

2023 Annual Report



MAINSRING
CONSERVATION TRUST



From the Executive Director



As you flip through the pages of this Annual Report, you'll get a glimpse of the conservation wins our team achieved in 2023. I hope you're as proud as I am of the impact Mainspring continues to have on this unique and beautiful region.

Also evident in this publication is the impact our volunteers make on this organization. Mainspring is blessed with a diverse group of talented individuals who are willing to offer their time and expertise in ways that help us do what we do — whether they're helping with office work (read about our Volunteer of the Year on page 3) or building a bridge (page 12).

In fact, the total time our volunteers cumulatively give each year equals more than two full-time staff members! As we also grow our team of salaried professionals (see page 6), I hope it is clear how much we value those who contribute the incredible gift of their time.

While we celebrate all the achievements of the last year, we must still keep our eyes on the future. This year, we are investing in a six-month-long comprehensive strategic planning process to assess different approaches for moving forward in a sustainable and meaningful way — while still preserving the precious culture of our organization. In a collaborative approach, Mainspring board and staff will use input from key stakeholders to make decisions about our direction, ensuring the intention of our mission continues to be evidenced in our work. While we have not strayed from the core vision of our founders, the organization has grown to address increasingly dire conservation needs in our region. Taking a step back and reassessing our response to these new opportunities, as well as the needs of the communities we serve, will ensure our effectiveness as we work to conserve the “best of the rest.”

Whether you support us with your time, talents, monetary donations — or all three — please know that we cannot be effective in this region without your support.

Sincerely,

Jordan Smith
Executive Director
Mainspring Conservation Trust

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Jordan Smith
Executive Director

Sharon Willard Burdette
Donor Relations Manager

Skye Cahoon
Conservation Outreach Associate

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Land Conservation Manager

Wendy Duvall
Finance Director

Graham Garrett
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Bill McLarney
Senior Scientist

Jason Meador
Aquatic Programs Manager

Kelder Monar
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Molly Phillips
Communications Director

Martha Ross
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Marshall Smith
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Sophie Vazques
Land Conservation Associate

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To Grow and Flourish

Since she was a little girl, Barbara White has sought out opportunities to help others — and, for nearly 20 years, she's included Mainspring in her generosity.

Barbara first came to the land trust in 2005 due to her growing concern for human impact on the local environment, with development threatening to overtake “our wonderful mountains and valleys,” she says. In the decades since, she's donated her time to the land trust in various ways — from working at Rickman Store events to planting trees at Tessentee Bottomland Preserve and to clearing invasive plants at the Cowee Mound site — earning her new title as the 2023 Mainspring Volunteer of the Year.

“One major project I was involved in during the early days of volunteering was copying many pictures and maps in support of official recognition of the Cowee Historic District,” she says. “And I remember the owners of Hall Farmhouse serving us refreshments when I was helping remove flood-damaged tree branches at Cowee Mound. That was much appreciated on a cold, rainy day!”

A few years ago, Barbara scaled back on the physical work but still made time to help Mainspring in other ways. “There comes a time when you know it's better to address envelopes, which is important for base support to Mainspring, than to annoy troublesome knees and an aging back with more strenuous

projects,” she says. “There are so many ways to assist and promote the goals of Mainspring, and it's an honor to serve with others who care about our natural communities and the diversity that occurs here.”

When asked why she continues to choose Mainspring as the recipient of such generosity, Barbara explains: “Mainspring continues to amaze me in its determination to maintain the integrity of organizational goals that are important to preserving our western North Carolina heritage and nature at its finest. Combining mountain cultural heritage with an ever-growing population is not an easy task. Even more difficult is retaining nature's need to flourish in a changing world that often damages the land and the unique ecology of the Southern Appalachians. I am truly delighted to serve Mainspring all these years and will continue to do so whenever I'm called to help, for as long as I am able.”

Interested in volunteering? Mainspring is grateful for people of all ages and talents who want to help with office work, property improvements or management, biomonitoring or at outreach events. Visit mainspringconserves.org/be-a-mainspring/volunteer to sign up.



“Mainspring continues to amaze me in its determination to maintain the integrity of organizational goals.”

Barbara White

Making it Happen

MAINSRING'S 2023 LAND CONSERVATION HIGHLIGHTS include projects around the region – from protecting water quality and preserving views to creating recreational areas and conserving farms and forests.

1

Watauga Town III

Macon County, 20 acres

Mainspring purchased the Ernest Childers Farm, within the Watauga Town boundary, to protect additional significant cultural and agricultural resources at the historic site. Mainspring hopes to restore the wetland surrounding Rocky Branch, a tributary to the Little Tennessee that runs through the property's lower field.

2

King Meadows III

Graham County, 50 acres

This project was added to two previous acquisitions in King Meadows, which now totals 932 acres. The project has very high natural heritage properties and water quality, including over 2,000 feet of tributaries to Squally Creek below.

3

Sweetwater Cove

Jackson County, 35 acres

Surrounded on three sides by USFS lands, this incredibly biodiverse, forested property sits adjacent to a future conservation project that will total 81 acres when complete.

