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Local Weather

[Friday, Jun 11](#)

Fair

Currently: **79°F**

Feels Like: 81° F

Hi: 88°, Lo: 65°



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Guest Post: Land Trust urges continued funding of conservation efforts

Author or source: *Kate Parkerson* ~ 10:22 a.m. May 12

Categories: [Appalachia](#), [Environment](#), [Heritage](#), [News](#), [Opinion](#)

FRANKLIN—The Land Trust for the Little Tennessee (LTLT) would like to thank Governor Perdue for recommending continued funding for the Clean Water Management Trust Fund (CWMTF) at \$50 million for the upcoming fiscal year.

Her support is vital in making sure that conservation remains a priority in these tough economic times. With the governor's budget recommendations, she has recognized that conservation projects create jobs in many communities hit hard by the recession. The state parks system, for example, continues to set records for both visitors and economic impact (more than \$400 million per year).

LTLT hopes legislators will also continue to recognize the value of conservation, and we urge them to support conservation funding as the General Assembly works on its budget legislation.

In response to losing more natural lands than any other state in the country over the last decade, North Carolina has shown exceptional national leadership in conserving its irreplaceable natural resources. Thanks to the North Carolina's investment through its four conservation trust funds, communities across the state have formed private and public (local, state and federal) partnerships to leverage state dollars and maximize economic benefits.

The Clean Water Management Trust Fund's board has identified dozens of quality conservation and clean water projects that are ready to close upon receipt of funding. These projects will protect our most important economic resource—a clean water supply. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that it is 20 to 400 times more expensive to treat polluted water than to prevent contamination through watershed protection.

LTLT as well as local counties and regional municipalities have received grants from the Clean Water Management Trust Fund since 1996 providing funding to cover closing costs such as surveys and appraisals for perpetual conservation easements on streams, rivers and wetlands. In many cases, trust fund grants supported the partial purchase of development rights from landowners who wanted to ensure their land would never be developed. However the CWMTF tap was virtually turned off in 2008/09 due to the state's budget crisis.

LTLT and North Carolina's twenty-four other land trusts work in partnership with willing landowners and the state to protect our most critical sources of clean water, wildlife habitat, and farmland, which sustains North Carolina's economy. Projects funded by our state's four conservation trust funds have set aside thousands of acres for the public to hike, fish, hunt, canoe, bird and sightsee. In western North Carolina,

public recreational areas conserved by CWMTF funding include the Needmore Game Lands in Swain and Macon Counties; Pinnacle Park in Jackson County, Lands Creek watershed in Swain County and Mable Creek watershed in Cherokee County. CWMTF has also helped to conserve important farmland such as the Spring Ridge Dairy in Macon County.

Tags: [conservation](#), [Environment](#), [Land Trust for the Little Tennessee](#), [state parks system](#), [wildlife](#)

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