



Highlands-Cashiers LAND TRUST

"Saving Special Places since 1909"

Fall, 2008

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The mission of the Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust is to preserve the natural areas, scenic beauty, and green spaces of Highlands and Cashiers for the enjoyment and benefit of the public.



The Mountain Placed in Conservation Easement



Summit of Little Scaly Mountain protected

The Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust is pleased to announce the preservation of an extremely rare tract of land that includes an old growth forest.

Joining together to ensure that future generations would forever enjoy the old growth forest and magnificent views from The Mountain Retreat and Learning Center, Jeff Murphy and Tim Campbell of Jackson Paper Company in Sylva, NC, partnered with The Mountain to place the 82-acre property in a conservation easement. The protected property runs from the 'base' of Little Scaly Mountain to the 4200-foot summit overlooking Blue Valley. Tom Warth, CEO of The Mountain Retreat, noted, "As a values-centered, mission-driven organization, we are excited to finally see this dream of preserving The Mountain property in perpetuity come to fruition. We believe this is a

reflection of our deeply held commitment to environmental stewardship."

The placement of this easement will prevent the development of this rare and fragile ecosystem while allowing the Mountain Retreat and Learning Center to continue to operate as a non-profit engagement center focused on the work of peace, justice and sustainability. The summit of Little Scaly Mountain, with the rare 400-year old dwarf white oak trees will be preserved forever. This is perhaps the last remaining forest of its kind in the world.

Jeff Zahner, Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust Board of Directors member and secretary stated, "To know that the vision of a caring group of people has been carried out to protect a beautiful mountain in the face of unprecedented growth is a reassuring

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HCLT

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By Mercedes Heller
 President, HCLT

HCLT Celebrates 100 Years

2009 will be "Year of Land Conservation"

On September 30, 1909, the top of Satulah Mountain in Highlands was purchased from the Macon Land Company by the Highlands Improvement Society for the large (at that time) sum of \$500. The funds to buy the property came from citizens of the Highlands community. Thus began the evolution of that organization into what is known today as the Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust. As we enter the 100th year of land conservation, HCLT has called upon members of the Highlands and Cashiers communities to help plan the events leading up to the celebration of anniversary year 2009. A Community Advisory Committee, consisting of Rosemary Stiefel, Mary Berry, Lyd-

ia Sargent Macauley, Sarah Nelson, Eric Nesmith, Sandy Barrows and Cathy Guyton, are planning several activities to stress the continued importance of land conservation. The committee is assisted by HCLT board members Wiley Ellis, Linda David, Ann McKee Austin, Hillrie Quin and Lila Howland.

HCLT will be working with other organizations such as the Highlands and Cashiers Historical Societies, the Highlands Biological Station, The Bascom visual arts center, the Highlands Plateau Greenway, local libraries and others to emphasize the importance of land conservation, wildlife habitat protection and the preservation of the biodiversity of the region. The mayor of Highlands, Dr. Don Mullen, will declare 2009 the "Year of Land Conservation." We here at HCLT are hopeful that Jackson County commissioners will follow suit.

The Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust is the oldest land trust in the Southeast and one of the first 20 land trusts in the US. That seems to be good reason to celebrate the fact that the people of these mountains were so far-sighted 100 years ago in preserving the top of Satulah Mountain for all to enjoy. HCLT will maintain that tradition by entering a second century of land preservation.

We thank all those partners who support land conservation efforts, and HCLT looks forward to leading those efforts with you.



Left to right: Board members Wiley Ellis, Charlie McDowell, Richard Melvin, Mercedes Heller, Linda David, Lila Howland, and Woodrow Wilson at a recent luncheon on Sunset Rock. Charlie and Woodrow are showing off their certificates of appreciation for their years of service to the Land Trust as they rotate off the regular board and become emeritus members.

A Land Trust Q&A

- Q: Giant trees — just how big can they grow?
- Q: How did the 2,175-mile Appalachian Trail get started and who maintains it?
- Q: How should one act if faced with a black bear encounter?
- Q: How did our local mountains form?
- Q: Who in the world knows the answers to all these questions?

A: *Anyone who has attended this year's Village Natures Series lectures knows the answers to these intriguing questions and more!*

The Village Nature Series (VNS) is a collaborative effort between Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust and The Village Green, and it is now in its second year. We are proud to offer such a quality educa-

tional program to the community at no charge. Part of the Land Trust's mission is to educate the public about conservation, and VNS is designed to do just that. We also aim to take advantage of the opportunity to get to know our supporters and to introduce HCLT to those in our community who don't yet know us. We encourage you to invite your friends to attend the lectures; not only will they have a fun and educational experience, but it will also give us the opportunity to make new friends.

We are your land trust. If you have suggestions for a speaker or topic you would like to see featured at a future VNS, please contact us. Your input is very important.

Oh, and if you missed any of the lectures and want the answers to any of those questions, just ask Gary — he won't mind!

Local Tours a Hit

Eco Tourism: *Responsible travel to natural areas, which conserves the environment and improves the welfare of local people.*

Your land trust launched our Eco Tour program in 2007 and it's been a great success. In the past year we have searched for hidden treasure on one of our favorite mountains, hunted wildflowers on the outskirts of a lovely artist community, braved the slopes of a monumental waterfall, and studied local birds with the Audubon Society. We've had a great time and made a lot of new friends, and the fun's still not over!

If you've missed out and want to be a part of the action, never fear. We still have a handful of exciting tours coming up this year.

HCLT Eco Tours are free to members and only a \$25 donation for non-members. Call or email us to book your spot today: Julie.hitrust@earthlink.net, 828-526-1111.



