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CAROLINA
THREAD TRAIL.

**Board of Directors Meeting Agenda
December 10, 2024
2400 Park Road, Suite 1 Charlotte, NC 28203**

1. Welcome (5 mins) Leslie Johnson

2. Consent Agenda (5 mins) Leslie Johnson
 - a. Minutes
 - b. CTT Update
 - c. Ratification of Executive Committee Action

3. Nominating Committee (10 mins) Bart Landess

4. Land Conservation Report (15 mins) Amanda Byrum
 - a. Cannon Preserve
 - b. Davis Branch CE
 - c. Conservation Strategic Plan

5. Natural Resources Management and Stewardship Report (10 mins) Will Ruark
 - a. Duke Energy Utility Easement

6. CTT Report (10 mins) Jane Love
 - a. CTT Grant Scope Change – Matthews

7. Finance and Development Report (20 mins) Gail Olsen
Jessica Otto
 - a. Financial update
 - b. Fundraising update

8. Strategic Planning (45 mins) Janet Hanson
 - a. Discussion of Priorities
 - b. Process to complete the Strategic Plan

9. Adjourn Leslie Johnson

CONTENTS

Minutes

Reports: CTT Update
Nominating Committee
Land Conservation
Natural Resources Management and Stewardship
CTT
Finance
Development
Strategic Planning



**Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Catawba Lands Conservancy and Carolina Thread Trail
October 17, 2024
8:30 AM – 1:00 PM
Foundation For the Carolinas
220 N Tryon Street, Charlotte, NC**

ATTENDANCE:

Members Present:

Janet Hanson	Steve Scruggs	Allison Holtzman	Compie Newman
Jon Morris	Tom Gates	Michael Lucente	May Barger
David Maynard	Leslie Johnson	Delane Clark	Allen Clark
Bill Carstarphen	Blair Boggs	Chris Walker	Lisa Phocas
	Harris Morrison	Phil Kuttner	

Members absent:

Dave Priester	Allan Baucom	Kacey Thompson
Bill Blair	Len Botkin	Shawn Wilkerson
	Chris Thomas	

Staff Present

Bart Landess	Gail Olsen	Jessica Otto
Amanda Byrum	Bret Baronak	Eric Calloway
	Sean Bloom	

1. Welcome

A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order at 8:42 AM by Chairperson Leslie Johnson. To accommodate the schedule of our auditors, she asked that the agenda be changed to begin with Executive Session.

Executive Session

Chairperson Leslie Johnson called for the meeting to enter Executive Session for the purpose of reviewing the 2023 auditors report and financial statements prepared by Foard and Company, PA, as well as the 2023 Form 990. Staff members left the meeting. Garrett Summers of the Foard Company joined the meeting via Zoom to present the audit and answer questions. At 9:00 AM the meeting returned to open session.

Return to Open Meeting

2023 Audit and Audited Financial Statements: Following Executive Session, the Board considered the adoption of the annual audit and audited financial statements. Lisa Phocas made a motion to accept the Audited Financial Statements, as recommended by the Finance Committee. Steve Scruggs seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously

2023 Form 990: Since the Board was considering the work of Foard, Finance Director Gail Olsen provided the Board with an overview of the 990 and the Finance Committee's recommendation for approval. Blair Boggs seconded the recommendation of the Finance Committee to approve filing the IRS 2023 Form 990 as presented. The motion passed with all in favor and none abstaining.

2. Consent Agenda:

Phil Kuttner made a motion to accept the consent agenda items, including minutes of the August 20, 2024 meeting and amendments to the Zimmermann and Jones and Polly Pharr Conservation Easements. Janet Hanson seconded the motion. The motion passed with all in favor and none abstaining.

3. Business Agenda

a. **Executive Session**: Taken out of order, see above.

b. **Finance:**

i. Audit: See above

ii. 990: See above

iii. Investment of Endowment Proceeds: Gail Olsen informed the Board that there is currently \$156,000 spendable in the CTT Endowment, held at FFTC. Upon recommendation from the auditors, staff recommends that the Board authorize the transfer of this spendable amount to a money market account at Bragg Financial with an interest rate of approximately 3.8%. Funds will be held in this account until November 15, 2024, then combined with a maturing \$223k Treasury Bill and reinvested into a two-year Treasury Bill to mature about November 2026. After some discussion about the organization's liquidity needs and the CTT unrestricted annual fundraising deficit, a motion was made by Compie Newman to approve, seconded by Janet Hanson. The motion passed with all in favor and Steve Scruggs (Bragg Financial employee) abstaining.

c. **Land Conservation Report**

i. Bigleaf Bluff Purchase and Sale Agreement: Land Conservation Director Amanda Byrum presented a final revised purchase and sale agreement for the purchase of the property known as Bigleaf Bluff. This project was previously approved by the Board in 2022, and has undergone several

revisions since then. NCLWF funding has been approved to assist in this purchase, but subsequent survey and environmental work further revised the project, changing the final acreage of the respective purchase and donation areas and requiring consent to risk-based remediation on the donated portion of the property. This will necessitate a revision to the NCLWF award. Staff recommends authorizing the Executive Director to sign the purchase and sale contract with Belmont Land and Investment, to sign the Consent to Risk-Based Remediation, and to approve the purchase of 46.4AC for \$1,424,500 and accept donation of 21.8AC. Jon Morris made a motion to approve, seconded by Harris Morrison. The motion passed with all in favor. Bill Carstarphen (landowner) and Chris Walker (environmental counsel to CLC) abstained.

- ii. Windy Grove Woods CE: Amanda Byrum presented the recommendation from the Land Acquisition Committee to approve receiving a donation of a conservation easement from the City of Charlotte through the Tree Canopy Preservation Program (TCPP) on a 6.5AC+/- property on Windy Grove Road in Mecklenburg County, known as the Windy Grove Woods Conservation Easement. After discussion about the TCPP program and the benefit to CLC of working with a partner like the City on a conservation program, the motion was seconded by Lisa Phocas. The motion passed with all in favor.
- iii. Popple Springs CE: Amanda Byrum presented the recommendation from the Land Acquisition Committee to approve receiving a donation of a conservation easement from landowners on the 25AC+/- Wise Road property in Lincoln County, near Lincolnton. The motion was seconded by Delane Clark. The motion passed with all in favor.
- iv. Small Parcel Policy Revision: Amanda Byrum described to the Board CLC's current policy, which favors acquisition of parcels of 40 acres or more, and subjects parcels that are smaller to additional acceptance criteria. The Land Acquisition Committee recommends revisions to this policy that will make all properties subject to a single set of criteria, better reflecting the organization's actual acquisition practices and the properties generally available for conservation in an urban/suburban region. The Committee recommends that the Board approve the revision of the language in Section IX. Land Acquisition Guidelines, Subsection B. Land Acquisition Policies and Procedures, in paragraphs 3. Project Selection Criteria and 4. Legal and Technical Aspects and the removal of subparagraphs 3. b. *Size* and 4. h. *Small Parcel Guidelines* in the CLC Policy Manual. The motion was seconded by Allen Clark, and passed with all in favor.

d. Natural Resource Management and Stewardship Report

- i. Trail Easements in Cramerton and McAdenville: Land Stewardship Director Sean Bloom brought to the Board the recommendation of the the Natural Resources Management and Stewardship Committee (NRMSC) to grant two trail easements on the Pharr Yarns Preserve in Gaston County, one to the town of McAdenville and one to the town of Cramerton. These trails would be part of the planned 23-mile Matthews Belk South Fork River Corridor, and trails would be built by the towns by 2026. Lisa Phocas seconded the motion to grant the permanent trail easements to the Towns of McAdenville and Cramerton. The motion passed with all in favor.

- ii. Preserve Management Fund Policy: Sean Bloom also presented the revised Preserve Management Fund Policy. NRMSC approved revisions to this policy in May 2024, and presented them to the Board in August 2024. The Board expressed some concerns about the revisions as presented, and sent the policy back to the Committee. The revisions approved by NRMSC was included in the Board packet. The Committee recommends approval of the policy as revised. Steve Scruggs seconded the motion, and the motion passed with all in favor.

4. Strategic Planning Session:

- a. Committee Reports: Staff and committee chairpersons presented a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) for each committee of the Board (Finance, Development & Marketing, Government Affairs, Land Acquisition, NRMSC and Carolina Thread Trail). The Board discussed these strengths and weaknesses as they were presented.

 - b. Breakout Groups: Following the Committee presentations, members of the Board were divided into small groups to discuss and devise their own overall SWOT analysis for the organization as a whole and list of major impressions based on the committee reports.

 - c. Reconvene for Process Discussion: Janet Hanson noted that, because of a lack of time, at a future meeting the Breakout Group reports will help launch the next step of strategic planning: committing to a vision and ambition, developing strategic options and making strategic choices.
5. **Adjourn**: The meeting was concluded at 12:40 PM and adjourned by Vice Chair Janet Hanson.

Board of Directors Meeting
Catawba Lands Conservancy and Carolina Thread Trail
November 6, 2024
8:00-9:00 AM
Via Zoom

Vice Chair Janet Hanson called the meeting to order. She explained that the Board was not able to complete their discussions at the October 17th meeting because of a lack of time. At the end of the October meeting, following work by Breakout Groups to develop strategic priorities for CLC and CTT, there was insufficient time to consolidate the work of the Breakout Groups. Therefore, the purpose of this meeting is to finish the business that had been planned for the October 17th meeting, including the review of the work of the Breakout Groups (see attached) and consolidation of recommendations into a single list of focus areas for the Board to develop as part of the strategic plan.

The Board discussed the work of the Breakout Groups and developed the list of focus areas below, which were common themes from each group. In addition, the Board delegated the focus areas to the committees most likely to address them as part of their regular work, and asked that each committee continue the process by refining the themes and adding actionable goals and objectives within each area.

Consistent themes

1. Partnerships/Collaborations to enhance capacity and network
- *NRMS, LAC, External Affairs, CTT committees*
2. Brand Awareness, Recognition/CTT-CLC Identity
- *Development, Marketing committees*
3. Organizational Sustainability and Streamlining/Financial Model Optimization
- *Finance Committee, Board and ED*
4. Ramp up Govt. & External Affairs efforts as means to enable CLC/CTT growth and expansion
- *Government and External Affairs committee*
5. Focus on Development/Sustainable Funding
- *Development and Finance committees*

There being no further business for this meeting, Janet Hanson adjourned the meeting at 9:00 AM.



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Meeting: December 10, 2024, Carolina Thread Trail Committee

Department: Carolina Thread Trail

Staff Contact: Bret Baronak

Report Date: December 4, 2024

Agenda Item: 2.b. Consent

Information

Trail Projects Update

Matthews-Belk South Fork River Corridor (MBSFRC)

- MBSFRC website is live! Check it out at: <https://www.carolinathreadtrail.org/mbsfrc/>
- Spencer Mountain
 - CTT was awarded \$250,000 from the Gaston Community Foundation in early October for Spencer Mountain construction. This is the largest award CTT has received from the Gaston Community Foundation to date.
 - The trail structures design is coming to close. The last draft will go before WBTB and Gaston County before being finalized. The final packet will be shared with the CTT Committee.
- CTT applied to the NC Recreational Trails Program in early September. The \$100,000 request (maximum allowed for the grant) is aimed at trail construction on Spencer Mtn. Specifically, a portion of the base loop connection with Poston Park and the summit trail to the top of the mountain.
- CTT submitted a \$500,000 Great Trails State Program grant on November 12th for construction of trails and trail structures on Spencer Mountain including: all planned trails, bridges, boardwalks, 4 kiosks, and the summit overlook area.
 - Cramerton has also applied for \$500,000 from the Great Trails State program for their section of the River Link Greenway extension. McAdenville is seeking other funding sources for their remaining balance to complete this collaborative project.
- MBSFRC fundraising is underway!

- **Please consider who you know that may be interested in a top gift for this phase of the project at \$1M. Who might that be in your area? Please consider and let Ashton or Bret know.**
- The South Fork Task Force has their “Ask” assignments that include gifts at or above \$100,000. Task Force members have begun approaching these prospects.
- CTT has assisted Cramerton in raising an additional \$60,000 (\$120,000 budget) to install the Helix/R sculpture and to build a small pocket park adjacent to the Riverside Greenway. The Helix/R meets our goal of incorporating iconic art along the MBSFRC trail. The installation of the Helix/R is expected by early next year!

