



# Highlands-Cashiers LAND TRUST

*"Saving Special Places since 1909"*

Spring, 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.*

**Blue Ridge Forever**  
blueridgeforever.org

## Land Trust is Recognized by Audubon


*HCLT protects habitat for birds*

**O**n May 10, 2008, the Highlands Plateau Audubon Society and Audubon North Carolina recognized the Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust for its significant conservation value to birds and their habitats.

The Land Trust, in partnership with Audubon, has designated the trail to Sunset Rock as part of the Highlands Plateau Important Birding Area. This trail is part of a North Carolina state-wide effort to establish Important Birding Areas, or IBA.

The Sunset Birding Trail is one of the first trails established in the Mountain region of North Carolina. The trail starts at the Highlands

Biological Station Nature Center and ends at Sunset Rock which is within Ravenel Park. Ravenel Park was set aside in 1914, and is under the stewardship of the Land Trust. A new sign describing the trail has been placed there.

Also honored for their contributions to the conservation of birds in Highlands were Town of Highlands Mayor Don Mullen; Mike Wilkins, U.S. Forest Service, Nantahala District Ranger; Cindy Trevathan, Chair, Land Stewards of the Highlands Plateau; David Bates, Executive Director, Jackson-Macon Conservation Alliance; and Patrick Brannan, Director, Highlands Nature Center. 

*HCLT Executive Director Dr. Gary Wein (right), receives award from Chris Canfield of Audubon North Carolina for the Land Trust's contribution to the new Sunset Trail Important Birding Area.*





# HCLT

## Board of Directors

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- Craig Cranston
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## Staff

- Gary Wein, Ph.D., Executive Director
- Julie Schott, Director of Development



By Mercedes Heller  
President, HCLT

## *A Steward's work is never done!*

### **Volunteers work quietly to protect and improve HCLT properties**

Late winter and early spring are often the times that seem quiet with not much activity going in the land trust community.

But, do not be fooled; when all is quiet, stewardship work is being done for the lands that HCLT owns or holds in conservation easements.

Trails are being repaired following winter storms. Fallen trees are cut up and hauled away. Re-naturalizing disturbed areas occurs. Improvements to make land trust properties more "user friendly" take place. Conservation easements are monitored to assure that the terms of the agreements remain in fact.

These actions are planned and carried out by the executive director, a committee of dedicated HCLT board members, and a group of conservation-minded community volunteers.

Recently, a portion of the trail on Satulah Mountain was rebuilt to USFS standards by volunteers from Highlands Falls Country Club. A disturbed area on land trust property on Satulah was re-naturalized. The corner of Foreman Road and Route 64 is being improved to provide a respite spot along the Greenway Trail; it also aesthetically

improves the site as previously it was a briar patch. Dixon Park was cleared of fallen trees, branches, and debris. Benches were placed on HCLT properties to provide places for people to rest and relax while enjoying the beauty of our mountains.

The entire community will benefit from these improvements.

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*The  
Highlands-  
Cashiers Land  
Trust is always  
in need of  
volunteers,  
especially for  
stewardship  
projects.*

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With ownership comes responsibility, and HCLT's stewardship team takes its responsibilities very seriously. Not only do they do the actual work, documentation of activities is required by the Land Trust Alliance to keep in compliance with the standards and practices of the national oversight agency.

There is a truism among professions which states that "if you did not docu-

ment it, you did not do it." That truism applies to all tasks undertaken by land trusts. Accurate records must be recorded and kept in perpetuity.

The Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust is always in need of volunteers, especially for stewardship projects.

If you would like to become involved in stewardship activities or other volunteer opportunities, please give us a call at 526-1111 or email [hitrust@earthlink.net](mailto:hitrust@earthlink.net).

