

View from the Foothills

2011 Annual Report & 2012 Spring Newsletter





Foothillsland.org

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Reflections on the past, present & future...

Dear Friends of the Foothills,

When I joined the Foothills Board of Directors back in 2007, the organization was breaking new ground - having just hired Bill Clabough as Executive Director, launching the 25 in 25 campaign to preserve 25,000 acres by 2010, and focusing efforts primarily on voluntary conservation easement partnerships across eastern Tennessee.

Over the past 6 years, our Board has taken on expanded roles, assisting FLC Staff with 74 conservation easement partnerships. We have increased the visibility of Foothills through civic outreach efforts, corporate sponsorship support and the individual resources contributed by every Board member. In addition, FLC's Board and Staff incorporated additional standard and practice operational procedures that further align our policies and programs with those of the Land Trust Alliance, a national service organization for the land trust community.

2011 was an exceptional year for FLC - with over 19 easements covering 4400 acres. 2012 is just as promising. As I wrap up my two terms with the Foothills Board this year, I know that our organization is poised for continued success with land preservation efforts. I will stay involved with Foothills and encourage you to continue your support of this important work. All of us here at Foothills are focused on preserving East Tennessee's cherished mountains, working farms and rural landscapes, and we ask that you join us in this effort.

I look forward to seeing you during our June 9th Summer Celebration at Teenie Hayworth's Penrose Farm!

Bob Van Hook
Board President



The mission of Foothills Land Conservancy...

To protect, preserve, and enhance the lands and associated environments of East Tennessee and to promote the character of the region for the benefit of the general public.

FLC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit and does not receive any financial support from federal, state, or local governments. We rely on individual and corporate contributions to sustain our organization, land acquisition and stewardship programs.

Front Page - top & right side images courtesy of www.mlewisphotovideo.com.

Letter from the Director

Foothills has entered into its 27th year of service as a land trust, and we celebrate the preservation of over 30,000 acres in 18 Tennessee counties!

As Mr. Van Hook mentions in his note, last year was a remarkable milestone for FLC. In fact it was a record setting year - 4400 acres, 19 land protection partnerships in 12 counties. These include two century farms in Monroe County, a beloved children's camp in Blount County known as 'Camp Montvale' and 1700 acres along the Cumberland Plateau. To view a full list of our 2011 projects, please see page 4 of this newsletter.

Looking ahead, FLC Board and Staff are poised for preservation expansion in the eastern region of Tennessee as well as continuing land protection projects in middle Tennessee. Another priority includes preserving working farms, not only to retain the region's rural character but also for the economic value farming brings to our communities. USDA numbers indicate between 2000-2010 Tennessee lost about 1000 farms annually with an average reduction of about 90,000 farmable acres every year. According to the TN Farm Bureau Federation, agriculture's impact on the state's economy is estimated at \$44 billion annually, providing more than 300,000 jobs.

Often times, I am asked what the criteria is for preserving a piece of land through a conservation easement agreement. I'm also asked if there are any acreage limits. Foothills has always been a land trust that takes into account the conservation value of the property no matter what the size. We have partnered on conservation easements that include several thousand acres and ones that are less than 10 acres. What does matter are the environmental, scenic, agricultural and/or historic attributes of the land. For a list of the principles FLC follows, set forth by the IRS's Internal Revenue Code and Regulations, please visit the landowners page of our website at www.foothillsland.org.

We look forward to keeping you apprised of our efforts throughout 2012, and, as always, we appreciate the generous and ongoing support of our Friends.

Bill Clabough
Executive Director



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Image courtesy of David Lewis.

2011 Land Protection Projects

This past year Foothills partnered with landowners on nineteen land protection projects covering 4400 acres of farms, woodlands and water tributaries in 12 counties! Take a look....