4

Peggy Gap

Jackson County, 126 acres

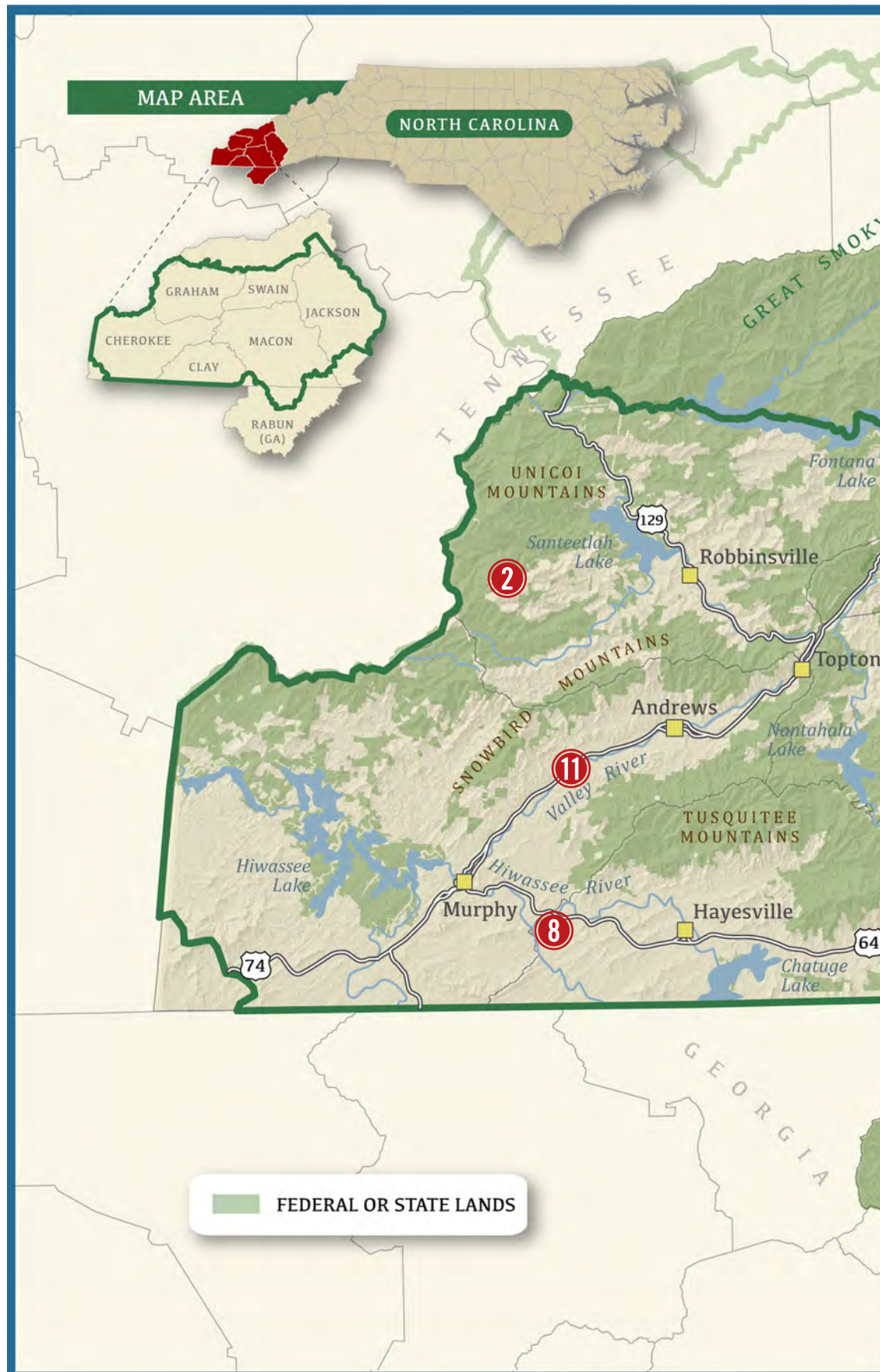
Located southwest of the Western Plott Balsam Mountains, this property sold to a conservation buyer in 2023, ensuring only one homesite would be built. The forested land includes a portion of the Camp Creek watershed, which flows into the Tuckaseegee River.