## *Off-season work continues for HCLT*



*(Left) A quiet bench at Dixon Park in Sagee Woods is the perfect place for contemplation. HCLT stewards cleared the area of debris over the winter.*



*(Above) Doug Landwehr of the Audubon Society at a new sign describing the Sunset Birding Trail.*



*(Left) A portion of the Satulah Mountain trail that had been disturbed by nearby development is re-naturalized.*

### CORRECTION

While every effort is made for accuracy with our Annual Report, an occasional reporting error slips by us. In our 2007 Annual Report the following generous partners were omitted from the list of contributors:

Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Brigham  
Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Lanigan  
Mr. and Mrs. Bearnard Neal

Please help us by reporting any corrections that need to be made to:

Julie Schott, Director of Development, Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust  
julie.hitrust@earthlink.net  
828.526.9938 x254

## Local businesses do their part for conservation

On Saturday, June 7, eco-minded businesses in Highlands and Cashiers will show their support for the conservation efforts of Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust by taking part in our second local celebration of Land Trust Day.

In 1992, the first Saturday of every June was named "Land Trust Day" to coincide with National Trails Day.

This year, several local businesses will display information about Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust and donate a percentage of their sales on this day or will become corporate members in an effort to recognize how their customers value the open spaces, hiking trails, scenic views and other outdoor recreation areas that land trusts protect.

Highlands and Cashiers residents can show their

support by dining at Fressers in Highlands and The Orchard in Cashiers and by shopping at Whole Life Market or Vivace in Highlands and at Victoria's Closet and VC for Men in Cashiers on Saturday, June 7. Additionally, Lakeside Restaurant will donate a percentage of sales to HCLT on Wednesday, June 4th when diners mention they are there to support the land trust.

It has never been easier to support community conservation efforts; simply patronize these local businesses on Land Trust Day and beyond. Please make sure to let them know that you appreciate them supporting your land trust. They have set the standard by stepping up to the plate and contributing to the commitment HCLT has made to protect the places we all love.



## *Save these dates for a summer of education & entertainment!*

### Eco tours

Join naturalists for these fun local day trips sponsored by the HCLT • 828-526-1111

**Thursday, June 12** ~ Birding with the Audubon Society

**Thursday, October 9** ~ Astronomy Event

**Friday, October 17** ~ Salamander Hike to Biscuit Rock

**Also coming this year, dates TBA:**

Geocaching in the Mountains (summer)

Elk Excursion (fall)



### Village Nature Series

Wednesdays, 6:30 pm • Albert Carlton Library, Grouse Point Rd. Cashiers • 828-526-1111

The Village Nature Series is a free summertime lecture series co-hosted by the Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust and Cashiers' Village Green. Everyone is welcome to the series held at the Albert Carlton Library in Cashiers. Lectures begin at 6:30 pm, with refreshments following the presentation. There is no charge, but donations are gratefully accepted. Call HCLT for info: 526.1111.

**Wednesday, June 25** ~ MORGAN SOMMERVILLE  
*History, Fun & Safety of the Appalachian Trail*

**Wednesday, July 23** ~ BILL LEA  
*Understanding the Black Bear*

**Wednesday, August 27** ~ STEVE YURKOVICH  
*The Making of the Mountains*

**Wednesday, September 24** ~ BRENT MARTIN  
*Weaving Nature and Community into a Poetry of Place*



### Zahner Lecture Series

Thursdays, 7:00 pm • Highlands Nature Center, 930 Horse Cove Rd. • 828-526-2602

**June 5** ~ *Great Auk on a leash: Bringing Nature Inside*  
Rosamond Purcell, Photographer & Author

**June 12** ~ *Amphibian Population Declines: Global and Local Problems*  
Wayne van Devender, Appalachian State University

**June 19** ~ *Juvenile Osprey Migration: Heading South on Two Wings and Instinct*  
Rob Bierregaard, UNC Charlotte

**June 26** ~ *Changing Public Policy: The Surest Way to Accelerate Land Conservation*  
Reid Wilson, Director, Conservation Trust for North Carolina

**July 3** ~ *The Roots Are Showing: Bacteria Native and Helpful to Eastern Hemlock*  
Seán O'Connell, Western Carolina University

