



the land steward

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From the Director

At its core, LTLT is a strong regional land trust in the heart of the Southern Blue Ridge. The proof is found within these pages.

We are proud to tell the stories of people who choose to leave a lasting legacy—people like Venice Lance, who sought our help to permanently conserve her family land along the Appalachian Trail in the Cheoah Mountains. This year other inspiring stories are emerging in a dozen new land conservation projects in the Cowee, Nantahala, and Snowbird Mountains, as well as along the banks of the Little Tennessee and Nantahala Rivers. **LTLT is making a difference.**

Taking care of the land means caring about the health of the water as well, and LTLT rises to face the varied threats to our rivers. The story of Ben Laseter's leadership demonstrates how we are at the forefront of restoring contaminated riverfront lands in a key location along the 4.5-mile Little Tennessee Greenway. **LTLT is making a difference.**

We believe that in order to sustain land and water conservation, people must be connected to these resources. No one understands this better than Bill McLarney, who 25 years ago launched an initiative in the Little Tennessee that has turned into an unparalleled database of ecosystem health—all while inspiring and engaging the local community in the conservation of this natural area. McLarney teaches that strong communities depend upon the health of the land and water.

LTLT's citizen science initiative is evolving beyond just helping our scientists do their work by becoming a powerful tool for connecting young people to the land and water. In the past year alone 1,700 kids have had their feet in our mountain waters thanks to these efforts. **LTLT is making a difference.**

Nearly half of LTLT's core operations are underwritten by individual, private support. Without our growing base of donors, the depth and breadth of LTLT's stories would not be possible. A heartfelt thanks to all who help write these and future conservation stories. **YOU are making a difference.**

Paul Carlson
Executive Director

The annual update on the activities and organizational status of LTLT (Land Trust for the Little Tennessee)

November, 2014

LTLT

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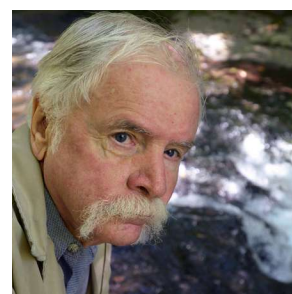
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A Legacy of Memories

CONSERVE

Clyde Garland spent a hard lifetime putting together a beautiful tract of mountain land. Now his heirs are safekeeping that commitment.

In 1989, 33-year-old Derek Lance was glancing through the *Asheville Citizen-Times* when he saw an article listing the top landowners in Western North Carolina. “I looked at that list and there at #3 was my grandfather, Clyde Garland, who owned 1,200 acres at that time. Until then, I had no idea.”

It took Clyde and his wife Grace years of hard work to acquire that much acreage. Childhood sweethearts with eighth grade educations, Clyde and Grace both grew up in Graham County. From 1942 until his retirement in the 1980s, Clyde owned a general store on Stecoah Road. But he felt a calling to the land—land that Clyde’s great-grandfather owned until his death, when it was split into pieces. In 1949, Clyde began buying it back, tract by tract as he could afford.

Clyde’s daughter, Venice Garland



Lance, remembers her father using the properties as he purchased them. “Dad would log it and cut timber off the different tracts. They had an old sawmill beside their house and Dad would hire people to log every day except on Sunday—one year, a man Dad had hired on Sunday died in an

accident on Monday, so Dad never again hired workers on Sunday.”

But the land wasn't just used for work. “I used to love to play with my grandmother in the streams on that property,” Mrs. Lance said, “and the memory that sticks in my mind was how clear the waters were.”

Mrs. Lance left Graham County at 16 to attend the University of Tennessee. She eventually married and settled in Arden, North Carolina. There, she and her husband Gil served in the Asheville City School System and raised their boys, Derek and Shane. When the family could get away, they visited Venice's parents in Graham County, giving their sons opportunities to make their own memories.

“Papaw (Clyde) used to take us boys around the property in a '49 Willis—until he bought a '69 Jeep pickup truck, which I still own,” Derek says. “We'd check on cattle and just explore the area. I loved it.”

