

# *The View*

*Foothills Land Conservancy's  
2014 Spring Newsletter & 2013 Annual Report*





**Foothillsland.org**

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

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*A letter from FLC's Board President...*

Dear Friends of the Foothills,

This past year was a third consecutive record-breaking year and a 'best ever' record for Foothills Land Conservancy, with well in excess of 11,000 acres protected! To date, FLC now has a total of 47,000 acres preserved – with projects that span 26 counties in Tennessee and one project recently completed in Watauga County, North Carolina. We could not have come this far without the support of our Friends of the Foothills. Thanks to your generous contributions, FLC is able to expand preservation efforts across our diverse region.

In addition to our land conservation successes, FLC has also set up a permanent, supporting foundation to accept farms, property or other assets that will fund a growing endowment. These funds will assist with our long-range projects like land acquisition, land stewardship and a landowner financial assistance fund. You can read more about the Foothills Properties Foundation in this newsletter along with an overview of FLC's 2013 land projects, preservation partners, and priority conservation areas for this year.

On behalf of FLC's Board and staff, please know that our door is always open to our Friends. We welcome any and all ideas, feedback and resources that will assist us with fulfilling our mission. All of us look forward to seeing you at our Annual Celebration at Penrose Farm on August 17th as well as at our many other events throughout the year.

Thank you for being a valued Friend of the Foothills!



Mark King  
Board President

# Letter from the Director...

Last year was a phenomenal year for Foothills! FLC had a record setting year with over 11,200 acres preserved through 14 conservation easement partnerships. This type of success is made possible by our Board of Directors, staff and Friends of the Foothills, all of whom have helped move this organization to a place of continued success and credibility while also advancing the protection of farmland, migrating wildlife, and woodlands across Tennessee. Here are a few figures I put together that highlight just how far Foothills has come in the last few years:

We reached 3 record setting years for preserved acreage – 11,200 acres (2013); 6,600 acres (2012); and 4,400 acres (2011) for a total of over 22,000 acres!

We implemented sweeping policy and organization changes upon review of the Land Trust Alliance's organizational assessment guidelines. FLC submitted a 2013 application for the designation of Accredited Land Trust by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission and we expect to be awarded accreditation status in the Fall of 2014.

We surpassed financial goals over the last 4 years by continuing to strengthen our fiscal outlook with strategic investments, diversified income and adhering to appropriate cost measures. Foothills utilizes a local, independent CPA firm for annual audits of all FLC financials.

We worked to create a permanent foundation for our planned gifts that will fund land acquisition and stewardship programs, a landowner financial assistance fund and other conservation projects.

Moving forward, our focus continues to be on the preservation of working farms, and lands that enhance water quality, view sheds and biological diversity. Priorities also include overseeing our land stewardship commitments and conservation easement partnerships, which have now grown to over 125 properties. We will also strive to broaden our outreach efforts to individuals, families and the regional community. FLC is always willing to provide information and presentations to local civic groups, organizations, clubs, and businesses.

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



Bill Clabough  
Executive Director

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## 2013 Land Protection Projects

*This past year Foothills partnered with landowners on 14 conservation easement agreement projects covering 11,271 acres in 7 counties - a 'best year ever' record! Take a look...*

### *Morgan County, TN*

#### **Rock Creek Property**

This beautiful tract encompasses 1,369 acres and includes hemlocks, rock walls and several creeks including Rock Creek. It is easily visible from parts of Frozen Head State Natural Area, which is located 10 miles south. Less than 2 miles off of the property, Rock Creek joins the Upper Emory River.



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### *Watauga County, NC*

#### **Furman Property**

Coinciding with FLC's record setting year, the organization also had another 'first' in 2013. Foothills now has a conservation easement agreement on 120 acres in Watauga County, North Carolina. This is the first time FLC has partnered on a conservation easement agreement out of state. The property is adjacent to the Blue Ridge Parkway and provides an important scenic backdrop to one of the most visited National Parks in the U.S. Since the easement is situated high on a mountain ridge, it can be seen from long distances. The owners say that on a clear day they can see the city of Hickory, NC, which is close to 35 miles away. (The man in the photos is none other than FLC Executive Director, Bill Clabough.)



