Local to Global
Community Programs Foster Conservation Success

MORE INSIDE
Welcome

Dear Legacy Club Member,

Given our planet’s size, it’s hard to believe that people have left their footprints everywhere—from the remote reaches of Antarctica to the small archipelagos in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. With that in mind, this issue of *Legacy* focuses on how, with your support, The Nature Conservancy’s work engages and benefits people in every corner of the Earth.

For example, we’re collaborating with chefs from Mexico’s Yucatan Peninsula to showcase unique ingredients produced by people living in—and safeguarding—the globally important Maya Forest. We’re working with partners in Australia and Washington, D.C., on innovative solutions to water pollution and water shortages that relieve the financial burden of local communities so that they can benefit from clean and abundant natural resources in order to prosper and thrive.

Within these pages, you’ll meet a fellow supporter who inspires us with his personal dedication to advancing the Conservancy’s mission within his own community, as well as places far from home.

I invite you to read on and share our enthusiasm about the exciting developments you’ve made possible. These stories are as much yours as they are ours because you are part of the equation for our conservation success. Thank you for caring about, and investing in, nature.

See you outside,

Meg B. Thomson
Legacy Club Manager

Please take a few minutes to let us know your views on The Nature Conservancy’s global strategy by participating in our survey, available online at [nature.org/legacysurvey](http://nature.org/legacysurvey). Thank you for your feedback!

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**WE ARE YOUR *Legacy Club* REPRESENTATIVES**

Meg B. Thomson  
Legacy Club manager

John Stapleton  
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Gift Planning donor relations manager

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Contact us with your questions and we are happy to get you the answers. We look forward to hearing from you soon!

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Cover: A young man on a cliff at Great Falls National Park in Virginia looking out on the Potomac River, one of the watersheds effected by Washington, DC stormwater. © Shutterstock; Opposite from left: © The Nature Conservancy (Ashley Ebbeler); © The Nature Conservancy (Ashley Ebbeler); © The Nature Conservancy (Louisa Phillips)
Conservancy supporters gain inspiration from global priorities

Last May, The Nature Conservancy hosted more than 80 Legacy Club members and and longtime Conservancy members at its headquarters in Arlington, Virginia to learn how the organization is advancing its mission around the world. The event showcased the Conservancy’s efforts to bring the power of nature into cities, where two out of three people are expected to reside by 2050.

Pascal Mittermaier, the Conservancy’s global managing director for cities, gave a thought-provoking talk about how the Conservancy is working with partners, including the United Nations, to harness nature as a way of filtering polluted water and air, cooling down temperatures, managing floods and standing up to sea level rise in urban areas around the world. Kahlil Kettering, the Conservancy’s urban conservation director in Maryland and Washington, DC, shared how this is playing out right down the road in our nation’s capital.

The Conservancy is already planning another gathering of supporters on May 18, 2017. This year’s event will feature a panel discussion on coastal resilience work in the Latin America Region. As a new feature, the event will be broadcast live by webcast. Legacy members and supporter everywhere can view the event online and ask questions to the panel.

VISIT NATURE.ORG/LEGACYCLUB to learn more about the event and how to join the live webcast.
Concern for urban water quality sparks creative solutions in nation’s capital

It has been said that necessity is the mother of invention. That has fueled a groundbreaking partnership involving private investors, municipal government, non-profit organizations and real estate design and construction professionals working in the nation’s capital to prevent millions of gallons of polluted stormwater from reaching the Potomac and Anacostia rivers, and eventually the Chesapeake Bay.

“The Chesapeake Bay is one of the most regulated bodies of water in the country, leading to specific guidelines on how to manage stormwater emerging from the District of Columbia,” says Kahlil Kettering, The Nature Conservancy’s urban conservation director in Maryland and Washington, D.C. “This type of runoff is the second largest source of pollution in the watershed and the only one that is growing.”

In response, the District of Columbia’s Department of Energy and the Environment (DOEE) mandated in 2013 that new development and redevelopment projects over a certain size meet stormwater retention requirements in order to get a Certificate of Occupancy Permit. Because the mandate quadrupled previous requirements, DOEE provided developers with the option to meet a portion of their obligations through the purchase of Stormwater Retention Credits (SRC) from offsite projects that reduce runoff.

“Buying credits gives developers a new avenue to be compliant if it is infeasible to meet requirements onsite, or if they want to maximize space onsite for revenue generating amenities like pools or parking,” adds Kettering. “It can also be cheaper for developers to buy credits from offsite projects rather than implementing all of their stormwater retention onsite.”

