

CONSERVE
RESTORE
CONNECT

A Mid-year Message from the Executive Director

Dear Friend of LTLT,

Long-term partnerships and trust are at the heart of LTLT's work. They are also the key ingredients in our conservation successes.

Our partnership with the Cherokee began a dozen years ago with rivercane harvest agreements that gave native artisans access to canebrakes conserved by LTLT. Six years ago we celebrated the return of the Cowee Mound to the Eastern Band of Cherokee and with this spring's transfer of Hall Mountain, a total of 180 acres in the heart of Cowee have been restored to tribal ownership.

Partnerships begun a decade ago with the State of NC and five different local governments led to the conservation of over 11,000 acres of municipally-owned watersheds in the Balsam, Great Smoky and Snowbird Mountains. Our strategy to conserve these lands culminated last November when a conservation easement was completed on the Town of Andrews' 930-acre Beaver Creek watershed.

This past spring LTLT partnered with 9 local schools to engage 525 students in outdoor education opportunities focused on the value of native plants and of healthy streams. As the year moves forward many more students will connect in LTLT's stream and bird monitoring programs and in the butterfly "migration celebration."

Partnerships continue to underpin our agenda to Conserve, Restore, and Connect the best places of our region as we enter the second half of 2013. For example:

- *LTLT is gearing up to conserve 300 forested acres adjacent to the Appalachian Trail in the Cheoah Mountains in partnership with a conservation-minded family;*
- *We are working to restore 2 miles of streambank in the valleys of the Tuckasegee and Little Tennessee Rivers in partnership with nine landowners, the Jackson and Macon Conservation Districts, and federal natural resource agencies; and*
- *In the heart of Cowee-West's Mill Historic District, we continue to connect the historic mosaic from the Cowee School and Rickman General Store to the Cowee Mound with our five-acre acquisition in the heart of the old village including the old post office and Vonnie West house.*

Other existing partnerships in the preservation and restoration of this historic area as well as numerous other projects across the mountains are too long to detail here, but are integral to our work.

None of our efforts would be possible without individual partners who support LTLT. Thank you for your role in our growing conservation success story.

Paul J. Carlson

p.s. We know you love these mountains as much as we do, so please help us conserve their resources, restore their treasures and connect to their heritage by donating today.

RESCUED
HERITAGE

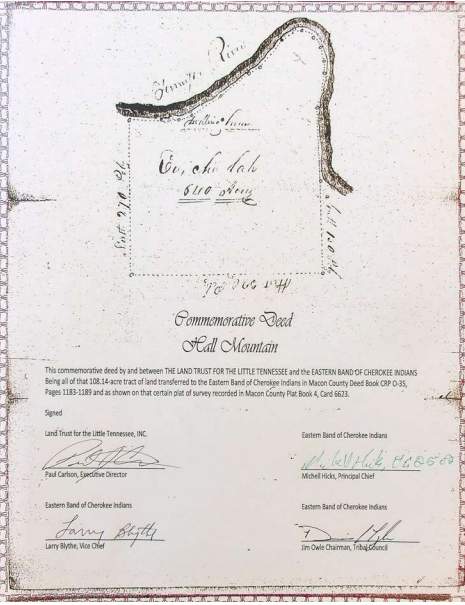
Hall Mountain
Land
Permanently
Protected



Officials from the Eastern Band of Cherokee and LTLT sign copies of the ceremonial deed (right) transferring the Hall Mountain property to the Tribe. Tribal dancers were on hand to mark the occasion.



Bottom photos courtesy of The Franklin Press



Conserve	An important tract is spared development
Restore	Sacred land is returned to the Cherokee
Connect	A complex partnership yields success

A public gathering held on May 31st celebrated the transfer of 108 acres of historically and culturally significant land from LTLT to the Eastern Band of Cherokee. The event marked the culmination of an eight-year effort to save the land from development and return it to the Tribe, protecting and preserving the viewshed from the Cowee Mound, an important Tribal landmark. The project was a partnership involving the Tribe, LTLT, the U.S. Forest Service, and The Wilderness Society.

"We have to make things right and that's why we're here today." With these words Principal Chief Michell Hicks joined LTLT's Paul Carlson in signing a ceremonial deed. Traditional blessings and dances added to the celebratory mood.

The Cowee Mound site itself—once the diplomatic and commercial center for the Middle Town Cherokee people—was transferred from LTLT to the Tribe in similar fashion in 2007. An ambitious residential development planned for Hall Mountain nearly spoiled the Mound's handsome visual backdrop. LTLT tried unsuccessfully to buy the forested viewshed from the

developers. "The owners had expectations way beyond what LTLT could compensate them for," according to Carlson. When the property went back to bank, LTLT was able to purchase the property and hold it until the Forest Service's Community Forest and OpenSpace Conservation Program—developed with the help of The Wilderness Society—provided a \$300,000 matching funds grant to the Tribe.