## *Blount County, TN*



### **Barton Property**

This 27 acre tract is close to State Scenic Highway 321 and within 5 miles of the Fort Loudon impoundment of the Tennessee River. The one permanent stream on the property flows into Gallagher Creek which then flows in to Fort Loudoun Lake. The site is also located within five miles of three conservation easements held by Foothills Land Conservancy, which combined, conserve over 507 acres. Foothills Land Conservancy currently holds roughly 6,100 acres in conservation easements across Blount County.

### **Blackberry Farm**

FLC recently partnered on two conservation easements at Blackberry Farm (totaling 127 acres). Blackberry Farm is located at the base of Chilhowee Mountain and is adjacent to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The recently preserved areas include open fields, creeks, a variety of native trees and views of the adjacent Foothills Parkway (pictured).



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## *Grundy County, TN*

### **Little Creek Property**

The Little Creek tract is 979 acres and located within 15 miles of the Savage Gulf Class II Natural- Scientific State Natural Area, a 15,000+ acre natural area known for its sheer sandstone cliffs and rugged canyons. It's also within 30 miles of Fall Creek Falls State Park and 20 miles of the Prentice Cooper State Forest and Wildlife Management Area. At least three quarters of the tract is covered in variously aged hardwood forest. Much of the forested area has many mature trees remaining and a diverse understory of forbs and shrubs that provide abundant cover and food sources for wildlife in the region.



### **Hailey Property**

FLC worked with landowners to place 1009 acres into a conservation easement agreement which represents a large, undeveloped tract of land in a rapidly developing area of Tennessee. The city of Manchester is within 12 miles of the property. Numerous protected lands are also nearby, including South Cumberland State Park, Savage Gulf State Natural Area and Grundy State Forest State Natural Area, which includes trails along Fiery Gizzard's stream and waterfalls. The property's large area plus the interconnection of a variety of woodlands, open fields and edges create early, mid and late successional habitat suitable for many resident and migratory species. At least 27 rare species have been identified within the nearby watersheds including 6 plants and animals that require wetlands or streams. The Hailey property has 2 large lakes, one large creek and a number of smaller wetlands and drainages. An adjacent property of 979 acres is also protected by an FLC conservation easement.

## *Roane County, TN*



### **Lexlin Ranch**

This 58 acre tract, located near Rockwood, is situated in the upper watershed of Watts Bar Lake and is less than one mile from the Watts Bar impoundment of the Tennessee River. The LexLin property is currently being utilized as an agricultural enterprise, with the breeding of Gypsy Vanner horses. The property is less than 10 miles from the Mt. Roosevelt Wildlife Management Area and less than 15 miles from the southeast portion of the Catoosa Wildlife Management Area. The juxtaposition of the LexLin Ranch property between developed subdivisions and these protected areas adds value to the Property as a buffer habitat for maintaining healthy populations of resident and migratory wildlife species, and as a corridor for the safe movement of wildlife between these areas. Additionally, the forest and large agricultural fields collectively support habitat for wildlife.

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## *Van Buren County, TN*



### **Skyview Bluff Property**

This 138 acre tract offers sweeping views that include Cane Creek, Rocky River, and the town of Spencer. Close to the property are Big Bone Cave (within 5 miles), Fall Creek Falls State Park (within 10 miles), and Virgin Falls Class II Natural-Scientific State Natural Area (within 12 miles). There are important wildlife habitats on this property, including rock shelters and cliffs, mature forests, a small creek section, and open pastureland. Animal species noted or likely to use the tract include resident and migratory bird species, raccoons, rabbits, opossum, bobcat, coyote, grey and red fox, fence lizard, toads, tree frogs, chorus frogs, bullfrog, crayfish, and white tailed deer. Birds noted or likely to use the tract include migrating redwing blackbirds, cardinal, tufted titmouse, goldfinch, American robin, golden-crowned kinglet, redtailed hawk, American kestrel, white-throated sparrow, Carolina wren, black capped chickadee, bluejay, several woodpecker species, a variety of warblers, and others.

