

Great News for Conservation in 2016!

The Conservation Trust for North Carolina (CTNC) is continuing to offer grants of up to \$25,000 to help NC landowners protect their land and waterways with a voluntary conservation easement in 2016.

Land conservation provides positive benefits to all area families, every single day, and these benefits don't last for a day, a month, or even a year. They last forever.

Conserving natural lands provides numerous public benefits, such as safe drinking water, clean air, fresh and local foods, parks and trails for outdoor exercise, scenic views that boost the tourism economy, and extensive habitat for wildlife.

Perhaps the most important benefit of all is the satisfaction and peace of mind from knowing that you've conserved the land you love, guaranteeing that it will be as beautiful in the future as it is today.

The Pacolet Area Conservancy (PAC), your local land trust, welcomes the opportunity to discuss land conservation options with area landowners and is happy to answer any questions about land conservation and CTNC grants.

As an introduction, a conservation easement is a legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust (such as PAC), or government agency, which permanently limits uses of the land in order to protect the conservation values on the property. Conservation values might include significant wildlife and plant habitat, stream banks, farmland, scenic or cultural lands, etc. Landowners continue to own and use their property, and the land can also be sold or passed on to heirs. Each conservation easement is personalized to reflect the wishes of the landowner; essentially, it is a Will for your land.

Grants available through CTNC provide a wonderful opportunity for landowners to protect their land and waterways. These grants help landowners by covering the costs associated with placing a conservation easement on their property. The grant will cover the cost of surveys, recording fees, title opinion and title insurance, stewardship endowment, baseline documentation report, project administration cost, appraisals, and legal fees. Landowners that protect their land with a voluntary conservation easement may also qualify for Federal Tax Incentives.

The Federal Tax Incentives, **which Congress made permanent in December 2015**, include:

- Landowners can claim a deduction of up to 50% of their adjusted gross income in any year;
- Qualifying farmers and ranchers can deduct up to 100% of their adjusted gross income in any year; and
- Landowners can take those deductions the year of the gift and carry them forward for up to 15 years (or until the value of the deduction is exhausted).

For example, a landowner who donates a permanent conservation easement valued at \$1 million and who has an annual adjusted gross income of \$100,000 may deduct 50% of \$100,000 (\$50,000) in each of years 1-15 for a total of \$750,000 in deductions. The remaining \$250,000 may not be carried over or used after year 15.

Landowners interested in learning more about protecting their property and/or waterways with a custom-made conservation easement are encouraged to contact the PAC, the local land trust that will apply for grants on behalf of the landowner.

To learn more about conservation easements and the possibility of qualifying for this grant in 2016, please contact the PAC at 828-859-5060 or landprotection@pacolet.org.

PAC is a proud member of the Conservation Trust for North Carolina, Blue Ridge Forever, and the Land Trust Alliance (LTA) whose standards and practices guide the work we do.

To date, PAC has helped protect nearly 8,700 acres of land. PAC holds 64 conservation easements and owns 25 tracts of land in fee-simple, creating a treasury of mountains, rivers, streams, farmlands, forests, and greenspace - land that will be preserved forever.

The Pacolet Area Conservancy is a 501(c)(3) non-profit land trust founded in 1989 to protect and conserve natural resources in the Foothills of North Carolina and the Upstate of South Carolina, with emphasis on the lands and waterways with scenic, ecologic or agricultural significance in the North Pacolet and Green River watersheds (our mission). PAC works with area landowners to ensure the long-term protection of their property through voluntary conservation easements (agreements) which enable landowners to maintain ownership of their property while preserving precious natural resources - open lands, forests, wildlife habitat, scenic vistas, farmland, stream banks, and more.

PAC – saving the places you love.