

# Same Journey, New Shoes

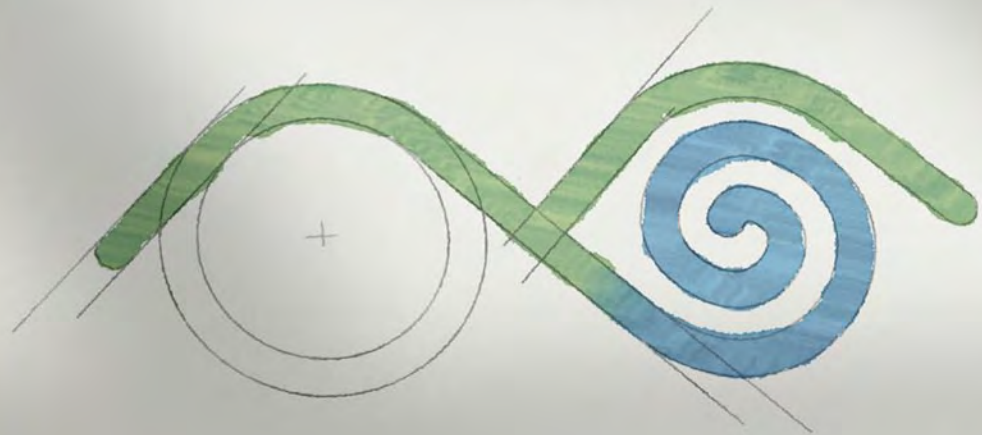
## 2015 Annual Report



**MAINSRING**  
CONSERVATION TRUST



**LTLT**  
*Land Trust for the Little Tennessee*





# From the Executive Director

## Mainspring Staff

**Sharon Fouts Taylor**  
*Executive Director*

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*Advancement Coordinator*

**Sara Ruth Posey**  
*Hiwassee Programs Manager*

**Ramelle Smith**  
*Finance Manager*

2015 was, to say the least, an eventful year. With your help, we conserved land, restored streams, and educated hundreds of people. You'll see those results in the following pages of this Annual Report.

On top of that, we changed our name. Your support and acceptance of Mainspring Conservation Trust as our new identity has truly been inspiring. You saw the value in moving into our future as we remember and embrace our significant past.

One of Mainspring's projects in 2015 was especially personal for me. In my 15 years with the land trust, I've sat across the kitchen table from many families and helped them consider and realize their dreams of leaving a legacy of land. Their lands may be valued for their farm soils, rich cove forests, rushing streams, or as lands that make up the unspoiled mountain views that we all enjoy and tend to take for granted. This year, I sat with my husband on the opposite side of the table, as we donated a conservation easement on our own Roper Knob property.

It wasn't easy. In fact, I was surprised how it felt to be the easement donor rather than the land trust staff member. Like so many others, our family land is our most valuable asset. George and I struggled with "giving up" the value of our land's potential for big-view development. We struggled with "forever" and its many unknowns. We struggled with the decision, even though we knew we wanted to leave an undeveloped Roper Knob — which forms a prominent view throughout northern Macon County — as part of our legacy.

The process gave me a new appreciation for all of the families that have made that important choice. I am proud to be one of them now and proud our acreage is now included in the "Private Land Easements" on page 5 of this Annual Report. And I am proud to honor you — who lend your support and put your confidence in Mainspring year after year — with this forever-protected view of Roper Knob.

Sharon Fouts Taylor

P. S. You made 2015 a successful year. **Your contribution is needed to make 2016 successful, too.** Please donate online at [mainspringconserves.org](http://mainspringconserves.org) or return the enclosed pre-paid envelope.



Photo by John MacLean

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Sharon and her husband George stand with the peak of Roper Knob in the background, as seen from the Indian Lakes Scenic Byway.



# 2015 BY THE NUMBERS

**1,130**

Livestakes planted to help with streambank erosion and to provide shade



**1**

Historic house sold for restoration




**8**

Mountain Partners meetings (see page 6)



Increase in number of educational events held from 2014

**36%**




**15,693**

Fish counted (and released) during biomonitoring



**11**

Western Carolina University faculty working with Mainspring on a variety of projects




**123**

Different names considered before selecting Mainspring Conservation Trust



**633**

Contributions by generous donors



**9,625**

Feet of streams conserved



**3**

Private land conservation easements: Macon County (70 acres, 27 acres); Rabun County (12 acres)



**2,998**

Youth reached through Mainspring's education programs



**5**

Land purchases



**\$5,000**

Received from the Tennessee Valley Authority as part of its Tennessee River Champion Award



**2**

Land donations



**1**

Mountain bog preserved



**3**

Events held around our region in Fall 2015 to announce Mainspring's name





# Mainspring at Work

## RESTORE

WHEN MAINSPRING FIRST PURCHASED property on Lakey Creek in Macon County in 2011, a culvert carrying the creek under a road was quickly identified as a barrier to fish movement. "Fish could pass downstream through the culvert, but only the strongest could swim back upstream," says Mainspring's Jason Meador. Culverts are not a permanent solution and rains were already causing the road going over the culvert to slump.