CTT Grant Award

- The Town of Spencer applied for \$50,000 for trail development in the Stanback Forest. The CTT Committee recommended a \$25,000 award. This was approved by the Board in August. Spencer plans to use the award as matching funds in their Great Trails State Program grant application.
 - As additional assistance, CTT staff arranged and conducted a walk with a professional trail builder to evaluate the corridor with town staff. Based upon site visit, the Town is looking at a conservative 25-30% decrease in cost vs. original estimate prior to CTT staff's guidance.

Gastonia to Crowders Mountain Feasibility Study

- CTT staff have reviewed a draft report and provided comments. The goal is to have a finished report by year's end and CTT staff will present at the January CTT Committee meeting. Staff have served in a lead role and reviewed and provided all comments for drafts, and timeframe is dictated by NCDOT final review and completion with project consultant.

Line to Fort Mill Feasibility Study

- Study has progressed with partners Lancaster and York Counties, Fort Mill. The study will examine multiple options to connect the Little Sugar Creek Greenway at the state line to destinations south in the greater Fort Mill area. Study to be completed in December of 2024.

Progress:

- A public meeting was held on October 10 in Fort Mill, with 75 participants providing feedback.
- Recommended corridor alignments have been identified and final information regarding implementation is being completed.
- Stakeholder meetings complete
- Comprehensive Site Visits
- 3 steering committee meetings held to provide input on study.
- Public survey response from 2500 residents

- CTT will provide a presentation on this feasibility study to CTT Committee in January and to CTT Board in February

Great Falls Rail Trail

- Construction is complete. Hurricane Helene resulted in some down trees and minor erosion to the project, but it was able to be cleaned up over two workdays.
- \$92,000 for Phase 1 which is one mile in length. This funding comes from SC Recreational Trails Program Grant.
- CTT and Town are working on improving the parking capacity for accessing the trail.
- Public program hike was held at the trail on October 19th.
- Formal ribbon cutting was held on 12/9.

Falcon Trail (Tom Webb Segment).

- The 3-mile trail addition is now open for public use. The location is Stanly County (Misenhiemer and Richfield). This section brings the total mileage of Falcon Trail to 5.7 miles.
- A formal opening ceremony took place on Friday, October 18 at 10:00 in Richfield Park as part of Pfeifer University's homecoming.
- The new section is named in honor of Tom Webb, past Board member and long-time supporter of CTT and CLC.
- Official CTT signage was installed by North Stanly County Parks and Trails non-profit organization.

Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail

- An additional approximately 2.5 miles of Thread Trail is coming to Lake Whelchel in Gaffney, SC. Canopy Trails of Georgia has started construction. The new trail is scheduled to be complete in December and is likely to be the best trail segment on the entire property! Once finished there will be 10 miles of trail at Lake Whelchel.

Regional Roundtable East-Southeast

- The E-SE Roundtable took place on Nov. 14 at Wingate University. Participants represented Union, Anson, Stanly, and Mecklenburg County partners. There were

approximately 25 attendees. The event allowed for updates on local trail projects, discussions on opportunities and challenges, ways that CTT can further assist partners, and peer-to-peer networking. Our partners are in favor of these round table events and speak to their benefits in helping them with their trail efforts.

Trail Forum

- The 17th annual Trail Forum was held on Thursday, December 5 from 8 to 3:30 in Mooresville. Chair Leslie Johnson will provided welcoming remarks at the event. Agenda is finalized and included with this report. There were roughly 250 attendees at the event.

Presentations

- CTT Director spoke to Salisbury Greenways Advisory Committee on October 9th to discuss trail planning opportunities and additional ways that CTT can assist with local efforts. CTT has provided over \$250K in grants to assist Salisbury with projects.
- CTT Director was guest on WRHI “Straight Talk” Radio program on Nov. 1 to discuss the State Line to Fort Mill Feasibility Study. Recording can be found at link: <https://www.wrhi.com/2024/11/straight-talk-11-01-24-bret-baronak-director-of-the-carolina-thread-trail-193993>
- Ashton gave a presentation about the Carolina Thread Trail and trails in Gaston County to the staff of the Hampton Inn in Belmont. Many had no idea what the Carolina Thread Trail was or that trails existed in their community. Hampton Inn staff hope to inform guests about ways they can enjoy the trails while staying at the hotel.

Volunteer Updates

- Total Hours so far in 2024- 1848, a nearly 10% increase over 2023



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Meeting: December 10, 2024 Board of Directors

Department or Committee: Executive Committee

Staff Contact: Bart Landess

Report Date: December 6, 2024

Agenda Item: 2.c

Action Item

Ratification of Executive Committee Action

Background: At a meeting on December 3, 2024, the Executive Committee considered and approved a resolution to assist the Town of Cramerton with a project to install the Helix/R sculpture along the Carolina Thread Trail (attached). The Town wished to raise money to assist with the project but anticipated that donors would prefer donating to a 501c3 organization, rather than a municipal government. They asked that CLC/CTT collect donations on their behalf and then provide them to complete the project.

The attached resolution memorializes our willingness to assist the Town of Cramerton by collecting donations, then providing those donations to them in the form of a grant to install and maintain the Helix/R sculpture.

Attachments: Resolution adopted by Executive Committee on 12/3/24

Recommendation: We ask that the Board ratify the action of the Executive Committee.

Resolved: By majority vote of its members, the Board of Directors hereby ratifies the action of the Executive Committee when adopting the attached resolution.

This action is effective the ___ day of December, 2024.

Leslie Johnson, Chair

Catawba Lands Conservancy

Executive Committee

Whereas, the Town of Cramerton (“Cramerton”) owns a significant piece of artwork known as the Helix/R statue (the “Helix”); and

Whereas, Cramerton would like to place the Helix along a segment of Carolina Thread Trail to enhance the trail and enhance the quality of life of residents of Cramerton; and

Whereas, the Helix is large enough to require a significant base upon which to rest, which is costly to install, budgeted by Cramerton at \$120,000 (the “Installation Cost”); and

Whereas, Carolina Thread Trail (“CTT”) has provided a grant of \$10,000 to assist with the Installation Cost; and

Whereas, CTT has also agreed to be the recipient of donations from the citizens of Cramerton to assist with the Installation Cost; and

Whereas, CTT has received \$78,000 in donations to cover the Installation Cost;

Now therefore, in consideration of the foregoing, the Executive Committee of CLC, on behalf of CLC and its programmatic arm CTT, hereby resolves that CTT shall grant to Cramerton

- a. The \$10,000 committed by CTT for the Helix, and
- b. Other donations received by CLC that are designated for the Installation Costs, up to and including the full Installation Costs, and
- c. If there are funds remaining after paying for the Installation Costs, CLC shall remit them to Cramerton to be used for future maintenance costs of the Helix.

In witness whereof, this resolution was adopted this ____ day of December, 2024.

Leslie Johnson, Chair



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CAROLINA
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Meeting: December 10, 2024 Board of Directors

Department or Committee: Nominating Committee

Staff Contact: Bart Landess

Report Date: December 6, 2024

Agenda Item: 3

Action Item

Nominating Committee

Background: The Nominating Committee recommends the following nominees for Board member:

Kenda Laughey – CFO, Southminster and member of the Finance Committee

Stewart Tate – Owner, Shaw Tate Group, real estate brokers and developers

John Herring – COO and general Counsel, Fidus Partners private equity firm

Thad Walton – RegionsBank Market President for NC and SC

Each has agreed to serve if elected.

The following are recommended as officers:

Janet Hanson – Chair

Allen Clark – Vice Chair

Michael Lucente – Treasurer

Chris Walker – Secretary

Recommendation: That the nominees proposed by the Nominating Committee be elected.

Resolved: By majority vote of its members, the Board of Directors hereby elects the persons noted below to the positions recommended by the Nominating Committee.

Board members:

Kenda Laughey

Stewart Tate

John Herring

Thad Walton

Officers:

Janet Hanson – Chair

Allen Clark – Vice Chair

Michael Lucente - Treasurer

Chris Walker - Secretary

This action is effective the ___ day of December, 2024.

Leslie Johnson, Chair



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Meeting: December 10, 2024 Board of Directors

Department or Committee: Land Acquisition and Natural Resources Management and Stewardship
Committees

Staff Contact: Amanda Byrum

Report Date: 12/3/2024

Agenda Item: 4.a.

Action Item

Cannon Preserve

Project: Cannon Preserve

Property: 44AC on Mauney Road

Location: Cabarrus County

Background: The landowner reached out to staff of Davidson Lands Conservancy (DLC), with whom he was acquainted. He expressed his desire for a simple donation transaction and wanted to convey ownership interest to DLC with the stipulation that the property be permanently protected and held for conservation purposes. DLC reached out to Catawba Lands Conservancy (CLC) staff to evaluate the project and proposed that DLC accept the donation, then convey to CLC and retain a conservation easement (CE) as that was the scenario with which the landowner was most comfortable. DLC has limited resources to manage preserves and is not as well suited to this role as CLC. CLC staff agreed with that transaction structure.

The property is approximately forty-four acres of forested land and is unimproved, encumbered with an existing power line right of way. Conservation values include habitat preservation, conservation of existing forest land, and protection of a stream buffer. The project also represents an opportunity for preservation of land ahead of development in a rural area and a partnership with a partner land trust.

DLC has handled the costs for due diligence for the project and closed on their acquisition of ownership in the property, providing CLC with copies of all reports. CLC will be responsible for title updates and obtaining title insurance as well as any legal expenses and recording costs



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associated with recording the deed conveying the property from DLC to CLC. CLC and DLC staff are working together to handle the CE internally. The landowner agreed to fund the full stewardship and legal defense fund amount needed for both organizations with \$14,000 to be distributed to each.

The conservation easement will include limited reserved rights, including passive recreation, trail development, and natural resources management. The CE will also include the right to subdivide the property, if necessary due to an adjoining owner's access needs or needs of additional utility rights of way. CLC staff do not anticipate that the organization's ownership of the property will involve uses beyond stewardship and management, so the easement is more restrictive, consistent with the donor's wishes.

Staff recommended approval of the acceptance of the donation of the preserve from Davidson Lands Conservancy subject to the conservation easement with the reserved rights and restrictions as described above. Both the Land Acquisition and Natural Resources Management and Stewardship Committees unanimously approved the project. The property is close to Buffalo Creek Preserve and Pharr Family Preserve so will add to other conserved areas in Cabarrus County.

Financial: The preserve will be donated. CLC's transaction costs, paid from Ketner, are only for title updates and insurance. DLC has provided all other due diligence items, and the landowner will pay the stewardship and legal defense fund contribution.

Attachments: Cannon Preserve Map

Recommendation: Land Acquisition Committee and Natural Resources Management and Stewardship Committees, at their respective November 6, 2024, meetings, unanimously recommended acceptance of the donation of the approximately forty-four acre preserve, subject to a conservation easement, from Davidson Lands Conservancy, located on Mauney Road in Cabarrus County.

Resolved: By majority vote of its members, the Board of Directors hereby accept the donation of the approximately forty-four acre preserve, subject to a conservation easement, from Davidson Lands Conservancy, located on Mauney Road in Cabarrus County.

This action is effective the 10th day of December, 2024

Leslie Johnson, Chair



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Meeting: December 10, 2024 Board of Directors

Department or Committee: Land Acquisition and Natural Resources Management and Stewardship
Committees

Staff Contact: Amanda Byrum

Report Date: 12/3/2024

Agenda Item: 4.b.

Action Item

Davis Branch Conservation Easement

Project: Davis Branch CE

Property: 16AC off JAARS Road

Location: Union County

Conservation Resource Area: Waxhaw Creek Barrens

Background: The landowner initially reached out to Catawba Lands Conservancy (CLC) staff related to her interest in bird and wildlife observation. She later expressed interest in conserving her property, and staff have worked with her to develop a project structure for donation of a conservation easement on the unimproved, wooded parcel adjacent to the parcel on which her residence is located. The property owner plans to sell her home in order to move into an assisted living facility due to medical concerns, so her financial capacity for the transaction is limited, but she feels very strongly about preserving the property and wildlife habitat.

The property is approximately sixteen acres of forested land and is unimproved, with limited natural surface trails maintained by the landowner for her use and use by her guests. Conservation values include habitat preservation, conservation of existing forest land, protection of a stream buffer along Waxhaw Creek and Davis Branch, and creation of opportunity for future trail connection along an adopted Carolina Thread Trail corridor. The property is located in one of the high priority Conservation Resource Areas, Waxhaw Creek Barrens, identified in the 2025-2030 Conservation Strategic Plan, also presented to the Board for adoption at the December 10, 2024 meeting.



