



# *The View*

*Foothills Land Conservancy's  
2020 Spring Newsletter & 2019 Annual Report*

*Outstanding view along Piney River on a recently preserved 1,000 acre tract in Roane County, TN.*



# The View

## FLC's 2020 Spring Newsletter & 2019 Annual Report

### **New Frontiers and Milestone Years!**

*A letter from FLC's Departing Board President*

Dear Friends of the Foothills,

As all of us move through this very challenging time, FLC's Board and staff hope you and your loved ones are safe and healthy. Please contact our office at 865-681-8326 with any questions, requests, or if we can be of service.



It has been my privilege to serve on FLC's Board of Directors over the course of 6 years with 3 of them serving as FLC's Board President. Over the course of my involvement with Foothills I have experienced many record conservation years, a relocation of our organization's headquarters to a 300+ acre working farm that has been permanently protected with an FLC conservation easement, and the addition of 2 more staff biologists to our team.

In 2019, the Conservancy had another successful year with 24 land preservation projects totaling 5,691 acres. These projects were spread across 10 counties in Tennessee and the three adjacent states of Alabama, Georgia, and North Carolina. You can view highlights of these recent partnerships in this newsletter.

As FLC continues into our 35th year, Board and staff look back at how far we have come as an organization and are also taking the time to explore potential new projects and areas of focus. We want to hear from you as part of this process! Please feel free to take a moment and send us any ideas, suggestions or feedback via email at [info@foothillsland.org](mailto:info@foothillsland.org).

We also wanted to take a moment to say how much we have appreciated your ongoing support of Foothills and our annual fundraiser over the years. We could not have come this far without our community of Friends! At this time, we have decided to postpone scheduling the date for FLC's Summer Celebration, which is typically held in August. In the coming weeks we will reach back out to all of you after a date has been set and will be sure to provide event details at that time.

Thank you for being a valued Friend of the Foothills!

*- Madge Cleveland, Departing FLC Board President*

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*Mission - FLC is dedicated to promoting, protecting, and enhancing the lands and environment of the Southern Appalachian region and promoting the character of the land for the general public, now and in the future.*

### **2020 FLC BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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Sara Fortune Rose

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*\*A special thank you to departing FLC Board Members:*

*Madge Cleveland, President; Jenny Hines, Treasurer;*

*Billy Minser; David Zandstra*

### **2020 FLC PROPERTIES FOUNDATION**

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Bill Clabough, Executive Director

Meredith Clebsch, Biologist

Elise Eustace, Communications & Dev. Dir.

Matthew Moore, Biologist

Shelby Lyn Sanders, Biologist

# Letter from the Director

Hello Friends,

On behalf of FLC's Board and staff, we are sending our most heartfelt thoughts to all of you, our community at large, our nation, and the world during this unprecedented time. We hope everyone is safe and healthy!

On behalf of FLC's Board and staff I wanted to give a very big thank you to departing FLC Board President, Madge Cleveland, who supported FLC through her leadership, talents and humor during her six years of service to our organization. A very big thank you to departing Board Member Jenny Hines, who graciously served as FLC's Board Treasurer. I also want to extend a big thank you to departing Board Members Billy Minser and David Zandstra. All of these fine folks provided their many talents and resources to Foothills over the years and we are a stronger organization because of their contributions.

2019 was yet another great year for FLC's land preservation efforts! We worked with land owners across Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia and North Carolina to partner on 23 land preservation projects and 1 land donation totaling close to 5,691 acres. To date, FLC has now has over 300 land preservation partnerships and has assisted in over 130,000 regional acres being preserved. This cumulative number includes conservation easement partnerships, fee simple properties, and additional land projects that FLC was involved in since the organization's beginnings in 1985. You can learn more about our 2019 land project highlights beginning on the next page. For more information about FLC's land preservation projects, visit FLC's website, [www.foothillsland.org](http://www.foothillsland.org).

2020 is a milestone year for FLC, having provided 35 years of service as a land trust. A lot has changed in our community and region since Foothills' beginnings back in 1985 but one thing remains the same for us, land preservation is our #1 priority. This newsletter includes information about FLC's tools and resources for landowners seeking to retain their property's natural features and/or agricultural practices. Beginning on the next page, we are highlighting recent land partnerships that assist the community with conservation efforts on public lands.

A big thank you to all of you for your ongoing support of our mission over the years! Please know that FLC's Board and staff welcome your ideas, feedback and resources to help fulfill our mission of promoting, protecting and enhancing the lands of the Southern Appalachian region. Feel free to contact us if we can be of service.



FLC Executive Director, Bill Clabough, takes a ferry ride along the Tennessee River enroute to visit a property in Lake County, TN.

- Bill Clabough, FLC Executive Director



Outdoor Learning at the Harris Farm - In February of 2020, 6th graders from Clayton Bradley Academy joined FLC staff for an afternoon spent outside. Among the tasks were helping staff decide optimal sites for the placement of several bluebird boxes and then working together to get them installed. Students also learned about blueberry bush planting techniques while digging in the dirt.