MONROE COUNTY

Color Wheel Farm 410 acres (Century Farm)

Color Wheel Farm owners, Brad & Kim Black along with Brad's sister Jennifer, are celebrating their decision to preserve the family's 191 year old 'Tennessee Century Farm' with an FLC conservation easement agreement. 410 acres of agricultural farmland will now be preserved as a working farm, free from commercial development, both now and for future generations. Roughly 340 acres are currently being used for cattle, row crops and switchgrass with 70 acres remaining in woodlands. Kim said this about her family's decision to preserve their family farm.... *"Bill and everyone involved with FLC understands our determination to protect and secure farm land and the farm life setting from urban sprawl. Agriculture has long been the backbone of this country and we hope our decision to partner with FLC will preserve our seven generation farm from this ever growing problem. Future generations deserve the right to experience the way of life this country was founded on. We do not view ourselves as the owners of this land but as the caretakers and we hope this decision will provide the best care for all future years."*



Left to right: Kim Black, Brad Black and FLC's Exec. Dir. Bill Clabough



John & June Thompson - 195 acres (Century Farm)

Another family in Monroe County is happy to report the preservation of their 195 acre property. Their working farm dates back over 180 years (in the image on the left June is holding the original deed dating back to 1824). The land includes old growth timber with farming

Bayne Property - 56 Acres

Incredible views, wildlife habitat, old growth trees, two springs and three creeks are just a few of the amazing conservation values to the Bayne's 56 acre property in Monroe County. Views include sweeping mountain vistas of Unicoi, Cherokee National Forest and the Smokies. Roughly half the acreage is wooded and the other half is open space/fields.

MIDDLE TENNESSEE

FLC partnered with property owner, Millard Oakely, to preserve close to 1700 acres in upper middle TN. All three properties fall in the Cumberland Plateau area - which runs diagonally across our state in a 450-mile-long swath between Nashville and Knoxville and, according to The Nature Conservancy, is said to be *"...the world's longest hardwood-forested plateau and is widely considered one of the most biologically rich regions on Earth, rivaling the biodiversity of tropical rainforests."*



CUMBERLAND COUNTY - Catoosa Ridge - 800 Acres

The 800 acre Catoosa property lies in both No Business Creek & Big South Fork watersheds in Cumberland County near Crossville, TN. This tract adjoins one of the largest areas of public conservation land in the region, Catoosa Wildlife Management Area (WMA), an 80,000 acre game management preserve managed by the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA). Clean water is abundant on the property.

SCOTT COUNTY - Honey Creek - 555 acres

One interesting aspect to the Honey Creek property stands out above the rest. The parcel adjoins the 150,000 acres of the Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area (BSFNRRRA). Per the agreement, 50 acres will be donated to BSFNRRRA. One of the most crucial resources on the property is the abundance of clean water. With four large creeks, numerous smaller side creeks and associated riparian areas, the property provides plentiful water of good quality to resident and migrant species.

OVERTON COUNTY - Roaring River - 400 acres

The property is located in Overton County, TN, near Livingston along the north central section of the Cumberland Plateau. The property contains nearly 13,000 feet of frontage along the Roaring River. This section of the river is classified as a Class I Natural River Area (TN Scenic Rivers Act), and is rated as having regional significance for natural and scenic qualities.

BLOUNT COUNTY

Camp Investment, LLC (Camp Montvale) – 364 acres

Blount County's beloved and long-time children's camp, Camp Montvale, now has a permanent land protection agreement! 364 acres of woodlands, cabins, creeks, ponds, and hiking trails will be preserved for future generations of children, adults and wildlife. Land adjacent to the property includes the Foothills Wildlife Management Area, which FLC initially worked to secure in the mid-90's, and one that has now grown to more than 10,000 acres. FWMA is managed by the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency.



Hurricane Mountain Conservancy (Blackberry Farm)- 67 acres

Back in 2002, FLC worked with landowners to place a 900 acre FLC conservation easement on Hurricane Mountain. In December 2011, the Hurricane Mountain Conservancy added a 67 acre easement on lands adjacent to the existing easement with Foothills. The property overlooks Hesse Creek and West Millers Cove and is part of the trail system for Blackberry Farm guests. This beautiful tract includes a chapel and cemetery.

Fryer Property - 22 acres

Gideon Fryer has been a long time supporter of Foothills and recently decided to place a conservation easement on his 22 acres in Blount County. Located close to the Great Smoky Mountain National Park, Fryer's property is situated just below the Schoolhouse Gap Trail near Townsend. The preservation of this property ensures that the land's scenic views will stay in tact as well as its value to providing a wildlife corridor/buffer area close to the GSMNP.