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Access to the property is through an access easement from JAARS Road crossing an adjoining property. The adjoining owner has been informed of the upcoming conservation project.

The landowner provided CLC with a recent survey of the subject property, showing the access easement. CLC will be responsible for title updates as well as the organization's legal expenses and recording costs associated with recording the conservation easement. The landowner is unable to make any financial contribution toward the stewardship and legal defense fund, so CLC plans to transfer funds from Ketner but will request funding from Catawba Wateree Water Management Group (CWWMG) for support for the project.

The conservation easement will include limited reserved rights, including passive recreation, trail development, and natural resources management. Timbering and agriculture are prohibited. Staff recommended approval of the acceptance of the donation of the conservation easement with the reserved rights and restrictions as described above. Both the Land Acquisition and Natural Resources Management and Stewardship Committees unanimously approved the project. The property is close to Waxhaw Creek and will add to other conserved areas in Union County.

Financial: The conservation easement will be donated. CLC's transaction costs, paid from Ketner, will cover title updates and insurance and the stewardship and legal defense fund contribution, unless awarded support from Catawba Wateree Water Management Group.

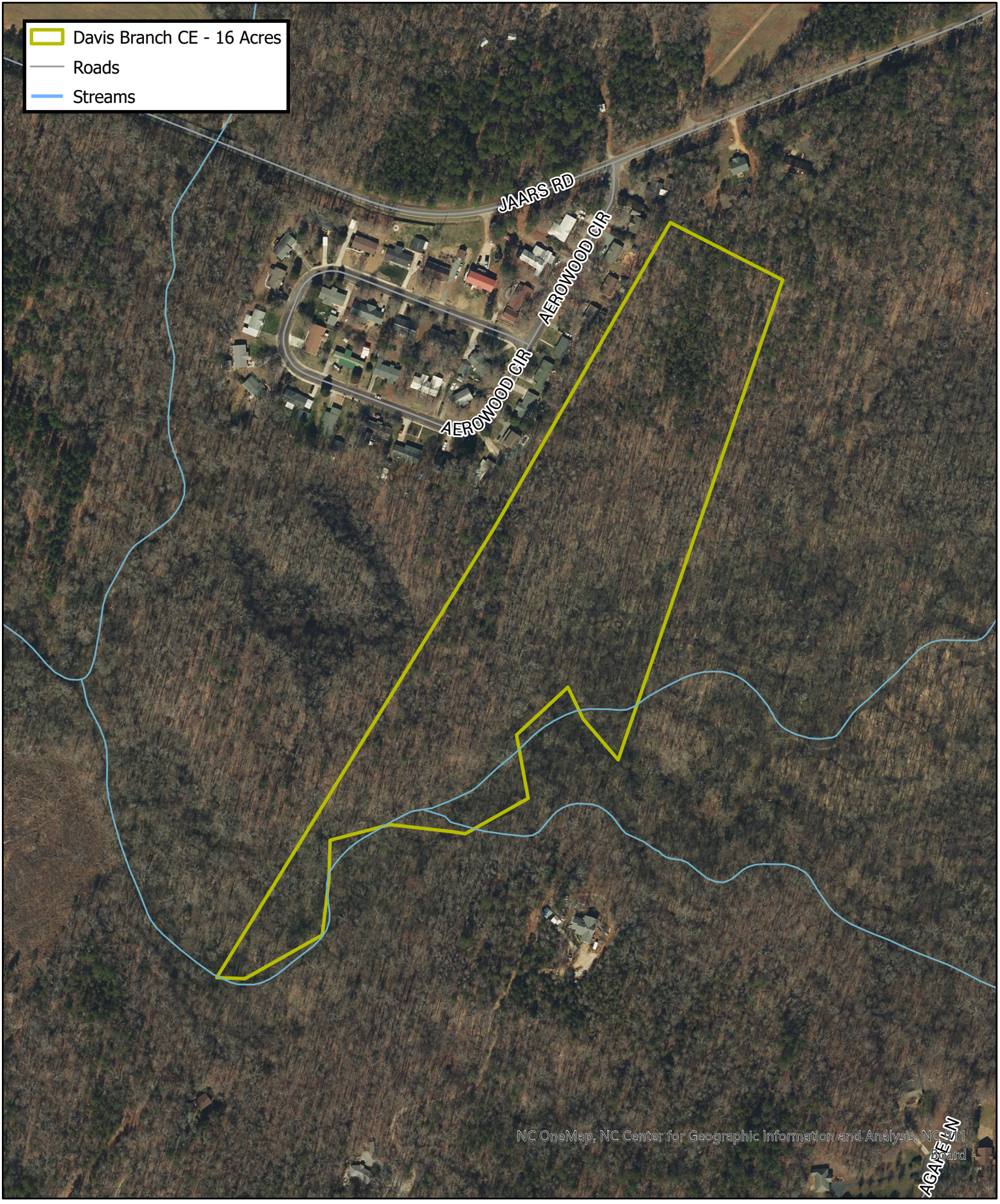
Attachments: Davis Branch CE Map

Recommendation: Land Acquisition Committee and Natural Resources Management and Stewardship Committees, at their respective December 4, 2024, meetings, unanimously recommended acceptance of the donation of the approximately sixteen acre conservation easement located off JAARS Road in Union County.

Resolved: By majority vote of its members, the Board of Directors hereby accept the donation of the approximately sixteen acre conservation easement located off JAARS Road in Union County.

This action is effective the 10th day of December, 2024.

Leslie Johnson, Chair



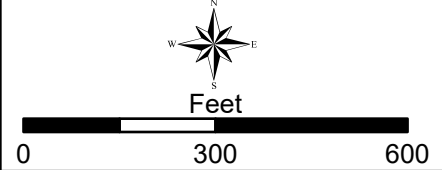
Davis Branch CE - 16 Acres
 Roads
 Streams

NC OneMap, NC Center for Geographic Information and Analysis, NC Board of Geography Names



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Figure 1: Property Map
 Davis Branch CE
 Union County
 Created By: SB
 Updated By: sbloom
 Date: December, 4, 2024



Feet
 0 300 600

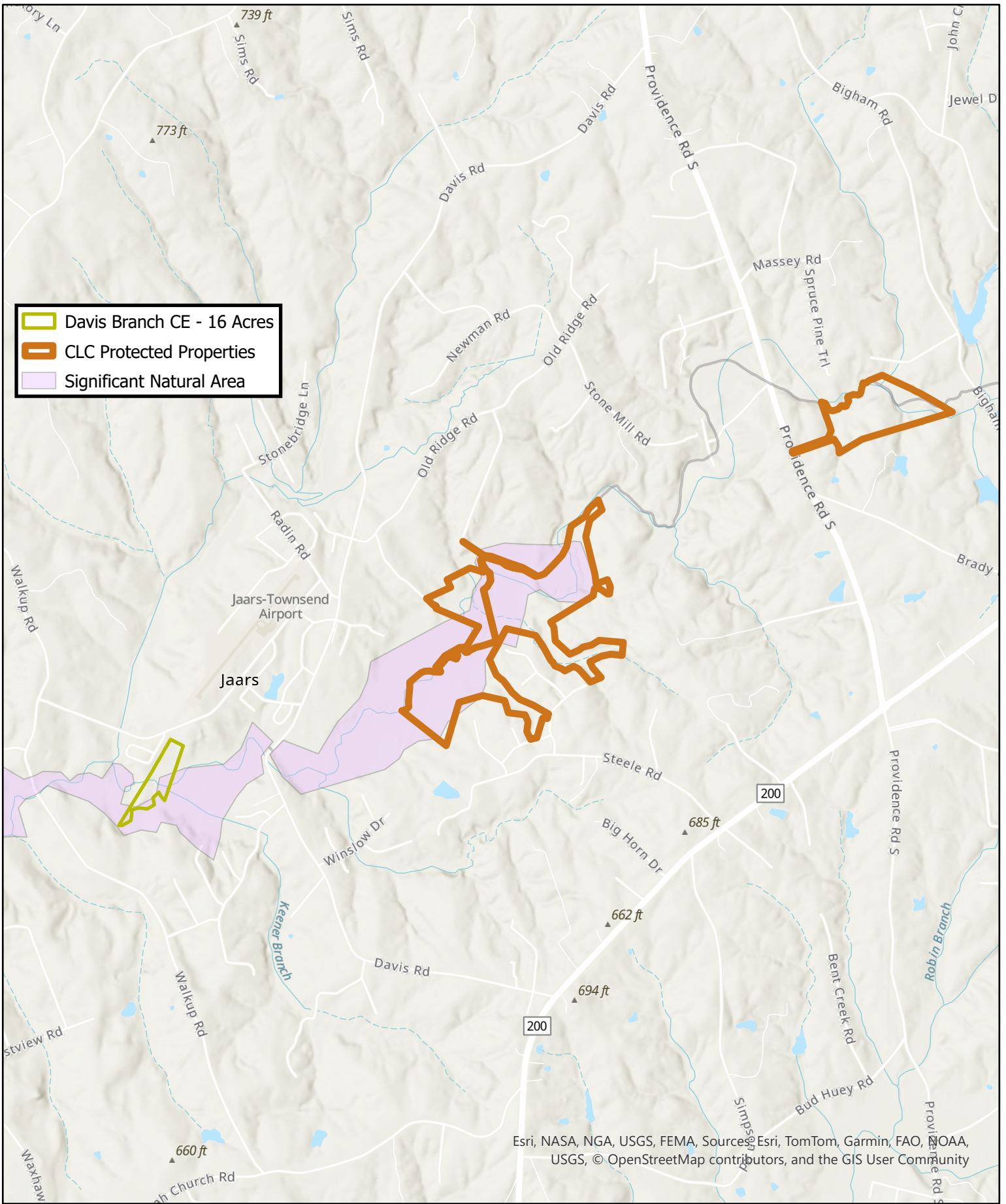
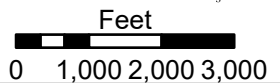


Figure 3: Area Conservation

Davis Branch CE
Union County

Created By: SB
Updated By: sbloom

Date: December, 4, 2024



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Meeting: December 10, 2024 Board of Directors

Department or Committee: Land Conservation

Staff Contact: Amanda Byrum

Report Date: 12/3/2024

Agenda Item: 4.c.

Action Item

Strategic Conservation Plan

Background: Board members may recall that Catawba Lands Conservancy (CLC) previously completed a strategic plan for land conservation in 2016, consisting of a map of the organization's conservation footprint with highlighted areas of highest significance. The data for that plan has now become outdated as the area has grown and land use changed, and staff have identified the need for a more robust plan document and mapping tool.

CLC staff have worked throughout 2024 with a GIS consultant to develop a set of maps, which reflects scoring of conservation values in each of the four focus areas across the geographic footprint of the organization. An additional map aggregate the highest scoring areas into what are called Conservation Resource Areas (CRAs), prioritizing those locations for outreach with greatest impact on conservation. In total, seventeen areas have been identified across seven counties, shown on the attached internal plan document.

Staff have presented to committees and the Board the concept of a conservation ambassador program. This program describes how Board, committee, and volunteer leadership can be engaged to communicate with property owners in CRAs to raise awareness of land conservation options and encourage conservation of important properties. No committee or Board members have identified themselves or others as prospective ambassadors at this time and staff welcome feedback on the approach to this program. Staff are finalizing materials to share with committee members to assist with outreach.



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Staff have engaged a design consultant to finalize the public-facing version of the plan for publication on CLC's website and the development of marketing materials for use with major donors.

The plan duration has been identified as 2025-2030, and staff recommend that the plan be updated within that timeframe to account for changes in land use and development. The Land Acquisition Committee unanimously approved adoption of the plan at its meeting on November 6, 2024.

Financial: A Duke Energy Climate Resiliency grant in the amount of \$40,000 is funding the GIS, design, and outreach components of the plan.