# 1,000 Acres Now Permanently Protected in Roane County, TN!



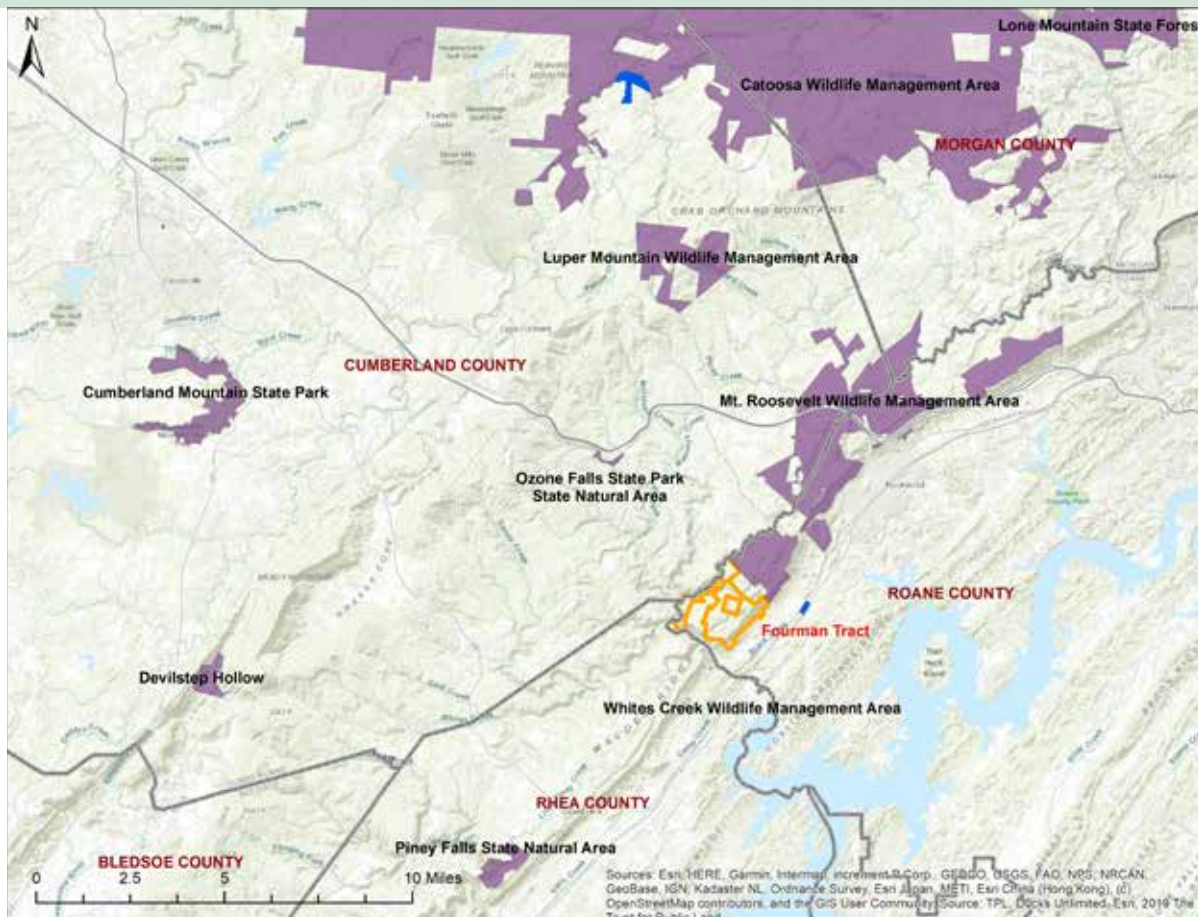
Image of Piney Creek, portions of this creek are considered a high priority conservation area by the Tennessee Department of Environment & Conservation.

**Roane County, TN** - On a chilly day back in February of 2017 FLC's Executive Director, Bill Clabough, spoke to an audience at Asbury Place, a retirement community in Blount County, TN. The group wanted to hear all about Foothills and questions arose such as, 'What does FLC do exactly? Where are some of the preserved properties located and what are they like?' One gentleman in the front row seemed to have a particular interest in land preservation. His name is Don Fourman and, unbeknownst to the Conservancy, he had quite a large preservation project of his own in mind. Mr. Fourman owned close to 1,000 acres of natural lands in Roane County – a beautiful property with creeks, woodlands, scenic views along with a unique history – and he had been considering how best to preserve this property for future generations. One of the tract's borders adjoins the 11,000 acre Mount Roosevelt State Wildlife Management Area (WMA). After a few initial conversations with the Conservancy, along with staff and Board site visits, Don Fourman deeded the property to FLC in March of 2017.

In 2019 the Conservancy placed an FLC conservation easement on it and conveyed to the State of Tennessee's Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA). TWRA plans to manage and steward the property as part of the Mount Roosevelt State WMA. Other natural areas nearby include: White's Creek Gorge, Ozone Falls State Natural Area, Piney Falls SNA, and Stinging Fork Falls Pocket Wilderness. In addition, other nearby private easements held or co-held by FLC include approximately 2,745 acres in Roane County.

