



Page 3 Honoring Hillrie Quin

Page 5 Happy Trails to a Friend



# Highlands-Cashiers LAND TRUST

*"Saving Special Places since 1909"*

Fall 2021

Blue Ridge Forever  
[www.blueridgeforever.info](http://www.blueridgeforever.info)

## Impressive Growth in 2021

Dr. Gary Wein, Executive Director

The 2021 conservation year has been surprisingly busy and generous. If there is a theme to this it's that people still believe in land conservation and that previous donors want to make their conservation easements even bigger.

To date, we have had seven land donations totaling 160 acres. Each of these land donations is special. Reid Freeman gave us a narrow sliver of land across his property that contains a section of the Kelsey Trail. You can now walk from the end of 5th Street to Sherwood Forest Road on Land Trust property. Evan, Connor

and Susan Smith donated an 11-acre tract on Grouse Mountain near Glenville that could become a future conservation easement.

The biggest surprise was two land donations from Brenda Baker and Stephen Baum. They donated a 22-acre tract on Windover Road, but the real gem is a 64-acre tract on Laurel Knob Road just north of Cashiers. This site has now been named the Edward Baker Preserve after Brenda's father and will ultimately contain a series of public trails. We are already conducting hard hat tours as we try and figure out how this site can best serve the community.

Three of our conservation easement donors have decided to add additional

acreage to their existing conservation easements. Carolyn McCall added ten acres to her easement in Horse Cove along Horse Cove Road, keeping that section of the road green forever. Charlie and Susan Shanor merged their two conservation easements into one and added five acres, becoming one of our largest easements at 260 acres. Sherwin Loudermilk is adding 48 acres to an easement, "Cedar Hill," on the north flank of Rock Mountain. The addition is a rock outcrop loaded with rare plant species.

We are also working on two conservation easements in Horse Cove and another conservation easement amendment near Cashiers that should add approximately 50 acres to our largest conservation easement, making it even bigger.

A view from Cedar Hill, a HCLT-conserved property that protects habitat for rare species.

Since January, the Land Trust has added 160 acres of donated land to be protected for the benefit of generations to come.





FROM THE PRESIDENT

### Good Fortune and Generous Supporters

The last twelve months have brought significant developments for HCLT. Not only have we added 160 acres to our protected properties, but we have also been the beneficiary of an unexpected donation. Unbeknownst to us, Amelia Ennis named HCLT as remainder beneficiary in a trust she created to benefit her son, Wade. When Mr. Ennis died last September, the assets in that trust passed to the Land Trust, and we learned of it from Mr. Ennis' attorney.

The assets of the trust include money and real property, notably Helen's Barn. Once we have successfully liquidated these assets, the money will be used to create an endowment that we have long needed, but been unable to establish. We hope that the income from the fund will enable us to avoid having to borrow to deal with cash flow issues, which has for some time been a regular occurrence, as well as allow us to bring our staff salaries more in line with other members of the Land Trust Alliance.

But the endowment will not solve our needs. As we continue to increase the size of our protected properties,



Carlton King, President

we have increased costs of operation. We need to increase our staff to adequately serve our mission. Our operations needs do not decrease each year, they increase. More and more the land we protect, especially that which we maintain for public use, is growing in importance. The pandemic has truly demonstrated the worth of those publicly available assets. That is where you come in.

Despite our recent good fortune, we continue to need your support, in increased, not decreased, amounts. We are proud of the support you provide through your membership and generosity, and are truly grateful for it. We don't want to, and cannot afford to, lose it. So please, as the year draws to a close and you begin to consider your year-end giving, remember the Highland-Cashiers Land Trust and be generous. We will continue to work hard to be good stewards of your donations, just as we work hard to steward the beautiful places that have been entrusted to us.