## Van Buren County, TN (cont.)

### Flatbush Property

Also in 2013, FLC partnered on a conservation easement agreement, called Flatbush, which consists of three tracts totaling 2127 acres in Van Buren County. Close to 1/3 of the Property is comprised of woodlands at various stages of maturity and 2/3 is in grasslands/hay fields, with one area having been recently devoted to the cultivation of green beans. Fall Creek Falls State Park borders a section of the Property and the Bridgestone/Firestone Centennial Wilderness, totaling almost 15,000 acres, is less than ten miles away. One of the most crucial resources on the property is the abundance of clean water from Whetstone Branch, Little Whetstone Branch and Indian Path Branch, which all conjoin in Falls Creek Falls State Park just off of the Flatbush property. (Team Photo at Top) - Discussion ensues on the best way to cover the property during a site visit in October (left to right) Meredith Clebsch, FLC Land Director; Bill Clabough, FLC Executive Director; landowner, Malcom Jessup; and Karen Petrey, FLC Assistant to the Land Director.



### Parkview Property

Parkview (pictured right) is an 118 acre tract that adjoins a 345 acre FLC conservation easement property, called Cane Creek. Parkview is also adjacent to the east side of Fall Creek Falls State Park, and assists in the protection of Park's view shed. Though one area of the property is in pine, the land is regularly dissected by diverse young to mature native forests dominated by oak species and by scrub and shrub regrowth.



### High Point & TOT Properties

High Point (pictured left) is 840 acres and is within 10 miles of Savage Gulf Class II Natural-Scientific State Natural Area and the South Cumberland State Recreation Area. Both High Point and another recently preserved tract, TOT (637 acres), are adjacent to the historic Trail of Tears. High Point alone has almost 2 miles adjacent to a section of the Northern Route of the Trail.

# FLC's Partners in Preservation

*Greg Babbit, President of Blue Ridge Waterways, Inc.*

## *Assisting Land Owners with Stream Bank & Wetland Restoration*

Greg Babbit, President of Blue Ridge Waterways, Inc. has been involved with Foothills Land Conservancy on several stream restoration projects over the years. Blue Ridge focuses on working with landowners whose property may be in need of stream and/or wetland restoration. Mr. Babbit takes a more 'holistic' type of approach to restoration efforts, recycling as much of the native soil, stone, and plant species from the project site as he can. Blue Ridge's design team *"is always in the process of discovering new approaches for each unique conservation project"*

Currently, Blue Ridge is working on a stream restoration project on one of FLC's conservation easements located along Bull Run Creek in Knox County. Landowner Sally Chaffin is partnering with Blue Ridge to improve close to 2,000 feet along the banks of the creek that flows through her property. The goal of these efforts will ultimately assist with improvements in water quality and both aquatic and terrestrial wildlife habitat.

Mr. Babbit says these projects begin with an initial site assessment, followed by a detailed design, construction, planting and, lastly, multi-year monitoring to ensure success. Included in this process is reshaping the eroded stream banks, removal of invasive exotic non-native plants, sowing native perennial seed, and planting native trees and shrubs. Greg admits that it's a lot of work, but finds it very rewarding, *"We are restoring and enhancing the natural landscape - having a direct impact now and in the future. Once neighbors learn about what we are doing and they see the results, interest is generated and the project oftentimes continues to grow."* Mr. Babbit also has praise for Sally Chaffin and her commitment to enhancing the conservation value of her property, *"Sally is a fantastic landowner and is really a great steward of her property. She understands the benefits of the work being done."*

Back in April of 2011, Blue Ridge worked with FLC and the National Parks Conservation Association on another stream bank restoration effort in Happy Valley (Tallassee, TN). The project was made possible through a grant by Nature Valley. Greg says the project involved restoring eroded stream banks through bioengineering, removing invasive non-native plants and replanting the riparian corridor along a stream that flows into the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

For landowners who are interested in stream bank restoration efforts for their property, Mr. Babbit says that visiting TDEC, NRCS and EPA websites are a good starting place. They have a number of fact sheets and pamphlets that explain what can be done to improve water quality and wildlife habitat along stream corridors. There are also a number of grants available through TDEC, TWRA, NRCS, USFWS, EPA and TVA.