## Fourman's Proximity to Nearby Protected Lands

The Fourman property (*high-lighted on the map in orange*) is adjacent to the Mt. Roosevelt Wildlife Management Area along the newly preserved tract's northeastern boundary. Several Tennessee state parks, natural areas, and wildlife management areas are located within a 20 mile radius. All of these lands assist in the protection and conservation of natural habitat, which consists of the region's diverse terrestrial, aquatic, and rich plant life.



# Why the Fourman Tract is Worth Preserving - Conservation Values in Pictures



**SCENIC VIEWS** - Walden Ridge traverses the entire length of the Fourman tract, forming steep forested slopes on both sides with uplifted escarpment rock outcrops on the south-facing slope. This ridge is a well known migratory pathway not only for the golden eagle but also for other raptors, songbirds, and butterflies.

Along with the Mt. Roosevelt WMA this tract also runs along the edge of the Cumberland Plateau and offers magnificent views of the valley, Watts Bar Lake, and even the Smoky Mountains. In turn, the Fourman property and the entire Cumberland Escarpment can be viewed from high points in the Smoky Mountains such as Gregory Bald and Look Rock.



**WILDLIFE DIVERSITY** - FLC staff observed a variety of species during site visits. Eleven butterfly species were noted including the rare golden-banded skipper. This species is ranked by the Tennessee Department of Environment & Conservation (TDEC) as rare and uncommon in the state.

Thirty-six species of birds were spotted —mostly closed forest dwellers, as there were no openings apart from narrow roads, waterways and rock outcrops. The Appalachian Mountains Joint Venture, which coordinates and implements all-bird conservation plans within the Appalachian Mountains Bird Conservation Region, has deemed many of these as Highest Priority species. These include the wood thrush, worm-eating warbler, Acadian flycatcher, brown-headed nuthatch and indigo bunting.

The ridgeline on the property is also a documented migratory flyway for the TN S1 ranked golden eagle and other raptors. This state threatened-status raptor depends on large forested blocks as are found on the property for passage between its breeding grounds in northeastern Canada and its wintering grounds in the Southeast U.S.



**WATERWAYS** - A portion of White's Creek and Piney Creek, located on the property, are mapped as a High Priority conservation area by the State of Tennessee. These two creeks, along with Rock Creek, a Piney Creek tributary, are rated as fully supporting by TDEC. This conservation area contains 13 aquatic threatened or endangered species including the laurel dace, tangerine darter, and orangefoot pimpleback. White's Creek and Piney Creek are also considered suitable habitat for the eastern hellbender by the Conservation Biology Institute.

*Clockwise from top) Winter view from atop the escarpment on the 1,000 acre Fourman tract; the 'rare' golden-banded skipper; Virginia chain fern; view along Piney Creek; pink lady-slipper*

## In Search of the Eastern Hemlock on the Fourman Tract

In March 2019, FLC staff traveled to the Fourman property to meet Daniel Newton, a forestry student at UT Knoxville.

Daniel was working with Dr. Schlarbaum at the Tree Improvement Program on a forestry 'special problems' course. They wanted to establish an eastern hemlock conservation planting by taking cuttings from mature trees (across several TN counties) and rooting them in misting beds. These saplings, free of the woolly adelgid, were then planted in designated fields by Norris Dam and in conjunction with TVA. FLC staff was able to assist Daniel with locating a few eastern hemlock trees for his project!



*UT Student, Daniel Green; FLC staff with Daniel; waterfall adjacent to the Fourman tract*

# FLC & Recent Public Land Conservation Projects

*Take a look at these recent partnerships we've been involved in, helping to preserve natural areas for public use!*

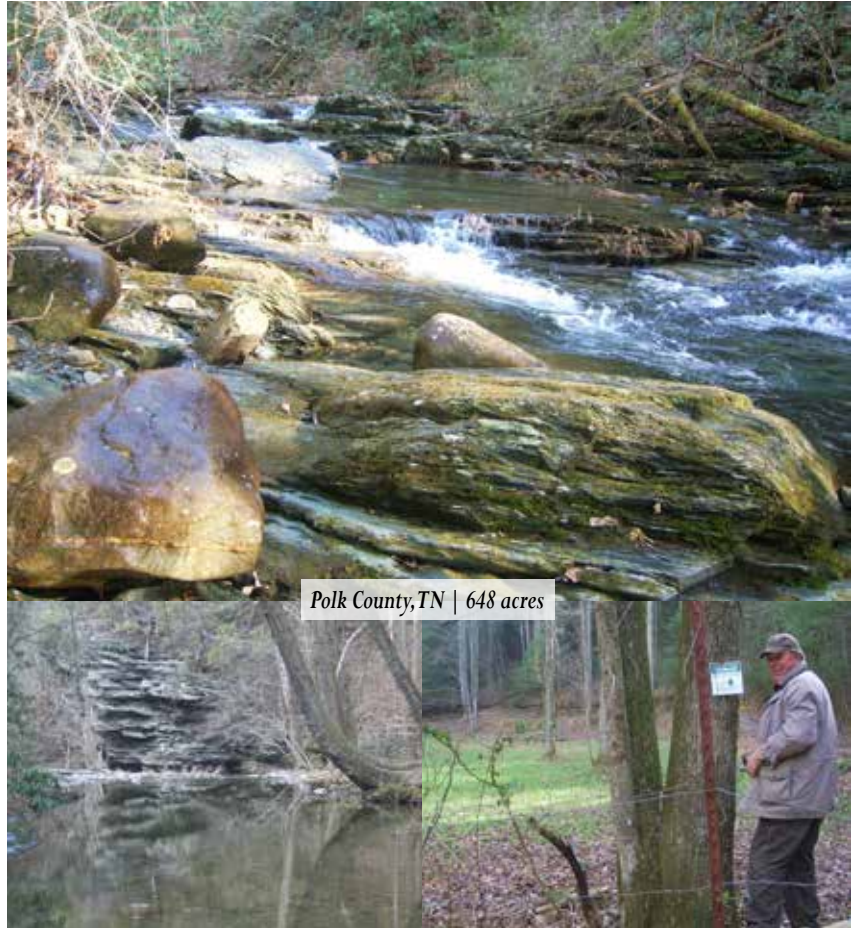
## 648 Preserved Acres Conveyed to the State of Tennessee - Polk County, TN

