



Nation Ford Land Trust *Fall 2022* Newsletter

New Historical Gem: *Fishing Creek Place*

Just on the outskirts of Rock Hill on Highway 324, Nation Ford Land Trust protected 110 acres of ecologically-significant, historical land along Fishing Creek. The land hosts a variety of natural areas: bottomland hardwoods, persistent and intermittent wetlands, upland forests, and boulder fields.

Alongside the stunning visuals of the land, the history of the property makes the conservation of the land ever more crucial. Based on historic documents and maps, the new owners of the property, Andrew and Mary Lazenby, discovered a potential “enslaved persons” cemetery. Since the beginning of 2022, the Lazenbys have worked tirelessly on researching the property and the presence of the cemetery to understand the significance it may have to the site and the history of the area as a whole. The current investigation of this site has identified more than one-hundred-and-fifty graves.



The Lazenby's continue their research efforts today by reaching out to local historians and looking for more ways to identify the individuals laid to rest, if possible.

In addition to the graves, numerous items of pre-western colonization life have been found. These include potential indigenous peoples’ projectile points and pottery shards that are scattered haphazardly throughout the property and deserve further investigation.

This project was made possible with funding from York County Forever and the South Carolina Conservation Bank.

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Special points of interest

- NFLT announced a new conservation easement: Fishing Creek Place.
- Four new board members have joined NFLT this year: Eleanor Landstreet, Hope Matthews, Dawn Johnson, and Laura Brewer
- NFLT has several events in the coming months for members and the general public to enjoy, such as: appearances at CatawbaFest and the Naked Goat Market, the Clover Rock Outcrop Cleanup, and the November annual meeting

2022 Spring Sponsors



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Mission

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

Board

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Eleanor Landstreet
Hope Matthews
Dawn Johnson
Laura Brewer

In Memoriam, Murry White, Jr.

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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: 15,356 acres

A Letter from Our Executive Director—Steve Hamilton



This has been a transformative year for Nation Ford Land Trust with some big changes in our board makeup. With the passing of our founder Murray White, and the rolling off of board members Jeanne Ferguson, Jetter Pittman and Lee Whitley, we had been shorthanded lately.

I am very excited with the selection of our newest board members (see “Welcome Our New Board Members!”). They have jumped right into the mix and are contributing to our

efforts in land preservation and getting the word out about NFLT. These ladies are bringing a wealth of knowledge and depth to the board.

We continue to push our land preservation acreage total to over 15,450-acres with our latest conservation easement, Fishing Creek Place. This is the third easement that the Lazenby family has placed with NFLT. Fishing Creek Place, at 110-acres, is a very special property that is bordered by Fishing Creek with wetlands, hardwoods, rock outcrops and an “enslaved peoples” cemetery.

Our accreditation process with The Land Trust Alliance is proceeding nicely. We are going through the rigorous application process and are targeting the Summer of 2023 for completion.

Looking out a couple of months, NFLT is working on several new projects. One will be a park in the fast-growing area north of Fort Mill and another will preserve green space along Anderson Road, south of Rock Hill. More on those projects in the Spring 2023 newsletter.

NFLT Upcoming Events

October 8th—Clover Rock Outcrop Clean-up

NFLT will be organizing a clean-up at a conservation easement local to the Clover area: the Clover Rock Outcrop. The cleanup will begin at **9AM** and parking will be available at **106 Hill Top Ln, Clover, SC 29710**.*

October 29th—NFLT @ Catawba Fest 2022

Festival-goers can come on by and learn about the land trust and what we've been up to recently at our booth! NFLT staff and board members will be there from **11AM until closing at 8PM**, so there'll plenty of time to pop in. We will also be raffling off a few of our decorative posters to support NFLT's conservation mission in the York County area!

November 1st—NFLT Annual Meeting

As tradition stands, NFLT will be hosting its annual meeting from **5:30PM-7:30PM at the Anne Springs Close Greenway Gateway**. Food and drink will be provided through ASCG, hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar. Guests are encouraged to RSVP by October 18th.*

November 12th—NFLT @ The Naked Goat Market

The new Naked Goat Market will be hosting two unique events on site and NFLT will be manning a booth in November from 3:00PM until 6:30PM. There will be all kinds of local farmers' and artisans' goods around so you won't want to miss out!