When her father died in 1991, Venice took a walk along a portion of the Appalachian Trail that borders their property. “Looking down at the

view from the AT, I knew then that I would want to conserve it someday. Dad worked so hard putting together these pieces to make them whole again. Saving it is my way of honoring his legacy.”

Last year, the Lance family began researching groups that conserve land and discovered LTLT. Partnering together, almost 300 acres in the Cheoah Mountains will, like Clyde Garland's original use, forever be available for timber harvest and agriculture. The Lances allowed only one home site on the property so hikers along the AT will continue to have uninterrupted views. Sawyer Creek, which flows through the property on its way to Fontana Lake, will remain clean and full of natural life.

What does this mean to Venice Garland Lance? Her brown eyes well up. “I wanted to do what Dad would have done. I think he'd be proud.”

LTLT is grateful to the Appalachian Trail Conservancy and the Conservation Trust for North Carolina for funding the transaction costs of this project.



“Dad worked so hard putting together these pieces to make them whole again. Saving it is my way of honoring his legacy.”



RESTORE

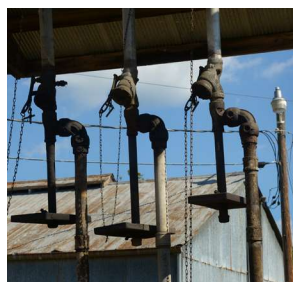
Ben Laseter broadens his skill set to save the brownfield next door.

Coming into the LTLT offices from the back parking lot each morning, Ben Laseter slowly began to notice what was around him.

"I never paid that much attention to this part of town until our offices moved here. LTLT staff parks behind the building, so every day I'd park

Main Street just see the front of the closed service station and don't know that there is over an acre of land, adjacent to Friends of the Greenway headquarters, with 350 feet of frontage along the Little Tennessee River. This looked like a perfect water quality project."

Neglected Treasure



my car and be face-to-face with this adjacent lot full of tanks, barrels, and pumps from its days as an oil distribution business and service station. It seemed kind of ironic that this was right next door to a non-profit dedicated to conserving this wonderful part of the world we live in." It wasn't long before LTLT discovered the property was available for purchase, but was probably contaminated due to 40-plus years of storing and distributing petroleum. Far from being deterred by that undesirable selling point, LTLT saw this as fitting right into its mission. "Most people driving down

Indeed. Already considered a brownfield, several rounds of environmental site assessments revealed an ongoing gas leak underground into the ground water, in addition to other contaminated areas. Left alone, these leaks could eventually make their way into the Little T.

So Ben, whose career began in wildlife ecology, immersed himself into learning everything he could about brownfields. "It was a pretty substantial learning curve—understanding the different rules, different agencies, the technical aspects. Thankfully, there are a lot of

agency folks in Asheville, Raleigh and Atlanta who have really gotten behind this project and have taught me quite a bit."

An Eagle Scout since 1991, Ben had childhood aspirations of following in his father's steps as an attorney. But a love of the outdoors led him to study

"When I drive into the parking lot now, I don't just see the polluted lot next door. Instead, I think even beyond the benefit of water quality and consider the additional potential—of beautiful green space in downtown, of possible access to the river, new commercial use, or



forest resources at the University of Georgia, followed by a master's at the University of Memphis and then back to UGA to complete his Ph.D. Ben spent a few years at an environmental consulting firm until an opportunity with LTLT came along.

Ben feels the time investment he's made to learn all he can about brownfield regulations, funding options for cleanup and coordinating with multiple agencies has been worth it. "It's been a lot of fun to learn a completely different area of expertise outside of what we normally think of as natural resource management."

maybe even a pedestrian bridge connecting the Greenway. There are so many options, and I hope by LTLT cleaning up this one property, we can have a hand in helping start the revitalization of this area in Franklin."