#### Board of Directors

- Carlton King, President
- Jeff Zahner, Vice President
- Karen Patterson, Treasurer
- Ann Huckstep, Secretary
- Brad Armstrong
- Chuck Auster
- Sandy Barrow
- Bob Bryan
- Sharon Cole
- Lawrence Dimmitt
- Hugh Fitzpatrick
- Tom Holmes
- Kathie Marsh
- Bill Mauldin
- Will McKee
- Richard Melvin
- Amy Patterson
- Walter Wingfield
- Martha Wright
- Adam Zimmerman

#### Staff

- Gary Wein, Ph.D., Executive Director
- Julie Schott, Development Director
- Sarah Pursel, Education and Outreach Coordinator
- Stephanie Dillingham, AmeriCorps Member, Environmental Stewardship and Outreach Associate

*The mission of the Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust is to protect valuable natural resources for all generations.*

**Please donate today. We need your support now.**

Hover phone camera to donate online at [hicashlt.org](http://hicashlt.org)



Gifts of stock accepted via TD Ameritrade 828-787-1055

Account: 943634311 DTC: 0188

SAVE MTNS



## Stewardship Activities

Kyle Pursel, former Stewardship Director

### Honoring Hillrie Quin

The late Hillrie Quin was a major figure in area conservation. As an HCLT board member and a founding member of the Highlands Plateau Greenway, Hillrie is directly responsible for miles of trail in and around Highlands.

One of his many endeavors included working with the local country clubs to institute a hike of the original Kelsey Trail every few years.

To honor his legacy and dedication to promoting outdoor recreation and conservation, HCLT is proud to announce Hillrie's Loop. Hillrie's Loop is a new loop trail slated to be open in the spring of 2022 at the Kelsey Trail Preserve. At a little over a quarter-mile, Hillrie's Loop will provide hikers an alternative route through HCLT's Kelsey Trail Preserve.

The trail was built largely thanks to the hard working volunteers of the Highlands Plateau Greenway and crosses through an area undergoing forest succession after the loss of some old hemlocks due to hemlock woolly adelgid. It provides hikers an opportunity to see a different side of the preserve and bird species more common in open areas. There is a small waterfall along the trail people can enjoy, as well as marveling at some of the old dead hemlocks the trail leads you through.

We would like to thank Pat and Hilda Patrick and the Patrick Family Foundation for their generous gift in honor of our mutual friend, Hillrie Quin.

**Hillrie Quin (right) was a great friend of HCLT and a champion for the land. He is missed.**

### Notes from the Trail

Hillrie's Loop is just one of four new trail projects HCLT is working on at this time. We hope to finish the West Fork trail at our Brushy Face Preserve by early 2022, providing almost a mile of new trail leading up the western headwaters fork of Clear Creek before heading down a small ridge.

At our new Edward Baker Preserve, HCLT is working on developing a trail plan to build out accessible hiking opportunities for folks in the Cashiers/Glenville area in the coming years. On the northern end of Highlands, HCLT and the Highlands Plateau Greenway are working on developing a plan for HCLT's Little Bearpen Preserve that will add another loop and eventually connect into the Kelsey Trail Preserve sometime in the next few years. Stay tuned to learn more about these projects as they develop.



### The Land Trust's Newest AmeriCorps Service Member

Hi, I'm Stephanie!

Originally from Asheville, NC, I was born and raised in the mountains of Western North Carolina. I graduated in 2018 from Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College with a General Science Associate's Degree. I went on to study Environmental Science and Geology at Western Carolina University, graduating with my Bachelor's of Science Degree in 2021.

Directly after graduation, I joined Appalachian Conservation Corps as a Conservation Crew Leader for the summer of 2021 to lead a trail crew in the West Virginia backcountry for three months building trails and completing mine land restoration. After completing my first AmeriCorps service term, I decided to take on a longer eleven-month term with Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust where I am currently serving.

After completing my service term, I hope to continue my education by pursuing a Master's Degree in Geology. I look forward to learning more about the unique natural wonders in the Highlands and Cashiers areas, and I'll be working hard to protect them.





# Kids in Nature



Looking to the future of conservation through the youth of today

Sarah Pursel, Education & Outreach Coordinator

## Why education programs for children matter

The Land Trust's Kids in Nature programs are designed to be a part of a long-term effort toward environmental literacy.

Environmental literacy is not achieved in one class or lesson. It is strived-for through a life-long journey filled with many different avenues for learning.

Starting at an early age, it is important to give children many opportunities to learn about the environment and to support their innate sense of discovery about the natural world. Through experiences that spark a child's connection with nature, an appreciation and sense of responsibility is developed and a desire to take initiative

to continue learning about and connecting with nature continues as they grow. The children of today will one day be responsible for stewarding our land in the future. It is important that we participate in growing these future stewards toward environmental literacy, so that they can make responsible and educated decisions about caring for the environment when it comes their time.

