



CONSERVATION IN THE LAKELANDS

SERVING EIGHT COUNTIES IN THE WESTERN PIEDMONT OF SOUTH CAROLINA

► SPRING 2019

Land Trust honors Wallace Wood, retiring Executive Director

The Upper Savannah Land Trust honored Wallace Wood at its 2019 Annual Meeting with the Peggy Adams Conservation Award. Wood stepped down in January after serving as the Land Trust's executive director since 2010. From 2007 to 2010, Wallace also served on its Board of Directors, and as Board President and Vice-President. Prior to that, and throughout his service to the Land Trust, Wood was a frequent advisor, supporter, and volunteer.

The Peggy Adams Conservation Award is presented annually to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to the Land Trust's mission of conserving natural and scenic lands-- farms, forests, waterways, and unique areas of South Carolina's western piedmont. It is named after Peggy Adams, who with her husband L.B. Adams organized the Land Trust in 2000, and whose vision the Land Trust still honors. "Wallace was and is a true natural conservationist," said Mrs. Adams, about this year's recipient. "His ties to nature seem always to have been close both personally and professionally. His gift has been sharing with others the appreciation he feels from having lived in close contact with what he loves. He has guided our land trust with great integrity as we have grown and advanced to another level."

In presenting the award at the March 21 Annual Meeting in Greenwood, Land Trust Board member Jimmy Sanders said "Wallace Wood is the most capable



Land Trust Board member Jimmy Sanders (L) presents retiring Executive Director Wallace Wood (R) with the Peggy Adams Conservation Award at the 2019 Upper Savannah Land Trust Annual Meeting.

and conscientious human being I've ever known. Like everything he does, his work for the Land Trust has been conducted with excellence, and we're very proud of it."

During Wood's tenure, acreage under protection by the Land Trust nearly doubled, and stands today just 11 acres short of 50,000, making the Upper Savannah Land Trust the third largest local land trust in South Carolina, and the largest in the state's upcountry. "We are so proud of this record," said Board President Rossie Corwon, "and we're equally proud of Wallace's tireless work to ensure our accreditation with the Land Trust Alliance." Land trusts accredited by

Land Trust honors Wallace, continued on page 4

UPPER SAVANNAH
LAND TRUST



CONSERVATION EXCELLENCE

Visit us at our web site:
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The mission of the Upper Savannah Land Trust is to encourage and support conservation of natural and scenic lands, farms, forests, waterways, and open spaces in our eight-county area: **Abbeville, Anderson, Edgefield, Greenwood, Laurens, McCormick, Newberry, and Saluda** Counties.

The Upper Savannah Land Trust is a 501(c)(3) membership organization. Contributions are tax deductible.

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**Conservation
in the Lakelands**
Volume 13, Issue 1



CONSERVATION EXCELLENCE

USLT Officers & Board, 2019-20

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Wade Harrison

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From the President's Desk . . .

Spring Greetings!

As I write my fifth letter as President of the Board for the Upper Savannah Land Trust, I am thankful for the people I have come to know through this role, for the diligence of our board members as we monitor each easement annually, for the easement donors who choose to protect their property in perpetuity, and for our members and sponsors who financially support the Land Trust.

It is with great appreciation that we celebrate (*allow?*) Wallace Wood's retirement as Executive Director of the Land Trust. Wallace continues to offer guidance as we move forward. What a legacy! He ushered us through the Accreditation process, and essentially grew the Land Trust to one of the largest in the state. Please read the article detailing Wallace's accomplishments, found in this newsletter.

We welcome our new Executive Director, Wade Harrison, native of Greenwood and McCormick Counties, forester by education, and most recently Director of Land Protection with The Nature Conservancy in Georgia. Wade's experience, education, and enthusiasm are great assets to the USLT, and we are fortunate to have his leadership.

During 2018, the Land Trust accepted donations of six easements totaling 2,427 acres, bringing the total to 49,989 acres under protection. USLT currently holds 120 easements. We completed the year meeting

the financial requirements set by the Land Trust Alliance for accreditation.

As board members, we are charged with several responsibilities, two of which are to:

- Provide general information about the value of conserving natural, scenic, historic, cultural, archaeological, agricultural, and outdoor - related properties for the benefit of future generations
- Engage public financial support of these operations through tax-exempt donations from individual members and organizations.

In order to fulfill these responsibilities, we increased our efforts to bring public awareness to the Upper Savannah Land Trust, by participating in the Greenwood America in Bloom program, introducing the Land Trust to the Leadership Greenwood Class, participating in Laurens County's Spotlight on Agriculture program, and presenting to two county forestry associations. Additionally, we held our first Sporting Clays fundraising event, highlighted below. Stay tuned for more information for this year's event to be held in the fall.