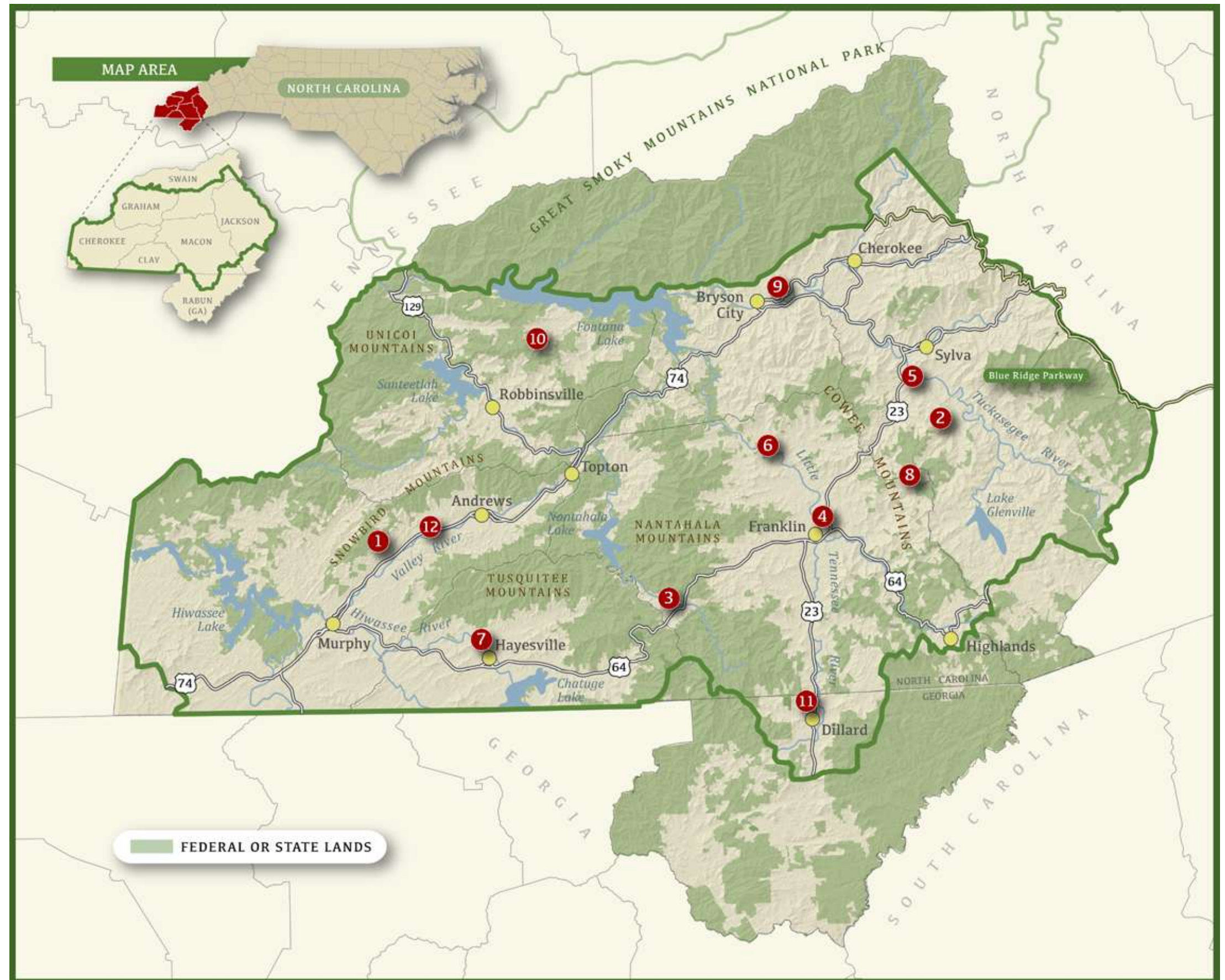
"When I drive into the parking lot now, I don't just see the polluted lot next door."

