



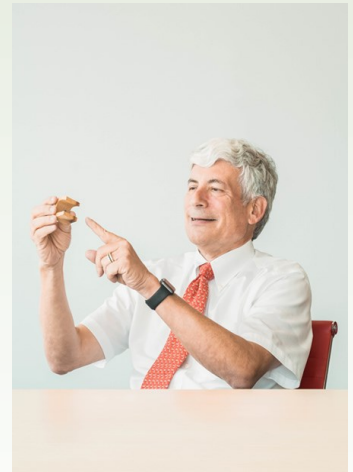
Nation Ford Land Trust *Fall 2021* Newsletter

Chairman Address—Bernie Ackerman

2021 has been a long and trying year, but Nation Ford Land Trust has persevered through COVID and stayed busy despite it. With our new staff changes in the spring, our website has been updated with new and correct information. It even has some new features and pages, such as our interactive map that showcases all our current conservation easements and protected properties! Along with our website, our Facebook has been updated and has become more active recently. Just like and follow our page and we'll keep you updated on our projects and happenings throughout the year!

This year has been busy for acquisitions, and continues to be, as we accept two new easements this fall: Moonshine Prairie and Blue Stone. We are grateful and impressed with the Lazenby's generosity and commitment to conservation and are delighted to welcome them to Nation Ford Land Trust. As we appreciate and continue in our acquisitions and stewardship operations, Nation Ford Land Trust has also begun the rigorous journey of being accredited. The Land Trust Accreditation Committee, a committee of the Land Trust Alliance, has accepted NFLT into the class of 2022 and we hope to "graduate" later next year. While we know it'll be a long and thorough process, and a lot of paperwork, we are excited to show that NFLT is an organized and responsible non-profit organization that landowners can trust to protect their lands and heritage in York County.

Our plans for the Murray White Preserve have reached significant milestones since our dedication ceremony last year. Since the passing of NFLT founder and past chair, Murray White Jr., the preserve has begun the process of planting loblolly pines and improving accessibility to the property through trails. Our very own John Hiott has been working hard to improve the property this way and we appreciate his dedication to the land. I believe Murray would be proud of how the land named after him is coming along and of what Nation Ford Land Trust has accomplished as a whole this year. I continue to be thankful for our committed staff and fellow board members for their hard work and dedication to Nation Ford Land Trust. Thank you for your invaluable support for NFLT and its conservation mission and I look forward to what 2022 has to bring to conservation!



2021 Sponsors



**David Anderson, Michael and Cheryl Hill, Will Close
Derick and Sally Close, Murray and Joyce White,
Craig Craze, Dr. Douglas Hansen, Richard Marriott,
Nation Ford Chemical, Kathy and Robert Pender**

Inside this issue

The Lazenbys.....	2
Blue Stone.....	2
Moonshine Prairie.....	3
New Board Member.....	3
2021 Annual Meeting.....	3
Letter from Exec. Director.....	4
Tax District 2 Greenspace.....	4
Conserv. & Antiquities Act	5

Special points of interest

- NFLT added two easements to its roster this year: Moonshine Prairie and Blue Stone
- The Land Trust Accreditation Commission accepted NFLT's application to go through the process of accreditation
- Nation Ford Land Trust's 2021 annual meeting will be on November 16th at the Anne Springs Close Greenway Gate-



The Lazenbys

Over the past few months, Nation Ford Land Trust has been in close contact with two very conservation-minded individuals, Andrew and Mary Lazenby. The Lazenbys have since forth donated two kinds of properties to the land trust: the experimental Piedmont prairie at Moonshine Prairie in York County and the lush, wild woodland at Blue Stone in Cherokee County. Both properties combined contribute 204.45 acres to Nation Ford Land Trust’s conservation coverage and both are in key areas that NFLT strives to protect in perpetuity. Throughout the easement process, the Lazenbys have shown that they care deeply about conserving the environment and ensuring that the land can be used and enjoyed by generations to come. You may recognize Andrew from Katawba Valley Land Trust’s 2021 Fall newsletter, as he stands as a current board member and wrote a segment in their newsletter that shows his knowledge and background in the natural sciences. We look forward to working with the Lazenbys as we manage their conservation easements for many, many years to come!