HCLT works with children's groups in Highlands and Cashiers to provide experiential programs that bring kids and nature together. We want kids to learn that they are a part of nature, not separate from it, and that they have a responsibility to better understand and care for nature.

As we provide our local children opportunities to learn about the environment, we are contributing to their environmental literacy. We work with several groups in the area including the Boys and Girls Club of the Plateau, the Literacy Council of Highlands and other local after school groups.

We are thankful for the recent support from our local grantors who help keep these programs going: Cashiers Community Fund, Church of the Good Shepherd, Cullasaja Women's Outreach, Macon County Community Foundation, Macon County Community Funding Pool, Mountain Findings, and Wade Hampton Golf Club Donor Advised Fund.



This year's Kids in Nature activities included a variety of programs with our local future stewards. Some highlights included "Fun with Animal Tracks" with Literacy Council of Highlands (above left); natural history hikes on Satulah Mountain with Junior Appalachian Musicians group (above right) and Gordon Center After School Group (below left); salamander searching at Kelsey Trail with Gordon Center (below center); and gem mining with Boys and Girls Club at Brushy Face Preserve (below right). These are just some of the fun programs we led this year with our local future stewards!



## Happy Trails to our Friend, Kyle

HCLT is sad to announce that long-time HCLT Stewardship Director Kyle Pursel left the organization in late November.

Kyle came to us in 2010 as an AmeriCorps Member, moving on to become HCLT's first Stewardship Coordinator in 2011. He has worked hard over the years to improve and expand HCLT's public trails, conservation easement monitoring program, habitat restoration, and invasive species control work on HCLT lands and beyond.

Kyle has contributed so much to the Land Trust and, by extension, to the conservation of the Plateau's natural resources. His will be big boots to fill.

The good news is he will be nearby, as he will be working as the new Stewardship Director over at Lonesome Valley near Cashiers, and he tells us he hopes to remain involved with HCLT as a volunteer.



## Satulah-bration

Hikers enjoyed an EcoTour of Satulah Mountain Preserve with Dr. Gary Wein at our annual Satulah-bration, which celebrates our first property protected in 1909 as well as all 121 properties conserved since.



## Mountain Fest

HCLT participated in the Mountain Retreat and Learning Center's First Annual Mountain Heritage Festival. Sarah Pursel, Education and Outreach Coordinator; Stephanie Dillingham, AmeriCorps Member; and local entomologist/arachnologist Allyssa Fuller set up a BioBlitz station where festival goers could use sweep nets to search for and identify native insects and pollinators. We hope to participate again next summer!





**Village Nature Series**  
 This year, our Village Nature Series (VNS) were mostly held virtually, with presentations about a variety of topics including how to enhance native habitat in your backyard with Sonya Carpenter, hemlocks as a keystone species and how to save them with the Hemlock Restoration Initiative, and the biology and conservation of hellbenders with the NC Wildlife Resources Commission. Our last two presenters of the year held in-person programs at The Village Green in Cashiers. WNC Nature Center gave a presentation on red wolves, complete with skins and skulls! Alyssa Fuller, local entomologist/arachnologist, wrapped up the series with a fascinating presentation about spiders featuring some special live eight-legged guests. The VNS is a partnership between The Village Green and HCLT, and we are already collaborating on our 2022 line-up.



**Cashiers Founders Day**  
 Dr. Gary Wein led mini nature walks for local 3rd and 4th graders at this year's Cashiers Founders Day (left). HCLT has participated in the annual event hosted by the Cashiers Historical Society since 2013.

**Bountiful Botany**

Over the summer, Logan Kallam, our 2020-2021 AmeriCorps Member, created a self-guided tour at Brushy Face Preserve (at right and below) about traditional medicinal uses of native plants. He also led a few special guided in-person tours for children and adults. The informational signs along the trail are in both English and Spanish, thanks to translation by the International Friendship Center. The signs were made possible by a grant from the Environmental Educators of North Carolina.



**Edward Baker Preserve**  
 Have we mentioned how thrilled we are to finally have public access trails in Cashiers? Coming soon at the Edward Baker Preserve!