The FLC Properties Foundation, a supporting organization for FLC, recently conveyed a 648 property in Polk County, TN, to the State of Tennessee. This beautiful parcel, surrounded on all sides by the Cherokee National Forest, was permanently protected with an FLC conservation easement back in 2010. The Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency has plans to manage it for hunting and fishing.

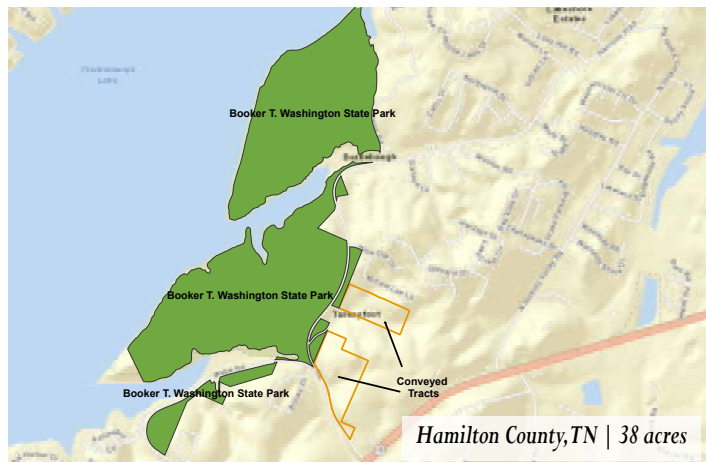
This tract offers ridge top views of the southern Appalachian Mountains and the Great Smoky Mountain National Park. Tributaries inside the easement allow for critical trout spawning for both the Hiwassee and Ocoee River watersheds, including 2.4 miles of trout habitat along Big Lost Creek. The property offers a mixed hardwood forest as well as old-growth white pine and hemlock. Bill Clabough, FLC's Executive Director, considers this a rare opportunity to preserve land that remains relatively untouched by human hands.

*"The beauty and environmental values of this property are in keeping with the forest lands surrounding it. What an outstanding opportunity for Foothills to assist in the preservation of this natural area both for our community and wildlife habitat."*

*Pictured Clockwise from Top: image of Big Lost Creek and it's pristine trout habitat; FLC's Exec. Director, Bill Clabough, places a sign at the property's fenceline; rock formation with reflection along Big Lost Creek*



Polk County, TN | 648 acres



## 38 Acres Conveyed to the State of Tennessee - Hamilton County, TN

Two properties, one owned by FLC and the other by its supporting organization the FLC Properties Foundation, have been recently conveyed to the State of Tennessee. Both tracts are located in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and will be managed as part of the nearby Booker T. Washington State Park.

Booker T. Washington State Park is a 353 acre park situated on the shores of Chickamauga Lake. It was built largely by African-American units of the Civilian Conservation Corps. Park facilities include picnic areas, a group lodge, floating docks, boat ramp, fishing pier, olympic size swimming pool, and 7.3 miles of biking and hiking trails. According to Park Ranger Robert Thomas, potential uses for these new tracts include providing additional walking trails, a picnic shelter, and playground.

## Pittman Center - Sevier County, TN

In 2008, FLC worked with the town of Pittman Center, located in Sevier County, Tennessee, to carry out a dream of Emily Brunner. Her vision was to create a nature park for the community. Brunner's 31 acres were conveyed to the municipality along with 19 additional acres from the estate of Millie Blaha. These lands now consist of a 50 acre nature park.



Sevier County, TN | 50 acres

# The Beginnings of an 11 Acre Community Park in Blount County, TN!

Back in 2010, FLC partnered with landowner, Catherine Gilreath, to place a conservation easement on an 11 acre tract just outside Maryville in Blount County, TN. Gilreath, a longtime resident of Knox and Blount counties, outdoors person, and volunteer, wanted to give back to her community in the form of a conservation easement.

