



NATION FORD LAND TRUST NEWSLETTER

Volume I Winter 2014

Preserving the open spaces, natural beauty, and scenic heritage
of
York County, South Carolina



An Update from Chairman Murray White

The Nation Ford Land Trust will celebrate its 25th anniversary in the fall of 2014. In June 2012 our board had a daylong planning session to review our past and set a course for our future. One of the decisions made at the planning workshop was to include in our staff someone who could expand the mission of the land trust as York County faces increased pressure for open space conservation brought on by decade of rapid growth. The Director of Conservation and Development position within the NFLT was established and Janet Steele, who has worked as Land Stewardship Manager since 2003, was hired on October 1, 2012. Janet's new responsibilities in this position include environmental and land conservation education, identifying properties of high conservation value, leading outings, coordinating community outreach to generate interest in the mission of the NFLT and grow membership, planning and coordinating fund raising events, growing corporate and private donor support, and preparing applications for environmental education and community grants. She will continue her land stewardship duties of preparing baseline documentations for proposed conservation easements and annual stewardship monitoring of conserved lands.

Jeff Updike will continue his duties as Executive Director. Beth Chuck will continue her responsibilities for trail maintenance and development. With the addition of Janet, we have a great staff in place that works well together to accomplish our

Land Trust Sponsors Exhibit at Fort Mill History Museum

SHIFTING GROUND: History of Land Use in Fort Mill

Follow the history of how people have shaped Fort Mill's landscape from pre-settlement natural prairies to farms established by its first settlers, and eventually to subdivisions and greenways in *Shifting Ground*, a new exhibit sponsored by Nation Ford Land Trust. For over four hundred years, humans have been leaving their footprints on the land we call Fort Mill. This April, step into the shoes of the past occupants of Fort Mill, including the Catawba, early Scots-Irish settlers, cotton farmers, and mill families, and discover how they used the land and the way their decisions impacted the landscape.

As the fastest growing suburban town in South Carolina, Fort Mill today is in the midst of another major period of change in land use and development. Explore what our own footprint looks like, and learn how organizations such as Nation Ford Land Trust have positively impacted our town's landscape by championing the preservation of the natural beauty and scenic heritage of York County through a variety of land conservation practices.

Along with the collection of historical objects on display, *Shifting Ground* will feature five original art panels created by art students from Fort Mill and Nation Ford High School interpreting each of the major periods of land use in Fort Mill. Additional student artwork inspired by this exhibit will be on display in the Samuel Elliott White Room for a limited time to celebrate the opening of *Shifting Ground*. The exhibit will open on April 16th, 2014 and run through July 2014



Article by Heather Otis, Curator, Fort Mill History Museum

Mission

To preserve the open spaces, natural beauty, and scenic heritage of the York County, South Carolina area.

Board

Bernard Ackerman – Treasurer
Will Close - Secretary
Jeanne Ferguson
Steve Hamilton
John Hiott - Chair-Elect
Will Hunter
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Perry Johnston
Barry Mack, Jr. - Vice-Chair
Kathy Pender
Jetter Pittman
Jim Triplett
Murray White, Jr. - Chair

Staff

Jeff Updike - Executive Director
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2013 Outings



(Left to Right) KVLV President Mark Grier, KVLV Executive Director Barry Beasley, KVLV Past-President Lindsey Pettus, NFLT Chair Murray White, NFLT Executive Director Jeff Updike

A joint outing for Katawba Valley Land Trust and Nation Ford Land Trust members was held on Saturday, April 6th at Cotton Hills Farm in Lowrys, South Carolina. The event began with a fried chicken lunch sponsored by Duke Energy. Our hosts Jeff Wilson and his family then lead wagon tours of Cotton Hills Farm, which has been operated continuously by the family since 1882. Guest also toured the Cotton Hills Farm Market. Katawba Valley Land Trust holds a conservation easement on approximately 600 acres of the "Home Place" located in Chester County, and Nation Ford Land Trust holds a conservation easement on the 230-acre "Abell Place" located in York County.

On Saturday, May 4th, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Biologist Laura Fogo led guest on a 3-hour hike for a spring migration bird count along the Catawba River at Westminster Park in Rock Hill. Laura explained to the group that different species would be found in the variety of habitats located at Westminster Park, including grassland, riverine, and riparian. The group identified by sight and/or sound 29 native and migratory bird species.



Annual Meeting

On Wednesday, December 4th the Nation Ford Land Trust held its annual meeting at Board Member Jim Triplett's property in Rock Hill. The event included an oyster roast and BBQ dinner. Land trust members were given an update on the year's accomplishments and plans for 2014. Since its founding in 1989, the land trust has protected over 9,200 acres.

Board Members (Left to Right) Murray White, Will Hunter, Jetter Pittman, Steve Hamilton, Perry Johnston, John Hiott and Jim Triplett.



Nation Ford Land Trust Executive Director

Jeff Updike

Membership

Membership renewals for 2014 will be mailed in June of this year to ensure an up-to-date mailing list of members for our 25th anniversary event in September.

Save the Date! Thursday, September 25, 2014

The Nation Ford Land Trust will be celebrating its 25th anniversary at the Brakefield Event Center at Riverwalk in Rock Hill on Thursday, September 25, 2014. The Catawba River will provide a beautiful backdrop for the event, which will begin with dinner. Nation Ford Land Trust board members, past and present, will be honored, and the latest fundraising project for the land trust will be unveiled. Through generous contributions from Williams and Fudge and Comporium Communications, the board has commissioned an original painting by nationally known historical artist Dan Nance. The painting will depict the Battle of Huck's Defeat, which occurred at Historic Brattonsville on land which the land trust was instrumental in protecting. The program for the evening will also include a look back at the accomplishments of the land trust over the last 25 years, and a look forward to the board's vision of the land trust's future role in land conservation in York County. Our campaign to raise money for our Preservation Fund will also be introduced.

