

LTLT hosts local food gala

The Land Trust for the Little Tennessee (LTLT) will put local food in the spotlight on Saturday July 25, in its first annual "Local Food Gala" at Cave Creek in the Lower Burningtown area of Franklin.

The fundraising event will include an open-air evening of music and entertainment with a multi-course dinner prepared by local chefs using exclusively foods grown locally. The gala is part of LTLT's strategic goal to directly align with local food production with the intention of bringing awareness to the value of locally produced food and fiber. "Not only do local foods reward our sense of taste, but locally produced food nourishes and strengthens our families and communities, sustains our mountain farming traditions, and protects our natural resources through productive land conservation practices," said Kate Parkerson, membership and outreach coordinator for LTLT.

LTLT has received generous enthusiasm from growers in its entire six county program region, Parkerson said, and some of the region's top chefs will prepare the delicious menu.

Guest will be entertained by singer/songwriter Tom Quigley and special guest North Carolina Poet Laureate, Kathryn Stripling Byer.

"Please join LTLT in supporting your local growers - buy from their farms, their stands, their booths at the farmers market, and purchase tickets to attend the Local Food Gala to support LTLT in conserving productive land to keep farmland available for future generations," Parkerson said.

Gala tickets are available for sale at the Franklin Chamber of Commerce, Jackson County Chamber of Commerce in Sylva, Swain County Chamber of Commerce in Bryson City, and through the LTLT office in Franklin or web site www.ltl.org

Since 1999 the Franklin based Land Trust for the Little Tennessee (LTLT) has conserved over 12,000 acres including 1,000 acres on working farms in Macon and Cherokee Counties. LTLT serves the six far-western counties of North Carolina - Jackson, Macon, Swain, Graham, Clay and Cherokee.

In mid-December 2004, LTLT acquired its first "working farm conservation easement" on the Spring Ridge Dairy - one of the largest riverfront farms at the head of the Little Tennessee River valley. In 2006, the Whitmire Family of Ridgefield Farm in Cherokee County donated an 870-acre working farm and forest easement to LTLT. In addition to these two premier farmland easements, LTLT holds another six farmland easements on private farms in their six-county project area.

All of the "groceries" used to prepare the meal are being donated by local growers from large and small gardens and farms in Jackson, Macon, Swain, Graham, Clay, and Cherokee Counties.

The food is the headliner for this event, but other features include a local and beer tasting with contributions from vineyards and breweries in the region. For more information please contact Kate Parkerson at 524-2711 or kparkerson@ltlt.org