48% of the Project area (121,473+ acres) has been secured as permanent open space easements.
Forestry & Carbon	Manage the forest resources on the Project property to avoid emissions and/or sequester 5 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO ₂ e) of verified carbon offsets over the life of the Project, providing revenue towards the Project's Investment Management outcome. Improve forest condition and structure on the Project's property to maintain and enhance climate change resiliency and connectivity while supporting local jobs and providing revenue towards the Project's Investment Management Outcome.	Achieved cumulative carbon sequestration of approximately 4.5 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO ₂ e), verified through the California Air Resources Board. Supported nearly 60 direct local jobs—including loggers, truck drivers, carbon verifiers, and foresters—and worked with around 20 contractors to conduct sustainable timber harvesting and other forest management activities on approximately 5,500 acres, resulting in the delivery of forest products to more than 25 local and regional mills. All timber harvesting areas include protective stream-side buffers and other “no harvest” retention areas to ensure habitat connectivity and water quality. Additionally, operations across the Project are audited annually by the FSC® to ensure adherence to strict sustainability standards. In 2024, the Project received high-performance marks from the FSC®, including special recognition for demonstrating “excellent examples” of stream crossings.

Desired Outcomes 2021–Fund Exit		Outcomes to Date
Recreation	Support the expansion of a sustainable outdoor recreation industry in the Appalachian Coalfields by providing equitable opportunities for people to connect with nature on the Project land. Make the Project property more accessible for recreational use via private and public leasing programs. Collaborate with recreational authorities and public agencies to create, maintain, and improve recreational infrastructure that contributes to local economies while protecting native habitat and water quality.	98.7K acres of permanent public recreational access has been secured across KY and TN. Collaborations with the Appalachian Regional Commission, Spearhead Trails, and the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency facilitated expanded outdoor recreational infrastructure, improved and new trails, signage and maps.
Energy	Demonstrate the currently unproven viability of constructing and operating utility-scale solar projects on former coal mines in Central Appalachia by leasing compatible areas for development and supporting developers’ efforts to permit, construct, and operate at least 5 new solar projects with a total installed capacity of ~100 MWs. Seek to establish at least one demonstration solar project in each of the 3 states (KY, VA, TN). Serve as a leading “proof of concept” project for The Nature Conservancy’s “Mining the Sun” initiative in terms of “smart siting” principles, coordination with mineral interests, and community benefits.	Secured 22 utility-scale solar energy generation projects on mining land and 4 storage project lease options with the potential to provide 179.4 megawatts of solar energy and 320 megawatts of energy storage. In addition, multiple community-based rooftop solar projects have been supported by the Community Fund.
Project Support	Ensure coordination/collaboration/communication, priority projects, roles, and expertise are in service to/ support team priorities in order to achieve desired outcomes, e.g. regular meetings, GIS and communications/ product database management, key science projects reports, maps, metric tracking, legal, and finance.	We are successfully managing this private for-profit impact investment fund across a highly matrixed organization, delivering real impact as evidenced in this report. Our efforts in coordination and collaboration have consistently supported team priorities and achieved desired outcomes.

Global Impact Metric Indicators

The Project tracks or will track several metrics that align with globally recognized impact reporting standards. The table below details progress against relevant metrics identified by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) formulated by the United Nations General Assembly, as well as select metrics defined by the Global Impact Investing Network (GIIN) Impact Reporting and Investment Standards (IRIS). Generally, the Project's strategy and operations support the following SDGs: Climate Action, Life on Land, and Responsible Consumption and Production.

Desired Outcomes 2021—Fund Exit	
Sustainable development goals	Year ended December 31, 2024
Forest area as a proportion of total land area	82%
Sustainable forest management	100%
Coverage by protected areas of important sites for mountain biodiversity (acres)	3,724
GIIN IRIS	
Area of Land Deforested (acres)	0
Area of Land Reforested (acres)	68
Area of Trees Planted: Native Species (acres)	68
Area of Trees Planted: Total (acres)	68
Area of Natural Regeneration (acres, cumulative)	624
Charitable Donations (dollars, via Community Economic Development)	\$112,000 ¹
Forest Management Plan	Complete
Greenhouse Gas Emissions Avoided due to Carbon Offsets Sold (tons CO ₂ e, gross ²)	22,500
Length of Streams Restored (miles)	0
Protected Land Area: Permanent (acres)	2,613
Units/Volume Sold: Certified sawtimber (MBF, FSC certified)	2,790
Units/Volume Sold: Certified pulpwood (tons, FSC certified)	6,633

¹ Charitable donations included here represent calendar year 2024 only. Total charitable donations since 2019 exceed \$500K.

² All carbon figures are presented in gross tons, which includes both saleable carbon offsets and carbon offsets deposited into required buffer accounts