

# afield

YEAR-END 2025

NORTH CAROLINA



# DIRECTOR'S NOTE

As 2025 draws to a close, I find myself quoting Charles Dickens from *The Tale of Two Cities*: “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times...” This year was defined not only by the challenges we faced but also by the unwavering determination with which we met them. From facing the aftermath of Hurricane Helene to political and economic uncertainties, this year tested our resolve—but it also revealed the depth of our commitment to protecting our state’s landscapes, wildlife, and natural resources.

Despite many challenging external headwinds, our chapter has made remarkable strides. As you’ll see in the following pages, we protected thousands of acres, utilized new technology in our burn program, restored thousands of acres of degraded peatlands, and worked to create healthy functioning floodplains. We also worked to maintain sources of federal funding that stand to have an outsized impact on the scale of our conservation work.

Our science-driven approach continues to guide us in everything that we do, along with our rigorous alignment to the organization’s 2030 Goals.

To do all of this in 2025 took incredible perseverance from our people. Our staff, volunteers, partners, and supporters showed up—again and again—with creativity, resilience, and hope. Whether navigating the effects of once-



in-a-lifetime events like Helene or advocating for nature-based solutions in complex political environments, your dedication made the difference.

Thank you for standing with us. Together, we will enter 2026 not just with hope but with the hard-earned confidence that perseverance, partnership, and purpose will continue to move conservation forward.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Katherine D. Skinner".

Katherine Skinner



*The mission of The Nature Conservancy is to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends.*

## THE NORTH CAROLINA CHAPTER

### WE'VE MOVED!

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**CHANGE IN OUR DONATION ADDRESS:** A self-addressed envelope is included in this newsletter. Although it goes to a Virginia address, please be assured that your money will come to the North Carolina chapter of The Nature Conservancy.

ON THE COVER: Grandfather Mountain in late fall © Jim Magruder/TNC Photo Contest 2019. THIS PAGE: Paint Hill Farm © Margaret Fields. RIGHT: Pine warbler © Sujata Roy/TNC Photo Contest 2019.

# Snow Much to Do, So Little Time!



## WE'RE HERE TO HELP!

Support the world you love, both today and in the future. Many charitable giving options are simple, offer tax savings, and can be tailored to your situation.

- If you're at least 70½, you can make a qualified charitable distribution from your IRA and avoid income taxes on the distribution.\*
- Have a Donor-Advised Fund or "Giving Account"? Recommend a grant to support TNC.
- You can name TNC as a full, partial, or contingent beneficiary of your retirement account.

*\*Transfers must be made directly from your plan custodian.*

➔ **TO LEARN MORE** about how to support the world you love and make the most out of your giving in 2025, contact Nelda Siemion at 919-246-5189 or [nelda.siemion@tnc.org](mailto:nelda.siemion@tnc.org).

*This information is provided to promote charitable giving methods. The Nature Conservancy does not render tax or legal advice. Please consult your professional financial or tax advisor before making a charitable gift.*



# 2025

## BY THE NUMBERS\*

Thank you so much for your support in achieving these conservation successes!

# 5,177

## ACRES

PROTECTED ACROSS 10 PROPERTIES

# 2,732

## ACRES

CONVEYED AS ADDITIONS TO PUBLIC LANDS

# 7,500

## ACRES

OF PEATLAND RESTORED AT ANGOLA BAY GAME LAND

# 10

## BARRIER REMOVAL

PROJECTS LAUNCHED ON FIVE PROPERTIES

# 1,759

## ACRES

BURNED USING THE AERIAL IGNITION DRONE

# 63

## CONTROLLED BURNS

LED BY TNC ON A TOTAL OF 5,117 ACRES ACROSS THE STATE

# 93

## CONTROLLED BURNS

ASSISTED ON BY TNC ON A TOTAL OF 20,894 ACRES IN NC, SC, AND TN



THIS PAGE: (Top) Plott Balsam preserve is now part of the Blue Ridge Parkway © David Ray; (Bottom) A controlled burn in the Sandhills © Alan Teed. OPPOSITE: (Top) A loyal donor walk at Weymouth Woods © Sophia Torres; (Bottom) TNC and NC Wildlife Resource Commission staff tag shad on the Cape Fear River © Maggie Gaither/WRC.



