Together, we continue to protect the beauty and serenity of this landscape piece by piece. Over the last 110 years, the Land Trust has protected over 3,400 acres in over 100 places. It all started with the foresight of early conservationists, who saw the value keeping natural spaces and the need to keep them protected forever. In 2019, we will have completed three conservation easements and two land donations. Each of the properties the land trust is protecting this year not only has high conservation value, which may include rare species, diverse habitat, landscape connectivity, streams and more, but also holds special significance to the donor. A few of the properties have been in families for many generations, while others were first generation owners who recognized the value of conserving their land and wanted to see it protected forever.

Michael and Sheila Padgett donated a 34-acre conservation easement in the Savannah Community adjacent to national forestlands and immediately adjacent to an existing conservation easement HCLT completed in 2009. The site has an amazing population of Fraser’s sedge. If the Padgett name sounds familiar, Michael
Moving to the Next Level

Did you catch the Shadow of the Bear this year? Your Land Trust owns and protects that view, as it does the Satulah Summit and Sunset Rock. You can see your dollars at work at McKinney Meadow in Cashiers and on the Satulah, Brushy Face and Kelsey trails. The Land Trust protects these and other properties on the Plateau that make it such a wonderful place to live and visit. This is where you can see your HCLT dollars at work rather than in a bricks and mortar building.

It has become clear that it is time to take the Land Trust to the next level as our conserved acreage has grown and the demand continues. We must very soon increase staff and other resources directly used to remain on our mission of protection and conservation. We currently do not have the budget to allow that growth. Staff salary and benefits is by far the largest line item in our budget. Our staff are the boots on the ground who teach the children, and inspect every conserved property to protect against encroachment and misuse.

Stewardship in perpetuity needs our community’s financial support. The board and staff of HCLT are committed to the present and to future generations. One hundred percent of our board members contribute to HCLT, and we have asked them to double their financial support this year. We hope you will do the same. Please keep us in mind for your year-end giving.

P.S. Ask your accountant or tax advisor about the tax benefits of donating appreciated stock or making a direct distribution to us from your IRA.

Carlton King, President HCLT

Interested in Leveling Up Your Support?

It’s simple with Recurring Monthly Giving

• simply set up online at hicashlt.org
• allows you to spread out your gift with monthly payments
• helps HCLT during “leaner months,” allows us to better predict income

Cheoah Level: $10,000+
Monthly: $833

Trillium Grandiflorum Level: $5,000
Monthly: $417

Oconee Bell Level: $3,000
Monthly: $250

Galax Level: $2,000
Monthly: $167

May Apple Level: $1,000
Monthly: $83

Century Circle Memberships begin at only $83/mo

Benefactor Level: $750
Monthly: $63

Patron Level: $500
Monthly: $42

Conservator Level: $250
Monthly: $21

Stewardship Activities

Over the next two years, HCLT will be working on three new trail projects.

Second loop added to Brushy Face Trail

At our Brushy Face Preserve we are working with volunteers to build Phase III, a second loop trail going down an old road and up the left fork tributary of Clear Creek, then looping back to the trailhead on Pineland. This trail should be similar to the other trails at Brushy Face and is estimated to be approximately 1–1.25 miles.

Addition to Kelsey Preserve

The second project is at our Kelsey Trail Preserve, where HCLT and the Highlands Plateau Greenway are partnering to add a loop trail on the opposite side of the creek. This will allow visitors a shorter, self-contained loop as opposed to the larger loop with our Rhododen-

Our New AmeriCorps Member

Meet Ivori Schley, who joined the HCLT team in the beginning of September and is serving as an AmeriCorps member through the Conservation Trust of North Carolina. She graduated from North Carolina A&T State University this May with a B.S. in Agriculture and Environmental Systems, and is now eager to explore conservation in the mountains!

Ivori volunteered at Zoo Atlanta in high school and conducted multiple agricultural research projects in East Africa and abroad throughout her college career. Ivori loves to share the outdoors with youth, and strongly believes that everyone can benefit from environmental stewardship and by practicing sustainability. After AmeriCorps, Ivori plans to explore plants across the world and spread environmental awareness through non-profit work.