If you wish to participate in any events by Nation Ford Land Trust, please be sure to RSVP by calling us at **(803)-547-8140** or emailing us at nationfordlandtrust@gmail.com.

*Some events will include an Eventbrite listing on our website for RSVPing ease.

Welcome Our New Board Members!



Eleanor Landstreet

Eleanor was born and raised on a farm in York, South Carolina and currently divides her time between the farm and Maryland. She received a BA from Mary Baldwin College and a JD from the University of South Carolina. She has practiced poverty, family, and data privacy law since 2006. She is licensed to practice law in Washington, DC; South Carolina; and Pennsylvania; and serves as a member of the Advisory Board of Hands Across the Nile, an American 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization that is committed to building bridges between the people of Egypt and the United States. Recently retired, Eleanor spends her time on farm upkeep and gardening.

Hope Matthews

Hope Matthews is originally from Nebraska but has lived in the area for over 20 years. She graduated from Winthrop University where she achieved her BA and MA in Biology.

Since university, her career has focused on connecting people of all ages with the outdoors. She's spent years being involved in education as a medium for teaching others about several fields in the biological sciences as well as outdoor education to the community.

Hope lives in Rock Hill with her husband, Shaun Cassidy, and their two children. In her spare time she likes to bake, garden, and do just about anything that gets her outside.



Dawn Johnson

Dawn Johnson is a graduate of Florida State University with a degree in Economics. She began working with State Farm after university and in 2006 started her individually owned and operated State Farm Insurance Agency. Having had the pleasure of working with State Farm for the last 30 years, she is committed to community and people development. In fact, she has won several awards because of her dedication to her community.

Beyond the office, Dawn is married with a beautiful daughter! She is the past Board Chair for the Rock Hill Economic Development Corporation assisting with initiatives such as Talent Pipeline and developing new businesses in our community, and Chair of the Black Economic Leadership League of Rock Hill.

Laura Brewer

Laura Brewer is a native Tennessean with a BS in Ornamental Horticulture and Landscape Design, and has been an ISA Certified Arborist since 1999. Her professional career included 20 plus years with the City of Charlotte, and she has served on several boards including NC Urban Forest Council, Charlotte Arborists Association, the Clover Planning Commission and Main Street Clover.

In 2014, Laura retired from being an arborist and moved to Clover in 2006 to refurbish an 1890s house on N Main St and start her own business. In 2015 she opened Magnolia House and Gardens, a B&B/event venue she refers to as the "best kept secret in Clover".

While managing her B&B, Laura keeps up with her ISA Arborist certification and is an expert in advising practices for tree care and placement.



Chairwoman Address—Janice Chism

The cooler temperatures lately are a welcome relief after the long, hot summer we've experienced. Fall's arrival comes with a sense of invigoration and renewal to many of us and to Nation Ford Land Trust. We have several new board members who bring a diversity of life experiences and skills as well as fresh perspectives and ideas. This edition of the newsletter provides details about our four most recent arrivals. I am so excited to work with all four of these energetic and insightful new board members. They have all jumped right in to our fundraising and conservation committees' activities and are already contributing to fresh approaches. You all will have a chance to get to meet these new additions to our team at our annual membership meeting in November. I hope you will join us for this important event.



At the annual meeting we will be filling you in on plans for our 2023 fundraising campaign. NFLT has been very successful in the last few years in adding major properties to our holdings of conservation easements. However, all of this new land under protection has come with growing financial demands on our organization. Our new board members are helping us think of new innovative ways to meet these demands.

NFLT's Conservation Committee is working to renew its efforts to identify properties around the City of York whose owners are interested in putting their land into conservation easements. York, like all of our county, is experiencing enormous development pressure. Conservation easements, such as that of the Stuck family, provide significantly-sized natural areas that protect wildlife habitat. Increasingly, the survival of wild animals and plants are threatened by what ecologists call "habitat fragmentation". High-density housing and industrial development leave behind small natural areas separated from each other by inhospitable areas that by themselves are often too small to support healthy wildlife populations. We are hoping to work with local landowners and the city and county of York to establish a "greenbelt" around York of adjacent properties with conservation easements to help connect up these natural areas and provide safe corridors for animals and plants to move through. Learn more about these issues in our "FAQs of Habitat Fragmentation and Wildlife Corridors" feature in this newsletter.