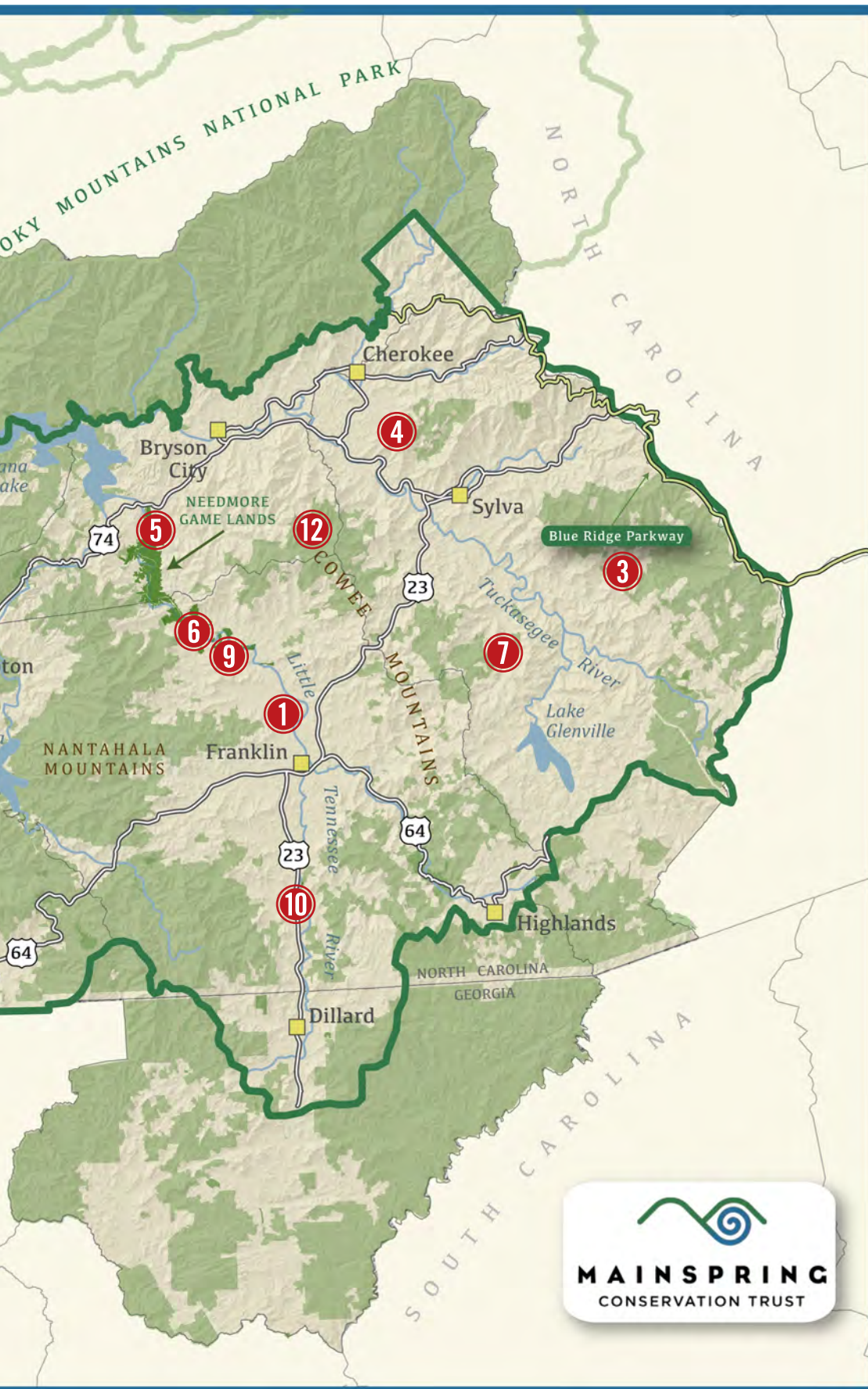
5

Horseshoe Bend

Swain County, 5 acres

The state of North Carolina acquired this property from Mainspring to join Needmore Game Lands under the Wildlife Resources Commission.





6 Lakey Creek Confluence
Macon County, 5 acres
 Mainspring sold this 5.5-acre parcel to the Wildlife Resources Commission for future public access to the Little Tennessee River in northern Macon County.

7 Cullowhee Forest Farm Phase I
Jackson County, 102 acres
 This forested tract is within the Upper Tuckasegee focus area. An N.C. Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Grant was awarded to conserve the property.

8 North Ridge
Clay County, 64 acres
 This donated property in Clay County is entirely forested. The easement that Mainspring will add will protect the headwaters of Greasy and Brasstown creeks and include the reserved right for one allowed homestead.

9 Mile 106 Wetland
Macon County, 24 acres
 Mainspring was awarded an N.C. Land and Water Fund grant in 2020 to sell a conservation easement on this wetland tract, which will allow for restoration and wetland enhancement. A parking lot will connect to this tract and to adjacent Needmore Game Lands.

10 Little Tennessee Bartram Restoration
Macon County
 This stream restoration will stabilize nearly 1,000 linear feet of riverbank while adding an acre of floodplain wetlands and offer better public access to the river. Partners include the N.C. Land and Water Fund, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services, the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission and the Tennessee Valley Authority.

11 Mason Branch Wetland
Cherokee County, 28 acres
 A mobile home subdivision came with this parcel when Mainspring acquired it in 2022. Mainspring sold the lots in 2023 and is planning to support rivercane restoration efforts and provide Valley River access with the remainder of the property.

12 Alarka Creek Restoration
Swain County
 This project aims to reduce sedimentation in the Alarka Creek watershed to benefit native brook trout and other unique aquatic species. Funded by a grant from the N.C. Land and Water Fund.



Ready, Set, Grow

People are our most valuable asset as an organization. Every successful project — from acres conserved to streams restored, habitats spared to cultural sites preserved — is a direct reflection of the passion, talent and drive of our dedicated staff.



But as development pressures mount and the demand for our services continues to grow, Mainspring must meet those needs by strategically investing in skilled professionals to broaden our impact and positively contribute to the Southern Blue Ridge.

Capacity has been a concern for the organization for many years, says Mainspring Executive Director Jordan Smith. While conservation

needs across the region have expanded greatly in the last decade, “from 2018 to 2020, a number of long-term employees retired from Mainspring, and that forced us to re-examine our workloads and see where the holes really were.”

One major step forward was the addition of a conservation outreach associate position, with a well-defined goal of fostering stronger ties to the local community and

introducing the land trust's work to a more diversified audience. In January 2023, **Skye Cahoon** joined the team to take over that role. A Massachusetts native and graduate of the University of Maine in Orono, Skye says she hopes to connect people both to the landscape and to each other through her work. "WNC is such a special corner of the earth, but people can't care about what they don't know about," she says. "Likewise, we can't protect what we care about by standing alone. Hopefully, by nurturing our community's excitement for the nature in our backyards, we can grow Mainspring's network and work together to protect our beautiful biodiversity."

In June, **Wendy Duvall** joined the Mainspring team to oversee the financial complexities of a nonprofit that is awarded grants, buys and sells land, and has multiple funds designated for specific projects. A Franklin native, Wendy previously spent most of her career in healthcare finance, but she wanted a change and knew she could make a difference at Mainspring. "It is very fulfilling to work for an organization that keeps the beautiful region where I grew up available for generations to come," Wendy says.

Of course, at the heart of Mainspring's work is its land and stewardship programs — but "especially after the pandemic, it was clear that our lands program, which has so many complexities and nuances, needed additional help," Jordan explains. Moreover, "the number of opportunities coming our way exceeded our capacity." So, in 2022 and 2023, Mainspring launched two nationwide talent searches and subsequently welcomed new Land Conservation Associates **Graham Garrett** and **Sophie Vasquez** to the staff. "Adding Graham and Sophie

to the lands team enables us to make more of an impact across our service area, particularly in the west," Jordan continues. "With these additional professionals, we expect to reopen an office in Cherokee or Clay County before the end of 2024."

But conserving more land also brings on an obligation to steward those properties — whether through an annual visit to each of our private conservation easements or maintaining our preserves (see page 12 for information on last year's activities on our preserves). And adding to our acreage each year, in turn, increases the workload for our stewardship team.

"We needed more boots on the ground just to keep up," Jordan says. "Stewardship is a crucial aspect of sustainable land management, so adding **Marshall Smith** and **Martha Ross** as stewardship associates will really help us ensure the long-term success of our projects."

Martha, a Georgia native, has a passion for nature and for protecting it through conservation and education. "I am so excited to be a part of Mainspring," she says. "With hands-on field experience from Virginia to Montana to Maine, I look forward to extending my reach to the Southern Blue Ridge and getting my hands dirty as part of the stewardship team."

Talking to donors about competitive salaries and Human Resources is not always the sexiest topic, "especially when compared to showing beautiful photos of conserved viewsheds or clean water," Jordan says. "But bolstering our team to help retain our current, super-talented staff and expand our capacity to tackle important projects is what will help Mainspring the most as we enter this exciting phase of growth and innovation."