**529,408**  
**PEOPLE**

REACHED ACROSS THREE NC  
SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

**17**

**HEADSTARTED  
BOG TURTLES**

RELEASED INTO WETLANDS IN  
WESTERN NC

**1,146**  
**MEMBERS**

OF NC'S LEGACY CLUB—A GROUP OF  
SUPPORTERS WHO HAVE INCLUDED  
TNC IN THEIR ESTATE PLANS

**100%**  
**COMPLETION**

FOR NC'S 2030 GOAL OF 339  
RIVER MILES WITH IMPROVED  
MANAGEMENT

*\*These numbers reflect our 2025 fiscal year—  
July 1, 2024–June 30, 2025.*

**4,133**  
**PEOPLE**

REACHED AT  
29 EVENTS IN THE  
COASTAL PLAIN



JOIN THE **23,000+ PEOPLE**  
WHO ARE SIGNED UP TO  
RECEIVE NATURE NEWS, A  
MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER.



**120**  
**SHAD AND  
STRIPED BASS**

TAGGED WITH ACADEMIC  
PARTNERS ON THE CAPE  
FEAR RIVER



# REBUILDING RESILIENCE IN WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA



In the year since Hurricane Helene reshaped western North Carolina's forests and rivers, the North Carolina chapter and many partners have been hard at work laying the foundation for long-term ecological recovery. From reconnecting stream systems to reducing wildfire risk, the restoration efforts now underway are designed not only to heal the land but also to make it more resilient against future storms and other threats.

TNC's work focuses on the Nantahala and Pisgah national forests and surrounding watersheds, where Helene's damage was especially severe. These landscapes are home to rich biodiversity, vital freshwater systems, and communities that depend on healthy ecosystems for clean water, recreation, and economic stability.

## Restoring Rivers and Watersheds

One of the most ambitious components of TNC's recovery effort is the improvement of five to seven priority watersheds, including the North and South Mills River, Davidson River, South Toe River, Wilson Creek, and Johns River. TNC aims to reduce sedimentation and restore aquatic connectivity over the next 10 years by:

**IMPROVING**  
**180**  
miles of river  
and their  
headwaters

**REMOVING**  
**30**  
aquatic  
barriers

**REMOVING**  
**30**  
headwater  
stream  
culverts



OPPOSITE: Hickory Nut Gorge in June 2025 © Margaret Fields. ABOVE LEFT: TNC intern Reagan Webb and members of the NC Wildlife Resources Commission collect and measure brook trout from the North Fork Ivy Creek in Buncombe County © Lucie Law. ABOVE RIGHT: A landslide into the South Toe River © Sara Gottlieb.



These interventions will help fish and other aquatic species, including hellbenders, to move freely through stream systems while also improving water quality and helping prevent washed-out culverts and flooded roads.

## Forest Health and Wildfire Mitigation

In the forests, TNC, along with our primary partner, the USDA Forest Service (USFS), is implementing a suite of restoration strategies to reduce wildfire risk

and promote native species regeneration. Strategies include:

- controlled burns to reduce fuel loads and encourage fire-adapted species like oak and hickory;
- reforestation to reestablish native tree cover;
- thinning and midstory treatments to encourage desired tree species, such as oak; and
- invasive species treatments to protect biodiversity and forest composition.



These efforts are informed by post-storm data, including landslide mapping and forest canopy assessments, which help identify areas most in need of intervention.