Picture: From left to right, then down, Steve Hamilton, Bernie Ackermann, Mary Lazenby, and Andrew Lazenby hold up their finalized and signed Blue Stone conservation easement documentation landowner binder.

“We feel it is a duty and privilege to work to save open spaces and undeveloped land for historical and environmental preservation for future generations to enjoy .”

Blue Stone

Tucked against Kings Creek in Cherokee County, the Blue Stone conservation easement is rich with Piedmont woodland and provides crucial creek frontage protection. The easement is roughly 133 acres and is ~95% inoperable forest because of its changing elevation (peaking at around 770 ft. and sinking as low as 620 ft. according to our topography maps). Most of the woodland is composed of mature hardwoods throughout the easement except where there has been trimming to allow powerlines through the easement on its eastern side.

The property sports two tributaries that branch off of Kings Creek and continue through the property where one ends within the easement boundaries and another continues past towards the east back towards York County. Along the western edge of Blue Stone, Kings Creek makes up 3,416 ft. of creek frontage while the tributaries make up 4,375 ft. of stream frontage. All together, Blue Stone has 7,791 ft. of waterway frontage on or along the property. The significance of King Creek is pinnacle to this easement mainly because of its eventual connection to the Broad River, which is a major conservation focus area for Nation Ford Land Trust.



The property used to have a home site, but all that is left are the remains of a brick/stone chimney (picture to the right) and the broken foundations of a barn where a small family must have had a farm at one point. For the most part, Blue Stone is an untouched, natural forest. In the future, NFLT and the Lazenbys (pictured to the left) hope to be able to use the land for potential local university research or guided nature walks.



Moonshine Prairie

Heading back into York County, the Lazenby family also donated the Moonshine Prairie conservation easement to NFLT back in September of this year. While Blue Stone can be described as a lush forest with rolling hills, Moonshine Prairie is mostly made up of what could become a model Piedmont prairie.

With around 70 acres to boast, the property is mainly forest (~50%) but its main feature is its wide open fields where cattle used to roam and graze but has since been allowed to flourish naturally. The forests are nothing to shirk, however, with their thick hardwoods and abundant wildlife providing a wealth of conservation value to the easement.

The property even has a pond that is accessible and creates a stream that benefits the upper bullock creek watershed. The stream also eventually empties into the Silver Creek and Bullock Creek and both flow into the Broad River. While Moonshine Prairie does not have any major creek frontage, it is still essential to protect the stream frontage that it contains to protect the water quality and health of the Broad River.

Moonshine Prairie even has historical significance as it is rumored that an illegal moonshine operation took place on the property in the past!

Similar to Blue Stone, Nation Ford Land Trust hopes to host guided nature walks and local university research on the property considering its habitat diversity. The Lazenbys have even started to experiment with marked out plots to see the effects of natural and guided planting when it comes to restoring the Piedmont prairie on the property (pictured above).



Welcome Our New Board Member: James Smith!

Our newest board member as of August 2021, Mr. James Smith is an executive with over thirty years of experience focused on the operations of real estate. He has held executive positions with Verisign, The US Navy, and Getronics and holds degrees in engineering and finance.

In the last decade, Mr. Smith has focused on environmental issues centering on diversity and inclusion in public spaces as well as environmental challenges, from clean air to environment politics. Mr. Smith serves on the boards of Clean AIRE NC and Anne Springs Close Greenway and is focused on creating positive changes to environmental policies, land protections and increasing public space inclusion by connecting people to nature.

James currently serves as a CEO of a real estate firm in Charlotte, NC and serves as the Charlotte organizer of Outdoor-Afro, whose membership is approximately 2,200 people in the Charlotte-metro area.