A series of outings to highlight the land trust's conservation projects will be scheduled leading up to our anniversary event. Please continue to check the website for details on these outings and to reserve your spot.

2013-2014 Grants



In May 2013, the Nation Ford Land Trust received a grant of \$11,100 from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners Program. A portion of these funds will be used to assist Banks Trail Middle School with the initial construction phase of an outdoor classroom and to help construct an interpretative nature trail from the middle school to an 11.25 acre site owned by Nation Ford Land Trust on Banks Road. The trail will highlight the unique communities of a South Carolina piedmont creek habitat, upland forests, and wetlands. The NFLT site contains a remnant Piedmont prairie grassland ecosystem, which includes the federally listed endangered Schweinitz's sunflower. Grants funds will also be used to update the site management plan in order to maintain and restore the remaining Schweinitz's sunflower population. Schweinitz's sunflower monitoring plots will be re-established and the population will be inventoried at least once per year for 5 years. While visiting the sunflower site, students will learn about endangered species and why there is a need to monitor rare species to help determine recovery population goals.



In September 2013, the Nation Ford Land Trust received a grant of \$10,950 from the Harry Hampton Wildlife Fund. The grant was used for the development and implementation of a county-wide environmental education program for elementary and middle school students called Sharing Environmental Education and Discovery (SEED). SEED provides teachers with an environmental based curriculum which meets requirements in South Carolina's State Scientific Standards for grades kindergarten through eighth grade, and which can be brought to their classrooms and school campuses. These science requirements emphasize organisms and their habitats, terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, and the processes and responses of plants and animals in their native environments. All of these topics can be linked to the natural communities surrounding students' homes and schools. Helping them make this connection at a young age will be reflected in the decisions they make as individuals and communities in the future. This is an opportunity for the land trust to use environmental education in the schools to share with students its mission of land conservation in York County.



In January 2014, the Nation Ford Land Trust received a grant of \$2,500 from the Fort Mill Rotary Club. The grant will be used along with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners Program to help construct the nature trail from Banks Trail Middle School to the sunflower site.

Thank you to these organizations for their support of the mission of the Nation Ford Land Trust to raise awareness about land conservation within our schools and communities.



Nation Ford Land Trust
Director of
Conservation &
Development

Partnerships

Through the donations made to the Nation Ford Land Trust from memberships and other generous private and corporate contributions, the land trust was able to partner with the York County Sportsmen's Committee and the National Wild Turkey Federation to assist York County with the purchase of 282 acres on Burris Road. This property is between the 357 acre Kirsh Wildlife Management Area and 295 acres owned by the Clemson Foundation. With this acquisition, the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources now has over 900 contiguous acres under its management. Negotiations for the purchase necessitated that the county allow the seller to retain timber rights for pine timber harvests for 15 years. The \$20,000 contributed by the NFLT allowed the county to purchase and retain 40 acres of hardwoods on the property, along with 17 acres of creek buffers.

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The Nation Ford Greenway News 2014 Moving Forward



Nation Ford
Greenway Project
Coordinator
Beth Chuck

The purpose of the Nation Ford Greenway is to protect the vital watersheds of the Sugar Creek and the Catawba River while providing a natural outdoor experience for residents and visitors and its motto is "Connecting The Carolinas - one trail at a time". In 2013 the NFG was one-step closer to completing its mission, to connect local residents with the outdoors. An additional one-mile trail was constructed along the Sugar Creek, just north of the existing Springfield Trail. This new trail was made possible by a generous \$40,000 grant by the Carolina Thread Trail. There was one big obstacle though, that of getting a bridge built to cross a small creek. Once again, the Carolina Thread Trail organization offered to help us build a suspension bridge at this site. The CTT matched fifty-percent of the needed funds to have the bridge constructed and it was completed in December 2013.

An local Boy Scout will earn his Eagle Scout rank by constructing a trail from the new bridge to the CTT trail section. The trail is scheduled to be completed in late March 2014. Once this section is open, the two neighborhoods of Springfield and Regal Manor will be connected, letting residents walk and bike along the Sugar Creek for 3.5 miles.

The NFG trail system is open to the public – FREE. So put down your phones and computers, and come out on the trail to disconnect from stress and reconnect with nature. This is your trail, take ownership of it and become involved in our events for 2014. We plan to have a new program called Talk 'n Walk on the Nation Ford Greenway and a 5k Fun Run.

The NFG does not receive any funding from a government agency. Please join the Friends of the Nation Ford Greenway and volunteer to help us continue making the Nation Ford Greenway a wonderful trail for our community and visitors. Instrumental to the trail's success will be The Friends of the Nation Ford Greenway. To become a Friend contact the Nation Ford Land Trust, www.nationfordlandtrust.org, for membership information.

Visit the Nation Ford Greenway on Facebook and 'Like' us and at our website www.nationfordgreenway.com, or contact us at GreenwayTrails@comporium.net or Outdoors@nationfordgreenway.com. We welcome your comments.

General Information - The Nation Ford Greenway is supported by the generous donations of individuals, businesses, and foundations that share our vision of offering an outdoor experience with nature. The trails are open to the public at no charge from sunrise to sunset. If you pack it in, then please pack it out and take care of the trail. No restroom or trash facilities are available. No motorized vehicles are allowed, and all dogs must remain leashed for the safety of other visitors and animals.