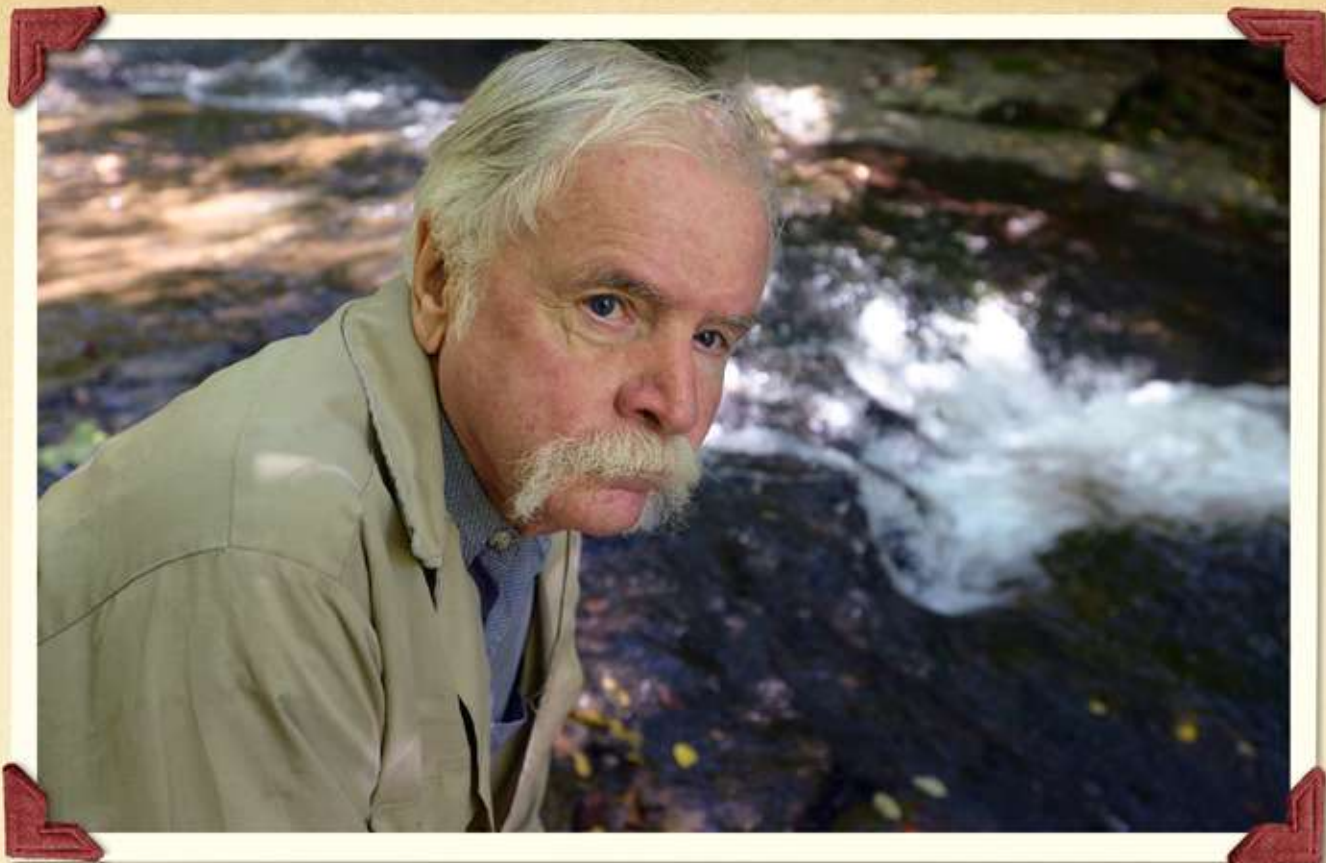


Our Year

LTLT's Projects and Progress at a Glance

- 1 Conserve**
Morgan Creek
Private landowner is conserving 159 acres adjacent to National Forest.
- 2 Conserve**
Bo Cove
104 acres of mature forest to go into conservation easement this year.
- 3 Conserve**
Nantahala River
2,800 feet of Nantahala River and productive farmland to be protected.
- 4 Restore**
Brownfield on Little Tennessee River
See page 6.
- 5 Restore**
Little Savannah Creek
Farmer Tom Kelly was profiled in LTLT's What Will You Do? publication. Visit lilt.org to read the article.
- 6 Restore**
Bradley Creek and Little Tennessee River
Restoration project will create resting habitat for endangered Spotfin chub.
- 7 Connect**
Kids in the Creek Program
Clay County 8th graders got down and dirty in the water.
- 8 Connect**
Upper Savannah Creek Hellbender Survey Site
LTLT volunteers were trained in non-invasive monitoring techniques for these cool creatures.
- 9 Connect**
Kids in the Creek Program
This time, it was the Swain County 9th graders who studied the fish.
- 10 Conserve**
Lance Conservation Easement
See page 4.
- 11 Conserve**
Stateline Wetland Conservation Easement for Rabun Gap Nacoochee School
Great potential for educational opportunities for the students who attend this private school.
- 12 Connect**
Welch Farm MAPS
Our local contribution to the national cooperative effort of broad scale demographic monitoring of land birds.