### A Science-Driven, Collaborative Approach

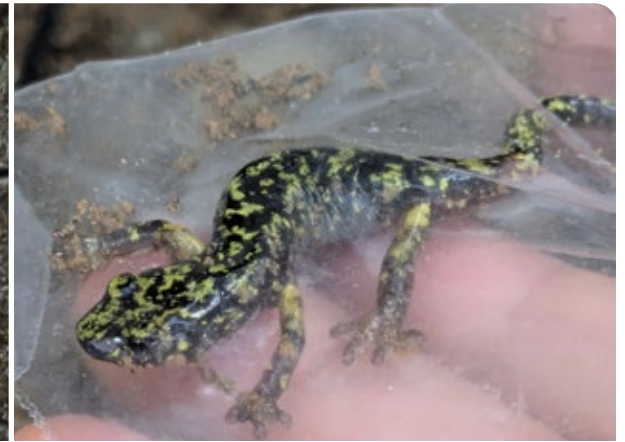
TNC's restoration work is guided by watershed restoration action plans developed in partnership with the USFS and other partners. These plans incorporate new data collected after Helene, including altered riverbed footprints and biodiversity surveys, to ensure that projects are targeted and effective.

"This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to rebuild stronger," says Megan Sutton, TNC's Southern Blue Ridge program director. "We're proud to bring our science, partnerships, implementation experience, and deep local knowledge to this critical work."

As restoration projects ramp up, the focus remains on resilience. By reconnecting rivers, restoring forests, and managing habitats, TNC is helping western North Carolina prepare for the future—one watershed, one forest, one community at a time.

**"THIS IS A ONCE-IN-A-GENERATION OPPORTUNITY TO REBUILD STRONGER."**

MEGAN SUTTON, TNC'S SOUTHERN BLUE RIDGE PROGRAM DIRECTOR



### Big Effort for a Small Critter

The Hickory Nut Gorge green salamander, a small salamander endemic to the 14-mile-long Hickory Nut Gorge, needs help. Before Helene, there were an estimated 200 to 500 individuals in existence. Now, after extensive flooding in the gorge that altered the entire riverbed, its population numbers are unknown.

To ensure the survival of this species, scientists are embarking on a mission to capture 25 individuals and bring them into a captive breeding program. The work is being led by the Amphibian and Reptile Conservancy (ARC) and the NC Wildlife Resources Commission alongside TNC and other partners.

TNC's Bat Cave Preserve has the second-largest known population of the salamander, and getting to it is no longer an easy walk across a bridge. Conservationists now must climb down large boulders from the temporary road to the river, walk through the river, and trek uphill through downed trees and debris on the other side.

Given that these 2-inch-long critters live in rock crevices, finding them takes both skill and patience. Rescuers must maneuver around large boulders to look carefully for the animals. In the spring, 15 salamanders were successfully transported to the North Carolina Zoo. On October 2, a team headed back to find more but were unsuccessful. Further recovery attempts will take place throughout the fall.

TNC's role in the long-term recovery of this species includes reestablishing access to the Bat Cave Preserve and surrounding areas. Being able to properly manage this land, primarily through invasive species treatments and native tree planting, will ensure that the returning salamanders have the best chance of survival.

THIS PAGE: (Left) ARC Executive Director JJ Apodaca and EMS Jenn White look for salamanders in October © Sophia Torres; (Right) This Hickory Nut Gorge green salamander has entered the breeding program © Brian Parr. OPPOSITE: Safety and rescue professionals help scientists get across the river to Bat Cave Preserve © Brian Parr.