Fast-forward to 2015, when the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission funded a more permanent and fish-friendly solution. With coordination from Mainspring, a steel bridge was completed that provides the family with a long-term solution for accessing their home. In addition to removing the culvert, Mainspring added habitat for fish to rest and hide by placing logs in the stream. Jason explains, "Think of the stream as a treadmill. Fish, like us, need to hop off the treadmill sometimes and rest. Pools are resting areas, so the fish are happy."



Before



After

## CONNECT

ON APRIL 17, 2015, people from the Franklin and Cherokee communities met for the first time to begin dialogue and explore strategies for regional partnership, cultural preservation, and economic development. "Our mission includes connecting people to the natural and cultural heritage of this region," Associate Director Ben Laseter says, "and the Cherokee make up a huge part of the history along the Little Tennessee River. Promoting heritage tourism that involves everyone can

have multiple economic development opportunities and can be a win-win for everyone."

Initiated by Mainspring, the group is called Mountain Partners and was made possible by support from The Community Foundation of Western North Carolina, the Cherokee Preservation Foundation, and the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation. The members plan to formalize into an operational organization whose goals include interpreting and linking sites such as the Nikwasi and

WHEN TIM AND EMILY CAMPBELL from Sylva began discussing donating 900 acres of land they own in Yellow Creek Valley in Graham County, they turned to Mainspring.

Mainspring purchased the land in 2008 and developed a plan to restore the property. With help from the Cheoah Fund, Mainspring also developed a trail to Yellow Creek Falls, a popular put-in for paddlers.

In 2013, Mainspring sold the property to the Campbells, who placed a conservation easement on it and kept the trail open for public access.

"Mainspring staff suggested donating the property to the National

Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf)." Tim says. "We met with their representatives and decided it would be a great fit."

NWTf plans to use the property for conservation education, mentored youth hunts and fishing, habitat demonstrations, and wildlife and forest management.

As supporters of both hunting and protection of wildlife habitat, the Campbells are glad the land will be put to good use. "None of this would have happened without Mainspring," Tim says. "I am glad that we could improve some of the most exceptional land in western North Carolina."

## CONSERVE



Yellow Creek Falls, on the property donated to the National Wild Turkey Federation by Tim and Emily Campbell.