2021 Annual Meeting on November 16th!

It's that time of year again where we invite our supporters and members of Nation Ford Land Trust to join end in end-of-the-year celebrations. This year we are taking over the Anne Springs Close Greenway Gateway on November 16th from 5:30 PM to 7:30 PM. Food and drink will be provided by Anne Springs Close Greenway in the form of hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar. Invitations will be mailed or emailed and guests are encouraged to R.S.V.P. by November 5th: nationfordlandtrust@gmail.com or (803)-547-8140. Thank you for your support throughout 2021 and we hope to see you there!

Mission

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

Board

Bernard Ackerman – *Chair*
Dr. Janice Chism – *Vice Chair*
Dan Love – *Treasurer*
Kathy Pender – *Secretary*
Will Close
Allison Love
Patrick White
Lee Whitley
Jeanne Ferguson
John Hiott
Perry Johnston
Jetter Pittman

Staff

Steve Hamilton
Executive Director
nationfordlandtrust@gmail.com

Megan Mahoney
Stewardship Assistant
mmahoney@nationfordlandtrust.org

Mailing Address

Post Office Box 1273
Fort Mill, SC 29716
www.nationfordlandtrust.org

Office

242 Dairy Barn Lane (Epps House)
Fort Mill, SC 29715
Phone (803) 547-8140

The Nation Ford Land Trust is a 501(c)(3) organization founded in 1989. The board of directors is a dedicated group of volunteers who support the land trust's mission and seek opportunities to further its land conservation efforts.

Acres presently protected by NFLT: 15,313 acres

A Letter from Our Executive Director—Steve Hamilton



I hope this newsletter finds each of you safe and healthy. So far, The Covid virus has not slowed our work here at Nation Ford Land Trust. In fact, I would say we have been busier than ever. This Fall season is an important time for us to engage with supporters, landowners and trail users. We are gearing up to finish our annual monitoring of our conserved sites, of which there are 53 total properties. We will begin our Fall year-end membership drive and are preparing for the annual meeting.

I am very grateful that each day I get to come to work at the Greenway. As I walk past the horse pastures and the vegetable gardens, to get to my office, I am reminded of the

importance of the work all of us, as NFLT members, do to protect the environment and conserve land for the future generations.

Our chairman's article has outlined our latest achievements so far this year. Thanks to the Lazenby family, we have pushed our total acreage of protected properties to over 15,300. We have several other projects in the pipeline that we should be able to report on in our next newsletter.

I am very excited that NFLT was selected, for the class of 2022, to become accredited through The Land Trust Alliance a nationally recognized organization. Over the next few months Meagan Mahoney, our Stewardship Assistant, and I will be very busy going through the rigorous application process, which will last through the Spring. The results, however, will take NFLT to the next level as an organization.

I look forward to next year partnering with York County Forever, Bethel/Lake Wylie Land Acquisition Committee and the South Carolina Conservation Bank to bring more projects and conserve more land in York and surrounding Counties. Towards that end, I encourage each of you to find out more about the Governor's initiative called the Conservation and Antiquities Act. See more on this topic in this issue.

The Tax District 2 Initiative for Greenspace

In November 2020 following a tremendous volunteer effort to get a referendum on the ballot, the people in a small area of District 2 York County passed with 68% approval to tax themselves to acquire greenspace. Led by County Council representative Allison Love, the initiative allows for acquisition and conservation of properties otherwise destined to be high density residential development.

A partnership with Nation Ford Land Trust and York County Forever has resulted in three prime parcels, totaling 150 acres, being under contract. These will be used for parks and passive recreation and all will be accessible to the public.

York County is one of the fastest growing areas of South Carolina and the special tax district established in the Bethel-Lake Wylie area is an example to others of how communities can come together and commit to creating greenspaces for generations to enjoy. A five member board oversees the funding and all properties purchased will be put into conservation easements with Nation Ford Land Trust in the near future.