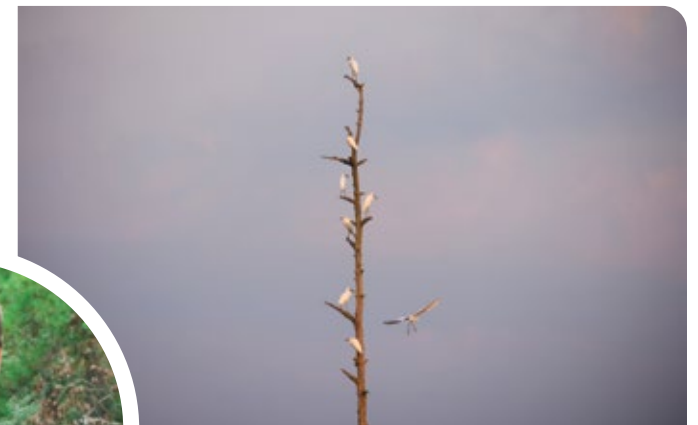




# A Marathon Peatland Photo Tour

BY ERIC SODERHOLM, TNC COASTAL WETLANDS  
RESTORATION MANAGER

It's 5:45 a.m. in late June at TNC's Green Swamp Preserve trailhead. It's already approaching 80 degrees; the thick air and pines aglow with first light. Photographer Travis Dove soon arrives, bleary eyed but in good spirits with two cameras slung shoulder to hip. Alex Parker, coastal game lands biologist with the NC Wildlife Resources Commission (WRC), pulls in and completes our roving trio. Between us, we've brought five different types of boots and waders needed for a two-day marathon tour of three unique peatland landscapes and the work TNC and WRC are doing to protect and restore these rare, vital ecosystems.



We hardly make it a few hundred yards into the preserve before we pause to revel in the blooming Venus flytraps and abundant toothache grass, bog cheetos, butterworts, and grass pink orchids. We stop at clusters of ripe, dew-covered blueberries and huckleberries. Our unhurried pace, allowing us to study each bear track and





deliberate on the finer points of navigating thick pocosin, is abruptly interrupted: TNC's Wilmington team sends word they are beginning a controlled burn just a little south of us in the preserve. With just enough time to slip on protective clothing, we attend their fire briefing and, moments later, are amid the crew carrying drip torches along the pocosin peatland edge.

We watch in awe as an aerial ignition drone drops fire balls into the forest. We see the spread of fire

and plumes of smoke before we leave the operation and continue our photo journey. Along the way, we discuss the critical nature of fire and the habitat benefits that will follow. This special peatland-dominated area, virtually unaffected by manmade ditches, is exceedingly rare in the state. Most of what remains are the ditched and drained peatlands that we are working to restore, and that is where we head next.

At Angola Bay Game Land, Travis puts his drone in the air to get a bird's-eye view of 7,500 acres of the completed peatland restoration area. The drone swoops low over several of the 37 water control structures that restrict water flow in the site's 140 miles of ditches. These new structures are the

backbone of the project. Alex and I treat them with a certain reverence, cleaning debris from their upstream bays and ensuring that the wooden boards set within them are holding tight. The structures allow the peat soil across this higher elevation headwater area to once again absorb rainwater that was freely running off the site down ditches toward low-lying communities for the last four decades.

We traverse the site's former pine plantation now planted with native Atlantic white cedar, cypress, and buttonbush as part of the restoration. The bright green seedlings are easy to spot in the dark brown muck. I brew our trio some tailgate coffee of similar color and, with all this talk of peat and muck, it only feels right to get a "deeper" look. A groundwater →

OPPOSITE: (Left) TNC Coastal Wetlands Restoration Manager Eric Soderholm measures water levels at Angola Bay Game Land; (Right) Egrets at Holly Shelter Game Land. THIS PAGE: (Left) Yellow pitcher plants at Holly Shelter; (Right) Soderholm holds peat soil at Angola Bay. All photos © Travis Dove.







monitoring well in need of repair offers a chance to collect an auger of soil and probe its depths. I have measured peat depth at more than six feet in this area. We want this peat, and the carbon within it, to stay here and continue to grow deeper.

Early the next morning, in nearby Holly Shelter Game Land, we find ourselves surrounded by egrets, lily pads, and even secretive alligators as we paddle across a vast wet-weather pond created by a wildfire that burned down into the peat soil. When the Juniper Road Fire in 2011 burned many feet deep into the dry, flammable soil across the game land's Ashes Creek headwaters and compromised critical roads, WRC managers knew they had work to do to help prevent the next fire. Alex began his career with WRC right here, in the wake of that fire. As we float above ground zero of that catastrophic wildfire, we study maps of the engineering that will guide our team's next steps in restoration. We cross a hunter footbridge to check on one of the 15 rotating acoustic monitoring sites that, after many seasons of recording the sounds of nature, will help us better understand the changes to biodiversity that accompany peatland restoration.