Wendy Duvall
Finance Director



Graham Garrett
Land Conservation Associate



Sophie Vasquez
Land Conservation Associate



Marshall Smith
Stewardship Associate



Martha Ross
Stewardship Associate

A close-up photograph of a person's head and shoulders in a river. They are wearing a snorkel mask and a blue and yellow snorkel. The water is dark green and slightly rippled. The person's hair is brown and wet. The background is out of focus, showing more of the river and some greenery.

What Lies Beneath

Most of our lives, we skim the surface. When we paddle a river, we experience only a thin skin of water. But there is a hidden world teeming below our boats.

“There are 500 other species of fish in Southern streams that you have likely never seen.”

Will Harlan, Editor-In-Chief
Blue Ridge Outdoors magazine

At first, I thought it was mainly just rocks and a few fish down there. Then I went snorkeling. That’s right: river snorkeling. Snorkeling isn’t just for oceans and coral reefs. In many ways, river snorkeling is even better. Rivers are shallower, which means you are much closer to the critters. And the critters are everywhere.

The rivers of the Southeast are some of the most biologically diverse on the planet. Our waterways are a global diversity hotspot for mussels, salamanders, crayfish and fish.

While most folks come here for the trout — most of which are not native and artificially stocked each year by fish hatcheries — there are 500 other species of fish in Southern streams that you have likely never seen.

Here are four more reasons to consider bringing a snorkel and mask on your next river adventure:

- **Snorkeling is easy.** It requires no special skills. Anyone can do it.
- **Snorkeling is relatively inexpensive.** A basic mask and snorkel cost around \$30. If you’re snorkeling in colder Appalachian streams, renting or buying a wetsuit might be worth it.



- **Snorkeling is badass.** Snorkelers often spit on their masks to keep them from fogging up.
- **Snorkelers are the astronauts of aquatic spaces.** Casper Cox calls snorkelers aquanauts: “with a mask of tempered glass you will float free, released from gravity’s pull, drifting though a watery world with quiet ease, exploring new mysteries.”

You can snorkel on your own or with a guide. Guides will show you a lot of the hidden world that your eyes have not yet adjusted to see. Guides will also know the best spots. But the snorkel trail allows anyone to dip their toes into the hobby.

The Blue Ridge Snorkel Trail

The idea for a regional snorkel trail was hatched by North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission biologists Andrea Leslie and Luke

Etchison, who have both dedicated a good chunk of their lives to protecting the diversity of species in North Carolina rivers and streams. Two years ago, in the middle of the pandemic, they began brainstorming ways to introduce more people to the region’s astonishing aquatic diversity.

Most river recreation, such as fishing and boating, brings people above the water. But many of the wonders of western North Carolina streams are under the surface.

It’s harder to care about something you’ve never seen,” says Etchison. “The more experiences that people have in our streams, the more they will want to protect them.”

So Etchison and Leslie began mapping out a Blue Ridge Snorkel Trail. They partnered with Mainspring and other nonprofits to identify 10 unique and spectacular snorkeling sites across western



Will Harlan is the editor-in-chief of Blue Ridge Outdoors magazine, where this article originally ran in May 2023. He is also the author of the national bestselling biography, “Untamed: The Wildest Woman in America and the Fight for Cumberland Island.” Will’s work has appeared in National Geographic Adventure, Sports Illustrated and The New York Times. Subscribe to Blue Ridge Outdoors by visiting blueridgeoutdoors.com.

What will you see?

Mussels

Mussels may seem simple — just a shell with a slimy foot. Mussels are blind. Mussels are mostly immobile. They don't even have a head or brain. Yet they pull off some incredibly complex stunts in the animal kingdom.

For example, immobile mussels transport their offspring upstream by fishing. Female mussels create elaborate lures with the fleshy parts that stick out of their shells. These lures look exactly like minnows — even though mussels themselves are blind.



Unsuspecting fish swim up to the lure, and when the fish bites, the female mussel sprays her larval eggs into the fish's mouth and gills, where they grow for a few weeks before eventually detaching many miles upstream.

Mussels can also climb to the river bank and “pee” into the water to lure fish. And they are our rivers' natural water cleaners: Individual mussels filter up to 20 gallons of water each day.

The Southeast is home to 269 species of mussels — 91% of all freshwater mussel species worldwide — with names like monkeyface, snuffbox, rabbitsfoot, heelsplitter and orange-footed pimpleback.

Fish

Tourists may come to Southern Appalachia for fall foliage, but aquatic folks know that springtime is the season of color underwater. During the spring mating season, rivers become a riot of color, with male fish displaying a rainbow of colors

North Carolina. Educational signs highlighting notable species will be posted at each site, and, last summer, kick-off events with guided snorkeling were held at several locations, including the Little Tennessee River at Mainspring's Queen Branch Preserve.

Additional sites along the trail include public parks and access spots on other biodiverse rivers, including the Cheoah, Mills, Tuckasegee, Swannanoa and Pigeon rivers.

The sights are stunning, but snorkeling expands your other senses, as well. Beneath the thrum



of the current, darters talk to each other using underwater knocks, groans and purrs. Bottom-feeding redhorses' suction lips audibly pop. River stones clatter. Curious fish acclimate to your presence and swim closer. You become one with the river.

And after a day of snorkeling

upriver, there's nothing better than turning around and floating downstream — face down, dead man's float, fully alive and wholly immersed in underwater wonder.

Learn more about the trail at blueridgesnorkeltrail.com.



to attract females. Outside the mating season, colorful fish like



tangerine darters, warpaint shiners and redlips darters adorn the rivers. It's especially thrilling to see brook trout lurking in shaded pools and schools of stonerollers grazing on algae-covered stones.

Crayfish

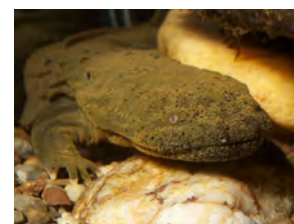
The Southeast is the crayfish capital of the world. Unfortunately, populations are plummeting thanks to dams, pollution, mining and large-scale agriculture and development. Extinction is looming for half of all crayfish species. Just discovered last



year, the Cataloochee Crayfish is one of the larger crayfish in the region and is found only in a few rivers around Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

Hellbenders

You may also see the king of North American salamanders



and the unofficial mascot of the mountains: the Eastern Hellbender. These slimy brown beasts can reach lengths of more than two feet. They breathe through their skin and often shelter beneath large boulders.