We look forward to future updates and progress on the expansion of the "Green Ribbon" dedication to conservation winding throughout this unique area of York County.

Proposed Conservation and Antiquities Act for South Carolina

On August 3rd, Governor McMaster outlined a bold vision to double the amount of protected land in South Carolina by 2050, from approximately three million acres to six million acres, and improve our public parks. The proposed Conservation and Antiquities Act would dedicate land protection funding to the SC Conservation Bank from existing fees on real estate transfers and fund improvements on State-owned lands from existing fees on the sale of sporting goods. The Conservation Bank has helped Nation Ford Land Trust fund many projects over the years. With more funding, more opportunities are available for conservation efforts. Importantly, it would not increase or create new taxes but would instead use existing fees to support conservation and public lands management. It's a thoughtful and financially sound approach that would solidify our state as a leader in land conservation during a time of unprecedented growth.



“Rapid land development in our state has led to the loss of forests and farms, wildlife habitats and recreational areas,” Campsen said in a news release announcing the bill. “This solution safeguards our drinking water, protects rural communities and economies and provides opportunities for citizens and visitors to access open spaces and waterways. Without intentional action, we cannot guarantee these benefits for future generations.”

How does that land protection happen on the ground? Just ask the twenty-two non-profit land trust members of South Carolina’s Land Trust Network that are responsible for the protection of more than 1,000,000 acres of land in our state. Their approach is a voluntary one that often results in families placing properties under conservation easement, keeping land in the family and preventing fragmentation. Typically, this is the best tool for family-owned farms and forests. In some cases, public agencies may purchase land from willing landowners to establish forests or parks – land trusts often assist in this process. In either case, as SC Senator Chip Campsen says, “we conserve land through negotiation and compensation rather than through regulation and condemnation.” The South Carolina Conservation and Antiquities Act will be introduced for consideration in the upcoming legislative session. Let your Senators and House Members know that you support this initiative.



From the left, S.C. Floodwater Commission Chair Tom Mullikin, Gov. Henry McMaster and state Sen. Chip Campsen speak to reporters on Aug. 3 at Cypress Reserve in Andrews following an announcement to double South Carolina’s protected lands by 2050.

PLEASE
PLACE
STAMP
HERE

Place Label Here

Mailing Address
P.O. Box 1273
Fort Mill, SC 29715
www.nationfordlandtrust.org

Office Address
242 Dairy Barn Lane (Epps
House)
Fort Mill, SC 29715
Phone: (803) 547-8140



Nation Ford Land Trust

Nation Ford Land Trust is dedicated to the preservation of open spaces, natural beauty, and the scenic heritage of the York County, South Carolina area. Preserving these qualities will ensure that as our home grows, it retains the qualities that have made it a wonderful place to live, work and raise a family.

Nation Ford Land Trust is a 501 (c)(3) organization.

Nation Ford Land Trust Membership

The Nation Ford Land Trust depends on its members to help further its mission to enhance the quality of life in the York County area by preserving its open spaces, natural beauty, and scenic heritage. We continue to look for opportunities to partner with the York County Forever Commission on conservation easements, as well as land purchases that provide public access. We are also working with landowners on a variety of conservation projects on private lands, including easements. Your membership will be used to protect land with significant conservation value through projects such as these.

The protection of open space with significant conservation and public value is crucial as our region faces unprecedented growth. Recent studies indicate that if growth continues at the current rate in the southeast, urban sprawl will engulf thousands of acres of forest and agricultural lands from Raleigh, North Carolina to Atlanta, Georgia within the next 50 years. Charlotte and its surrounding counties, including York County, are directly in this path. To donate to the Nation Ford Land Trust or to become a member, please visit our website at **www.nationfordlandtrust.org**.

We accept online donations through PayPal and major credit cards and mail-in donations through our membership form with a check(s) sent to our P.O. box at **P.O. Box 1273 Fort Mill, SC 29715**.