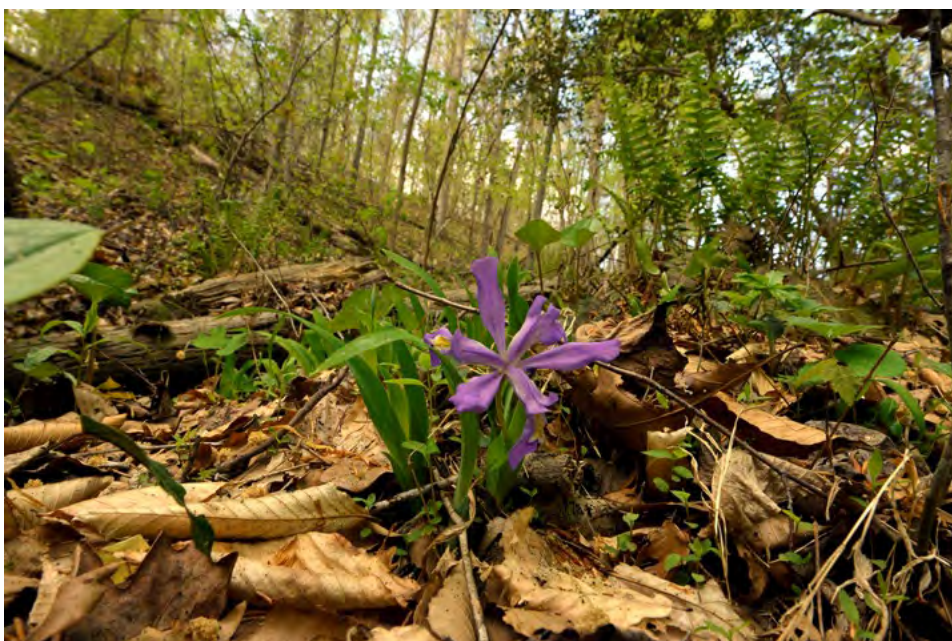
Attachments: Conservation Strategic Plan 2025-2030 Internal Plan Document

Recommendation: Land Acquisition Committee, at its November 6, 2024, meeting, unanimously recommended adoption of the 2025-2030 Conservation Strategic Plan, as presented.

Resolved: By majority vote of its members, the Board of Directors hereby approve the adoption of the 2025-2030 Conservation Strategic Plan, as presented.

This action is effective the 10th day of December, 2024.

Leslie Johnson, Chair



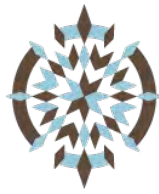
CATAWBA LANDS CONSERVANCY: CONSERVATION STRATEGIC PLAN

2025-2030 PLAN

*Catawba Lands Conservancy:
Saving land and connecting
lives to nature.*



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Introduction

Mission

Catawba Lands Conservancy's mission is: Protecting land and connecting lives to nature.

Organization Background and Past Successes

Catawba Lands Conservancy was formed as a grass-roots organization in 1991, focused on protecting the water quality of Mountain Island Lake, an important drinking water source for the Charlotte area. After our early success in advocating for land protection along the lake in Mecklenburg County, the volunteer group then known as SMILE (Save Mountain Island Lake for Everyone) recognized that we had other opportunities for land conservation in the Catawba River basin.

Once formed as a non-profit organization, Catawba Lands Conservancy acquired our first property in 1995. The organization achieved accreditation with Land Trust Alliance in 2007, becoming one of the first land trusts in the country to receive this national designation. In the same year, the Carolina Thread Trail, a regional network of trails, greenways and blueways, was launched with Catawba Lands Conservancy as the lead agency.

Our focus areas for conservation work as an organization are water quality protection and enhancement, habitat conservation and restoration, farmland preservation, and connections to outdoor recreation opportunities. To date, Catawba Lands Conservancy has conserved over 17,800 acres. Our footprint includes Union, Mecklenburg, Gaston, Lincoln, Catawba, and parts of Iredell and Cabarrus Counties.

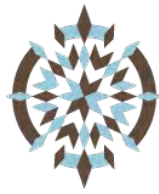
Conservation Strategic Plan Background

Catawba Lands Conservancy's last conservation strategic plan was completed and adopted in 2016. As the region has continued to experience population growth and associated development, we recognize that changes in land use and local government regulations have altered the landscape of our conservation work. In 2022, staff determined that it was time for an updated and more robust conservation strategic plan in order to inform our work and priorities.





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Conservation Challenges

Presently, the majority of conservation projects are generated by landowners contacting the Conservancy. Staff have identified a need to increase outreach and brand recognition as our work is currently limited to landowners who are familiar with land conservation. As with other land trusts, the Conservancy is responsive to landowner inquiries, which depends upon general public knowledge of conservation. In order to address this challenge, staff will utilize the conservation strategic plan to identify key geographic areas for outreach opportunities.

An additional factor that creates a challenge for successful land conservation projects is the lack of supportive public policy at the state and local levels. Since 2013, the number of conservation projects overall has decreased. This trend directly correlates to the sunseting of the North Carolina state conservation tax credit. The Conservancy and numerous land trusts in North Carolina have worked with lobbyists through the Land For Tomorrow coalition to encourage the reinstatement of the tax credit. The legislature has approved a limited tax credit from 2025 through 2026 for landowners who donate ownership interests in conservation land. The Conservancy hopes to use the conservation strategic plan as a communications tool in the engagement of the Government Affairs Committee with state and local officials.

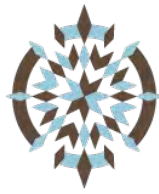


Land Conservation Project data 1994-2024, October 2024

Finally, the rising cost of land in the Southern Piedmont is a barrier to successful projects as landowners face pressure to sell for fair market value and are unable to pursue bargain sale or donation transactions. The funding sources available in North Carolina are limited to state trust funds, including the North Carolina Land and Water Fund and the North Carolina Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund. While the Conservancy does have internal funding sources for transaction costs and to match grant awards, these funds are not part of annual fundraising or campaigns, and their use could exceed their replenishment. Due to our limited funding sources and limited landowner interest, the Conservancy must use the limited available resources in a more strategic manner in order for our work to be most impactful for regional conservation benefits.



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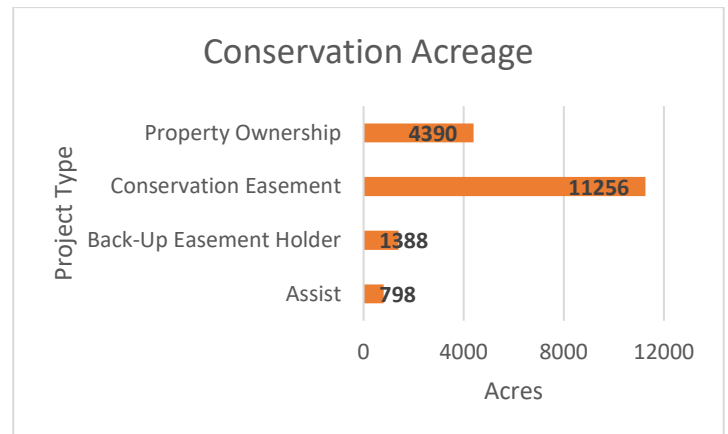
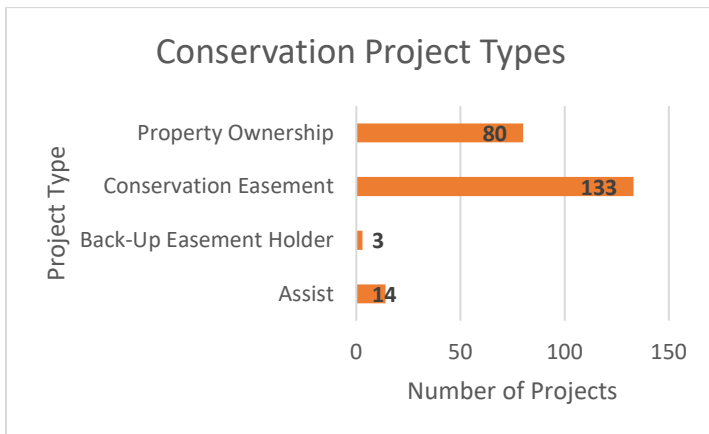


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Conservation Methods

The primary tool used by Catawba Lands Conservancy for conservation is a voluntary land conservation agreement, referred to as a conservation easement. Conservation easements include easements specific to the preservation of working agricultural lands as well as undeveloped natural lands or lands with low intensity private use. The Conservancy works with landowners to accomplish their vision for the future of their land and develops conservation easements with specific land use restrictions to preserve the conservation values of the property while allowing landowners to retain ownership and use of the land and the ability to convey, sell, gift, will, or otherwise devise the property. In some cases, the Conservancy may accept donation of ownership interest in a property. Donated properties may be held as preserves if they possess high conservation values or may be identified as trade lands. Trade lands sales allow the proceeds of sale of low conservation value properties to be reinvested in other conservation opportunities that align with the organization’s mission and focus areas.

The Conservancy also identifies important natural areas that meet the organizational focus areas and pursues acquisition by bargain sale purchase, typically supported by grant awards. These properties, along with land donated to the Conservancy, are held as preserves and managed and restored by the Conservancy’s Natural Resources Management and Stewardship team. Such properties may be subject to conservation easements or other restrictions held by grant-making agencies that funded the projects or by partner conservation organizations.



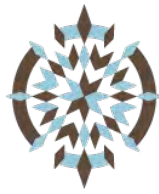
Conservation Interest data, October 2024

Purpose of Conservation Strategic Plan

Catawba Lands Conservancy’s conservation acquisition work is highly relevant and urgent in our developing region as we balance the necessity of increased housing, employment centers, and infrastructure to support the growing population in our area with the need for green space and the ecosystem services, local farms and food, and outdoor recreation amenities. While there are many benefits to the Conservancy’s location in a flourishing metropolitan area, there are also challenges, including the affordability and availability of land, limited funding sources for conservation, and lack of awareness of conservation options. As a result, the Conservancy must be strategic about where resources are allocated



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and utilized. The purpose of a conservation strategic plan is to guide the team’s landowner outreach and grant application strategy to focus on those areas of greatest benefit to the conservation values identified in the organization’s focus areas.

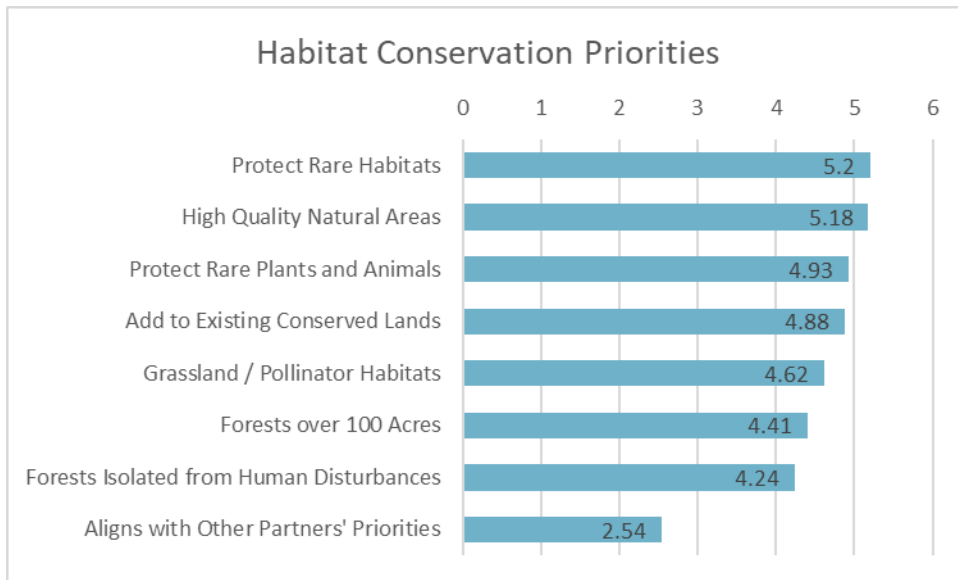
Updated Conservation Strategic Plan Process

Survey

In the early stages of determining how to proceed to an update with our conservation strategic plan, Catawba Lands Conservancy staff wanted to validate the alignment of our values with those of our supporters. In May 2022, we sent out a survey to our email lists and shared it on social media, so the primary engagement was with our existing network.

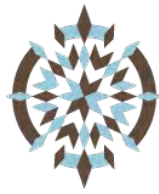
The response rate was low and primarily comprised of self-selected individuals already familiar with the work of CLC. Respondents were asked to rank (Highest to Lowest) priorities for conservation in categories corresponding to the organization’s focus areas, including Habitat Conservation, Watershed Conservation, and Farmland Conservation. Projects aligned with other partners’ priorities consistently ranked lowest across all categories.

Habitat Conservation: Protecting rare habitat, high quality natural areas and rare plants scored highest in habitat conservation. Score rankings were closest to one another in this category.