According to Kettering, this type of arrangement attracts private investors to finance stormwater retention projects, which removes this financial burden off of the city budget and residents. Allowing for the capture of stormwater in other parts of the city—in places where it makes the most environmental sense—also provides opportunities for organizations like the Conservancy to create new green spaces, often in communities who can benefit from them the most.

The desire to leverage new sources of capital for conservation has led to the Conservancy to create NatureVest. Established in 2014, NatureVest creates and executes investable deals that deliver conservation results and financial returns for investors. The SRC market embodies NatureVest’s conviction that capital markets, businesses and government agencies must invest in nature to promote a sustainable, equitable and efficient economy. In Washington, DC, NatureVest embarked on the first venture of its kind in the country. Specifically, Prudential Financial invested $1.7 million in a project led by the Conservancy and asset management firm Encourage Capital to develop bioswales, rain gardens, green roofs, tree canopy and other SRC-generating natural infrastructure projects that comply with DOEE requirements.

“Investing in green infrastructure to solve environmental problems in urban communities can help make cities more sustainable and resilient,” says Eron Bloomgarden, partner at Encourage Capital.

Bloomgarden also speaks to the co-benefits that come with such projects, including income for landowners, expanded green space, reduced flooding, jobs related to building and maintaining...
project sites and health benefits derived from cleaner air and water. His enthusiasm is shared by Russ Dudley, an environmental engineer with Tetra Tech, the firm spearheading the design components of the venture.

“Typically, these types of projects take place with financing, design and construction happening in separate orbits,” says Dudley. “Working together as a team is critical to ensure we can optimize the value of gallons captured and credits obtained. I look forward to continuing our work as it evolves and drives this market to benefit the environment.”

These developments in the nation’s capital also advance the Conservancy’s efforts to infuse nature into cities and help resolve many of the challenges faced by urban areas around the globe.

“It took some time to assemble the partners and skills required to pursue this idea,” says Craig Holland, senior director for product development at NatureVest. “Now, with everything in place, we hope to generate good conservation that results in cleaner waters, a financial return for investors and a healthier, more sustainable city.”

**VISIT** [NATURE.ORG/CONNECTTHEDROPS](#) to learn more about our work to protect urban waters around Washington, DC.

**NatureVest** The mission is to create and execute investable deals in a variety of sectors around the world that deliver conservation results and financial returns for investors. Its vision is based on the conviction that capital markets, businesses and governments must invest in nature as the long-term capital stock of a sustainable, equitable and more efficient economy.

**Global Cities** The Nature Conservancy has launched a new urban conservation program that seeks to implement nature based solutions to address environmental challenges that impact water and air quality, heat islands and wildlife habitat in ways that benefit the quality of life for city residents.

Above: Green roof of the ASLA building (American Society of Landscape Architects) in Washington DC. Natural infrastructure projects like green roofs help curtail city stormwater runoff. © Karine Aigner
Regional chefs feature flavorful ingredients from Mexico’s Maya Forest

For millennia, communities living within the 35-million-acre Maya Forest have cultivated food employing milpa, a form of farming that efficiently combines corn, beans, squash and wildlife habitat in one field to reduce stress on the surrounding forest. Corn stalks support climbing beans. Squash spreads out to enrich and protect the soil. Patches of trees and open areas attract wild game—an additional food source—and bees and butterflies for pollination.

Mayan families usually complement what grows in their field with jardines maya, or patio gardens that yield fruits, chilis and additional vegetables. The resulting sweet, spicy and smoky flavors evoke traditional Mayan cuisine. These flavors of the forest are attracting chefs from throughout the region who are interested in offering local, organic, artisanal foods that fill seats at their restaurants.

“This increasing food awareness is an important step in connecting people living in urban areas with the places where their food is grown and harvested,” says Justin Adams, director of The Nature Conservancy’s Global Lands Team. “However, we need to take this interest to the next level and illustrate what impact the food has on the natural world.”

That was the focus of this past November’s K’óoben Gastronomic Festival held on Mexico’s Yucatan Peninsula. During the event, the Conservancy collaborated with five regional chefs to celebrate the country’s cuisine and the sustainable practices for delivering it to consumers.

“These chefs, in their search for delicious ingredients, are important champions for sustainability,” says Rane Cortez, director of the lands program for the Conservancy in Mexico and Northern Central America. “It is exciting to witness a growing appreciation for what the Maya Forest can provide when we care for the ecosystem.”