The Oreo Gang

So far this year we have had five eco tours. Pictured above is the "Oreo Gang" as they rest from a hard day geocaching on Satulah Mountain. Left to right: Edwin Graves, Tyloe Graves, Linda Bean, Suzie Williams and Gary Wein.

Monday, September 29 Elk Excursion ~ Venture to Cataloochee to learn about and witness the elk reintroduction to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Afterwards, there will be an optional overnight camping trip at a primitive campground.

Thursday, October 9 Stargazing ~ Study the stars with an astronomy professor right here in Highlands, as we enjoy wine and light refreshments at a beautiful field site.

Friday, October 17 Green Salamanders ~ See the green salamander and find out why it's endangered — and why it matters — from a wildlife biodiversity specialist who has years of experience studying these rare creatures.



Left to right: Mauldin, Stiefel, Chambers and Tate.

Volunteers Clean Up

Board members Jim Tate and Bill Stiefel, along with stewardship volunteers Sam Chambers and Bill Mauldin, joined on a recent workday at Satulah Mt. to clean up the trail. Other stewardship activities include placing benches at Satulah Summit, maintenance at the Foreman Road/Highway 64 intersection (thanks Jimmy Tate), and clean-up at Dixon Park. We are getting ready to work with certified arborist Chris Hastings in an effort to treat the 12 largest hemlocks at the Henry Wright Tract in order to protect them against the hemlock woolly adelgid. If you would like to join the Stewardship Volunteers or learn more, call us at 526-1111.




Lilium superbum,
Turk's cap lily

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thought. May this act of conservation be an inspiration to others who have the power to do the same."

In a conservation easement or agreement, the owner donates their right to develop to a qualified second party such as a land trust. In return, the owner still has all the rights they would have otherwise, but receives a tax deduction and can earn a North Carolina tax credit.

To learn more about the Land Trust and land conservation options, contact us at 828-526-1111 or visit our website: www.hicashlt.org. In 2009 the HCLT will have been protecting special places for 100 years. Become a member and help us celebrate. 

Superbum Turk's Cap

By Gary Wein, Executive Director, HCLT

Turk's cap is not the world's laziest plant — I just wanted a title to catch your attention. The word refers to the superb nature of *Lilium superbum* the tallest *Lilium* east of the Rockies. Turk's cap is commonly seen flowering in cove forests, forest openings, bogs, and balds of western North Carolina in July and August. The name refers to the relaxed orange to reddish petals bending back to the stem looking like a "Turk's" cap. The plant is common in the eastern United States and ranges from southern New York and New Hampshire south to Florida and Alabama, although interestingly is not found in South Carolina. This showy plant, which grows 4–6 feet tall, is pollinated by butterflies and is visited by spicebush swallowtails, pipevine swallowtail, eastern tiger swallowtail and great spangled fritillaries.

There are no documented medicinal uses for this plant although in general the roots and buds of this genus have sometimes been used for food. The Cherokee made flour from the tubers of another lily, yellow Canada lily, in times of famine. Please don't go around digging up

our native *Liliums* to find out what they taste like. This lily is commonly planted in our perennial flower gardens and makes a great border plant. It is so beautiful that very little selection for specific genotypes is done by horticulturalists.

There are a couple of other native lilies of note in the mountains of western North Carolina. The highest diversity of this genus is to be found in the mountains. Five of the six species reported for North Carolina grow in our region. Yellow Canada lily, Gray's lily, Carolina lily, and the wood lily are found in the counties of western NC. Gray's lily is a southern Appalachian endemic, and is listed by the state as a threatened plant of special concern because it is so rare. Roan Mountain is a great place to see this lily and there is also one growing at the Highlands Biological Station.

To learn how your local land trusts help protect the important biological diversity of western North Carolina, check out our website at www.hicashlt.org or stop by our offices in the Peggy Crosby Center in Highlands.



A good time was had by all at our Appreciation Party in June, honoring 2007 conservation donors. The event was held at the historic Hill House in Horse Cove.



By Julie Schott
Director of Development, HCLT

Invest in Your Community!

One of the most important investments you can make today is to invest in your community and help to protect our natural heritage. If you have not yet renewed your HCLT membership, please take a moment to do so now. Your land trust is working hard to ensure the special places that we all love will remain and we cannot do it without your support.

Renew your partnership with a meaningful gift by sending your contribution to us at PO Box 1703, Highlands, NC 28741. (If you would prefer to donate with a credit card by phone, call me at 828-526-1111.) The choices we make today will have far reaching consequences affecting the lives our children and grandchildren will enjoy for years to come. Thank you for doing your part, it means so much.

Help Save Our Natural Heritage

Please accept my donation of \$_____ and put it to work.

I want to be a member of the Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust. Please sign me up at the following level (circle one):

- | | | | |
|------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| \$35+ Individual | \$100+ Friend | \$500+ Patron | \$5000+ Satulah Steward |
| \$50+ Family | \$250+ Conservator | \$1000+ Kelsey Benefactor | _____ Other |

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

(memberships are renewed annually in June)

Make checks payable to: **Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust, P.O. Box 1703, Highlands, NC 28741**

OR charge your donation to Visa Master Card American Express

Name on Card _____ Signature _____

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Donations to the Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust are tax deductible. We are a 501(c)3 tax-exempt public charity.

Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust

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Visit our web site at www.hicashlt.org



Join the Land Trust on Monday, September 29 when we venture to Cataloochee, NC, site of an elk reintroduction to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. After viewing these magnificent animals and hearing about the reintroduction program, there will be an optional overnight camping trip at a primitive campground.

Photo by elk specialist Joe Yarkovich who will lead this exciting Eco Tour.