Her wish to preserve this land stemmed from the experiences she had growing up and a desire to preserve the land for others. Gilreath said at the time,

*“Sports kept me out of trouble. Growing up in Sevier County (Kodak) across the road from Beech Springs School, my sibling and I along with all the neighborhood kids, enjoyed the nearby outdoor recreational facilities. That’s why I wanted to specify that this property could be used for community soccer fields and for other recreational uses.”*

The property, which includes a mix of open space and woodlands as well as a creek, have all of the attributes for an outdoor recreation area. While soccer fields were initially considered as an option, the property was eventually donated to FLC and then conveyed over to FLC’s supporting organization, the FLC Properties Foundation.

Bill Clabough, FLC’s Executive Director, says there was a general consensus among Board and staff to consider its potential as a public park, *“All of us have thought about it and know this property could be used as a passive park, maybe with a trail or two on it. In the future it could possibly connect to a greenway system.”*

What is needed to make this vision a reality? A plan along with some funding of course! FLC staff biologist, Shelby Lyn Sanders, is currently researching grant opportunities and working to create the partnerships necessary to bring this park concept to fruition. We will keep you posted on its progress!



*Pictured in 2010) Catherine Gilreath and FLC Executive Director, Bill Clabough, sign a conservation easement agreement on an 11 acre tract in Blount County, TN. This land will likely be turned into a public park with a trail system in the near future.*



*Blount County, TN | 11 acres*



*Left) An aerial photo highlights the boundaries of the 11 acre tract, which is located in Maryville, TN, and adjacent to Highway 321. Top right) The tract has a small creek, patches of woodlands, and gentle slopes which makes it ideal for a community park and natural area.*

## FLC’s History of Public Land Partnerships

Over the years, Foothills has worked with the National Park Service, The State of Tennessee’s Wildlife Resources Agency, and several other governmental entities and organizations to assist in the conveyance of over 10,000 acres for public lands, including those areas now designated as Wildlife Management Areas (WMA’s). These park systems include:

- Forks of the River WMA (Knox County, TN)
- Great Smoky Mountains National Park (Blount County, TN)
- Yuchi Wildlife Refuge at Smith Bend (Rhea County, TN)
- Kyker Bottoms WMA (Blount County, TN)
- Seven Islands State Birding Park (Sevier County, TN)
- Foothills WMA (Blount County, TN)

FLC also has land preservation partnerships, called conservation easement agreements, adjacent to several park systems. These projects include privately owned lands bordering:

Great Smoky Mountains National Park; Cherokee National Forest/South Cherokee WMA; North Cumberland WMA (4,000 acre buffer); Mt. Roosevelt WMA, Rankin Bottoms WMA, Catoosa WMA, Fall Creek Falls WMA/State Park, and Buffalo Ridge WMA



*In 1998, a 524 acre wetland refuge along Ninemile Creek in Blount County was purchased through efforts by Foothills Land Conservancy, TWRA, and Ducks Unlimited. 7*

# Highlights from FLC's 2019 Land Conservation Projects

In 2019, the Foothills staff completed 24 land preservation land partnerships totaling close to 5,690 acres within the states of Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, and North Carolina. Check out a few highlights from these projects.

## TENNESSEE

10 Projects | 3,357 acres | 7 counties of Blount, Knox, Hawkins, Roane, Sequatchie, Scott, & Warren

### Knox County | 54 acres

Located in the Hardin Valley area of Knox County, this 54 acre property consists of forest and open pastures. The property is situated between the urban areas of Oak Ridge, Farragut, and Knoxville in a metropolitan area with a population nearing one million. Rapidly increasing commercial and residential development pose immediate threats to biodiversity and open space, which is important for both ecological and aesthetic reasons. The property is being preserved for the protection of its valuable natural resources which include scenic open space, forest, and prime agricultural soils.

### Hawkins County | 235 acres

FLC recently partnered with a landowner to permanently preserve a 235 acre property near Rogersville, Tennessee, and close to the historic Pressmen's Home district. The property's primary forest consists mainly of oaks including white, northern red, and chestnut along with hickory and red maple. In addition to the mast-producing hardwoods, flowering dogwood, black gum, and black cherry contribute to the availability of mast for the continued presence of white-tailed deer, wild turkey, and other wildlife species.

During a site visit, FLC staff observed several saplings of American chestnut in the rich woods. According to NatureServe, the American chestnut was once one of the most prevalent and important forest trees throughout its range before being devastated by the chestnut blight, a parasitic fungus that wiped out 3-4 billion trees in the first half of the 20th century. Though the species persists as stump shoots in the Appalachians and elsewhere, these shoots seldom reach maturity before succumbing to the blight. The American chestnut is considered a Special Concern species by the state of Tennessee and a Species of Greatest Conservation Need as designated by the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency.

### Sequatchie County (2 projects) | 949 acres

Both of these land projects are situated within 20 miles of over 66,000 acres of state natural areas including: Savage Gulf State Natural Area, Prentice Cooper State Forest, and Fall Creek Falls State Park. Other nearby non-governmental easements cover about 27,000 acres, 22,000 of which are held by the FLC in Sequatchie and neighboring counties.