In closing, I will leave you with a reminder—part 4 of a poem in 7 parts, by the late great Mary Oliver (1935 – 2019), entitled SOMETIMES...

Instructions for living a life:

Pay attention.

Be astonished.

Tell about it.

Sincerely,
Rossie Corwon



The Land Trust hosted its first **"Sporting Clays for Conservation"** event in November, and it turned out to be the most successful fundraising effort in our history, **raising almost \$10,000** to support our operations and stewardship. It was a gorgeous autumn day at the Clinton House, with nearly a hundred friends and supporters on-hand, including some new to USLT. Seventeen teams, with up to 4 shooters per team, participated in the competition; many of them becoming prize-winners and raffle-winners, and everyone enjoying good fellowship and good food. Thanks to 2017-18 Land Trust Board member **Stan Todd**, whose vision and hard work made this wonderful event possible.

Membership Donors Supporting USLT Conservation Efforts in 2018

We gratefully acknowledge the support of these donors in 2018:

Savannah/Saluda Society, \$3,000 or more

Davis Family Foundation, Inc.
L.B. and Margaret Adams Jr.

Foundation, \$1,500 - \$2,999

Mike and Rossie Corwon
Fred Gerow
Bill Huff
John and Rebecca Patrick
Stan and Mary Todd

Guardian, \$1,000 - \$1,499

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Tim Burke
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Lanny Miller
Richard Powers
Stone & Associates, Inc.
Storey Foundation, Inc.
John Taylor
Brad & Pam Thompson
David Tompkins
Austin Wood
Wallace and Susan Wood

Sponsor, \$500 - \$900

AgSouth Farm Credit
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Charlotte Ross
Janis & Jimmy Sanders
Brad Thompson
Bill & Becky Tomlinson
Robin Underwood
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Friend, up to \$99

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Chrysanthemum Garden Club
Cassandra Daniels
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Rick Green
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Kelly Larimer
Patrick Morgan
Phyllis Nolan
Mr. Lee Padgett
Avery & Raye Parrish
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Hugh Riley
Clark Rushton
Fred Suggs Jr.
Jill Warner

Easement Donors Paying Fees

Timberland Holdings and management
Joseph L. and Emily W. Boyle
Dr. Bryan Green
Millway Tree Farm LLC
Southern Resources LLC
Stockman Land Company

**THANKS TO ALL
OUR DONORS!!**

At the 2019 Land Trust Annual Meeting, retiring Executive Director Wallace Wood (right), recognized the six 2018 conservation easement donors, including Dr. Bryan T. Green (left) and John N. Harrison (center) of Millway Tree Farm LLC. Not pictured are John Clark Brown (Timberland Holdings and Management LLC), Joseph and Emily Boyle, John and Jenks Patrick (Southern Resources LLC) and Chip Stockman (Stockman Land Company). These six easements totaled over 2400 acres in Abbeville, Greenwood, and McCormick Counties.

