

# THE TRUST *for* PUBLIC LAND

CONSERVING LAND FOR PEOPLE



## NORTH CAROLINA: *Upper Neuse Clean Water Initiative*

There are nine water supply reservoirs supplying eight municipalities in North Carolina's 770-square-mile Piedmont basin. Two of those municipalities—Raleigh and Durham—are among the top five fastest-growing cities in the state. With population growth often comes a threat to water quality.

### **TPL's role**

The municipalities in the region recognized that water is a shared resource and that drinking water protection requires a unified approach. With funding from the City of Raleigh, the Conservation Trust for North Carolina (CTNC) hired The Trust for Public Land to assist them and their partners—local governments, watershed associations, and land trusts—in creating a regional plan for protecting drinking water sources in the Upper Neuse River Basin. After creating a model identifying

lands that best reflect the conservation priorities of stakeholders, TPL developed a public report that promotes land conservation and incorporates the model results. TPL then transferred the model to a local partner and trained them on how to use it.

### **Project highlights**

TPL facilitated a public forum where community leaders and stakeholders confirmed drinking water quality protection as their primary conservation priority. Protecting working lands and habitat connectivity were identified as secondary priorities. Working with local partners, TPL assembled a team of regional experts to develop a customized Geographic Information System (GIS) model and identify parcels of land that the partnership might conserve to best meet their goals.



## Results

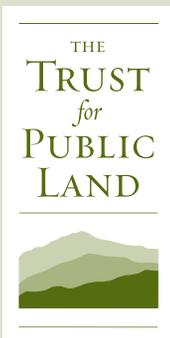
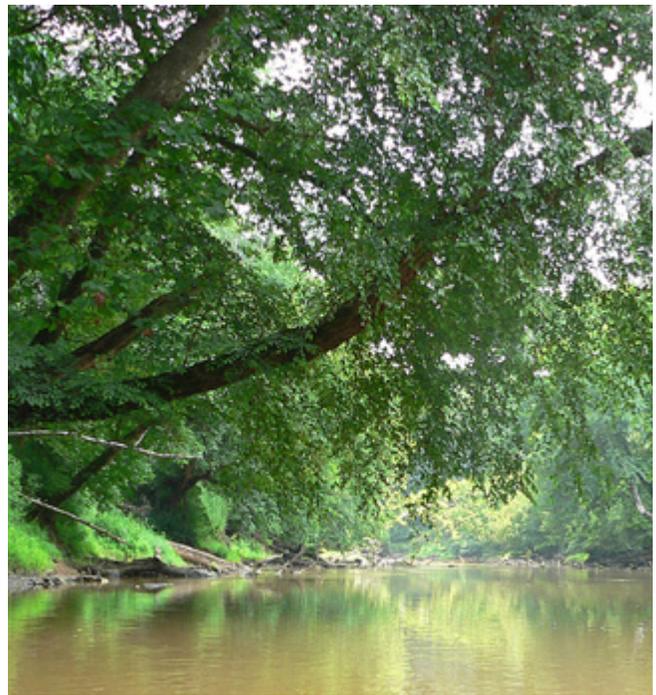
The Greenprint has served as a guide for the permanent protection of more than 53 miles of stream buffers. To date, local governments in the Upper Neuse River Basin have contributed more than \$15.4 million to land protection efforts directed at protecting water supplies in the basin.

These successes represent the efforts of six conservation groups: the Ellerbe Creek Watershed Association, the Eno River Association, the Tar River Land Conservancy, the Triangle Greenways Council, the Triangle Land Conservancy, and TPL. TPL helped kick off implementation with acquisition of a critical 213-acre tract adjacent to Falls Lake within six months of the planning document's completion. Since 2006, partners have completed 48 transactions conserving 5,262 acres of land.

Recently, CTNC received a \$1.7 million grant from the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities to further conserve working forests that will help preserve the quality of drinking supplies in the basin.

*“Raleigh supports this conservation plan because . . . preserving land around waterways protects public health and is more cost effective than building new water treatment facilities. Conservation also protects well water supplies and reduces flooding. And this strategy provides the public with the added benefits of cleaner air, increased recreational opportunities, and preservation of our area’s most treasured open space.”*

—Charles Meeker, Raleigh mayor



*The Trust for Public Land conserves land for people to enjoy as parks, gardens, and other natural places, ensuring livable communities for generations to come.*

## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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