UP A CREEK

25 Years of Citizen Science with LTLT's Dr. Bill McLarney

CONNECT

We have a conversation with the biomonitoring master on his quarter-century of devotion to the Little Tennessee.

Since 1989, Dr. Bill McLarney has spent his summers knee-deep in the waters in and around the Little Tennessee River, catching and examining fish to determine the health of the river or stream. Clad in waders and wearing a wide brim hat to protect him from the sun, McLarney sloshes through the water resembling how one would imagine a mad scientist might look—wild white hair, an Einstein-like mustache, wearing a weird backpack that beeps intermittently while holding a net in one hand and a metal hook in the other. He barks orders at his volunteers, scolding them if they aren't paying attention, pushing them to go

“just a little bit further upstream” before mentioning a lunch break.

But behind that gruff exterior is a brilliant, witty biologist and educator, committed to the natural resources both here and in Costa Rica, where he is the founder of ANAI, a non-profit that focuses on integrating nature conservation, family and community-centered development.

After 25 years of collecting data in the upper Little Tennessee River Watershed, we asked Bill to sit down and reflect on his career. He did so with only a little bit of complaining.

Q: You were educated in Ohio and Michigan—why did you decide to

live in Franklin and choose the Little Tennessee Watershed as your place to work?

A: Ask my wife. I'd rather be in a swampy place. With that caveat, I picked it out of all the watersheds in the southern Appalachians because of the combination of good health, good fishing, and a chance to do something for conservation.



Q: What first drew you to monitoring rivers/streams?

A: I've been doing it since I was four years old—when you look at a stream wondering if you can catch a fish, and especially if you look at it a second time after some time has passed, you're already monitoring. The rest is just about getting technically more sophisticated.

Q: How did you then get involved in biomonitoring in this area?

A: I wanted to assess my environment (Little T watershed) in some way, and even better if I could make a living at it. In 1988, I got the chance to apprentice with Charlie Saylor and others from Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) at a critical moment when TVA was pioneering IBI (Index of Biological Integrity) methods.

Q: You spend half of your year in Franklin and the other half biomonitoring in Costa Rica. How

does southern Appalachia differ from Central America?

A: Let's change the terms of the discussion. It's not about water quality; it's about biodiversity and ecosystem integrity—things which overlap, but not so broadly as some think.

Costa Rica has some of the best regulations anywhere; they are not enforced. We have pretty good regulations; they are somewhat enforced. Nowhere in the world are regulations enforced unless it fits someone's economic vision. But most of our problems outside of high intensity use areas (urban, industrial, big agriculture) are not primarily going to be solved by regulation—it must be driven by cultural change.

Q: So how does one change the culture?

A: Oh, this can open a quagmire. I'm generalizing greatly here, but walk with me a moment: if the average American's level of sophistication in math were equivalent to that in biology, 90% of us would require professional help to balance a



checking account. In that respect, the average Costa Rican campesino or Indian usually has some baseline knowledge, realizes how much he doesn't know and has a huge willingness to learn.

Again, generalizing vastly, but most Americans have not only lost all the

DR. BILL BY THE NUMBERS



4,750

Acres of public Needmore Game Lands that biomonitoring helped protect

29

Waders Bill has worn out doing his work in the river



1

Appearance in a Patagonia catalog

DR. BILL BY THE NUMBERS

3

Awards
Bill has
received in
recognition
of his work



Volunteers
who have
helped Bill
shock fish

3,000+



31 Miles
of stream
researched

0

Times Bill has been
caught smiling in a
photograph

knowledge they once had, they either don't know it even exists or they think it's all "technical" and beyond them. Either way it does not lead to learning. Even people that want to help a scientist like me have little idea how they affect biodiversity. The challenge is to correct this degeneration and reconnect people.