The Tribe plans to create a scenic hiking trail system through the tract that will exhibit traditional uses of natural resources and will serve as a regional educational center.



OPEN CLASSROOM

Conserve	Programs raise environmental awareness
Restore	4,000 volunteers protect resources
Connect	LTLT encourages community involvement

LTLT feels strongly that its initiatives have the maximum potential for success if the people we serve are educated about the issues that surround our mission. Here's an overview of this year's efforts.



LTLT's Educational Outreach Programs

Following the NC Standard Course of Study, Macon County 8th graders learn about water quality and stream health through direct, hands-on fish surveys, microinvertebrate surveys, water chemical testing and more under the guidance of LTLT staff and a host of regional partner organizations.

Kids in the Creek

262 students from Franklin High School, Macon Early College, Oconaluftee Job Corps and Mountain Valley Intermediate School spent a spring day learning about the range of invasive exotic plants, insects, fish, mammals and invertebrates that have found a home in our region and how each contributes to degradation of our lands and streams. 40 volunteers and presenters used visual aids, natural artifacts, games and scientific observational skills to engage and involve the students.

Invasive Species Field Day

Live staking is a specialized technique for planting particular species to establish sound stream buffers to fight erosion and keep streams shady, cool and healthy. Presenters guided participants in the how, where and why of this important conservation skill as they practiced on a local stream.

Live Staking Workshop

In conjunction with Coweeta Hydrologic Laboratory, 30 land owners and managers from the region spent an in-depth day with experts learning how to plan and construct new low-volume private access roads, and how to maintain existing roads, all with a sensitivity to the environment.

Environmental Road Construction

Organized by LTLT Board member Jason Love and his wife Jennifer, this four-day workshop involved the participation of 340 6th graders from Mountain Valley Intermediate School. Students learned monarch butterfly tagging, bird banding (led by Southern Appalachian Raptor Research) and played the "Migration Headache" game. By duplicating the methods of Coweeta researchers, they learned about the complex connections between bird and insect species.

Migration Celebration

The upper Little Tennessee River aquatic biomonitoring program measures the health of the watershed through a fish-based index of biotic integrity, microinvertebrate sampling and physical habitat assessment. It has amassed 23 years worth of data. This year's session involved 90 participants.

Aquatic Biomonitoring

196 participants from across the region have helped in this May-through-September program. Goals include monitoring breeding bird productivity and survivorship, educating the public on native birds and their habitat, and developing native-language educational materials for Cherokee students.

Bird Monitoring

REUNION

Conserve	Macon County history is protected
Restore	Cowee-West's Mill preservation continues
Connect	Reuniting a community with its heritage

Aunt Vonnie West, daughter of Jesse and Pallie West, taught in the Cowee Schools for more 50 years. Her home, built in 1936, stood vacant and dilapidated until LTLT purchased the property.



Preservation and restoration of the Cowee-West's Mill Village has been an important part of LTLT's long-term strategy of heritage protection beginning with the national designation of the 340-acre Cowee-West's Mill Historic District. Without a strong connection to historic culture, public appreciation and involvement in regional conservation efforts falls short; a region's ecology and economy are inseparable from its cultural identity.

To that end, we are very excited about our purchase of the Aunt Vonnie West property, which includes an informational kiosk with visitor parking,

two buildings on the National Historic Register and 5.5 acres of land with 140 feet of Cowee Creek frontage. The first building, from the early 1920s, once served as the West's Mill Post Office. Pallie West, Vonnie's mother, was the postmaster. In 1936 the post office was rolled on logs to its present location to make room for the construction of Aunt Vonnie's house, a two-story frame house with a gabled tin roof and gingerbread trim.

Both structures are sound and ready for restoration, and once restored will contribute to the heritage-based economic development of the West's Mill area.

Aunt Vonnie West Property Purchased

It's easy to envision the bustle of activity that must have surrounded the center of West's Mill Village early in the 20th Century. The post office, where Aunt Vonnie's mother served as postmaster, stands at the west end, Vonnie's home on the east.



UNSPOILER ALERT

Appalachian Trail Vistas to Remain Unobscured

And an important watershed to be protected



Conserve	LTLT helps family keep heritage land intact
Restore	Keeping Sawyer Creek cool and clean
Connect	Protecting a special viewscape for hikers

LTLT is helping conserve 300 forested acres of heritage land in Graham County that provides a spectacular view for hikers on the Appalachian Trail.

Thanks to one family's connection to its old home site and property, a large tract of undeveloped land, with abundant hardwood, wildflowers and the trout waters of Sawyer Creek, will be conserved. The family is donating a conservation easement to LTLT that will protect these natural resources

plus a sweeping view of the Sawyer Creek watershed from the Appalachian Trail. The family's conservation easement will allow sustainable forest management and a home site on the property near a standing stone chimney from the original family homestead.