Mr. Babbit looks for conservation projects that involve degraded streams and wetlands and that are strong candidates for funding. Currently Blue Ridge is working on a project on Lick Creek in Greene County and one on Oostanaula Creek in McMinn County. To learn more about Blue Ridge Waterways' projects and to contact Mr. Babbit, please visit Blue Ridge's website at [www.brwaterways.com](http://www.brwaterways.com).



*Pictured Above - Greg Babbit, President of Blue Ridge Waterways.*

*Pictured Below - Images from Sally Chaffin's preserved property (83 acres). Efforts are underway to restore 2000 feet along the banks of Bull Run Creek that flow through Chaffin's property in Knox County.*





## *FLC Receives Native Tree Planting Grant from Alcoa Foundation & American Forests In Support of East Tennessee Restoration Initiative*



Last year, the Alcoa Foundation and American Forests Global ReLeaf Partnership for Trees program awarded Foothills with a \$5000 native tree planting grant. FLC committed to planting over 3200 native trees and shrubs in the early part of 2014 as part of a restoration initiative to enhance the regional environment. Planting areas included sites with stream bank erosion and locations where the addition of native bio-diversity will increase wildlife diversity and habitat while enhancing view sheds. Project sites are qualified, managed and monitored by designated FLC grant partners, staff and/or board members. Take a look at some of our planting projects to date!

### **Forks of the River Wildlife Mangage Area (Knox County)**

Forks of the River WMA is a 400 acre active hunting preserve managed by the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA). The property includes the City of Knoxville greenway system and is a part of the Urban Wilderness Corridor established by the Legacy Parks Foundation. A mix of 350 native shrubs and trees were planted along the established greenway, creating an edge between greenway and native grass fields that will ultimately provide a soft edge for wildlife cover and soft mast for food.

### **Kyker Bottoms Refuge (Blount County)**

Kyker Bottoms became a refuge 15 years ago with the help of several agencies and organizations – including Foothills Land Conservancy. Kyker now covers 500 acres in Blount County and is also managed by the TN Wildlife Resources Agency. Kyker is primarily managed for wetlands and early successional habitat – which offers a variety of native grass and shrubs for over 220 bird species. Trees and shrubs were planted next to the road way and along existing native grass fields and forested areas for a soft edge effect and to help many wildlife species. Another planting site required a shortleaf pine border leading to an observation blind to prevent wintering waterfowl from being spooked before observers can reach the blind.

**Other project sites include the Foothills Wildlife Management Area, Seven Islands Wildlife Refuge and private lands, several of which have an FLC conservation easement on the property.** A special thank you to Bill Smith from TWRA and Dick Conley (retired from TWRA) for all of their technical assistance with these projects and to the Alcoa employees who volunteered to help plant at Forks and Kyker.



*“Looking toward the future, I see the Foothills Land Conservancy expanding our preservation reach while having the resources to carry out land stewardship programs for many, many years to come. Launching a supporting foundation is the first crucial step to making that happen.”*

*Bill Clabough, FLC Exec. Dir. (Quote from TN Conservation Magazine - March/April 2014 Issue)*

*Foothills Parkway - All Photos Courtesy of Mark Lewis*

FLC Properties Foundation, a supporting organization for Foothills Land Conservancy, was formerly launched this past year and is designated as a 509(a)(3). The foundation is governed by a separate Board of Directors and has the ability to accept farms, property or other assets that will fund a growing endowment. Donations can be designated as restricted or unrestricted. These funds will continue to assist Foothills with long-range projects like land acquisition and land stewardship. A financial assistance fund is now in place to support land owners who do not have sufficient resources to cover conservation easement related costs. For more information about donating property or other assets to Foothills Land Conservancy and its supporting foundation, please view the Leave a Legacy information on the opposite page and contact the Foothills office at 865-681-8326. Let us know if your estate plans include Foothills Land Conservancy so that we may follow up with you and extend our thanks.

## Tennessee Land Preservation Programs



### *In Her Words... Gail Harris, Blount County Resident & Founding Member of Foothills*

Jim and I always wanted to protect the farm. We saw development come in...all over the county. When we first moved here there were 50 dairies in the county. It's now down to about 2. We always felt the value of the land was in its productive capabilities as well as providing an aesthetic resource for the county. And so we never, ever considered selling it. It was always our intent to protect it. After Jim died I went ahead with the decision to put a conservation easement on it. And it's my intent after I become late, as in the late Gail Harris, that the land will go to Foothills and Foothills will perhaps keep it as a working farm or use it as an educational center. There are beautiful trees on the property, there's a cave. Lots of wildlife, lots of birds. And to me that's very, very important because as humans take over the world we're edging out more and more species of animals and wild places and it's extremely important for me that I do my small part to preserve some of it.