**July 10** ~ *Cherokees and the American Revolution: A Cultural Landscape in Flux*  
Russell Townsend, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians

**July 17** ~ *Southern Forests, Southern Fungi*  
Andrew S. Methven, Eastern Illinois University

**July 24** ~ *Defining the Greatest Good: Management Challenges for the Nantahala-Pisgah National Forest*  
Brent Martin, Appalachian Senior Associate, The Wilderness Society

**July 31** ~ *The Plight of the Honeybee*  
Kefyn M. Catley, Western Carolina University

**August 7** ~ *Renewing America's Food Traditions: Restoring Food Diversity to Our Farms*  
Gary Nabhan, Author, Northern Arizona University



Photo: Mark W. Hutchinson, LIGHT IMAGE Pro Digital Photography

## Tax deductions for conservation easements extended

If you have been following the Land Trust progress since its birth in 1909 you know that we have been able to protect nearly 1400 acres in some 50 special places. Initially the Land Trust focused on protecting two places, Satulah Mountain (1909) and Sunset Rock (1914 – Ravenel Park). It wasn't until 1991, with the new Internal Revenue Services statutes that allowed a tax deduction for conservation easements, that land protection by the Land Trust began in earnest. Between 1991 and 2007 we were able to protect over 1300 acres. In 2007 we protected nine properties (drag out the last newsletter for the details), three more than in 2006. Already in 2008 we are looking at 15 potential easements that could protect over 600 acres.

There are a couple of reasons for the increase in land protection. The obvious one is the new

federal tax deduction rate of 50% adjusted gross income over 16 years. But tax deductions alone do not bring those interested in land preservation to the table. What does, is an interest in preserving the special places of the Highlands-Cashiers Plateau. Thanks to our conservation partners for their good work, sage advice, generous financial support and valuable time. Keep up the good work.

Important news: The 2008 Farm Bill has had a rocky road, but became law this May as the Senate and House overrode a Presidential veto. The Farm Bill allows for a two-year extension of the 50% tax deduction over 16 years for placing land in a conservation easement. This is great news and will allow landowners and land trusts to move ahead to protect land using this valuable tool.

## HCLT WISH LIST

- Volunteers
- A digital camera – at least 300 megapixels, in good shape and including a memory card.
- Photos! We need local pictures for use in our growing gallery of photos. (Send electronically to Julie.hitrust@earthlink.net, or bring them by the office.)

Please call the office at 526-1111 if you have questions about our needs.



*Trillium grandiflorum*, the snow trillium.

## *Trillium grandiflorum*

By Gary Wein  
Executive Director, HCLT

The snow trillium or *Trillium grandiflorum* is one of our showiest spring wild flowers. The single white flower atop the three leaves characteristic of the *Trillium* genus is a sure sign it is April or May. The snow trillium, is one of the largest of the white flowered trillium group; only the nodding trillium, *Trillium cernuum* is larger.

The snow trillium is found from Canada to Georgia and Arkansas and is also called white wake-robin, grand trillium, great flowered trillium, large-flowered wake-robin, Beth root, birthroot, Trinity, great white trillium, or wood lily.

This beautiful plant is a member of the lily family and is one of the nine trilliums you could find in Western North Carolina. It grows in rich neutral to slightly acid soils along streams found in old and second growth forests. The plant can take 7–10 years to go from seed to flower. Like many spring flowers the seeds are dispersed by ants. The seeds

contain oleic acid which induces corpse-carrying behavior in ants. The plants are favored by white tailed deer, that will eat them before any other trillium.

This flower has been the official emblem of Ontario and is the Ohio state wildflower. Snow Trillium was used by Native Americans for treating sore and arthritic joints. A root bark decoction was used as a wash on sores, sore ears, and burns. A tea made from the grated roots can used to treat cramps and as a treatment for irregular menses. The herb can be eaten but one should only

do so in a survival emergency, and eater beware of a chance for a belly ache.