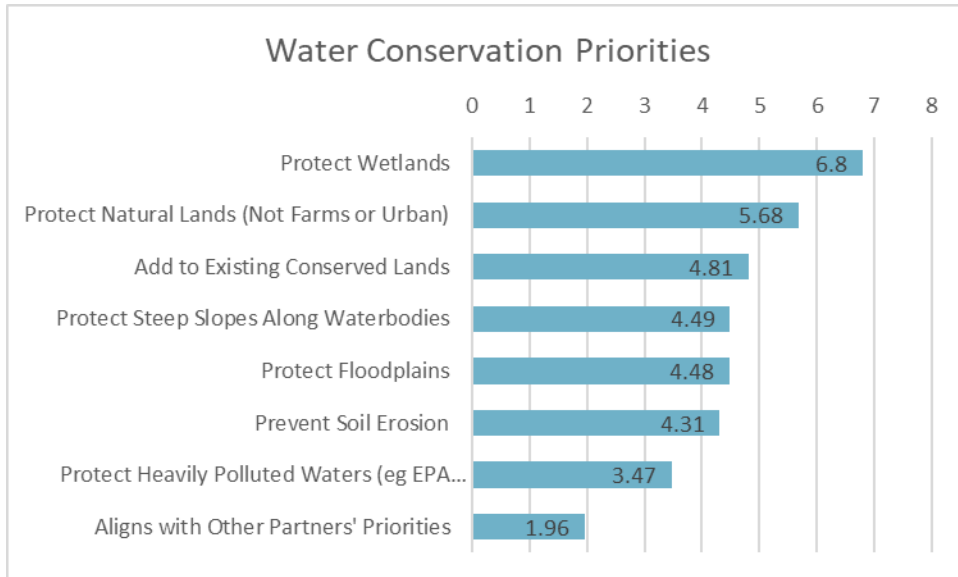


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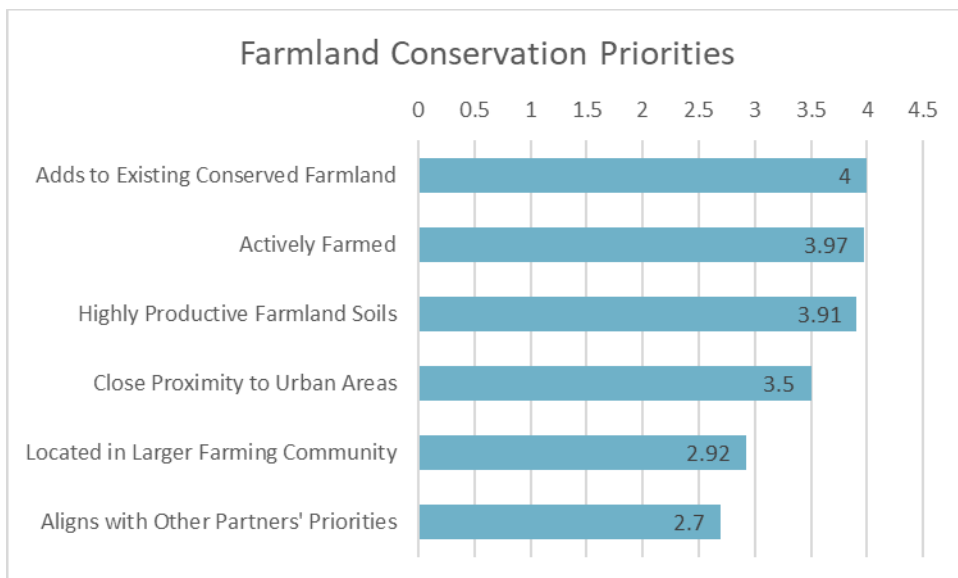


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Watershed Conservation: Protecting wetlands and natural lands scored highest in watershed conservation.

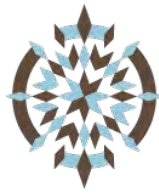


Farmland Conservation: Adding to existing farmland conservation efforts, protecting actively farmed lands and highly productive soils ranked highest in farmland conservation.





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GIS Methodology

Following initial work by an outside consultant, Catawba Lands Conservancy's Land Stewardship Director performed an analysis of our footprint using data from nine sources, including federal, State of North Carolina, and local governments:

- US Environmental Protection Agency
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- United States Geological Service
- US Federal Emergency Management Agency
- NC Natural Heritage Program
- NC Wildlife Resources Commission
- NC Department of Transportation
- Natural Resource Offices in Gaston and Mecklenburg County

This analysis followed our focus areas as an organization: Water Quality, Habitat, Farmland and Outdoor Recreation.

Staff created a series of maps analyzing each focus area based on the following conservation value criteria:

Water Quality: wetlands, impaired watersheds, soil permeability, natural lands within stream buffers, floodplains, water supply watersheds, proximity to protected properties

Habitat: rare habitats, Natural Heritage Natural Areas, Elemental Occurrences, intact forests, proximity to protected properties

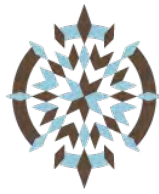
Farmland: farmland use, farm soils, proximity to incorporated areas, proximity to farm services/suppliers

Outdoor Recreation: Carolina Thread Trail planned or existing routes, proximity to parks and nature preserves, proximity to other recreation sites

Staff processed each dataset to remove irrelevant or obsolete data before beginning the analysis. Each conservation value criterion was assigned points within a scoring system, with the resulting maps indicating through color shading the higher and lower scoring locations. For each focus area, clusters of high-ranking scores in the conservation value criteria were identified and mapped. The highest scoring locations for each conservation focus area were then overlaid. Areas where two or more high-scoring locations overlap are identified as Conservation Resource Areas. This data was used both to create the Conservation Resource Area map and identify top priority geographies for conservation outreach and to provide our staff with an interactive online tool to evaluate prospective conservation projects.



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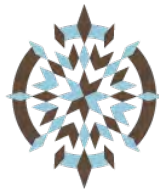
Conservation Resource Areas

Staff of Catawba Lands Conservancy and Carolina Thread Trail reviewed the final regional and county maps to verify the Conservation Resource Areas. Many of these locations are consistent with existing conservation areas of larger land interests. Conservation Resource Areas have been identified as follows:

County	Map ID	Conservation Resource Areas	Focus Areas			
			Farmland	Habitat	Trails	Water Quality
Cabarrus	2	Dutch Buffalo Creek	X	X		
	1	Lower Rocky River	X	X	X	
	3	Upper Rocky River		X	X	X
Catawba	5	Lyle Creek	X		X	X
	4	Riverbend	X	X	X	X
	4	Wilderness Gateway		X	X	X
Gaston	6	Catawba Cove	X	X	X	
	8	Dutchmans Creek		X		X
	7	Greater Spencer Mountain		X	X	X
	9	Indian Creek	X			X
Iredell	11	South Yadkin River	X	X	X	
Lincoln	12	Beth Haven Forests		X		X
	13	Forney Creek			X	X
	14	Riverbend	X	X	X	X
Mecklenburg	15	Long and Gar Creeks		X	X	X
	10	Huntersville-Cornelius-Davidson	X	X	X	X
Union	16	Waxhaw Creek & Barrens	X	X	X	X
	17	Goose Creek	X	X		X



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Updated Conservation Strategic Plan Adoption and Implementation

Adoption

Catawba Lands Conservancy is governed by a Board of Directors, whose leadership is supported by a committee structure. Committees include Land Acquisition, Land Stewardship, Government Affairs, and Carolina Thread Trail. Staff presented on the process of updating the Conservation Strategic Plan and gathered input on the mapping from both the Land Acquisition Committee and Land Stewardship Committee. The final Conservation Strategic Plan 2025-2030 was presented to the Land Acquisition Committee for approval at their **November 6, 2024**, meeting and finally to the Board of Directors at their **December 17, 2024**, meeting where it was approved and adopted.

Implementation

Staff will use the updated conservation strategic plan to evaluate prospective projects beginning in 2025 and will report to committees and the Board on how the projects fit into the plan model when presenting items for approval. Successful conservation projects rely upon willing landowners, so in many instances, the land trust will continue to be responsive to inquiries and accept projects brought by enthusiastic landowner partners that meet the organization's policies and standards for conservation.

Outreach Plan

Conservancy staff will identify outreach opportunities in each of the Conservation Resource Areas, whether through direct outreach to particular landowners, participation in community events, or speaking engagements with other local organizations or agencies. Conservation projects are often complex financial and real property transactions involving an asset with which landowners have a personal and family connection, so it is important for staff to develop trust and relationships within Conservation Resource Area communities.

American Farmland Trust Land Transfer Navigator Program

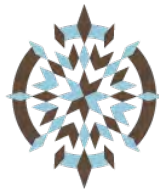
In 2023, the Conservancy was awarded the four (4) year American Farmland Trust (AFT) Land Transfer Navigator (LTN) grant, which supports the land trust's work in providing education to farm owners and operators about conservation as it fits into estate and succession plans. The grant program provides funding for events, which will also be targeted to the Conservation Resource Areas, where possible. The primary outreach goal for LTN is to deliver at least one (1) presentation to a farm-owner audience in each county of the Conservancy's footprint over the course of the four (4) year grant term.

Conservation Ambassador Program

In addition to direct outreach, Catawba Lands Conservancy staff have also developed an approach to work with interested landowners in the identified Conservation Resource Areas through our network of volunteers, a new Conservation Ambassador volunteer program. Conservation Ambassadors will include Board members, committee members, existing landowners, and other volunteers associated with the Conservancy.



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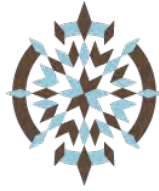


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Conservation Ambassadors will be provided with informational materials by Conservancy staff and outreach letter and email templates to initiate engagement with prospective landowners and to raise community awareness of conservation. If interested landowners and community members are identified, staff will assist with informational gatherings hosted by Conservation Ambassadors. Those gatherings are intended to allow the Conservation Ambassadors to share conservation resources in their communities and with their networks and to make introductions and connections between Conservancy staff and prospective landowners. The goal is to hold one (1) gathering in each county within the Conservancy's footprint by 2030, with geographic proximity to one or more Conservation Resource Area.



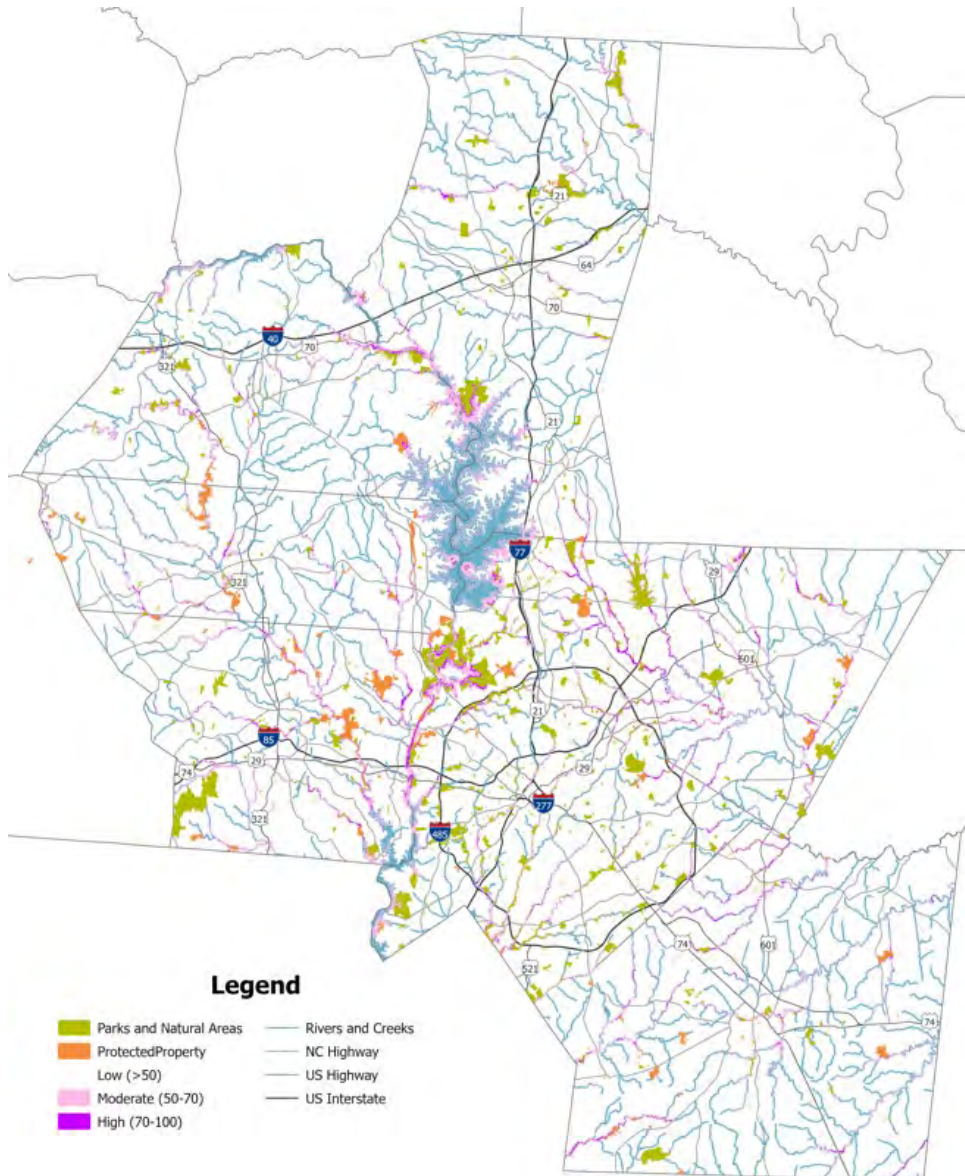
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Updated Conservation Strategic Plan

Focus Area: Water Quality



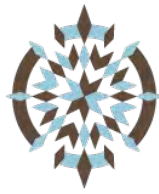
Goal: Protect riparian buffers along creeks, streams, rivers, lakes, and other waterbodies that contribute to surface water and drinking water quality in the region.