**If you own property and are considering preserving it in perpetuity, Foothills can walk you through the process. Preservation methods include:**

**Conservation Easement** - FLC partners with landowners who wish to preserve their property in its natural state 'in perpetuity', or forever. This is a legal contract between a landowner and FLC describing the activities that may take place on a property in order to protect the land's conservation value. Both parties agree to forego future development rights. Landowners continue to own, use, and live on the land and they can bequeath it to family or public/private entities.

**Fee Simple Ownership** - Landowner grants all property rights, title, and interest to Foothills. FLC then owns and manages the land.

**Remainder Interest/Reserved Life Estate** - Landowner conveys the land to FLC but continues to live or use the property until his/her death. The 'remainder interest' in the property then passes to Foothills Land Conservancy.

**Devise** - Land is conveyed to FLC at the death of a landowner through the landowner's will.

# Becoming a Friends of the Foothills!

Annual Giving • Major Gifts • Leaving a Legacy



## Annual Gifts

Foothills gladly accepts any and all donations - no gift is too small! Our annual membership program, called 'Friends of the Foothills', allows supporters to give annually, quarterly or monthly.

Benefits include a thank you letter and call from Foothills staff, an acknowledgement in our annual spring newsletter, as well as an invitation to all events. You also have the satisfaction in assisting FLC with widening our reach towards the protection and preservation of Tennessee's cherished mountains, working farms and rural landscapes.

To become a member or to renew your annual contribution please utilize the envelope inserted into this newsletter or visit our website at [www.foothillsland.org](http://www.foothillsland.org). 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 projects, and stewardship programs.

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## Major Gifts

### FLC's Conservation Circle

As a Friend of the Foothills we hope you will consider joining our major gifts program, either as an individual or as a business partner. Donors that give annually at \$1000+ will be included as a member of our Conservation Circle. In addition to the Friends level benefits, donors will also receive:

*Tickets to FLC's Annual Summer Celebration*

*Name inclusion on our Celebration invitation and day-of-event banner*

*Recognition in FLC's August eNews & Celebration Webpage*

*Mid-year visit & tour of Bluff Mountain with Foothills staff*

*Personal invitations and access to all other Foothills activities*

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## Legacy Circle

### Benefitting Future Generations

Planned gifts provide FLC with a permanent foundation for conservation projects including land acquisition and stewardship programs and a landowner financial assistance fund. These donations can be designated as restricted or unrestricted. For those whose passion lies in passing on their love of the land to future generations, we hope you will consider supporting FLC 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 FLC for the purpose of retaining its agricultural or natural features*

FLC can work with your financial advisor to facilitate these and other giving methods. 11

# ***A very special thank you to our Friends of the Foothills for all of your contributions, time, and talents in 2013!***

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Now in our 29th year of service, FLC has assisted in the preservation of over 47,000 acres of cherished mountains, working farms and rural landscapes in 26 Tennessee Counties.

Join Foothills as we celebrate our many successes, look to the future and raise awareness for our mission - that mission being to protect, preserve, and enhance the lands and environments of the Southern Appalachian region and to promote the character of the land for the benefit of the general public, now and in the future.

The support of our Friends assists us with land preservation projects, community outreach and operating expenses.

Casual Dress \* Heavy Hors D'Oeuvres \* Open Bar

Celebration Location - Penrose Farm:  
8432 Nubbin Ride Road  
Knoxville, TN 37923

## Join FLC for our Summer Celebration! Sunday, August 17th Penrose Farm



All Photos Courtesy of Randy Purcell

### A special thank you to FLC's 2013 Celebration Sponsors & Host Committee!

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## SAVE THE DATE!

**June 7th, 2014**  
**Land Trust day**  
Mast General Store - Knoxville

**August 17th, 2014**  
**FLC's Summer Celebration**  
Penrose Farm - Knoxville