According to Cortez, pressures on the forest are greater than ever. Locally sourced, small-scale food production is giving way to extensive agriculture and ranching operations, threatening those who depend on the environment for food, fuel and income. This shift also affects water quality, wildlife habitat and the warming climate when carbon that was once stored in the trees is released into the atmosphere.

In response, the Conservancy works in rural areas throughout the Yucatan Peninsula to identify ways of growing, harvesting and producing traditional Mayan food that won’t destroy the natural resources sustaining the people.

“We are working together to combine the best traditional practices with new technologies so that local communities can prosper,” says Cortez. “That way, they can maintain a traditional way of life that supports healthy forests for generations to come.”

VISIT NATURE.ORG/HARVESTINGFLAVORS to watch videos of the five chefs that took part in the K’óoben Gastronomic Festival.
NATURE BRIEFS

Utah  ||  Over an eight-year period, The Nature Conservancy collaborated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Utah Department of Natural Resources and the state’s School and Institution Trust Lands Administration to acquire four parcels of land that formed the White Dome Nature Preserve. A fifth parcel, gifted by the Utah Department of Transportation, completed the 800-acre preserve, a harbor for the endangered dwarf bear-poppy, which is found in five Washington County locations and nowhere else in the world. The rare plant grows only in a unique gypsum soil that’s present at the preserve, making the preserve a stronghold for the remaining populations. The Conservancy has opened trails at the property to the public, while closing other areas to support scientific research.

LEARN MORE about this nature preserve at NATURE.ORG/WHITEDOME.

Mississippi  ||  The Nature Conservancy acquired 2,100 acres that connect more than 450,000 contiguous acres between the Pascagoula River Wildlife Management Area and De Soto National Forest. The parcel—secured thanks to coordination among private landowners, the Mississippi Forestry Commission and other partners—helps to ensure the Pascagoula River remains the largest free-flowing rivers in the lower 48 states. The watershed supports unique fish and wildlife such as Gulf sturgeon, which travel from the salty waters of the Mississippi Sound to freshwater spawning grounds further upstream. Endemic yellow-blotched sawback turtles and more than 300 resident and migrating bird species also depend on the watershed.

LEARN MORE about this important project at NATURE.ORG/PASCAGOULA.
Australia’s water market reveals the true value of life-giving water

From space, the Earth appears to have water in abundance. But there is a limit—particularly to the freshwater resources available to support life on the planet. Due to rising demand, rivers, lakes and wetlands are increasingly diverted, depleted and dried up. And sometimes, they are too polluted for consumption.

These situations make it increasingly challenging to support wildlife and local communities around the world that depend on secure and clean sources of water. Nearly half of the world's people face water scarcity, which troubles Brian Richter, The Nature Conservancy’s lead scientist on water. “More than 30 percent of the planet’s water sources are over-exploited, in many cases to near exhaustion,” he says.

Yet in his travels around the world, Richter encounters many farmers who are conserving water with cover crops and no-till methods, or by growing crops that use the resource more efficiently. “We have made some progress on conserving water,” he says, “especially in urban areas that are adopting technology like low-flow toilets and cultural changes like reducing water use in landscaping.”

But conservation alone will not tackle the looming challenges—a problem that led the Conservancy to propose the solution of Water Sharing Investment Partnerships (WSIPs).

The Conservancy launched its first WSIP in Australia, where dams commonly divert seasonal floodwaters from river systems to accommodate agricultural operations that drain a significant portion of the arid continent’s land area. In the 1990s, a severe drought led the federal government to put a cap on water diversions from its largest rivers—the Murray and Darling—and regulate use by issuing water entitlements that gave
farmers and other users access to a specific annual water volume. The entitlements were bought, sold or leased through an open water market, not unlike stocks or commodities.

While well intentioned, water entitlements were over-allocated, resulting in depleted rivers that jeopardized the wildlife and local communities they sustained. In response, the Australian government sought to buy back 20 percent of the entitlements in the Murray-Darling Basin and return that water back to nature.

The Conservancy’s new WSIP in Australia, the Murray-Darling Basin Balanced Water Fund, helps to supplement these government efforts by soliciting investor capital, along with government grants and philanthropic donations, to acquire a portfolio of water rights. Most of those rights are leased or sold back on the market, ensuring that users have access to water and investors realize a financial return. A portion of the rights is used to divert water back to natural ecosystems.