This beautiful white flower is the symbol of the recently started Century Circle, established to help the Land Trust celebrate 100 years of protecting places we love.

### Whitewater Falls Eco Tour

**O**n May 2 an intrepid crew lead by Jim Whitehurst made the First Annual Wildflower foray to Whitewater Falls. The third eco tour of 2008 featured spectacular weather, millions of flowers, and great company. Whitewater Falls is located on the Whitewater River, and at 410 feet is among the tallest waterfalls in the east.

The tour started at the top of the falls and meandered down the trail where hikers saw many species of wildflowers including six different trilliums, wild ginger, fairy wand, Solomon’s seal, wild mandarin, twisted stalk, trout lily, violets, may apple, foam-flower, sweet shrub, and many more. After a stop for lunch at the base of the falls, the crew walked out to the Bad Branch parking lot, a four-mile walk. This eco tour was lead by Land Trust member Jim Whitehurst, board member Jeff Zahner, and executive director Gary Wein.

Two other eco tours this spring also featured wildflowers. In April, Edwin Poole and board president Mercedes Heller visited the Hambidge Center seeing marvelous displays of spring wildflowers. On May 16 members of the Land Trust visited the gardens of the Smith family. These historic gardens were originally planted by botanist Thomas G. Harbison.

The next Eco tour is June 12 and will be a bird watching trip with the Highlands Audubon Society on the new Skitty Branch Trail. If you are interested in joining us call the Land Trust office. We will also be hosting eco tours later in the year for those interested in green salamanders, elk, star gazing, and geocaching.



*Cypripedium acaule, pink lady slipper, was spotted blooming at the Smith garden during a May eco tour.*



*Eco tour trekkers (above) down the Whitewater Falls trail enjoyed fine weather and good company in addition to native wildflowers.*

*An earlier eco tour to the Hambidge Center near Dillard, Georgia, exposed hikers (at right) to a spectacular display of spring wildflowers.*



## Century Circle Celebrates HCLT Anniversary



**By Julie Schott**  
Director of Development, HCLT

*One hundred years of protecting the unique vistas and habitats of the Highlands Plateau and beyond is a milestone worthy of special consideration.*

Undoubtedly you noticed something special in your mailbox recently, an invitation to join the newly founded Century Circle. As your land trust prepares to celebrate its 100th year in 2009, a group of forward-thinking individuals have come together to form the Century Circle. This giving society has been founded for the purpose of supporting the very important conservation work that still needs to be done. Partners in the Century Circle have pledged to donate \$1000 or more annually for the next three years.

Every gift to the Land Trust makes a difference. We would like to thank all of our partners and remind those who have chosen to renew with their normal annual membership that membership renewals will be in the mail soon. We have chosen to send out annual membership renewals later than usual in order to avoid seasonal address change issues.

As you know, we depend on the support of our partners. Through your ongoing support we are able to continue the vital conservation work that still needs to be done. We ask that you make a gift that is meaningful to you and realize that when you do, you are making an investment in the future of this special place, one that will make a difference for future generations. Ours is legacy you can be proud to be a part of. Thank you for continuing to help us to save the places we all love.

## 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 \_\_\_\_\_

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_ V Code \_\_\_\_\_

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

# Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust

Post Office Box 1703  
Highlands, North Carolina 28741-1703  
(828)526-9938, ext. 250

Visit our web site at [www.hicashlt.org](http://www.hicashlt.org)



## HCLT Celebrates with a New Look

You probably have heard the news; next year your land trust will be 100 years old!

A good friend of HCLT has already given a gift and what a special one it is. Local artist and friend of the Land Trust, Rosemary Clark Stiefel, has created a beautiful new logo for Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust. This logo features a red tailed hawk perched on a limb overlooking an old growth forest. Inspiration for this image comes from Rosemary's original triptych, "Sayonara."

We would like to thank Rosemary for sharing her talent and for creating such a beautiful piece of art that we are proud to have as a visual representation of the Land Trust.