A Shared Dedication



Tessentee IV



Welch Farm & Preserve



Gibson Bottoms Preserve

stew-ard-ship [stü-ərd-ship] *n* 1 the office, duties and obligations of a steward. 2 the conducting, supervising or managing of something, especially: the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care.

Background:

Tessentee IV

This 42-acre former pastureland, bordered by Tessentee Creek and the Little Tennessee River, was the fourth in Mainspring's Tessentee Bottomland Preserve project. Since acquiring the property in 2019, Mainspring has begun the long-term work to incorporate it into the preserve and manage its native ecosystems, wildlife habitat, water quality and public recreation.

Background:

Welch Farm and Preserve

This public preserve is named for its former owners, the Cherokee planter John Welch and his wife, Betty, who was white. The Welches' land was not seized

Mainspring owns around 3,400 acres of land, and land ownership requires attention. Those thousands of acres take a lot of time and effort to manage responsibly. When Mainspring acquires a property, our stewardship staff create a management plan to guide habitat restoration and community engagement. In 2023, our team worked with volunteers on several exciting projects that enhanced and improved the lands we steward.

The work of volunteers in 2023 — more than 810 hours in the stewardship program alone — is a testament to these individuals' commitment to environmental conservation and community engagement. Mainspring's story is

not just about the number of acres owned; it's a narrative of nurturing, growth and a shared dedication to the future of these lands.

Tessentee IV

Last spring, Mainspring volunteers planted 3,750 tree seedlings over 14 acres along Tessentee Creek and the Little Tennessee River — the start of an alluvial forest in this part of the property. Another round of planting followed in early 2024. "We selected 11 native trees and shrubs specifically to increase forest diversity and provide food and habitat for wildlife," says Kelder Monar, Mainspring's stewardship manager. With the trees planted, Monar plans to begin the more complex work of restoring other

parts of the floodplain into a native wildflower meadow later in 2024.

Welch Farm and Preserve

In spring 2023, Mainspring volunteers joined forces with the Cherokee Preservation Foundation and Cherokee artisans to plant white oak and butternut seedlings. White oak, with its sturdy fibers, is a prized material in the art of basketry, while butternut serves as a natural dye. Though it may be decades before these seedlings are ready to be cut and processed, artisans also harvest rivercane from the property for immediate use.

A major project last fall was the construction of an arched footbridge over the oxbow wetland on the property. Designed by Mainspring board member and volunteer Ed Haight, the bridge is meant to resist the floodwaters that destroyed the original at this location. The bridge completes a pedestrian loop trail, a boon for nature enthusiasts and for artisans accessing Welch Farm's prized rivercane stands.

With a 32-foot span supported by arched steel beams, this was the most complex bridge project Mainspring has ever undertaken. It would not have been possible without the expertise and equipment donated by Penland Contracting and supporters Leslie and the late Richard Keeley, who kickstarted the project in 2021 with a \$1,400 donation. Though the final tally was several times that amount, it was all worth it, Monar says: "We want this bridge to last."

Gibson Bottoms Preserve

This summer and fall, Mainspring volunteers displayed their commitment to biodiversity at Gibson Bottoms through manual understory thinning. Volunteers and staff selectively thin one area at a

time with chainsaws, hand saws and loppers. "We removed autumn olive and other invasive species - plants from abroad that don't belong anywhere on our landscape," says Mainspring Conservation Outreach Associate Skye Cahoon. "We also removed white pine, red maple and tulip poplar, native species that are not fire-adapted and whose overabundance makes this forest unnaturally moist."

Monar explained further: "Light is king in the plant world" he says. "Historically fire-adapted forests such as these have open understories that let in lots of light. We have bluestem, blazing star and sunflowers here — flowers and grasses that otherwise grow in fields."

Mull Creek

Although most of the property is forested, it also holds an exceptional 12-acre high-elevation meadow, which adds significant habitat diversity to the landscape. Mainspring keeps this area open to provide food and cover for a wide variety of species, as well as nesting and fawning cover in the spring. Golden-winged Warblers couldn't live without meadows like these. We are committed to preserving biodiversity, even in the most remote corners of our property.

At Mull Creek, our volunteers helped remove two structures from a hard-to-reach area — picking through the rubble of a collapsed cabin, hauling out plastic and metal and leaving only wood behind to decompose. Meanwhile, Penland Contracting hauled out a shipping container that was used as a hunting cabin, puncturing a tire in the process. With all of the manmade structures gone, the Mull Creek landscape is one step closer to its future in the public's hands.

during the Cherokee Removal in the 1830s, allowing them to hide approximately 28 Cherokee families in the hills above the Valley River. In 2011, Mainspring bought 57 bottomland acres, including part of Welch's Town, and has since restored its forested wetland buffers, suppressed exotic plants and managed Cherokee artisan resource plants. Today, the property is used for recreation, and some sections are leased to local farmers.

Background:

Gibson Bottoms Preserve

Gibson Bottoms was once fated to be an RV park, with treated sewage discharging into the Little Tennessee River. Hundreds protested this development, and those grassroots efforts allowed Mainspring to buy the property for conservation in 2003. Today, Mainspring manages this 64-acre property for plant and animal communities, water quality and public use, with three miles of trail for people to enjoy.

Background:

Mull Creek

Mainspring's long-term plan for this remote 72-acre property, purchased in 2019, is to sell to the U.S. Forest Service. Until then, the land trust is committed to stewarding this parcel known for its popular trout fishing stream. Although most of the property is forested, it also holds an exceptional 12-acre high-elevation meadow. Committed to preserving biodiversity in even the most remote corners of its land, Mainspring maintains this open area to provide food and cover for a wide variety of game and nongame species, like the Golden-winged Warbler, which depends on meadows like these to survive.

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Mainspring gratefully acknowledges the following contributors for their generous support.

Donors with names in **bold** have given for ten years or more.
Donors with an * have given for fifteen years or more.