Priorities: Adding land to protected properties; protecting wetlands, vegetated buffers and/or floodplains.

Strategy: Target properties featuring wetlands and vegetated riparian buffers; target tracts with direct impacts on drinking water; target properties with first order streams; target properties with high scoring potential for water quality and habitat preservation grants.

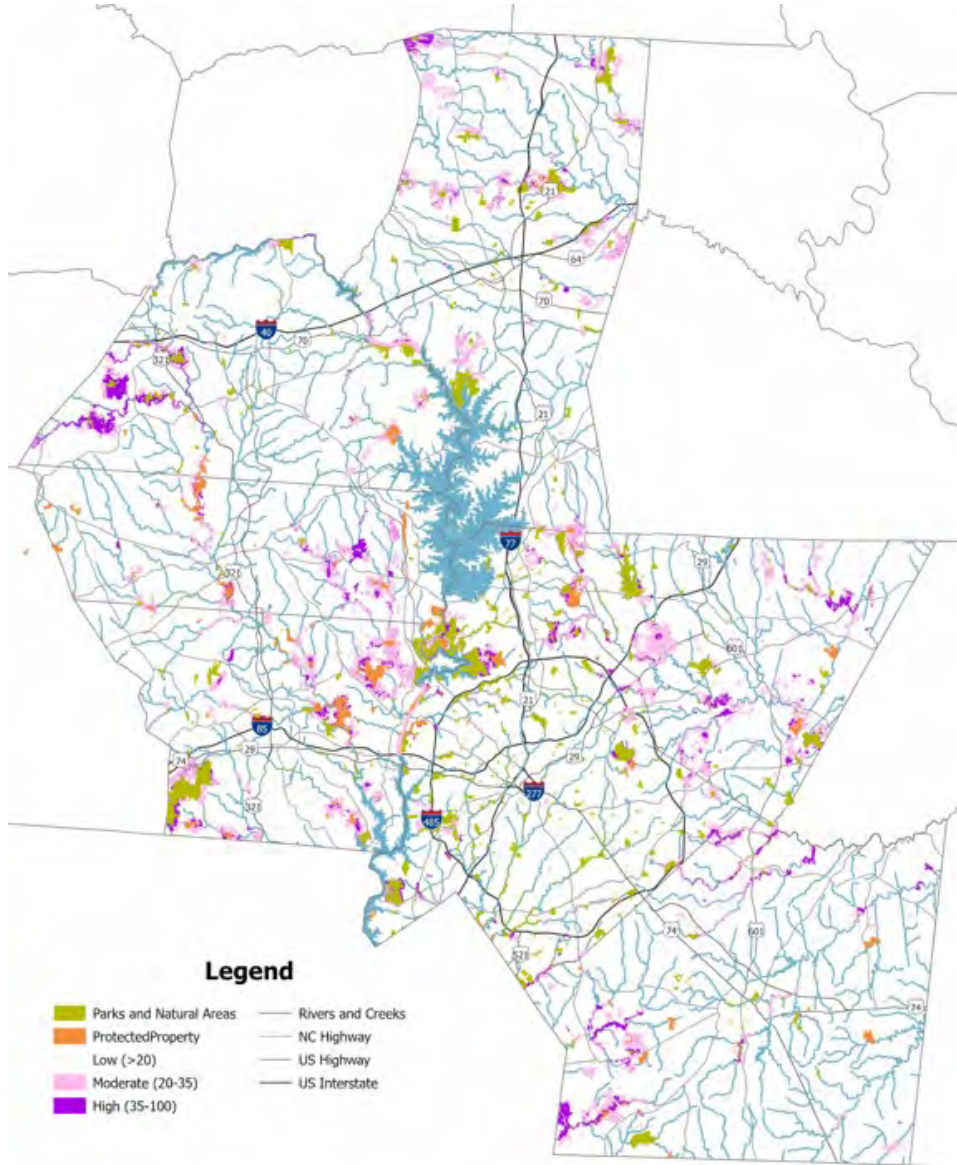


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Focus Area: Habitat



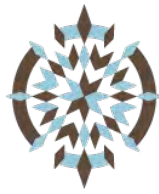
Goal: Expand existing conservation areas to five (5) total sites with 1,000 acres or more; conserve landscapes that provide existing habitat for plant and animal species or create connectivity between protected land areas for wildlife corridors; provide protection and buffers for isolated rare or unique plants, animals and natural communities.

Priorities: Protecting unique habitats and/or imperiled species, including plants and animals; preserving high quality natural areas; adding to protected properties.

Strategy: Target land identified as Significant Natural Areas and locations of imperiled species populations; target assemblage opportunities to add to existing conservation areas.

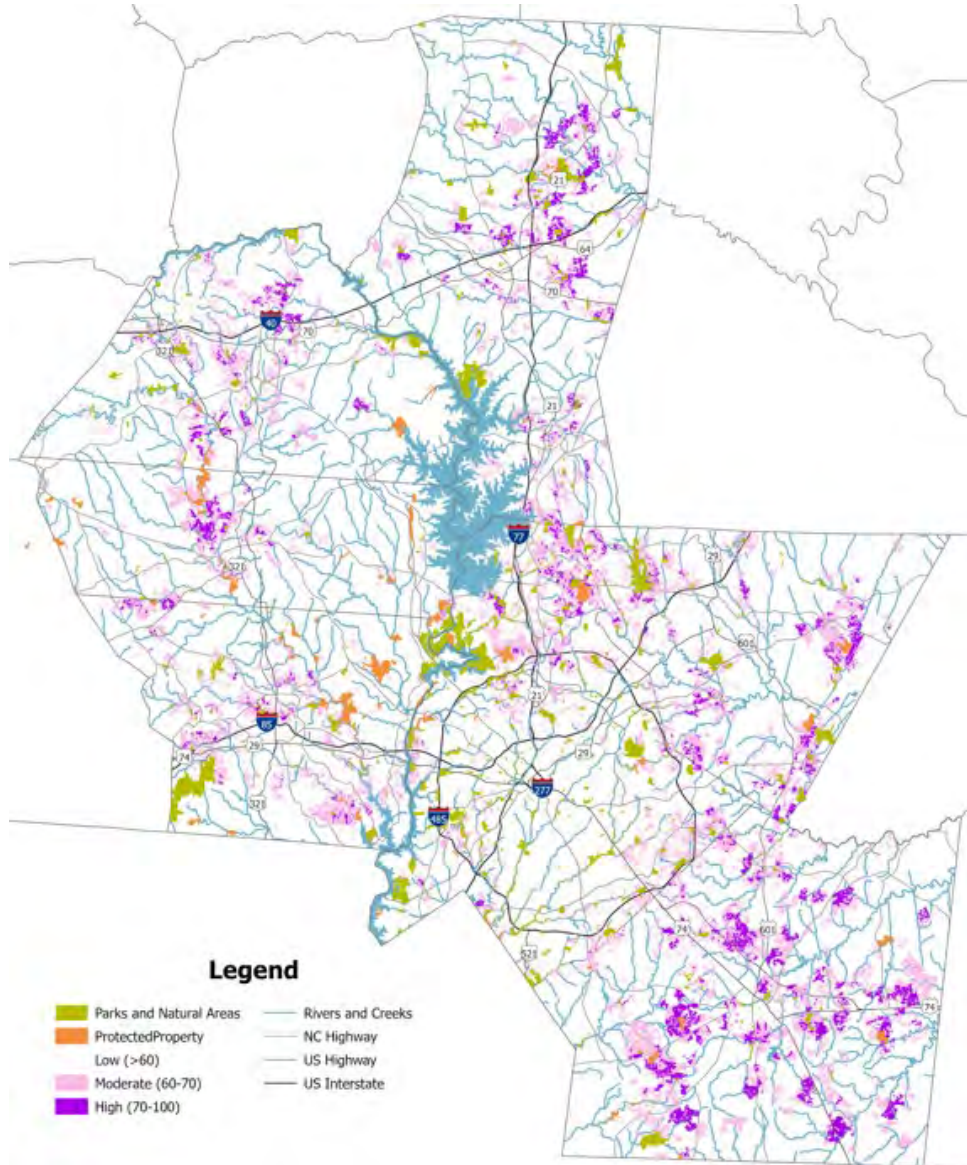


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Focus Area: Farmland



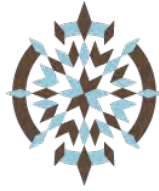
Goal: Preserve farmland to support local agricultural economies and create opportunities for emerging, historically underrepresented or low resource farmers.

Priorities: Preserving active farmland; protecting high quality farm soils; adding to protected agricultural properties.

Strategy: Outreach to farm owners with conservation plans and/or enrolled in Voluntary or Enhanced Voluntary Agricultural Districts; target properties with high scoring potential for agricultural preservation grants; develop partnerships with other non-profit and government agencies to advance farmland conservation.

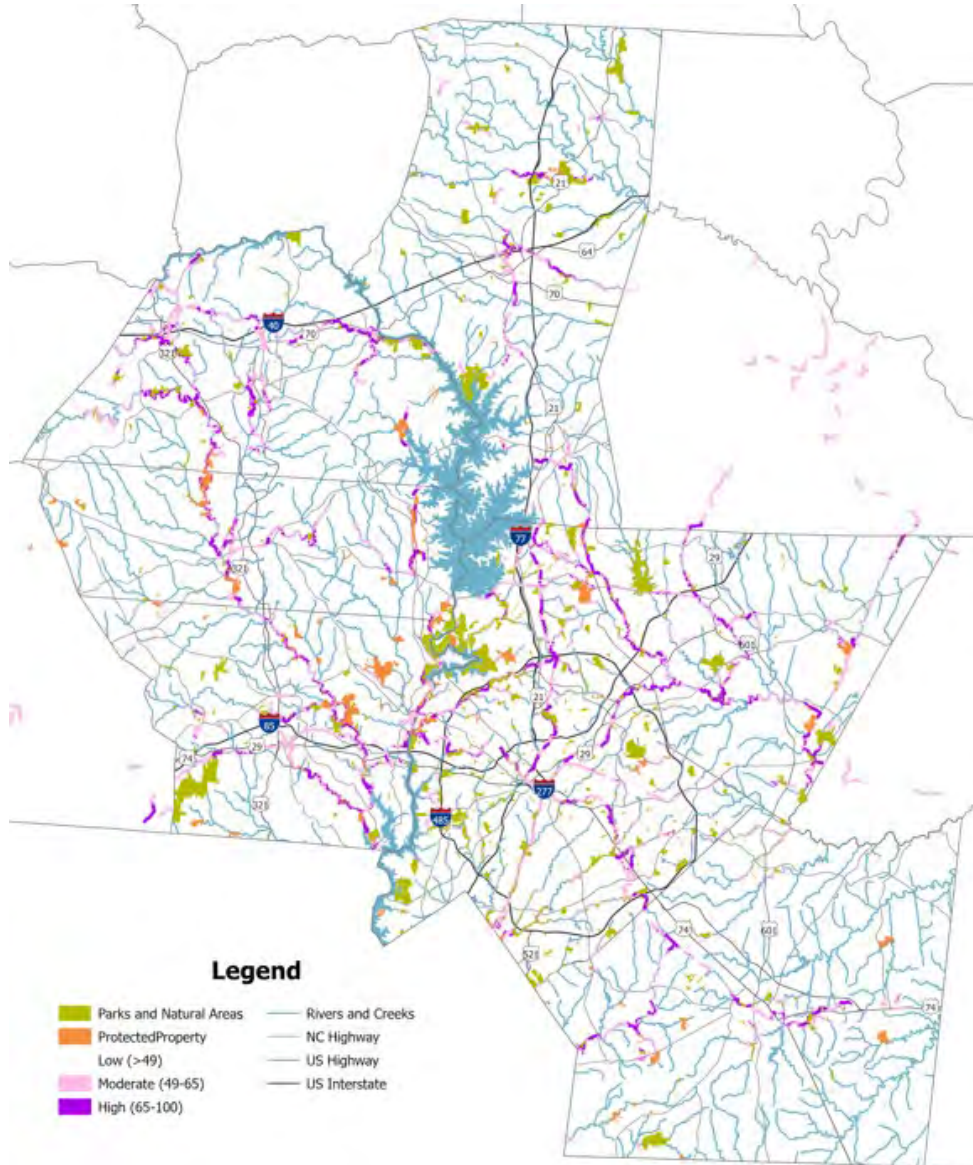


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Focus Area: Public Access



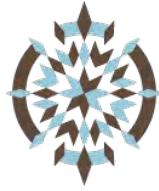
Goal: Conserve land that facilitates Carolina Thread Trail connections; support expansion of existing parks and nature preserves.