We end our tour by letting some dust fly behind the truck as we hustle to the Onslow Bight/Cape Fear Arch Joint Conservation Partnership meeting. There, we clean up as best we can and change into our fifth and final set of boots on this trek. Alex and I present to an audience of peers about both ongoing peatland



restoration projects. As I listen to the other speakers and participants working across this landscape, it is hard to ignore that so many of the special places on our coast are knit together by these ancient and fragile peat deposits. The innovation required in restoring them for the future must match the

challenges ahead, with benefits that ripple out far beyond the peat's edge.

OPPOSITE: Soderholm (back) and Alex Parker, with the NC Wildlife Resources Commission, paddle across a wet-weather pond created by a wildfire at Holly Shelter Game Land. THIS PAGE: (Clockwise from top) A weir holds back water at Angola Bay; a controlled burn at the Green Swamp Preserve; TNC Coastal Plain Stewardship Manager Nathan Burmester monitors the burn. All photos © Travis Dove.



Read this article online and see more photos at [nature.org/NCPeatlands](https://nature.org/NCPeatlands).



# CONSERVING A CRITICAL PIECE OF LONGLEAF CONNECTIVITY

Longleaf pine forests are an ecological hallmark of the American Southeast. Once blanketing over 90 million acres from Virginia to Texas, longleaf forests have dwindled to about 5.2 million acres today, up from a historical low of 3.2 million acres two decades ago. The Nature Conservancy is working to continue this upward trend by restoring and reconnecting this iconic and diverse ecosystem.

Alongside partners at other nonprofits and state and federal agencies, TNC aims to establish a resilient, interconnected network of longleaf pine forests, riverine corridors, and rare fire-dependent wetland habitats across southeastern North Carolina. Landscape connectivity is crucial for maintaining ecological processes, allowing species to move, migrate, and adapt to environmental changes. It supports healthy ecosystems, helps preserve biodiversity, and enhances resilience to climate change.

Our most ambitious protection target is one we have been working on for decades, and it is one of the most biodiverse natural areas in coastal North Carolina. The area sits just outside Wilmington near the confluence

of three major rivers: the Black, Northeast Cape Fear, and Cape Fear. As you can see from the red dashed box on the map, protecting parcels within this pinch point, where development pressures are already very high, will be both extremely challenging and critical to maintaining longleaf connectivity.

## At Risk: A Forest and Its Wildlife

Longleaf pine forests aren't just a landscape; they are a life support system. These forests, along with fire-dependent pocosin peatlands and pond pine woodlands, are home to species found nowhere else, including the federally threatened red-cockaded woodpecker (RCW). The RCW is the only woodpecker that excavates its nest cavities in living pine trees, relying heavily on mature longleaf stands.

As these habitats shrink, so too do the RCW populations. The decline of the species reflects the deterioration of vital longleaf ecosystems. With development pressures intensifying, the clock is ticking. If conservation of this land cannot be achieved in the near term, the land will be lost to development.