Q: In another 25 years, what do you hope to see for this area?



A: The word is "hope," right? I hope to see people recover all those aspects of culture I just talked about. The kinds of education I and others at LTLT do can help this process along, but it will

terms of the legacy you'll leave?

A: It depends on how you frame the question. In terms of scientists, my legacy there—in both countries—will be a few outstanding younger people and a couple of databases. I hope the value of the databases are better realized and tapped, which would feed my ego—a much maligned organ which deserves better press.

Nuts and bolts, my already fairly secure legacy is on the ground—Needmore, Alaska Laurel, the Gandoca/Manzanillo National Wildlife Refuge in Costa Rica, the San San/Pondsak National Wildlife Refuge in Panama, and a lot of smaller actions by private landowners and communities.

But a nice piece of legacy would be to contribute to chipping away at the word "scientist." In my ideal future everybody would be able to precisely define "biodiversity" but not precisely define "scientist." I don't mean that everybody could, should or wants to be a professional scientist, but I would hope I contributed to us all caring about the same things and being

Bill was one of the first to recognize the value of alignment with TVA's monitoring program and adapted the methodology to LTLT's monitoring plan and Asociación ANAI monitoring plan in Costa Rica. These award-winning programs became two of the most successful conservation initiatives worldwide.

Dave Matthews
Tennessee Valley Authority

take a lot more. It's also worthy to hope for no net loss of biodiversity in 25 years. Were that to be the case, one could be hopeful about other improvements.

Q: What are you proudest of, in

able to talk about them.

I also hope people will remember I was funny at times.

Want to know more about Bill's legacy? Read more at lilt.org.

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 supporting LTLT's
 work. Visit Itlt.org.**

Thank You!

Foundations:

Cherokee Preservation Foundation
 Duke Energy Foundation
 Merck Family Foundation

Agencies:

North Carolina Clean Water Management Trust Fund

North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural
 Resources
 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 Region A, Appalachian Regional Commission

Other:

Appalachian Trail Conservancy
 Blue Ridge Forever
 Conservation Trust for North Carolina
 Land Trust Alliance
 Lowe's
 The Wilderness Society

LTLT Annual Report of Funds

| Sources of Funds, 2013 | | |
|-------------------------------|----|--------------------|
| — Individuals | \$ | 563,693 |
| — Foundations & Organizations | \$ | 362,522 |
| — Rent, Interest, Events | \$ | 120,333 |
| — Program Contracts | \$ | 103,444 |
| — Government Grants | \$ | 98,959 |
| — Corporations & Businesses | \$ | 44,108 |
| Total | | \$1,293,059 |

| Use of Funds, 2013 | | |
|--------------------|----|--------------------|
| — Conserve | \$ | 431,410 |
| — Restore | \$ | 257,499 |
| — Connect | \$ | 239,752 |
| — Program Support | \$ | 150,086 |
| — Fundraising | \$ | 77,090 |
| Total: | | \$1,155,837 |

Porch Party!

On October 16, LTLT donors and volunteers gathered to celebrate a year of accomplishments in the Southern Blue Ridge. The party was sponsored by the LTLT Board of Directors, with event support from Tallents Produce, Ingles, Lowe's, First United Methodist Church and Macon Funeral Home. Guitarist and singer/songwriter Tom Quigley provided music for the event. A group of special volunteers helped complete the porch in time for the party, proving that LTLT is truly a community! Also, Outdoor 76 presented LTLT with a check for \$1,000—proceeds from the September 18 Beer, BBQ and Bluegrass event hosted by the Franklin-based outfitter.





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What will your footprint be?

If you are interested in learning more about how you can create an estate plan that secures your family's financial future and helps make a lasting difference in Western North Carolina, please contact the LTLT office at 828.524.2711, or visit lilt.org.