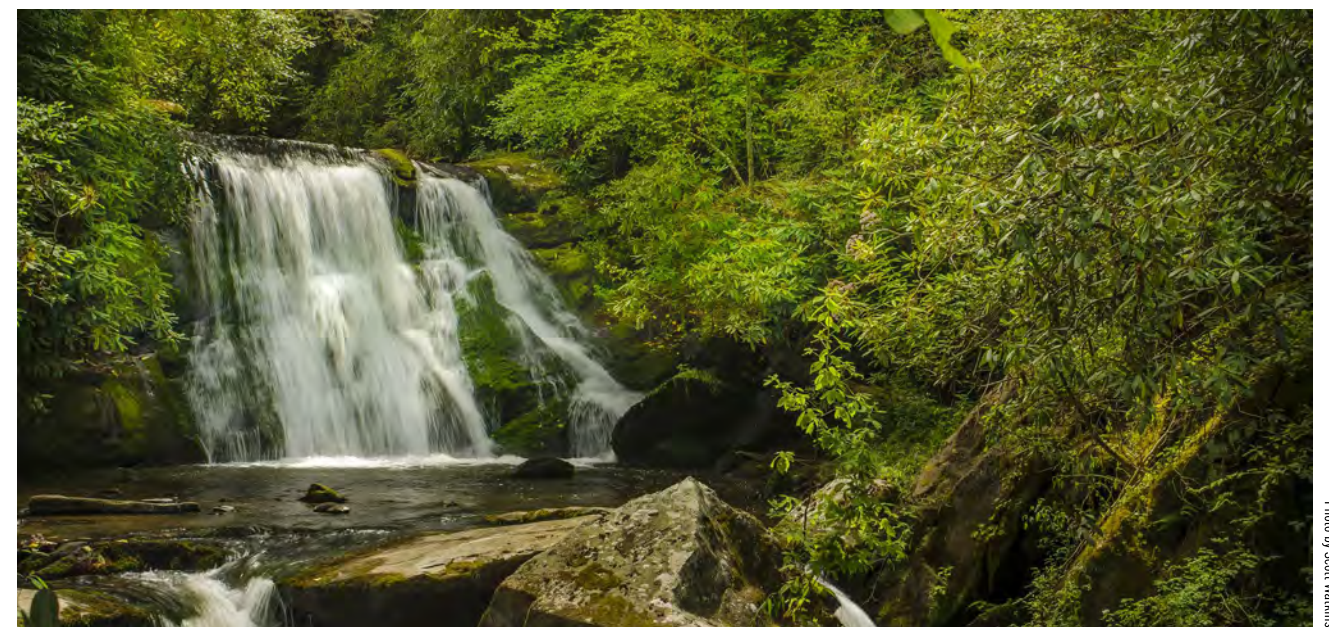


Photo by Scott Watkins

Cowee mounds, raising awareness and funds to pursue those efforts, and exploring opportunities for collaboration between the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and local communities.

Juanita Wilson, Director of the WNC Leadership Initiative and a Mountain Partners member from Cherokee, thinks the effort is important. "If people can see the bigger picture, we can build something that has positive and long-range impact for the region."



Tommy Cabe, Forest Resource Specialist and member of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, and Barbara McRae of Franklin discuss a heritage corridor map during a Mountain Partners meeting.



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Mainspring gratefully acknowledges the following contributors for their generous support.

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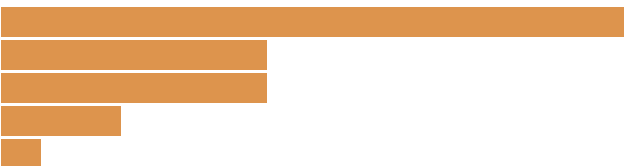
# 2015 Mainspring Finances

<b>2015 Source of Funds</b>		
Rent, Interest, Events	\$39,256	2%
Government Grants	\$76,916	4%
Foundation Grants	\$91,006	4%
Organization Grants	\$155,345	8%
Corporations/Businesses*	\$267,710	13%
Program Services	\$339,770	17%
Individuals	\$1,085,404	53%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,055,407</b>	<b>100%</b>



<b>2015 Use of Funds</b>		
Conserve**	\$904,764	47%
Restore	\$388,861	20%
Connect	\$387,421	20%
Administration	\$164,700	9%
Fundraising	\$65,782	3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,911,528</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* Includes Land Donations  
\*\* Includes Capital Expenditures for Conservation Lands



## Hiwassee Helper

IN 2015, MAINSPRING identified land conservation and activities in the Hiwassee Watershed region as an organizational priority, including hiring a programs manager to live and work in that territory. On February 1, 2016, **Sara Ruth Posey** began her work at Mainspring Conservation Trust in this role. Sara Ruth was born and raised in the Ranger Community of Cherokee County, North Carolina, and received a B.S. in Environmental Sciences from UNC-Chapel Hill in 2013.

After graduation, Sara Ruth worked for the Tourism Development Authority in Murphy, where she developed an understanding of what draws tourism dollars. “Conserving the cultural character of western North Carolina is near and dear to my heart, but also vital to increased



Sara Ruth Posey,  
Mainspring's new  
Hiwassee Programs Manager

tourism revenue. Conserving the natural beauty of our mountains and rivers will continue to improve our local economies through eco-tourism. Accepting a position with Mainspring Conservation Trust allows me to pursue a career in conservation while living in a place where I feel at home.”

Mainspring’s second office will be on Valley River Avenue in Murphy.





## **MAINSRING** CONSERVATION TRUST

Stewards of the Southern Blue Ridge

557 E. Main Street, Franklin, NC 28734

P. O. Box 1148, Franklin, NC 28744



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# Saving Aunt Vonnie's



The Vonnie West house before, and (right) in the process of restoration by Daniel and Darlene Carey.

IN FALL 2015, MAINSPRING sold the historic Vonnie West house to Daniel and Darlene Carey through Preservation North Carolina, a nonprofit dedicated to saving our state's historic buildings. Mainspring had owned the property, located in the Cowee-West's Mill Historic District in Macon County, since 2013. It's easy to see that the Careys have

already made significant improvements! They will continue to restore the house under the historic guidelines they developed with Preservation NC, as well as a 1920s post office that is also on the property. Follow their progress on Facebook by searching for "Aunt Vonnie West Mill House and West Mill Post Office."



Photo by Scott Watkins