#### Project 1 - (272 acres)

This recently preserved property consists of two parcels that are approximately two air miles apart. Both tracts are surrounded by a 'nature development' that includes several homes that are well-spaced and do not greatly disrupt the connectivity of the forest, adding ecological value to the undeveloped property. The southern tract features an "Overlook Trail and Park" that is currently open to residents of the development. This tract has a gravel path that runs from one end to the other and includes approximately 2000 feet of escarpment, yielding high visibility from several points in the Sequatchie Valley below.

#### Project 2 - (677 acres)

This property is located roughly one mile from the tracts listed above and was donated to FLC in 2019. Woodcock Creek cuts through this tract and is considered as having 'Natural & Scenic Qualities' as part of the The Tennessee Rivers Assessment. This assessment is part of a national program operating under the guidance of the National Park Service's

8 Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance Program.



Knox County, TN | 54 acres

Portions of the forest are dominated by oak and hickory species. In addition to the mast-producing hardwoods, flowering dogwood, black gum, and black cherry also contribute to the availability of mast for the continued presence of white-tailed deer, wild turkey, and other wildlife species.



Hawkins County, TN | 235 acres

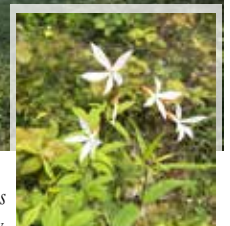


Clockwise from top) Photo of old homestead site; rock outcrops; American chestnut sprout, one of many observed on the property during a site visit



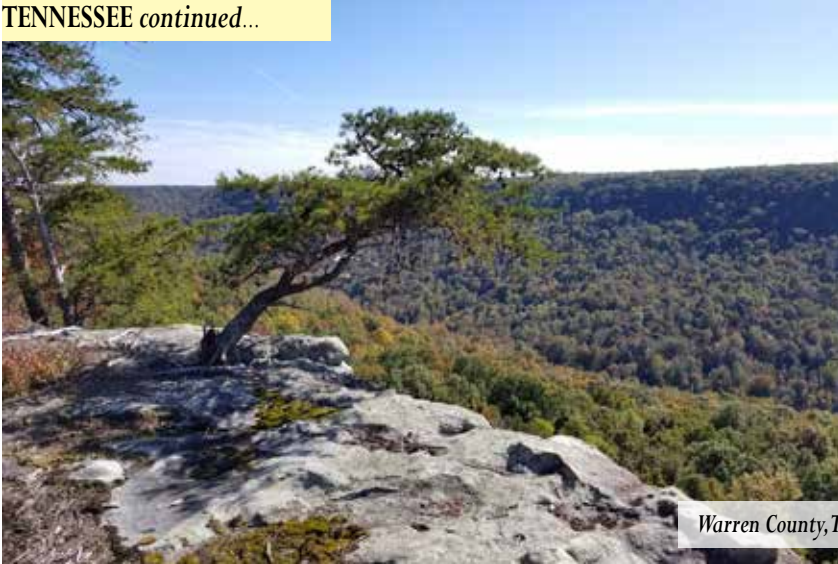
Sequatchie County, TN | 272 acres

Above) View of Sequatchie Valley from preserved property  
Right) Bowman's root, just one of 51 woody plant and herb species noted on a recently preserved 677 acre tract in Sequatchie County





TENNESSEE *continued...*



Warren County, TN | 539 acres

**Warren County (2 projects) | 539 acres**

These two adjacent tracts, totaling 539 acres, offer outstanding views along the Plateau Escarpment. Both are located within 5 miles of the Savage Gulf Class II Natural-Scientific State Natural Area, which is a part of South Cumberland State Park. Foothills has 4 conservation easements totaling 3,469 acres within three miles. There are 7 easements held by other land trusts totaling 933 acres within 10 miles. Plant life observed during the site visit included a total of at least 110 plant species at each property. Over 50 of those species on each tract were grasses or forbs with over 40 tree and shrub species. During the site visit, evidence of wildlife consisted of white-tailed deer and several bird species. Red-shouldered hawk, turkey vulture, pileated woodpecker, and several other bird species were heard or seen during a property survey.

*Left) View along the Plateau Escarpment from the property Above) Rock walls, like this one, as well as large rock formations are common on both of these recently preserved tracts*

**ALABAMA**

**5 Projects | 1,685 acres | 6 counties of Autauga, Cherokee, Coosa, Franklin, Lowndes, and Randolph**

**Franklin County | 200 acres**

This property is located within a largely undeveloped corridor that provides critical connections between a number of priority habitats and other natural areas.

27 species of birds were observed, including the wood thrush, which is listed as a species of conservation priority in Alabama by the Appalachian Mountain Joint Venture and is a Bird of Conservation Concern nationally.

Four rare species were noted, as listed by the AL Natural Heritage Program, consisting of three plants and one bird. These include Gattinger prairie clover, Carolina gentian, prairie trillium, and the yellow warbler.