Phelps Property - 80 acres

The Phelps recently decided to put their land into a conservation easement with Foothills. Located at the base of Chilhowee Mountain, the property consists mostly of woodlands, ridges and knobs. Pockets of moist, cove like areas offer a mix of rhododendron, mountain laurel, river cane and ferns. The highest ridge top includes a 360 degree view of both Chilhowee Mountain and the Cumberland Mountains. One thing to note, their property is adjacent to another FLC preserved property!

BRADLEY COUNTY

Trewhitt Reserve, LLC - 312 acres

This undeveloped property includes a creek and plenty of open space for wildlife. It extends along the boundary of Cohulla Creek and includes increasingly rare mature hardwood forests and unique wetland areas.



JACKSON COUNTY

Charles & Robert Montgomery's Property - 410 acres

This beautiful property is situated on two tracts in Jackson County. It includes a creek, falls, and woodlands. The site has a variety of mature trees and provides habitat for a number of wildlife species.

KNOX COUNTY

Pete Claussen - 130 acres (2 locations)

Site #1 one is situated along the French Broad River near Kodak, TN. It includes a 30 acre island within the French Broad and is located across from the Seven Islands Wildlife Refuge. The land is also adjacent to a 28 acre FLC conservation easement (also part of SIWR). SIWR is known for over a 150 variety of birdspecies and includes native grasses and wooded areas. Site #2 is located along the Tennessee River near the junction of the French Broad and Holston Rivers. Both properties offer open space and vegetation along their river banks.



Knox County (continued on the next page)...

KNOX COUNTY (CONT.)

Beasley Property - 146 acres

This farm has been in Marjorie Beasley's family for many generations. She remembers helping out with the daily chores that went into the tobacco, corn, dairy and beef cattle operations. Named for the ten oaks surrounding the property's spring, Ten Oaks Farm is now leased out for soybeans, corn and hay. Wildlife visitors include deer, turkey, possum, quail and rabbit. Roughly 1/2 of the farm is agriculture fields and the other 1/3 has mature hardwoods. Marjorie's husband, John, researched the property and learned that during the Civil War Union soldiers camped there to ensure the Confederate soldiers moved along once they crossed (by ferry) what is now the Strawberry Plains area.



Audrine Honey - 60 acres

Situated along the French Broad River, the property includes warm season grasses and open spaces allow for a diverse wildlife habitat. A variety of bird houses are situated among the property along with a fresh water pond. Visitors also include ducks, river otter, deer, and turkey. Audrine, who grew up on a farm in Roswell, GA, has worked over the years to create natural succession plots and stabilize the banks along the riverfront.

MEIGS COUNTY

Cotton Port Area - 186 acres

Located on Chikamauga Lake, the Cotton Port property consists primarily of woodlands. There are also open fields and a creek that flows through the property. Natural areas in the vicinity include the Cherokee National Forest and Yuchi Wildlife Refuge at Smith Bend.

WILLIAMSON COUNTY

Covey Property - 126 acres

Located on the southern end of rapidly growing Williamson County, the wooded property includes Shoals Branch, a tributary of the Duck River. It is surrounded by many archaeological and historically significant sites, including major Civil War battles such as the Battle of Thompson's Station and the Battle of Franklin.



ROANE COUNTY

Zachry Property - 17 acres

Outdoor enthusiasts, authors, and Smoky Mountain Field School Instructors, Joel & Kathy Zachry, decided to preserve their Kingston area property. It will now be preserved in its natural state - a mix of woodlands and open fields. The property is an important 'island habitat' for a variety of plant and animal species centered within a developing region.