While working alongside everyone in the HCLT office, Ivori helps maintain trails, lead hikes and EcoTours, manage volunteer work days and teach a variety of educational programs. When not in the office, she likes to hike, garden, read and canoe.

As Ivori becomes more familiar with the biodiversity of the Southern Appalachians during her time here, she will contribute to local garden projects and share her love of nature with youth while exposing them to environmental issues.

The mission of the Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust is to protect valuable land resources for all generations.
The Land Trust’s Kids in Nature programs provide environment education learning experiences to kids in Highlands and Cashiers. We feel that environmental education is important because one day the children of today will be responsible for caring for our land. We want to ensure that these future stewards understand how precious the environment is, and how an intact and functioning ecosystem is vital to all life. But the benefits of our Kids in Nature programs go beyond just teaching kids about the environment.

When children get a chance to walk in the woods on a nature trail, something good happens to them mentally and physically. They get to see the world with their own two eyes, not through the glare of a screen. Whether they know it or not, they are connecting with their natural world in a way that can have a huge impact on their growth and development. Spending time outside – whether it is crossing a stream, maneuvering over uneven ground, figuring out which trail to follow, or just exploring what is under a rock – can help kids gain better communication and problem solving skills, improve coordination and increase self-confidence. Being outside also exposes kids to many elements that can be beneficial to their health. Getting a little dirty isn’t just fun for kids, but can also be helpful. Contact with bacteria and other microbes found in soil can actually help children build a stronger immune system and, in addition, there is one bacterium that may even act as an antidepressant. Exposure to the sun is one of the main natural sources that helps the body to synthesize Vitamin D, which is necessary for building and maintaining healthy bones. Physical activity, such as hiking, running, or just playing outdoors can be a great way to provide exercise.

Getting kids outside and engaging them in their natural surroundings clearly has many benefits. The Land Trust is proud to contribute toward developing a future of environmentally literate individuals while offering opportunities for kids to get outside to explore their world.

Thank you to our sponsors for making our Kids in Nature programs possible: Cashiers Community Fund; Church of the Good Shepherd; Colony Club Community Fund of High Hampton; Collabasa Women’s Outreach; The Jackson County Community Foundation and the Macon County Community Foundation, affiliates of the North Carolina Community Foundation; Laurel Garden Club, Macon County Community Foundation; and Wade Hampton Foundation Fund.

Getting Kids in Nature Grows Happier and Healthier Future Stewards

Children participating in HCLT’s Kids in Nature programs (from top): Literacy Council kids hiking on the Greenway trail; a Gordon Center group exploring Dixon Woods; children at Highlands Rec Camp learning about birds with a nest-making activity.

GEOLOGY OF WATERFALLS Bill Jacobs discusses the geology of Sliding Rock Waterfalls. Bill is the author of Whence These Special Places? The Geology of Cashiers, Highlands & Panther Valley.

POND HOLLOW HCLT Executive Director Gary Wein examines the smart use of native plants in a wildflower meadow at Pond Hollow, an HCLT-conserved property owned by Greg and Amanda Gregory.

HENSON RIDGE TRAIL AT THE PITTILO FAMILY PRESERVE Up close and personal with Dan Pittillo’s curated collection of wildflowers at his HCLT-conserved property.

BARTRAM TRAIL Hiking the Bartram Trail to White Rock Mountain for lunch and views of the Nantahala Mountains.

EcoTours

If you haven’t explored our trails, forests and vistas with HCLT, you don’t know what you’re missing!

Photo: Billy Love
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CENTURY CIRCLE AWARDS
Century Circle donors gathered to celebrate and honor 2018 HCLT land donors at our Annual Century Circle Awards Celebration at Cedar Creek Club in June.

HCLT board member Ann McKee Austin, Beth Townsend, land donor honorees John Berteau (Castor Meadow), and land donor honorees Anne Bennett and Randy Bennett (Cedar Hill) at the annual Century Circle Celebration.