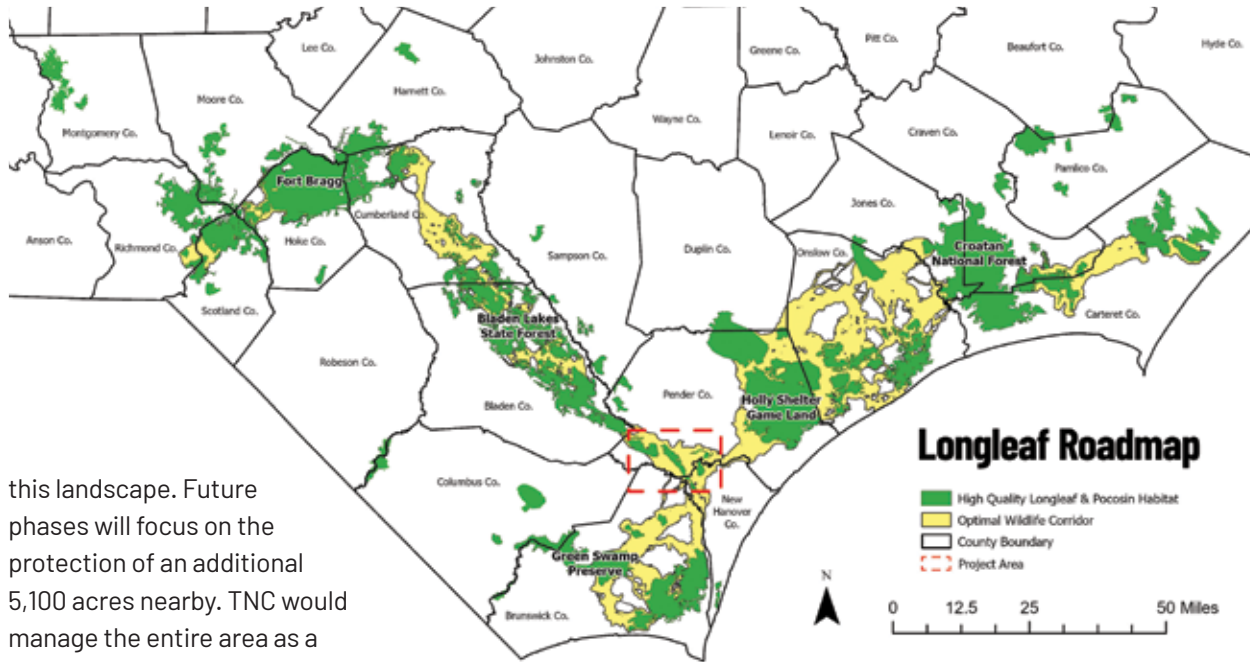
## A Pivotal Property

TNC and its partners have created a comprehensive road map showing priority areas of high-quality longleaf and pocosin habitat and the optimal wildlife corridors connecting these prime habitats.

Our immediate focus is the purchase of a linchpin 632-acre property in Pender County at the heart of







this landscape. Future phases will focus on the protection of an additional 5,100 acres nearby. TNC would manage the entire area as a conservation preserve and reintroduce controlled burning until the land can be transferred to the North Carolina State Parks system.

Conservationists envision this area as the core of a new state park within three years, and it would be the first in Pender County. Just nine miles from downtown Wilmington, this future park would offer vital public access to outdoor recreation and education for people and would also act as a refuge for wildlife, a corridor for species migration, and a buffer against the damaging impacts of climate change.

To realize this vision, TNC has laid out a bold three-phase land acquisition and management plan—but we need public and private support to make it happen.

“This is a rare and pivotal opportunity to stitch together a living landscape—one that protects longleaf pine, restores fire-dependent ecosystems and river corridors; and creates a legacy of access and resilience for the people of North Carolina,” says Kim Livingston, land protection specialist for TNC’s North Carolina chapter.

The project has secured \$3 million in state grant funding, which is a great start toward the \$10 million purchase price for the phase 1 parcel. However, the effort now hinges on raising an additional \$5 million in



OPPOSITE: A red-cockaded woodpecker peeks out of a cavity in a longleaf pine tree © Gary Michael Flannigan. THIS PAGE: An aerial view of an important longleaf pine ecosystem in Pender County © Margaret Fields.

private philanthropy to match and unlock these public funds by the end of 2025. As of early October, we are a little over halfway to this goal thanks to the generosity of a small group of committed supporters.



For more information about this and other fundraising priorities, please contact Director of Philanthropy Nelda Siemion at [nelda.siemion@tnc.org](mailto:nelda.siemion@tnc.org) or 919-246-5189.