UNION COUNTY

Cann Property - 112 acres

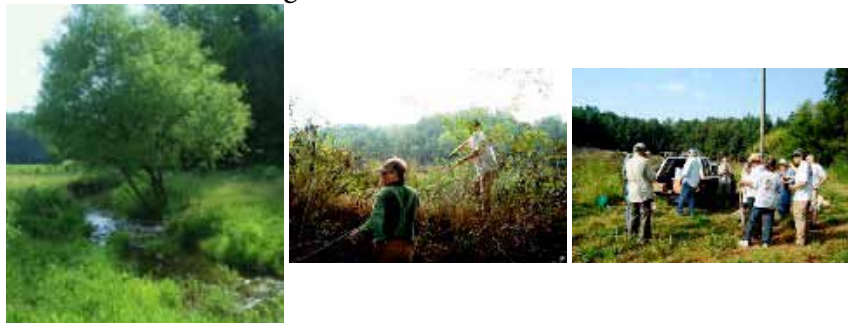
The Cann property contains woodlands that border TVA's buffer area along Norris Lake. The mixed forest, variety of slopes, pond, creek, spring and old fields found on the property collectively support habitat for a diversity of wildlife. Large areas of public land in the immediate vicinity help further support healthy populations of many game and non-game species, making the Cann property an important component in the viability of wildlife corridors between these protected lands.



Also in 2011...

Partners in Conservation

In August, the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) and Nature Valley® partnered with the Foothills to remove non-native, invasive plant species along Bell Branch Creek. This creek is one of the only waterways that flow into the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and is located very close to the Abrams Creek campground area. The next step will be to re-plant native trees and shrubs to help minimize pollution and creek sedimentation entering the Park.



Left to Right - View of Bell Branch Creek; FLC Exec. Dir. Bill Clabough works on removal of invasive exotic plants and shrubs; Volunteers gather their tools and break into teams

12 volunteers, including Bill Landry, spent time removing non-natives like Multiflora rose and East Tennessee's nemesis, Chinese privet, through a method called "cut and paste". The shrub or plant is cut to its base and then a targeted spray of herbicide is applied to the cut surface. These efforts will provide for improved aquatic habitat and protection of aquatic species in the stream, in the Park and downstream. Meredith Clebsch, FLC's Land Director, notes the importance of the project, *"This is a beautiful creek and valley that includes some rich wetlands. The invasives spread along the creek from upstream threatening the Park, and now that we have them under control we will fill those gaps with natives like silky dogwood, buttonbush and white oak."*

Other Partners:

- FLC Staff attended the annual conference of the Land Trust Alliance's Southeast Regional Office (Chatanooga, TN).
- Bill Landry of the Heartland Series and author of 'Appalachian Tales & Heartland Adventures' donated a portion of his book's proceeds to Foothills.
- Blount Memorial Wellness Center is currently providing FLC their location for free monthly presentations that focus on the appreciation of our natural resources and individual wellness during 2011-2012. Topics have included FLC conservation easements and tour, nature photography, estate planning, the East TN Black Bear, and many more!

Tennessee Farmland Legacy Partnership



This year FLC became a member of the TN Farmland Legacy Partnership and also hosted one of the organizations quarterly meetings in Maryville. Based in Nashville, the group formed in 2010 as a resource to the farming community and to promote the preservation and viability of working farms in the state. During their visit, FLC staff provided an overview of our programs and past accomplishments to representatives from the TN Department of Agriculture, Center for Historic Preservation, and UT's Institute of Agriculture. Also in attendance was Tourism Commissioner Susan Whitaker. The meeting offered everyone a chance to network and discuss ways to partner on future farmland protection projects.



FLC Land Director Meredith Clebsch provides a tour of a Blount County conservation easement property for TFLP representatives.

A very special thank you to our Friends of the Foothills...

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of our region's cherished mountains, working farms and urban parks.*

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Creating a Legacy For Future Generations

East Tennessee's rural character is diverse, beautiful and worth preserving. Planned gifts provide Foothills with a permanent foundation for land stewardship obligations and future conservation programs. For those whose passion lies in passing on their love of the land to future generations, we hope you will consider supporting Foothills through these options:

- Naming FLC as a beneficiary in a will, trust, insurance policy or retirement plan
- Providing appreciated assets, securities or land parcels
- Donating land to Foothills for the purpose of protecting the land's natural conservation values

You're Invited!

