

SOUTHEASTERN TRUST FOR PARKS AND LAND, INC.



Spring 2016 Newsletter

From the Executive Director

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It has been an incredible 6 months for STPAL!

We are accredited! STPAL undertook the important process of applying for Accreditation status through the Land Trust Accreditation Commission. This process took us about two years from the very start until we were notified in February. The process is rigorous, time consuming, and challenging. It takes a deep look into all aspects of our work including our finances, policies, procedures, transactions, and acumen. It involved submitting hundreds of documents, interviews, and then more documents. It uncovered our weaknesses and provided a process for systemically addressing them. The end result of being Accredited is a nice feather in our cap, but the process itself has made us a much better organization. Because we own land that is permanently conserved we need to be permanent too. The Accreditation process has made us into an organization that will be just as permanent as our conservation lands. Check back in 5 years when we do it all again with the Reaccreditation process!

We have grown our total of donated land to 23 properties (19 in Georgia, 3 in North Carolina, and 1 in Tennessee). We own over 9,000 acres! We have 8 new properties that we expect to receive in the next few months.

We have given away land! In 2015 we donated 930 acres of conserved land to the State of North Carolina for a Forestry research and demonstration center. We gave about 300 acres to the Village of Cedar Rock NC for a new passive recreation park and nature preserve. We gave about 150 acres to the City of Villa Rica GA for a new passive recreation park and nature preserve. Our goals are to conserve natural land and make

it available for passive nature based public recreation. If we have a local, state or federal entity that is willing to build and care for a park on our land it makes good sense to give them the land and let it happen. The land will still remain conserved and available to the public through the permanent deed restrictions that we placed on it. And we are better able to focus on other projects. We intend to create 100 new parks by 2034. By enlisting the help of forward thinking communities we will reach this goal.

We are on a path to achieve the financial resources to become a permanent organization. Fundraising is hard and time consuming. Owning and caring for conservation land across a big area is expensive. I get stressed out thinking about all the land that we are acquiring and wondering how it will be monitored and protected for hundreds of years into the future. I wonder what will happen if STPAL has an unexpected financial problem or if community support for protecting land goes away. So we are planning for the future of STPAL by making strategic decisions regarding our assets. "What assets?" you might ask. Trees. We own lots of trees. We are diligently working towards creating permanent and predictable income through gentle, conservation minded, habitat enhancing forestry harvesting on some of our properties. In the coming years we will be able to do gentle timber harvests on 15-20 year rotations in which each year we are able to fund our operations. I don't share this to discourage you from making donations. But rather to point out that your donations can go to priorities such as building trails, improving habitat, enhancing science education, and other improvements to our properties. Meanwhile we will use forestry revenue to pay salaries and other overhead. Your support goes directly to our mission!

Property Spotlight



Pumpkinvine Creek Nature Preserve

Pumpkinvine Creek Nature Preserve in Paulding County, Georgia is the first property acquired by STPAL. It was donated to us in 2012 by a generous individual. It is a triangle shaped 110 acres with long frontage of Pumpkinvine Creek. There is a nearby historical marker which indicates that the Union Army of Tennessee marched across the land prior to the Battle of Dallas and ultimately Kennesaw Mountain. This property is exceptional as conservation land because its setting and topography produce several unique landscapes despite its relatively small size. These include riparian hardwoods areas, a big beaver swamp, native and non-native grasslands, early successional pine areas, and transitional areas between them. It is being used as a home base for a non-profit that mentors at-risk youth. This group has done great work protecting and monitoring the conservation values of the property. They have built new trails, improved the parking area, built a gazebo, added a fire pit, installed a garden, put in pollinator beneficial elements, and are positively impacting the lives of young people. Meanwhile the property is providing wildlife habitat, storm water control, and carbon sequestration. Conservation land is good for the environment and communities!

2016 Fundraiser

On April 1st (no fooling!) about 150 friends came to the Urban Cidery to drink their cider, eat good food from Muddy Waters BBQ, listen to the Crooked Wits band, learn more about STPAL, provide some financial support, and have a lot of fun. We appreciate everyone that showed up and feel confident saying that if you did not show up you missed a heck of a good party!



Join Our Mission of Conserving Land!
Want to join STPAL and help support our mission of conserving land? Simply visit our website at www.stpal.org/donate to become a member.

Annual memberships begin at only \$20!



STPAL is a 501-C-3 organization dedicated to conserving land and making it available for responsible public use.

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