# Margaret Fields: Celebrating 30 Years

When someone joins TNC's North Carolina chapter, Margaret Fields is inevitably one of the first people they get to know. Her institutional knowledge about the chapter makes her a go-to source for information and insights, and her affable nature makes her easy to approach with a question—or, more often, 20 questions.

"Margaret makes the effort to take new employees into the field, helping connect them to our work and the history of our chapter," says NC Director of Conservation Operations Jodie Lapoint, who has been working with Margaret for nearly 20 years. "It's really commendable."

This year, we celebrate Margaret's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary with the chapter. From her early days as a volunteer to her current role as GIS manager and drone specialist, Margaret's journey at TNC is a testament to her curiosity, adaptability, and a deep-rooted commitment to conservation.

"I started out just helping around the office as a volunteer," Margaret recalls. "It was really good exposure to the chapter and what everyone was doing." Her first official role came when she stepped into a receptionist position in 1995, a job she held for two years.



Margaret's big-picture thinking led to the creation of the Afield Preserve Guide, a project she worked on with then-Communications Director Ida Phillips. This 200-page book provides extremely valuable and practical advice on how to visit all the public lands that TNC had helped protect.

"I realized that TNC had been involved in protecting everything from state parks to national forests, and I thought that it needed to be in one place," Margaret said. "This was before everyone had the Internet."

Margaret's career evolved alongside the organization itself. She quickly transitioned into the chapter's first conservation coordinator role, managing hunting

THIS PAGE: (Above) Margaret participates in a controlled burn in the Sandhills; (Right) Margaret guides new staff on a paddle in the Black River in 2024. OPPOSITE: NC Chapter staff celebrate Margaret (front row in white shirt) in Durham on her 30th anniversary. All photos courtesy of Margaret Fields.





leases and collection permits, and eventually became the chapter's GIS lead just as ArcGIS was emerging as a desktop application. "[Head of Science and Stewardship] Sam Pearsall told me, 'Eventually, everyone will use this, but for now, you'll be the one to learn it and train others.'"

In the last several years, Margaret's drone work has

become a cornerstone of her contributions. After attending a TNC-led science conference in Austin in 2018, she returned with a clear mission: "We need a drone."

With support from leadership, she got licensed as a drone pilot and began capturing aerial imagery that would later prove invaluable during the COVID-19

pandemic. "Suddenly, we needed new ways to engage people," she said. "The drone gave us visuals, stories, and a way to connect with the land even when we couldn't be there."

Her drone work also supports scientific research, such as mapping ephemeral wetlands at Calloway Forest Preserve and scoping inaccessible areas after Hurricane Helene. "It's a bridge between fieldwork and satellite data," she says. "It fills that middle scale—close enough to see detail; far enough to see large areas at once."

One thing Margaret remains proud of is her effort to remain grounded with the work in the field. For 25 years, Margaret kept up her fire qualifications and would assist on controlled burns a few times a year. She found this to be a great way to visit project sites and interact with conservation colleagues based in other parts of the state. Now her drone work plays a part in filling that gap.

"I've always tried to keep one foot in the field," she says. "It's where the data starts. You can't build good models or tools without good field data."

As she looks ahead, Margaret remains open to what's next for her. "Keeping up with constant change, especially with technology, is the next big thing," she says. "And making sure we focus on what really matters."



# The McAlister Family

## A LEGACY ROOTED IN NATURE

BY GRAYSON MENDENHALL

For the McAlister family, a love of the outdoors runs deep. It's woven into childhood memories, family stories, and generations of stewardship.

Long before the Alexander Worth McAlister Foundation made its first grant to The Nature Conservancy in 1979, McAlister family members were already living their conservation ethic. As children, sisters Betsy Groves and Margaret McAlister, along with their cousin Stewart Flora, spent their formative years immersed in the natural world.