Located less than 10 miles to the east of the property is the William B. Bankhead National Forest, which includes the Sipsey Wilderness and the Sipsey Fork of the Warrior River. This river is designated a Wild and Scenic River and the only one in the state. The William B. Bankhead National Forest is also designated by the Audubon Society as an Important Birding Area for its ability to support several uncommon species.

*Clockwise from top left) Sandstone outcrop dotted with tufted yellow woodsorrel and ragwort; the 'rare' Gattinger prairie clover; Carolina larkspur; walking fern; woodland and rocky outcrops near the property's main creek*



Franklin County, AL | 200 acres



## GEORGIA

5 Projects | 360 acres | 4 counties of Elbert, Floyd, Fulton, and Oglethorpe

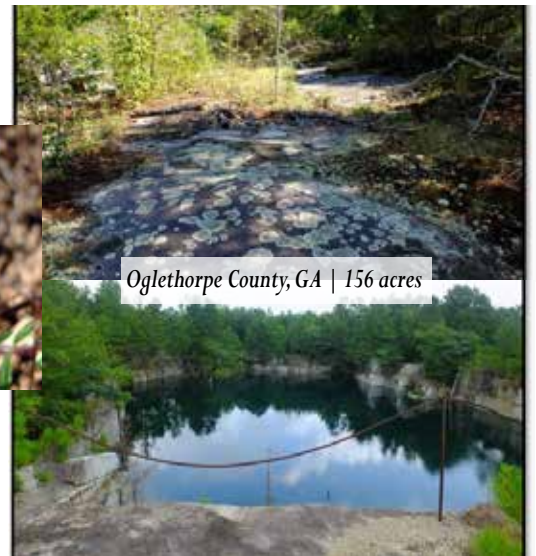
### Oglethorpe (2 projects) | 156 acres

Two tracts in Oglethorpe County were recently preserved with a conservation easement. Both tracts are close to 76 acres in size and located only 3 miles apart 'as the crow flies'. Both are wooded tracts containing a large quarried exposure of the Elberton Granite Deposit, also known as the Lexington-Oglesby Blue Granite Belt.

Granite outcrops and thin soil woodlands were observed on each tract. These natural outcrops have flat to sloping exposed granite rock, with patches of vegetation in soil buildup areas and are surrounded by mainly loblolly pine trees. Species found in this unique and state rare natural community included prickly pear cactus, confederate daisy, wild quinine, yucca, false garlic, dormant stems of stitchwort, rough buttonweed, rock moss, and sedges.

Both properties were also observed to have over 50 plant species. The following wildlife species, along with many others, were observed at one or both of the properties: coyote, gray squirrel, tree frog, and white-tailed deer, buckeye butterfly, blue jay, Carolina wren, pileated woodpecker and eastern towhee.

Both tracts are situated close to several preserved lands including numerous private conservation easements, Watson Mill Bridge State Park, Broad River Wildlife Management Area, the Savannah River Corps of Engineers, and the Oconee National Forest.



Oglethorpe County, GA | 156 acres

*(Image of Flower) - Helianthus porteri is a species of sunflower known by the common names porter's sunflower, stone mountain daisy and confederate daisy. It is native to the southeastern United States. (Top) Small natural granite outcrop, with granitic vegetation, along northwest corner of the property. (Bottom) View of a quarry that contains Elberton Granite Deposit.*



Fulton County, GA | 26 acres

### Fulton County - 1 project | 26 acres

This property is located within Atlanta city limits with the Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport just 3 miles away. The majority of the property is in planted pine (pictured left) with sections containing mature hardwood forests and scattered boulders. There is a small creek near the eastern boundary. Located within 20 miles of the tract are The Lake Charlotte Nature Preserve, Southside Park, Constitution Lakes Park, Reynolds Nature Preserve, Panola Mountain National Natural Landmark, Panola Mountain State Park and nine other conservation easements.

## NORTH CAROLINA

2 Projects | 288 acres | Chatham County

### Chatham County | 163 acres

A few years ago, FLC received a land donation of 163 acres in Chatham County, North Carolina. This year, FLC conveyed ownership to the FLC Properties Foundation and placed a conservation easement agreement on the tract.

The tract is within the Tick Creek Watershed, considered a high-priority area for watershed planning. The property is generally composed of forest stands that have had timber harvest activities a few years prior. Those areas are naturally revegetating in saplings, shrubs and herbs, plus strips of mixed hardwood-pine forest. The property is close to a Clean Water Management Trust Fund, a 96-acre protected tract, and the Ore Hill Registered Heritage Area, a 175 acre tract which has been protected for its biodiversity. Within 5 miles of this property FLC has also protected close to 800 acres. Staff observed a yellow-billed cuckoo, which is considered a common bird in steep decline.

### Chatham County | 124 acres

The 124 acre easement will protect rolling farm fields with forested corridors along the creeks. These creeks join on the tract and flow into the Rocky River. A portion of the Rocky River is designated as a Blueway, a paddling trail that is part of the Carolina Thread trail system. The vast majority of the property is designated as USDA Prime Farmland Soils of Statewide Importance and it's productive farmland will continue to be used for agriculture. Bird species considered a priority at the state level, and 10 noted on the property, include the northern bobwhite, field sparrow, northern flicker, and hairy woodpecker.