This year, the Conservancy was able to return water into wetlands that hadn’t “had a good drink” for decades. “It was exciting to witness the return of water to the wetlands,” says Richter. “With the twist of a valve, a series of siphons opened, and over three weeks, nearly one billion liters of water flowed into the region to welcome back wetland plants, fish, frogs and other native wildlife.”

“Water trading is working in Australia, not just among farmers but also among investors, for whom the growing disparity between supply and demand ensures that water remains quite valuable,” says Cullen Gunn, CEO of Kilter Rural, a specialty fund that manages investments in farmland, water and ecosystem services, including the Conservancy’s WSIP.

Richter and others are optimistic that this approach can work elsewhere. Currently, 37 water-scarce countries have some kind of water-rights system in place.

“In the past, local communities approached water scarcity from the supply side—drilling deeper in search of groundwater or pumping it in from other basins. But there is simply no surplus water to be found anymore,” says Richter. “As water assumes a value, it provides a huge incentive for conservation and savings. The only way to meet the growing demand is to be more efficient with how we use it.”

VISIT NATURE.ORG/WATERSHARE to learn more.

WATER = LIFE

Only 3% of the world’s water is fresh water, and two-thirds of that is tucked away in frozen glaciers or otherwise unavailable for use. In big and small ways—in developed and undeveloped countries—local communities rely on a reliable, safe and sanitary supply of water to support lives and livelihoods.

Opposite: Red Gum trees along the banks of the Murray River at Ned’s Corner in Victoria, Australia © Paul Sinclair/Trust for Nature; This page: A glass of fresh drinking water. © The Nature Conservancy and Kent Mason
Did you know ...

that you can give long-term appreciated securities directly to The Nature Conservancy? These gifts are easy to arrange—plus, they can provide a charitable income tax deduction and help you avoid paying tax on capital gains. A gift of appreciated stock, bonds or mutual funds can be put to work immediately, helping to conserve the lands and waters you love. You can also establish a gift that provides lifetime income. For more information on the savings, see the example below.

Example: Imagine that Jane, a Nature Conservancy donor, wants to make a gift of $10,000 to the Conservancy. Jane has $10,000 invested in company X, which she initially bought for $5,000 seven years ago. Jane’s federal income tax bracket is 39.6 percent and her long-term capital gains tax rate is 25 percent.*

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*Tax rates and brackets vary for different individuals and families. Please note that The Nature Conservancy cannot provide tax or legal advice. Please consult your advisor before making a gift.
The circle of life led Dale Killen to consider his legacy

Dale Killen discovered the outdoors while growing up on a farm and exploring nature on camping trips with his family. When it came time to retire from a successful career in engineering, he returned to farm life and camping—this time in an RV with his wife Julie.

The circle of his life got Dale thinking about his latest chapter and, ultimately, his legacy. “In retirement, there is more time to think about things like this—time you didn’t have when you were working 40 to 60 hours per week,” says Killen. “We never had children and knew we wanted to dedicate all of that green paper accrued over a lifetime to something that reflected our core values.”

That “something” ended up being nature, a revelation that led to a decision to leave, in his words, “all that I am and all that I have” through a bequest from his estate that would be dedicated to The Nature Conservancy’s highest priorities at the time of his death. He says establishing the gift was as easy as a phone call to express his intent and acquire the information and forms required by his financial advisor to make it official.

Killen mentions that through all of his travels, he’s been impressed with the Conservancy’s presence. “In the natural areas that draw my attention, you almost always come across a sign referring to The Nature Conservancy and their role in protecting a particular refuge, park or nature preserve. They are quiet but effective—using science to carefully choose their projects.”

With each passing year, Killen has become more involved with the organization; proudly advocating for its work to people he meets on the road. At home, he leaves part of his farm untouched and forested to benefit local wildlife and boasts that even the front porch is off limits to humans while barn swallows are nesting.

“When I attended a Nature Conservancy Legacy Club luncheon in Chicago, it felt like home with so many like-minded people,” says Killen. I feel confident that I have entrusted my estate with others who embrace the idea of protecting some places where people should stay out of the way—places that belong to nature.” The ‘thousand points of light mentality’ is great, but The Nature Conservancy is the sun.
Global demands for food, energy and shelter are putting unprecedented pressure on the resources of the planet. Water is at the heart of this challenge. Knowing more about your water source will make you a stronger steward for water conservation.

For more information: sourceofyou.org
Join the conversation: #sourceofyou

Above: © Laura Lefurgey-Smith