Foothills' 2012 Summer Celebration

Saturday - June 9th

5:00PM - 8:30PM



casual dress • heavy hors d'oeuvres • open bar

Image courtesy of www.mlewisphotovideo.com.

PENROSE FARM



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A special thank you to FLC's 2011 Celebration Sponsors & Host Committee Members!

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Mast General Store

June 9th - FLC's Summer Celebration
Penrose Farm - west Knoxville

August 7th - Pint Night
River Sports Outfitters

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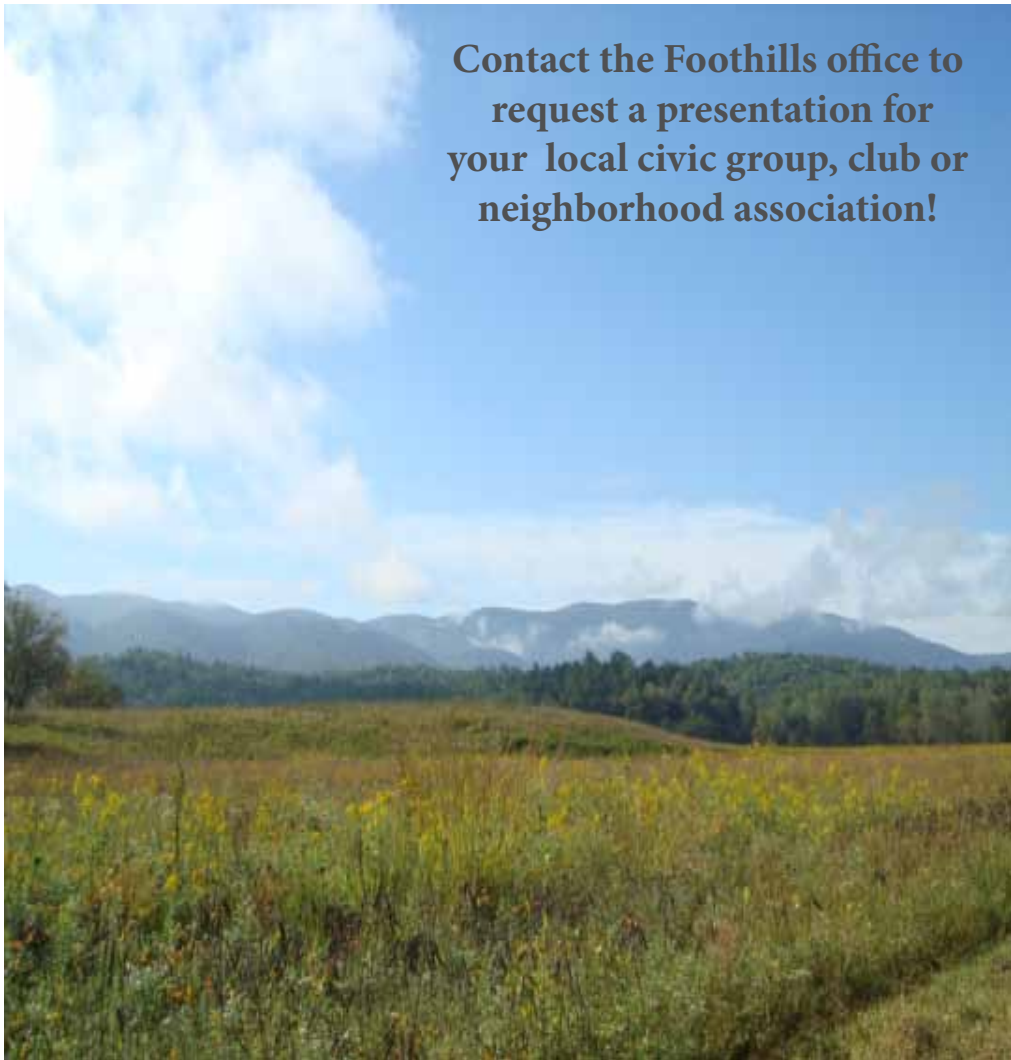
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FLC Event Listings
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**Contact the Foothills office to
request a presentation for
your local civic group, club or
neighborhood association!**