"We grew up around nature in Fries [VA]," recalls Betsy. "It was idyllic. One school, the YMCA with a swimming pool, and forests all around."

Margaret vividly remembers having to overcome her fear of getting lost in the forest after her family moved to a home backed by woods when she was 6. "That was really my first time spending long hours outside, just exploring," she says.

Many of their earliest memories were formed at Piedmont Springs, the family's beloved summer retreat near Danbury, NC. Stewart remembers Piedmont Springs as the heart of their outdoor experience. It was where generations connected with nature.



"Our great-grandfather, Alexander Worth McAlister, bought it in 1901," Stewart says. "He was all about hiking, fresh air, and drinking the spring water, which was loaded with iron. You could probably pick up a cup of water with a magnet!" he laughs.

Piedmont Springs had no electricity or air conditioning. It was just hammocks strung across screened porches, buckets of water hauled from the spring, and the constant hum of crickets and cicadas.



LEFT: Back Row: Johnny McAlister III, Betsy Groves and her husband, Tim, and Margaret McAlister. Seated: Fred Marszalek and his wife, Sally. ABOVE: John Worth McAlister IV hiking with aunts Betsy Groves and Sally Marszalek.

"It was heaven," says Margaret. "It shaped us."

That same reverence for nature infused the McAlister Foundation's philanthropic vision when it was established in 1968, following a provision in the will of Alexander's wife, Sarah. The foundation's guiding principle has been to support the common good through small catalytic gifts that could make a big difference.



Although land conservation wasn't a widely discussed issue during their childhood, the family's instinctive respect for the land made the foundation's partnership with The Nature Conservancy obvious. "When we were growing up, nobody talked about land conservation," Margaret says. "But as adults, we all, in one way or another, became aware of the need to protect land, so our fit with The Nature Conservancy was—and is—a great partnership."

Through the years, the McAlister Foundation has supported numerous TNC projects across North Carolina, including the purchase of the Ryan Tract in the Highlands of Roan, a biodiversity hotspot and Appalachian treasure. Stewart recalls a particularly meaningful hike to Big Yellow Mountain that was organized by TNC staff.

"We spotted a rare Baird's sandpiper. Johnny, our cousin, took the photo that confirmed the sighting," Stewart said. "It's still listed in records as a rare sighting."

That same connection to the land has continued into the next generation. Stewart now hikes with his grandson, and Betsy's grandchildren are learning to fish from their father. Still, the family is mindful that keeping this legacy alive in an increasingly urbanized world takes intention.

"Now that we do have some of the next generation on the board of trustees, we do need to be more mindful about making sure they understand our history reconnecting with the land and partnering with The Nature Conservancy," Margaret says.

For the McAlister family, supporting TNC isn't just a gift—it's a return to their roots. It's a way to honor the past while protecting the future.

As Betsy puts it, "I live in a concentrated city now, but we all grew up in relatively rural areas, spending much of our playtime outside in nature. It's part of who I am. Part of who we all are."



ABOVE: Vaughn McAlister Sr., Eugenia McAlister, Joe Flora, Cornelia McAlister, "Watty" McAlister Flora. BELOW LEFT: John Worth McAlister Jr. with daughter Margaret.



"As adults, we all, in one way or another, became aware of the need to protect land, so our fit with The Nature Conservancy was—and is—a great partnership."

—MARGARET MCALISTER





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# One Future Together

Together, we are deciding what kind of North Carolina we want to leave to our families, friends, and the next generations. Every action we can take now to support people and nature puts us on the path to a healthier and more resilient future.

Thank you to our Legacy Club members—supporters who are living their values and joining us on this journey by including The Nature Conservancy in their estate plans.



**Do you have questions** about making a future-thinking gift through your will or by beneficiary designation? Contact **Hope Woodhouse** at **919-205-4316** or **[hope.woodhouse@tnc.org](mailto:hope.woodhouse@tnc.org)**.

*This information is general in nature and should not be considered tax or legal advice. Please consult your professional advisor about your specific situation.*