Highlighting One of Our Current Conservation Easements

Nanny's Mountain

As one of our oldest conservation easements, Nanny's Mountain, previous Ferguson's Mountain, is near and dear to our hearts. The easement provides a 1.8 mile trail up to a small mountain formation known as a monadnock, a single rock outcropping surrounded by gently sloping or even flat land. The trail is good for all skill levels and even allows dogs as long as they are leashed. The trail forks with one trail taking hikers to a pavilion at the top of Nanny's Mountain and the other to a picnic area and scenic overlook. The land is managed by York County and is known as a historical park because of its history during the American Revolutionary War. Any users of the trail should find several markers and informational plaques about the history of Nanny's Mountain, particularly the iron ore pits and veins that supplied the metal to make weaponry and other needed items.



FAQs of Habitat Fragmentation and Wildlife Corridors

What Is Habitat Fragmentation?

Increasingly, survival of wildlife is threatened by what ecologists call “habitat fragmentation”. In areas like York County which are experiencing rapid growth and development, large tracts of natural landscapes including forests, marshes, farmland, and woodlots are converted into high density housing or commercial developments. This process leaves behind small areas of more natural land (“habitat fragments”) which are separated from each other by developed areas and roads.

Why Is Habitat Fragmentation a Problem?

Wildlife living in these small, isolated habitat fragments often do not have access to enough of the resources they need to survive. When they must move between these fragments to find food, water, shelter or mates they cross open areas and roads, often, sadly, with fatal results. These movements can also be dangerous for humans traveling the roads when they try to avoid hitting animals, or actually collide with them. Federal, state and tribal governments are increasingly acknowledging the importance of safe passages for wildlife (and people) by building “just for wildlife” underpasses and overpasses on major highways. NFLT’s Founder’s Trail provides just such safe passage under the I-77 and Highway 21 bridges.

What Can We Do to Address This Problem?

Counties and cities like ours can make sure that when previously natural, open areas are developed, care is taken to leave some larger areas of habitat and to connect up smaller areas (fragments) with what are called “wildlife corridors”. A large area of habitat can be something like a greenway, or any area set aside for recreation or to protect scenic beauty. A wildlife corridor can be made up of many smaller protected areas connected together or even a series of walking or biking trails which can also act as a protected corridor.

What Are Some Local Examples of Areas That Help Fight Habitat Fragmentation?

An example in our area of a large area protected by a conservation easement with NFLT is the Anne Spring Close Greenway. An example of smaller protected areas which are connected and so form a very effective wildlife corridor are the parks along the Catawba River (River Park, Riverwalk). Although Riverwalk by itself is a very narrow strip of habitat, it provides a critical wildlife corridor between the Highway 21 bridge and the more extensive River Park further south. In this same area there are a whole series of buffers and hiking trails along the river from Lake Wylie Dam to River Park. These offer recreation for the growing number of York County residents as well as significant habitat and a wildlife corridor, which in this case, actually includes the river itself.



Do Wildlife Habitat Areas and Corridors Have to Be Closed off To People to Be Effective?

Absolutely not! Anne Spring Close Greenway is a great example of an extensive and beautiful area that not only provides high quality wildlife habitat but all kinds of recreational opportunities for people as well. The series of trails along the Catawba is another great example. In cities, parks designed primarily for human recreation, walking and bike paths, and even railway rights-of-way can be good corridors. The Carolina Thread Trail, which will eventually connect the Carolina mountains with the sea, is another critically important wildlife corridor, even though that probably wasn’t its main purpose.

How Can Land Trusts Like NFLT Help?

NFLT is making several significant contributions to reducing habitat fragmentation and providing wildlife corridors. First, by offering landowners ways to keep their land from being developed through conservation easements we help protect over 15,000 acres of open and natural habitat. Many of these easements include significantly large land holdings such as the Stuck property in York County. Our Founder’s Trail provides an important 2.3-mile-long corridor for wildlife connecting the Mason’s Bend development with Rock Hill’s Riverwalk across the Catawba at the Highway 21 bridge. Perhaps NFLT’s most significant contribution, however, may be to help local governments plan ahead by designating key areas of existing open and natural habitat that can be conserved now so that future development will avoid extensive habitat fragmentation and incorporate wildlife corridors. To this end we hope to work with the city of York to establish a “greenbelt” around the city that will accomplish these goals and ensure current and future residents have a high-quality environment to live in as well.

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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 sent to our P.O. box at **P.O. Box 1273 Fort Mill, SC 29716**.