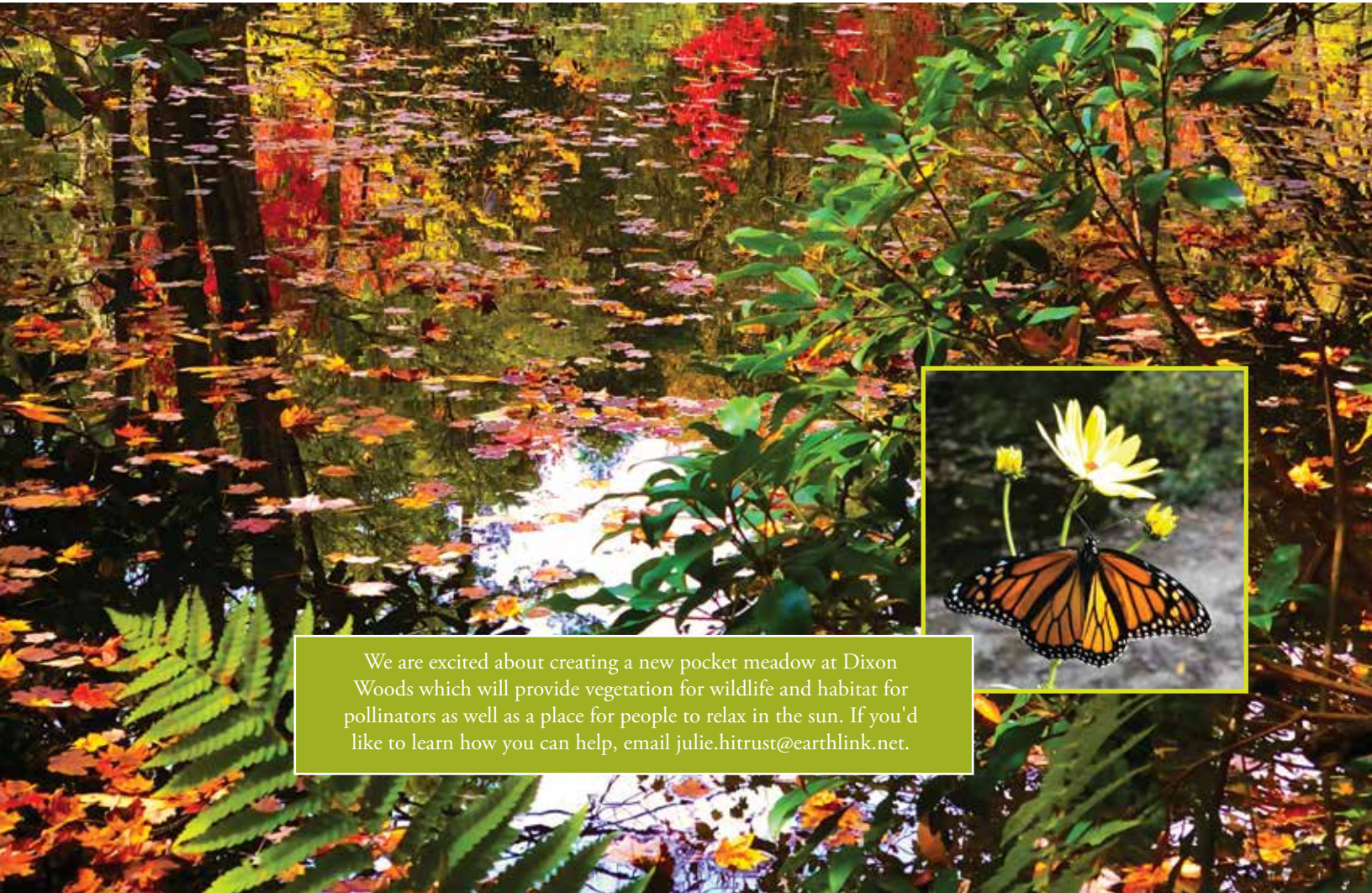


# Highlands-Cashiers LAND TRUST

*"Saving Special Places since 1909"*

Post Office Box 1703  
Highlands, North Carolina 28741-1703  
(828) 526-1111  
[hitrust@earthlink.net](mailto:hitrust@earthlink.net)

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



We are excited about creating a new pocket meadow at Dixon Woods which will provide vegetation for wildlife and habitat for pollinators as well as a place for people to relax in the sun. If you'd like to learn how you can help, email [julie.hitrust@earthlink.net](mailto:julie.hitrust@earthlink.net).