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Bluebird Walk

Long-time volunteer Mark Graham shows Martin Kelly a bluebird nest in a nest box at Welch Farm Preserve in Andrews. Mark has been stewarding the nest boxes on this property for years and shared his wisdom on caring for these bird boxes during our Bluebird Walk in May 2023.

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 Nantahala Bank & Trust
Phillips, Randy & Molly
 Poindexter, Robert
 Purdy, Michael & Margo
Schweizer, Louis
Shatley, Ed & Jane
Simonson, Adrienne & Carlson, Paul*
 Skeen, Marianne
Spencer, Gerald & Susan
Stibbs, Hal & Martha
 Tallant, Mack & April
 Unity Church of the Mountains
 Upson, Doug
Veal, Michael & Wanda
Wade, Ilene & Scotty*
Weresuk, Sarah & Andrew
Willis, Wanda & Lockaby, Bruce*
 Willoughby, Windee & Pittman, John
 Wilson, Mark
 Wooton, Tim & Shari
\$1 – \$249
 Alonso, Jim & Sharon
 Anderson, Robert & Olivia
 Annis, Judy & Jere
 Anonymous
 Asbury, Tom & Mary Ann
 Barbour, Monica
Baste, Betsy & Scott
Beattie, William
Beck, Charles & Lorna*
Berry, Roger & Bets*
 Black, Billi & Winecoff, Ron
Blaine, Hugh & Gaynelle*



MAINSRING ENDOWMENT

In Honor of Sharon Fouts Taylor

2023 Donors

Patricia & John Adams

Chris Brouwer

Chelsie Gesswein

Maria Greene & Jim Kautz

Susan Jenkins

Kelder & Heather Monar

Karen Youngblood

Blanck, Heidi
Blankenship, Sarah & Smoot, Jack
 Bledsoe, Carolyn
 Bonner, Jim & Patty
 Boonstra, Michael
Bradshaw, Gary
 Branson, Marjorie
Breithaupt, Charlie & Kathy

Brenner, Nathan
Brenner, Ron & Debra
Broadwell, Barbara
 Brock, Dean
 Brown, Jane & Tom
 Brown, Ken
Burdette, Sharon & Glenn*
 Burns, Donna
Byrd, Joan & Rector, George*



Valley River Float
 Smiling kayakers paddle down the Valley River in Marble, N.C. during last year's float event. This year, on our May 14 float, we hope to catch a glimpse of a Sicklefins Redhorse, a rare and threatened fish that can reach over 2 feet in length. We'd love it if you could join us.

Cantrell, Bud & Alatha*
Carlson, Peter
 Carothers, Sarah & Honcik, Randy
 Carson, Anna Jane
 Chika, Arthur
 Clapp, Amanda
Clark, Joann*
Coe, Susan*
Coon, Richard & Nancy*
 Copeland, Elizabeth & McNair
 Cornell, Emmie
 Costa, Leslie & Jim
 Cowdrick, Bob & Emily
 Crawford, Marilyn
Croft, Betty
 Crowe, Malia
 Dalhouse, Deborah
 Daugherty, Richard & Kim
 Deloach, Kate
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Dillard, Claudette*
 Disner, Sue
 Drury, Bryan
 Duvall, Wendy
Easley, Robert & Katherine
 Eaton, Linda & Robert
 Engelbrektsson, Paige
 Falchook, Frederick & Suzanne
 Falzone, Teresa
 Federico, Chris & Robert
Fesenmyer, Kurt
 Fewell, Danna & David
Floyd, Richard*
 Forrest, Craig
 Fortner, Kristina
 Foster, Steve & Pat*
Fouts, Lucille*
Galloway, Lee & Thompson, Nancy*
 Gesswein, Chelsie
Gladden, John & Sandra
Glasgow, David & Terri
 Glazier, Loss
 Glover, Anne
 Gooder, Guy & Alicia
 Gorny, Vicki
 Gribble, David & Teresa
Grist, Sharon & David*
 Guthrie, Nancy
Ham, Emerson*
Handley, Jud & Kim

Harrison, Kaitlyn
Hedden, David & Vicky
Hehn, Marc & Betsy
Hemstreet, Linda
Higgins, David
**Hill, Robert & Romanowicz,
Frank***

Kearney, William & Marilyn
Kevill, Cliff
Knoepp, Paul & Jennifer*
Kuharcik, Karen*
Laborda, Michael & Dayline
Laseter, Suzanne
Lazy Hiker



Ghosts of Dark Cove

Staff and board members walk along a trail at Dark Cove Farm to marvel at spring wildflowers. This property is also home to a thriving population of Blue Ghost Fireflies. Members of the public will have an opportunity to view the ethereal Blue Ghosts here during a fundraiser on June 7. (PHOTO: April McNiff)

Hunter, Walter & Terri
Hutchins, Brock & Patty*
Hyder, Anne*
Jarvinen, Phyllis*
Jenkins, Susan
Jensen, George
Johnston, Jack & Jean
Joy, Deborah & Davey,
Michael
Juhlin, Frances
Kackley, Cassie

Leister, Kim
Lenehan, Thomas
Lewis, Keith
Lindstrom, Marcia & Fred
Locascio, Glen & Wells, Elly*
Loeffler, Judith
Longstreth, Julie
Lopp, Irene
Luczak, Marsha
Lynn, Beverly
Macauley, Kimberly

Macon County Community
Foundation
Mann, Lu
Martin, Brent & Angela
Mattox, Phil & Virginia
Maxwell, Sue
Mazur, Jody
McGlamery, Dan & Joanne
McGuire, Patrick & Jeanne
**McLarney, Bill & Ervin,
Susan**
McLean, Will & Caroline
Meador, Eddie & Milissa
Meador, Jason & Kristen
Midgett, Russell & Beverly
Miles, Vanessa*
Mills, Jennifer & Jay
Moe, Kristina
Monar, Kelder & Heather
Moore, Philip & Callie
Moore, Robert & Hotchkiss,
Julie
Moore, Sue
Moore, Susan
Moore, Vanessa
Morgan, Hiddy
Munday, Doris*
Navarro, Nicole
Neely, Andrew
Nobel, James
**Norton, Anne & Kauffman,
Gary***