Please consider a generous year-end gift today.
We operate on a lean $330,000 and rely on your support to meet our budget goals. We will put your gift to work to save our most treasured places. We promise.

Consider one of these smart ways to give.
Contact Julie with questions: julie.hitrust@earthlink.net.

2019 Donations and Easements
Continued from page 1

is the son of Ranger Bob Padgett for whom the magnificent Padgett Poplar, located in Horse Cove, is named.
The second easement is a 10-acre conservation easement owned by Glenda Zahner. It’s located on Bob Zahner Road and acts as a buffer to another existing conservation easement we call the Gorges of Big Creek. Glenda was married to Bob Zahner, a highly revered forester and conservationist.
The third easement is located on Scly Mountain and is home to many small streams and four rare plant species, along with a couple of grotto caves and rock outcrops.
HCLT has accepted two land donations that we are very excited about.
Alan and Helen (Bunchie) Neely donated 6 acres that contain a natural bridge. This natural bridge is a giant granite slab 150 feet long and 20 feet in diameter that is suspended above the ground by boulders at each end. The distance between the resting points is over 100 feet. While an absolute wonder, the bridge will not be open to the public; doing so could ultimately destroy its natural heritage value. Instead, the Land Trust will conduct limited guided visits. (Watch for our calendar of EcoTours in 2020.) This acquisition was funded by a Mountain Revolving Loan Fund mini-grant from the Conservation Trust of North Carolina.
The second property is a game changer for the Land Trust. This donation, made by Hillie Quin encompasses some 30 acres of land on Buck Creek Road, and also includes a tractor, Polaris Ranger UTV (utility task vehicle) and wood working shop – all housed within a barn located on the donated property. The land is awesome and full of natural beauty, and the valuable equipment means we are no longer dependent on others for mowing and grading our roads. Kyle Pursel, our stewardship coordinator, is excited about monitoring HCLT properties from the comfort of the Polaris, which will be a big help as a couple of our easements are large and require miles of walking.
We are already working on projects to work day.

Volunteer Celebiration
This summer we held a small celebration to thank our hearty corps of trail volunteers at Founders Park. If you’d like to get involved, we will hold trail days every third Tuesday of the month through the winter. Contact Ivori for details: ivorie.hclt@earthlink.net.

Volunteer Work Days
Boy Scouts help plant rescued azaleas from High Hampton at McKinney Meadow.

Above and below: Volunteers help build the Mushroom Rock trail reroute on Satulah Mountain.

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VNS Raptor Encounter
Balsam Mountain Trust delighted the crowd with several live raptors at The Village Nature Series this summer in Cashiers. This is the 12th season that HCLT has partnered with The Village Green to engage and educate the community about our rich natural and cultural heritage. Big thanks to Cedar Creek Club for being our 2019 VNS Sponsors.

Reaccreditaton
HCLT was honored at the National Land Trust Alliance Rally this fall for earning national reaccreditation.

Sarulah-bration Chili Cook-off
Our 2019 Sarulah-bration Chili Cook-Off winners (L-R) Lindy Womack, 1st place; Tracy Strible, 2nd place; and Ivori Schley, 3rd place. We are grateful to Cake Bar, Satulah Mountain Brewing and The Spice and Tea Exchange of Highlands for being part of the celebration. Also, huge thanks to our 2019 Sarulah-bration sponsor, Entegra Bank.

We are already working on projects for 2020. Stay tuned!

Trail volunteers John Akridge and Sarah Lown with a salamander who made an appearance during a volunteer work day.

We are already working on projects for 2020. Stay tuned!

We are already working on projects for 2020. Stay tuned!
TOASTING THE SUNSET AT SUNSET ROCK
On the July 4th weekend, Ravenel Park hikers enjoyed a special treat — Satulah Mountain Brewing was there on the rock selling their tasty Sunset Saison craft beer. HCLT added to the festivities with giveaways and treats.