Priorities: Acquiring land along planned trail routes, gaps in existing trail routes, and/or land that promotes outdoor recreation with community partners.

Strategy: Target properties that create opportunities to extend or connect existing, constructed trails and/or along planned trail routes in priority Carolina Thread Trail corridors.

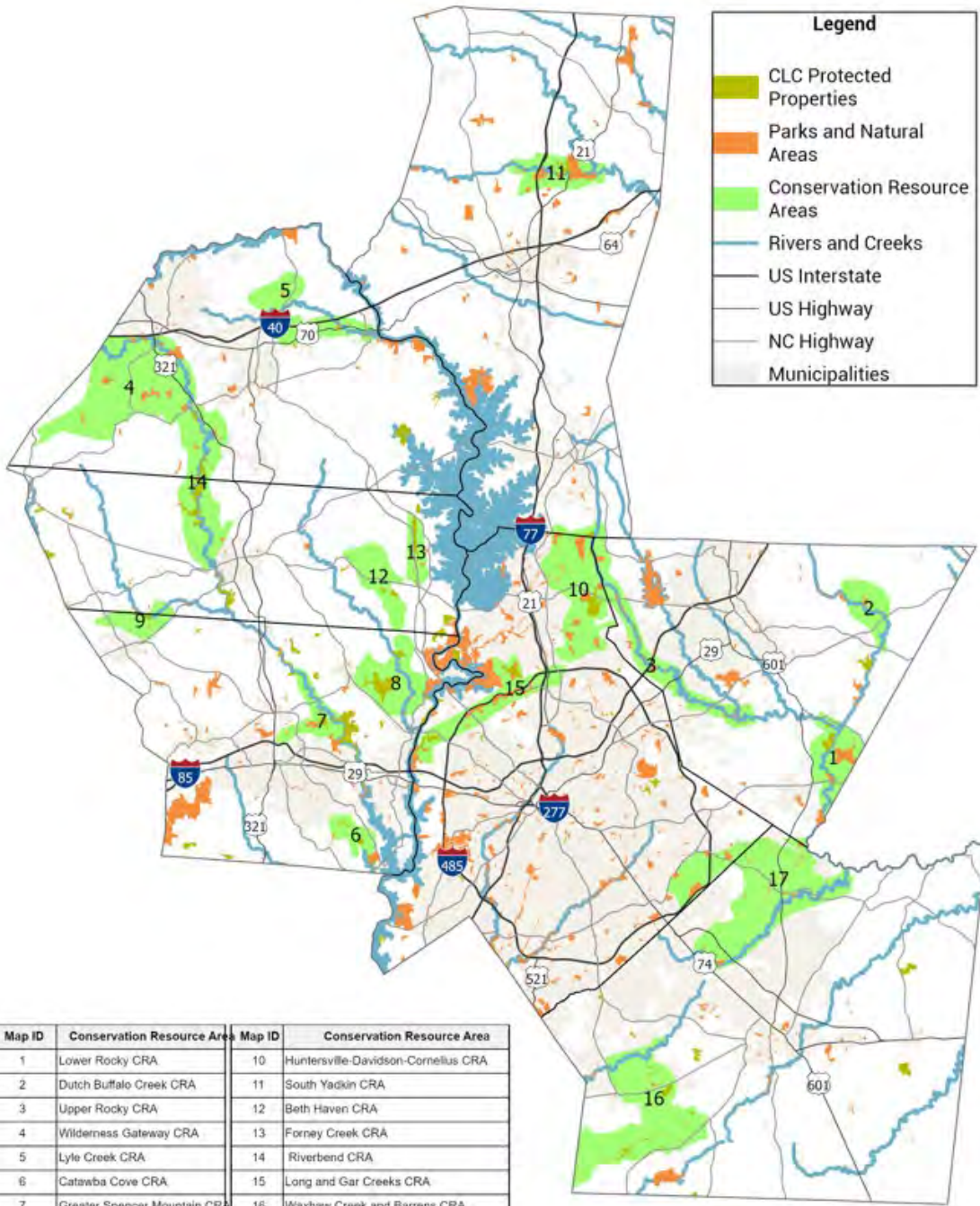


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Conservation Resource Areas



Map ID	Conservation Resource Area	Map ID	Conservation Resource Area
1	Lower Rocky CRA	10	Huntersville-Davidson-Cornelius CRA
2	Dutch Buffalo Creek CRA	11	South Yadkin CRA
3	Upper Rocky CRA	12	Beth Haven CRA
4	Wilderness Gateway CRA	13	Forney Creek CRA
5	Lyle Creek CRA	14	Riverbend CRA
6	Catawba Cove CRA	15	Long and Gar Creeks CRA
7	Greater Spencer Mountain CRA	16	Waxhaw Creek and Barrens CRA
8	Dutchmans Creek CRA	17	Goose Creek CRA
9	Indian Creek CRA		



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Meeting: December 10, 2024 Board of Directors

Department or Committee: Natural Resources Management and Stewardship Committee

Staff Contact: Will Ruark

Report Date: 12/4/2024

Agenda Item: 5.a.

Action Item

Long Creek East Preserve – Duke Energy Easement

Project: Long Creek East Preserve

Property: 56 +/- Acres

Location: Mecklenburg County

Background: Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC has approached CLC with a request to expand an existing right-of-way easement at Long Creek East Preserve in Mecklenburg County. The expansion will facilitate the construction of a utility line serving Stowe Water Resources Recovery Facility (SWRRF). The project will expand a preexisting right-of-way in the southern portion of the property and utilize a preexisting Charlotte Water access road in the northern portion.

The property is encumbered by Declaration of Covenants and Restrictions (DRCs) established through a North Carolina Land and Water Fund (NCLWF) grant. The DCRs permit CLC to grant utility easements and specifically allows for easements to benefit the SWRRF. Additionally, Duke Energy possesses the authority to condemn the property needed for the utility easement, if necessary.

The expansion includes two right-of-way strips totaling approximately 0.833 acres. (0.480 +/- acres and 0.353 +/- acres). The proposed areas are considered low conservation value and consist primarily of a monoculture of planted loblolly pine. The preserve already includes numerous other utility easements and access roads.

Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC has offered a total compensation of \$34,361.25 for these easements.



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The Natural Resources Management and Stewardship Committee unanimously approved the proposal and recommended granting the easement in exchange for the offered compensation and authorizes the staff to negotiate further provisions related to site restoration.

Financial: CLC will receive \$34,361.25 as compensation for the easements.

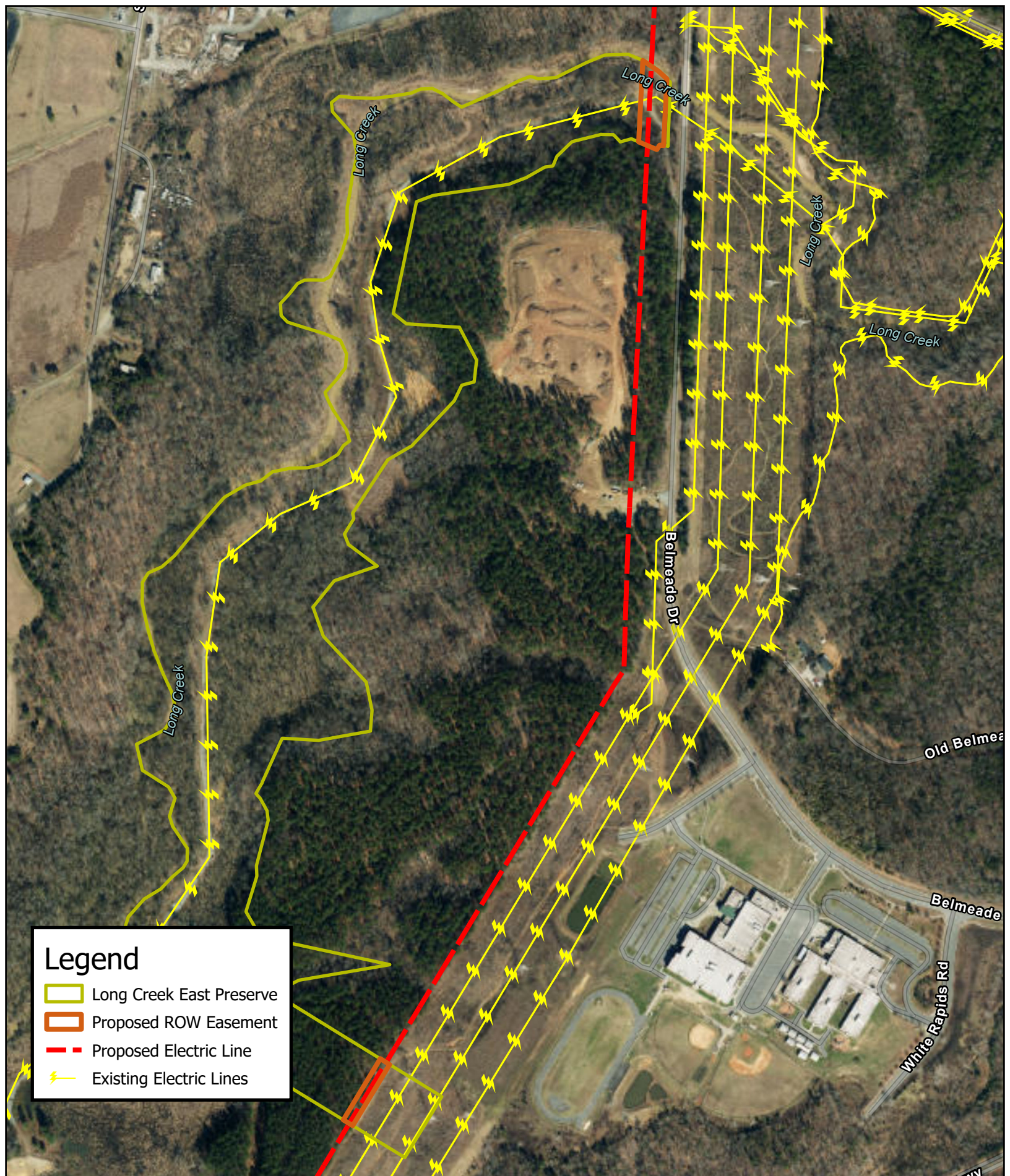
Attachments: Map of Long Creek East Preserve and proposed easement locations.

Recommendation: The Natural Resources Management and Stewardship Committee, at their November 6, 2024 meeting, unanimously recommended approval of the easements in exchange for compensation of no less than \$34,361.25 and authorizes staff to negotiate additional site restoration provisions.

Resolved: By majority vote of its members, the Board of Directors hereby approves granting Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC an easement across two portions of Long Creek East Preserve in exchange for no less than \$34,361.25 and authorizes staff to negotiate additional site restoration provisions.

This action is effective the 10th day of December, 2024.