Ochsenfeld, Michael
Olson, Candy
Olson, Janis
Owens, Ben & Starr, Hygie
Parkerson, Kate
Perrigo, Sandra
Perry, Vic & Margaret*
Powers, Becky
Price, Morgan
Putkowski, Katharine
Pyron, Doug & Kathleen
Ramsey, Joe & Theresa*
Ratcliff, Kathy
Regnery, Russ & Helen*
Rehling, Connie*
Reisdorph, Tom & Sue Ann*
Richardson, John & Marjorie
Rippetoe, Melissa
Ritchie, Bruce*
Robertshaw, Lisa
**Roe, Chuck & Jones-Roe,
Charlotte***
Rogers, Bob & Betty
Rogers, Philip & Helen
Roman, Lucy
Roos-Collins, Richard
Ross, Jackie
Russ, Don*
Russell, Janet
Sakowski, Carolyn &
Franklin, Alton

In Honor of

Jim & Sharon Alonso
Copeland
Bud & Rosemary Branson
Mark Cantrell
Paul Carlson

Sara Ruth Posey Davis
Jamy Beth & Michael John
Ferraro
My Grandchildren
Ed Haight
Jason & Jennifer Love
Lydia Macauley

Donor

Elizabeth & McNair
Marjorie Branson
Bud & Alatha Cantrell
Peter Carlson
Lydia Macauley
Clark Raby
Joan Posey-Neumann
Claire & Joe Suminski

Joan Posey-Neumann
Helen Meadors
Polly Love
Chelsie Gesswein
Ben & Stephanie Laseter
Kimberly Macauley
Mainspring Staff
Steve Meyer

In Honor of

Lydia Macauley (cont'd)

Gil Mayer
Mom & Dad
Jackie Palmer & David Smith
Wendy & Gary Price
Rickman Store

Rita Salain

George & Sharon Taylor
Sharon Taylor

Jim & Bev Upson

Dick & Denise Weaver

Donor

Chuck Roe & Charlotte
Jones-Roe
Ann Stoneburner & Robert
Wyatt
Eugene Crouch
Nicole Navarro
Burt & Rebecca Kornegay
Morgan Price
Cassie Kackley
George & Gloria Syring
Walter & Terri Hunter
Becky Powers
Vanessa Moore
Patricia & John Adams
Susan Jenkins
Karen Youngblood
Doug Upson
John Upson
Bryan Drury

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Scott, Bob & Nancy*
 Semmelman, Karen &
 Ortwein, Bernard
Sharp, Mike
 Shuler, Keith & Pam
**Smith, Janet & Mordhorst,
 John**
 Smith, Jordan
Smith, Karen
Smith, Ramelle*
 Smith, Tom & Olga
Sobek, Chris*
 Southerland, I. B.
 Staples, Phil & JoAnn
**Stoneburner, Ann & Wyatt,
 Robert***
 Stork, George
 Streible, Catherine
Sullivan, Dave & Ellie*



Volunteers Needed

2023 marked 37 years of Mainspring's aquatic biomonitoring on the Little Tennessee River and its tributaries. Volunteers are always needed each summer for these ever-popular events, so join us for some creek-based science and fun.

Suminski, Claire & Joe*
 Sumner, David
 Surles, Carol
 Sussman, Stuart & Carol
Swank, Roberta*
Tebault, B. J.*
 Thomas, Deborah

Thomas, Wilbur
 Tilley, Rex & Susan
 Tolbert, Laurie
 Towers, Eric & Patricia
Tracy, Tom & Jane*
Trevathan, Bob & Sandie
Tribble, Arthur & Lori*

Tyler, Dan & Linda
 Upson, John
Van Horn, Bill & Sharon*
 Vanhook, Soni
Wallace, Gloria*
 Wallace, Karen
 Watkins, Dan & Margie
Wenger, Robert & Charlene
 West, Dona & Tom
 West, Stephen
White, Barbara*
 Wiesmayer, Susan
 Wikstrom, Judith & Pat
Wilde, Kathy
 Wiles, Wynette
Wilkinson, Gary & Lynne*
 Williamson, Bob & Mary
 Willoughby, Lynn
Wood, Darry & Barbara
 Wooten, Toni & Rick

In Memory of

Jere Annis

 Monica Wall Beattie
 Fred Berger
 William Bolte
 Phyllis Boudreaux
 Zena Pearl Rickman Brogden
 Adam Clawson
 Hazel Davis
 Robert & Margie Downs
 George Ellison

 Marty Gallup
 Randy Hooper
 Lt. Col. Ret. Grace P. Johnson
 Sally Kessler
 Ann Mack
 Bob Mayer
 Mimi
 Justin D. Moe
 Robert W. Moore, Sr.
 Ed Ralph

 Al & Margaret Ramsey
 Dave Rehling
 Sue Ellen Ritchie

Donor

Frank Hill
 Frank Romanowicz
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 Lee Berger
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 Beverly Lynn
 Barbara White
 Julia Mack
 Eugene Crouch
 Sunny Himes
 Kristina Moe
 Sue Moore
 Donna Burns
 Polly Love
 Joe & Theresa Ramsey
 Connie Rehling
 Bruce Ritchie

In Memory of

Stu Ryman
 Fred Salain & Mary Lou
 Burrell Salain
 Ronald Schrichten
 Walton R. Smith & Annie
 Dee Leatherman Smith
 Larry Stenger

 Harold & Carolyn Strader
 Hoop Tebault
 Sam, Hilda & Lynn Vance
 Denny Vanhook
 Dick Wallace
 Lawton Wiles
 Nancy Wiley
 Montine Wooten
 Karen Youngblood

Donor

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 Chris Brouwer
 Anna Jane Carson
 Marilyn Crawford
 Linda & Robert Eaton
 Kristina Fortner
 Phil & Connie Haire
 Fred & Jennifer Jones
 Paul, Jennifer, Lilly & Patty
 Knoepp
 Macon County Community
 Foundation
 Lynn Wilson
 B.J. Tebault
 Marty Vaughan
 Soni Vanhook
 Gloria Wallace
 Wynette Wiles
 Juddith Loeffler
 Toni & Rick Wooten
 Chris Brouwer