Chatham County, NC | 288 acres

*Left) FLC staff biologist, Shelby Lyn Sanders, walks through a field in early successional habitat during a site visit to an 163 acre tract  
Right) Beautiful creek on an 124 acre tract that flows into the Rocky River. A portion of this river has been designated as a Blueway and is enjoyed for recreational use.*



## *Foothills Land Conservancy - Areas of Focus*

### *Celebrating 35 years of land preservation!*

Since our very beginnings back in 1985, FLC's focus has been on working with both public agencies, the community at large, and private landowners to assist in the preservation of our region's diverse landscape. This topography includes working farms, scenic views, woodlands, open spaces, and important wildlife habitat. One question we are often asked is how does Foothills preserve land? Well, in case you were also curious we wanted to share a few highlights!

### **Land Preservation Methods - Landowners have options!**

**Conservation Easement Agreements & Fee Simple Donations** - FLC primarily works with two popular land preservation methods - conservation easement agreements and fee simple donations.

A conservation easement agreement is a voluntary, customizable legal document between a land trust and a landowner that specifies what can and cannot take place on the property 'in perpetuity', or forever. Both parties work together to ensure the landowners wishes are included, covering allowable land uses including agriculture, as well as prohibited activities on the property, like commercial or residential development. When landowners donate a conservation easement they maintain ownership and management of their land and can sell or pass the land on to their heirs while foregoing future development rights. They can also decide to bequeath the land to private or public entities.

With a fee simple land donation the landowner grants all property rights, title and interest to the land trust. The land trust owns and manages the land.

*\*For information visit [www.foothillsland.org/landowners](http://www.foothillsland.org/landowners) or call FLC at 865-681-8326.*

### **Land Stewardship - Keeping our promises!**

**Monitoring** - Every FLC conservation easement partnership receives an annual site visit - with over 300 easements that's quite a lot of ground to cover! As part of these agreements FLC promises to assist in the stewardship of the property with an annual site visit. These visits begin in February and continue through the summer and often into fall.

Visits primarily focus on observing the condition of the conservation values, as listed in the conservation easement agreement, and noting any significant changes. FLC staff identifies any changes to surveyed boundaries, roads, gates, man-made structures as well as any natural features to the property like creeks, wetlands, and wildlife. As part of this agreement landowners are contacted prior to visits and receive a report with any observations and recommendations.

Over the last few years, FLC's recent approach to data gathering and report generation while out in the field has been enhanced by improvements to technology. FLC's biologists currently utilize two smartphone software applications, Collector for ArcGIS and Survey123 for ArcGIS. These programs are not only used for monitoring purposes but also provide data for site visits to new projects. Staff can generate electronic monitoring reports in real time and attach photos. For new projects, the software can be used to create a database of conservation values that are attached to individual easement projects.

### **Outreach - Engaging the community over the years!**

**Presentations | Events | Social Media** - In the early years, FLC worked on community campaigns to assist in the purchase of land for the purpose of its conservation. In the mid-2000's, FLC Executive Director, Bill Clabough, launched a successful public campaign called '25 in 25'. This regional campaign focused on FLC's efforts to preserve 25,000 acres of land by 2010. The goal's central message caught the public's attention and began the conversation of a land trust's role in the community. In recent years, FLC has provided presentations to clubs, organizations and groups across Tennessee, profiling our mission and programs. We also joined the social media movement, began hosting annual friend-raisers, and profiled our landowner stories through publications like this one. In 2017, Foothills received the gift of a 300+ acre farm which provided a permanent headquarters for FLC! Founding FLC member Gail Harris, who gifted her farm to the Conservancy, had placed an FLC conservation easement on the property back in 2009. The potential for utilizing the farm as part of FLC's future outreach programs is unlimited!

Now in our 35th year of service, FLC has assisted in the preservation, protection and enhancement of over 130,000 acres across Tennessee and the surrounding states of Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia. We've come a long way but there is more to accomplish! Here's to another 35+ years of land protection, stewardship, and community engagement!



*Above) FLC's Bill Clabough (left) visits with a Blount County landowner to discuss permanently protecting his land's conservation values.*



*FLC staff biologists, Shelby Lyn Sanders (above) and Matt Moore (right) stopped by a few potential conservation projects along the Cumberland Plateau in the Fall of 2019. They collected information about each location, noting any natural features and man-made structures on the property. They also spent time observing a variety of wildlife species, like this purple Blazing Star, (right) which grows in prairie like conditions.*



*FLC's Bill Clabough speaks to Sevierville Rotary during their noon program, highlighting the organization's mission and successes. 11*



**Celebrating 35 years!**  
**FLC's SUMMER CELEBRATION**  
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*FLC Board Member, Billy Minser with grandsons Grayson and Spencer.*

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### Land Trust Day at Mast General Store!

(Date To Be Determined)

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(Date To Be Determined)



*Image looking out from a 423 acre recently preserved property into Sequatchie Valley in Sequatchie County, TN.*