Leslie Johnson, Chair



Legend

- Long Creek East Preserve
- Proposed ROW Easement
- Proposed Electric Line
- ⚡ Existing Electric Lines



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Meeting: December 10, 2024 Board of Directors

Staff Contact: Jane Love

Report Date: 12/2/2024

Agenda Item: 6.a.

Action Item

Re-scoping of Grant 2019-3 to Town of Matthews

Background: In March of 2019, the Carolina Thread Trail awarded the Town of Matthews a \$50,000 grant for construction of 0.5 miles of paved greenway connecting Matthews-Mint Hill Road to Matthews Township Parkway in a wooded portion of the Novant Health property. The project is known as the “Novant Segment.” The budget for the project at the time of application was \$397,502. At that time, the Town was in discussion with Novant about the institution’s potential financial participation. The Town’s general fund was another planned source of funds. Upon the CTT Board action, Matthews was notified of the award, but CLC/CTT has not transferred the \$50,000 to the town, as the Town was not ready to expend it.

Since 2019 CTT staff has followed up several times regarding project status. However, the most recent update revealed that Novant Health has no specific schedule for their project. Subsequently the town staff requested re-scoping the use of the \$50,000 grant. The attached map shows the location of the awarded project vs. the proposed project for the re-scoped award.

Re-scoping request:

The Town of Matthews requests to use the CTT award on the Sam Newell Road Multi-Use Path (MUP) project, known as “EB-5783” at NCDOT. This segment of the planned Carolina Thread Trail route is 0.64 miles long, beginning at Williams Road and ending at Crown Point Elementary School. The second map attached to this report shows the project location in detail. Town staff have provided the following rationale and funding details:

There are currently no students walking to the elementary school due to the lack of pedestrian connections. This MUP, in conjunction with the new Irvins Creek Greenway, could create new and safer connections to the school from the surrounding neighborhoods.



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Design for this project was completed and the North Carolina Department of Transportation approved Right of Way Authorization in the spring 2024. Construction Authorization is anticipated by January 2025 and a spring 2025 bid is probable.

The total project cost is \$2,707,570. Updated engineering estimates indicate there is a budget shortfall of \$497,090 in the construction phase. The extra CTT funds will help the Town cover the shortfall. Additionally the Town has applied to the Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization (CRTPO) to cover part of the shortfall, leaving \$99,418 to be covered by the Town's general fund, if the requests to CTT and CRTPO are successful. Matthews will learn of the CRTPO decision in January 2025.

Staff and CTT Committee Review: CTT staff reviewed the request from the Town of Matthews and the CTT Committee discussed it at their November 20 meeting. The segment now proposed for use of the funds is longer than the initial grant-funded project and would provide a new segment of the CTT network in Matthews. This segment along Sam Newell Road would connect the surrounding residents not only to the elementary school but also to the newly completed Irvins Creek Greenway segment, which is another part of the CTT network. The initial project would have moved the CTT route off of an existing sidewalk onto a parallel greenway on a hospital campus about 0.4 miles to the east. Re-scoping the grant would help a state-funded project stay on schedule to be bid out next spring. CTT previously supported the design phase of this Sam Newell Road multi-use path. The permission to re-scope is an opportunity to bring updated terms into the grant agreement, such as the signage cost-sharing statement in the current agreements.

Financial: The funds for this \$50,000 grant are reserved in the "General" (unrestricted) fund of the implementation grants. The balance of available funds for the region, accounting for the so-far unpaid grant, is \$236,721. If the grant were to be cancelled, the available funds would increase by \$50,000.

Attachments:

- Location map of awarded project vs. proposed project
- Detailed location map of proposed project

Recommendation: The CTT Committee recommends that the Board of Directors approve re-scoping CTT Implementation Grant 2019-3 to the Town of Matthews, as presented.



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Resolved: By majority vote of its members, the Board of Directors hereby approves the re-scoping of CTT Implementation Grant 2019-3 to the Town of Matthews, as presented.

This action is effective the 10th day of December, 2024.

Leslie Johnson, Chair



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CAROLINA
THREAD TRAIL.

Meeting: December 10, 2024 Board of Directors

Department or Committee: Finance

Staff Contact: Gail Olsen

Report Date: December 4, 2024

Agenda Item: 7.a.

Information Item

Finance Report

Overview

The Finance Director has completed September reports. The goal is to be caught up with month end closings by the end of December. The budget will be presented at the February Board meeting. It has been a challenge to get caught up with limited staff capacity for half of the year, but there is an end in sight.

We are actively working on interviews for the Finance Director position in anticipation of the retirement of the current Finance Director after the first quarter of 2025.

In March, with the sale of the Teeter property for \$2.4 million, there is an opportunity to consider how the proceeds from that sale will be used. Whether it is earmarked for other land purchases, operations, restricted activities, or a combination, it is an opportunity to plan for good governance and strategic investment.

Cash

CLC: At the end of September CLC cash reserves are at 4.8 months. This is below our policy of 6 months of cash on hand. Expenses are outpacing revenue as expected until the fourth quarter. Donations are larger in the last quarter of the year and most voluminous in the month of December. A rough estimate points to 6 months cash on hand at the end of December. Although that meets our policy goal, first quarter donations are not robust enough to maintain that level.

CTT: At the end of September cash reserves is at 21 months.



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September

CLC: There is 25% of the year remaining at the end of September. The current revenue to budget is showing 49% to achieve. History shows an achievement of 40% of revenue in the last quarter. This means we are behind with a 9% unfavorable variance in revenue to our budget. Conversely, the expenses at the end of September are showing an 8% favorable variance. Although the revenue is not coming in as anticipated, the expenses are being managed and is currently offsetting most of the difference to maintain the net bottom line as of September.

Looking forward with the Development Team, we anticipate a fundraising revenue shortfall of about \$225k at the end of year. Expenses tend to increase near the end of year. However, assuming expenses will be under budget by about \$100k, it would appear a net deficit of about \$80k is possible.

CTT: Total operating revenue at the end of September appears to be on track as it relates to history. There is 25% of the year remaining and 42% still to achieve. In the last quarter, CTT receives about 50% of revenue. However, history for CTT annual fundraising is relatively new. CTT's expenses are also 9% favorable at the end of September. CTT is positioned to meet the overall budget.

Attachments: Cash Position 09.30.2024, CLC Results 09.30.2024, CTT Results 09.30.2024

Catawba Lands Conservancy - Cash

	12/31/2023	9/30/2024
Operating Cash		
CLC - General	692,820	508,376
CTT	1,709,839	1,525,058
CTT Investments	449,071	463,149
Subtotal Operating Cash	2,851,730	2,496,583
Grant/Other Restricted Funds		
CLC/CTT Project Funds	919,445	1,136,770
CTT Restricted Funds	2,196,941	2,176,314
CLC ST Bond Fund -Grant/Other	696,050	731,693
Land Acquisition Cash	1,054,561	1,068,762
ST Bond Fund - LA	359,184	374,459
Total Restricted Funds	5,226,181	5,487,999
Stewardship/ Legal Endowments	3,760,079	4,195,610
CTT Endowment	3,272,346	3,687,324
Total Cash, Restricted & Endowment	15,110,336	15,867,516

Ave Monthly expenses *

CLC	90,000	105,000
CTT	90,000	95,000
CLC - Months of cash on hand	7.7	4.8
CTT -Months of cash on hand	19.0	20.9

CLC ACTUAL VS BUDGET RESULTS

	September YTD 2024	Budget 2024	Year Remaining 25%
Revenue	406,835	1,031,500	
Stew/Legal Draws	100,000	100,000	
Investment Earnings	84,532	60,000	
Other	73,428	108,205	
Total Revenue	664,795	1,299,705	49%
Expenses			
Staff Compensation	(590,010)	(880,741)	33%
Office/Admin	(130,432)	(235,955)	45%
Discretionary	(9,747)	(17,000)	43%
Outreach	(64,265)	(109,100)	41%
Operations	(43,119)	(14,605)	-195%
Expenses	(837,573)	(1,257,401)	33%
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	(172,778)	42,304	

CTT BUDGET VS ACTUAL

	September YTD 2024	Budget 2024	Year Remaining 25%
Fundraising/Other	271,199	522,000	
Unrestricted CC	243,700	311,050	
Endowment Draw	0	125,000	
Investment Earnings	66,458	40,000	
Total Operating Revenue	581,357	998,050	42%
Staff Compensation	(586,376)	(828,614)	29%
Office/Admin	(105,305)	(198,510)	47%
Discretionary	(9,635)	(17,000)	43%
Outreach	(40,828)	(80,900)	50%
Operations	(12,771)	(24,570)	48%
Total Expenses	(754,915)	(1,149,594)	34%
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	(173,558)	(151,544)	



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THREAD TRAIL.

Meeting: December 10, 2024 Board of Directors

Department or Committee: Development

Staff Contact: Jessica Otto

Report Date: 12/3/2024

Agenda Item: 7.b.

Information Item

Development Report

Background: Staff forecast for unrestricted fundraising is that we will end the year about the same or slightly ahead of 2023. Revenue through 11/30 is slightly behind 2023 for the same period. Some of this is due to timing. For instance, an additional \$93,000 from corporate and foundation supporters has been committed for the year but not yet paid, and we expect all of that will be paid. Also, Giving Tuesday usually falls in November, and this year it was in December.

It's clear that our budgeting for 2024 was overly optimistic. For our 2025 unrestricted fundraising revenue forecast, staff have taken a much more conservative approach, factoring in overall national trends in fundraising. The forecast in the attached report is assuming 5 percent growth for CLC (over the projected actual 2024 revenue, not the 2024 budget for unrestricted fundraising) and 15 percent growth for CTT. These percentages are in line with historic patterns (see attachment).




Attachments:

- 11-30-2024 Fundraising Report
- 2025 Fundraising forecast


Fundraising Results Through 11/30/2024

Unrestricted Fundraising

CLC	11/30 actual	11/30 last year	variance	2024 budget
Individuals	\$342,824	\$362,012	(\$19,188)	\$610,000
Corporate	\$124,120	\$188,275	(\$64,155)	\$277,500
Foundation	\$31,130	\$54,700	(\$23,570)	\$97,500
Government	\$49,000	\$26,250	\$22,750	\$46,500
Sales	\$10,479	\$11,724	(\$1,245)	\$20,000
Total	\$557,553	\$642,961	(\$85,408)	\$1,051,500

 additional ~\$9,000 that we just learned about
 additional \$60,000 committed not yet paid
 additional \$10,000 committed not yet paid

CTT	11/30 actual	11/30 last year	variance	2024 budget
Individuals	\$164,463	\$284,630	(\$120,167)	\$345,000
Corporate	\$42,400	\$40,980	\$1,420	\$100,000
Foundation	\$101,070	\$10,000	\$91,070	\$60,000
Sales	\$17,210	\$15,333	\$1,877	\$17,000
Total	\$325,143	\$350,944	(\$25,801)	\$522,000

 additional \$23,000 committed not yet paid

Total:	\$882,696	\$993,905	(\$111,209)	\$1,573,500
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CTT Unrestricted Capital campaign	\$352,885
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CLC & CTT Unrestricted Total	\$1,235,581
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Restricted Fundraising

CLC Restricted	\$582,950
CTT Restricted	\$662,399
Total:	\$1,245,349

Fundraising Forecast

	Thru 11/30	December forecast	2024 forecast	2023 actual December	2023 actual full year	Fundraising Budget 2024	Fundraising Forecast 2025
CLC	\$557,553	\$250,000	\$807,553	\$149,537	\$791,528	\$1,051,500	\$847,930
CTT	\$325,143	\$145,000	\$470,143	\$116,000	\$467,300	\$522,000	\$517,157
Total	\$882,696	\$ 395,000	\$1,277,696	\$265,537	\$1,258,828	\$1,573,500	\$1,365,087

December through 12/6 we've already raised 30% of December 2023, and that's before our first mailing dropped (a single gift of \$35,500 was excluded from this calculation).



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THREAD TRAIL.

Meeting: December 10, 2024 Board of Directors

Department or Committee: Executive Director

Staff Contact: Bart Landess

Report Date: December 6, 2024

Agenda Item: 8

Information Item

Strategic Planning

Background: As the next step in our strategic planning process, we will discuss the five areas of focus that were identified at our meeting on November 6th. Those items are:

Financial model optimization

Sustainable funding

Partnerships and collaborations

Government affairs

Brand awareness

Our objective is to begin establishing goals and objectives in each of these areas and to assign to committees and maybe special task forces, the full development of those objectives and the completion of the strategic plan.