Mainspring Legacy Society

David Adams

John Beckman & Jane
Finneran

Gary Bradshaw

Chris Brouwer

Paul Carlson

Peter Carlson

Sarah Carothers

Chris Carr

Mary Dodson

Mike & Betsy Fleenor

Bob & Judy Grove

Nancy & Bill Grove

Phil & Connie Haire

Jean Hunnicutt

Terrie & Martin Kelly

Carol Litchfield

Kenneth & Diana McKinney

Carla Norwood & Gabe
Cummings

Donna Orford & Jerry
Cheek

Larry & Kendra Rasche

Marilyn Reid

Cathy Ramos & Steve
Barnes

Susan Reinheimer & Greg
Coyle

David & Ann Setzer

John & Cathy Sill

Craig & Ann Smith

Ramelle Smith

Sharon & George Taylor

Sylvia Walbolt

Larry Warren

Lynn Willoughby

Donors listed are those who have included Mainspring in their will or estate plan that we are aware of as of Feb. 15, 2024. If your name has been inadvertently omitted, we apologize. Please contact us so we can correct our records.

In-Kind Donations

Fred Alexander

George Clements

Cherokee County Sanitary
Landfill & Sheriff's office

Clark & Company
Landscape Architect and
Construction

Gooder Grafix

Eric Haggart

Jack Johnston

Law Offices of Ken
Fromknecht, P.A.

Macon County Public
Library

Sam Henry McLaurin

Moore Surveying

Penland Contracting
Company

Penrose Environmental

Purplecat Networks, Inc

Smoky Mountain Land
Surveying

The Sequoyah Fund

Wildcraft Kitchen

Winding Stairs Nursey

Thomas Woltz

Foundation Partners

Cannon Foundation

Cherokee Preservation
Foundation

Community Foundation of
WNC

Duke Energy Foundation

Revitalization of Traditional
Cherokee Artisan
Resources

Agency Partners

EBCI Office of Natural
Resources

Eastern Band of Cherokee
Indians

Jackson County Soil & Water
Conservation District

Macon County, NC

Macon County Soil & Water
Conservation District

Natural Resources
Conservation Services

NC Brownfields Program

NC Department of
Agriculture and
Consumer Services

NC Department of
Environmental Quality

NC Forest Service

NC Land & Water Fund

NC Wildlife Resources
Commission

Southwestern Commission
Council of Governments

Swain County Soil & Water
District

Tennessee Valley Authority

Town of Franklin, NC

Town of Murphy, NC

Town of Sylva, NC

USDA Natural Resources
Conservation Service

US Army Corps of Engineer

US Fish & Wildlife Service

US Forest Service

Nonprofit Partners

American Rivers

Balsam Mountain Trust

Bartram Trail Conservancy

Graham County Schools

Graham Revitalization
Economic Action Team
(GREAT)

Highlands Biological
Station

Land for Tomorrow

Land Trust Alliance

Land Trust for Tennessee

Mountain Findings

Native Fish Conservation
Area Partnership

NC Land Trust Federation

NC Wildlife Federation

Nikwasi Initiative

Preservation North Carolina

Qualla Arts and Crafts
Mutual

Southern Appalachian
Highlands Conservancy

Southern Environmental
Law Center

The Conservation Fund

Trout Unlimited

Trail of Tears Association

Other Partners

Abraham Baldwin
Agricultural College

Alliance Land Surveying

Bruce Black Surveying

CDN Appraisal

Cherokee Central Schools

Cherokee County Schools

Coward, Hicks, & Siler

FEI Land Surveying and
Consulting, David Ivey

Hambidge Center for
Creative Arts and
Sciences

Inner Woven Wellness Yoga

Jackson County Schools

Kelly Penland, Realtor

Lazy Hiker

Macon County Schools

McKeever & Smith Law
Firm (now Lance Law
Firm)

Nantahala Outdoor Center

Nantahala Learning Center

Nichols Appraisals &
Associates

Northbrook Carolina II, LLC
Outdoor 76

Rabun Gap Nacoochee
School

Southwestern Community
College

Swain County Schools

Tallant Law Office

Tennessee River Basin
Network









Union Academy

Western Carolina University







Wildland Engineering

2023 Mainspring Finances

2023 Source of Funds

Restricted Giving	893,894.00	30.8%	
Individuals	805,103.15	27.7%	
Government Grants	562,960.69	19.4%	
Land Sale Proceeds	335,052.00	11.5%	
Organization Grants	125,129.00	4.3%	
Rent/Interest/Sales	84,865.16	2.9%	
Program Services	73,554.38	2.5%	
Stewardship Fund	23,168.18	0.8%	
TOTAL SOURCES OF FUNDS	2,903,726.56	100.0%	

2023 Use of Funds

Land	1,569,160.16	57.7%	
Water	462,539.56	17.0%	
Administration	447,443.18	16.5%	
Communications	124,817.43	4.6%	
Fundraising	76,633.74	2.8%	
Cultural Heritage	38,403.57	1.4%	
TOTAL USES OF FUNDS*	2,718,997.64	100.0%	

Pre-audit figures

*Amount released from restrictions and included in 2023 income/expense = \$196,861



MAINSRING

CONSERVATION TRUST

P. O. Box 1148, Franklin, NC 28744

Conserving the waters, forests,
farms and heritage of the
Upper Little Tennessee and
Hiwassee river valleys in
western North Carolina and
northern Georgia.



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Join the Fun

Upcoming Events (Subject to weather)

Date	Event
4/20	Moth & Butterfly Excursion, Otto
5/11	Migratory Bird Day Celebration, Sylva
5/14	Valley River Float, Marble
5/17-5/19	Needmore Game Lands Bioblitz, Swain County
6/5	Valley River Cleanup, Marble
6/7	Firefly Feast Fundraiser, Cullowhee
6/15	Plant and Sip Workshop, Franklin
6/20	Summer Solstice Yoga, Macon County
7/13	Forestry Types Walk, Otto
7/24	Snorkeling the Cheoah River, Graham County

Stay up to date on the latest Mainspring events at
mainspringconserves.org/events.