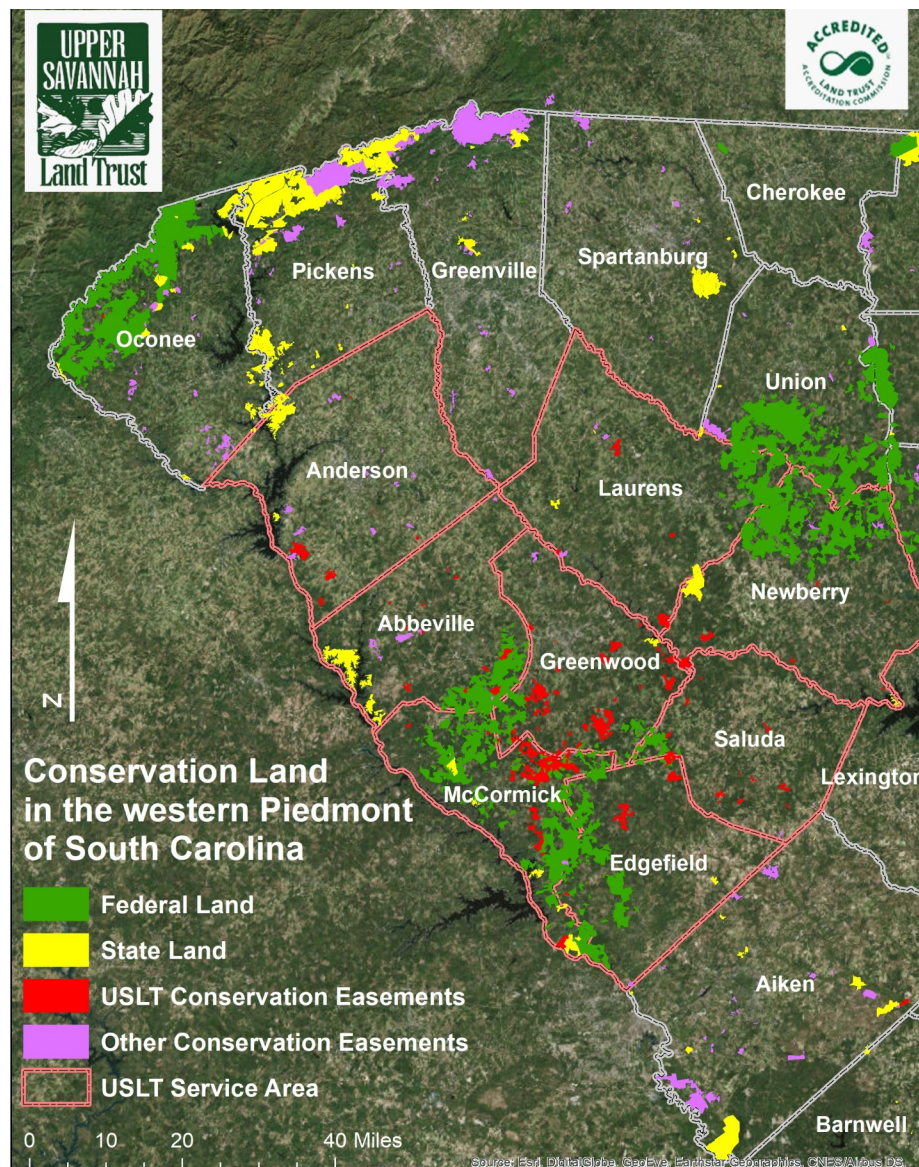


Philip Juras shares artful and ecological vision at Land Trust's 2019 Annual Meeting



Philip Juras, a landscape artist, trained ecologist, and native of Augusta Ga., was the guest speaker at the Land Trust's 2019 Annual Meeting in March. Philip shared his special appreciation for the lost grasslands of the southeast, their natural history and their visual character, including how he approaches painting such nuanced scenery as sunlight filling up an open glade, or fire running through a pine savanna.

Philip's exhibitions and publications are increasingly popular among advocates of land conservation, including his recent works *The Southern Frontier*, *Landscapes Inspired by Bartram's Travels*, and *The Wild Treasury of Nature, A Portrait of Little Saint Simons Island*. With over a hundred guests at the meeting, Philip was busy before and after the meeting, telling stories, answering questions, and signing books.



The Upper Savannah Land Trust continues positive growth in terms of the number of acres conserved. In 2018, the USLT added 2427 acres in new easements to its list of conserved lands in the Upstate. The map above and the table below show the 120 easements (shaded red on map) totaling 49,989 acres held by the USLT as of December 31, 2018.

CONSERVATION EASEMENTS AND ACRES BY COUNTY 2018		
County	Number of Easements	Acres
Abbeville	10	2,811
Aiken	1	342
Anderson	7	2,731
Edgefield	6	4,524
Greenwood	43	14,935
Laurens	7	2,587
McCormick	16	16,795
Newberry	12	2,280
Oconee	2	126
Saluda	16	2,858
Total	120	49,989

Land Trust Honors Wallace

Continued from front page

the Alliance meet the highest national standards for excellence and conservation permanence, completing a rigorous review process, and joining a network of conservation organizations united by fiscal accountability, strong organizational leadership, sound transactions and lasting stewardship of the lands they conserve.

“USLT was a good organization before Wallace, but after he took over it reached a new gear,” said Ken Driggers, the Land Trust’s general counsel. “It has become one of the premiere local land trusts in the Southeast.”

Under Wood’s leadership, the Land Trust focused much of its effort in the Stevens Creek Watershed, in the Savannah River Basin. Over half of its conservation easement acreage, including protected land that Wood and his family owns, is in this watershed, in which biodiversity has been noted as in the top 15% of all watersheds in the United States.

Wood’s successor as Executive Director, Wade Harrison, noted that Wood was working hard closing conservation easements right up through the end of December. “Although he claims to be retired now,” said Harrison, “Wallace is still out there speaking and networking for us, to the Land Trust’s great benefit, and to the benefit of all who appreciate the conservation of rural lands and natural resources.”



Wade Harrison steps in...

Wade Harrison, a native of our Upper Savannah region whose family has been farming the fields and forests of Hard Labor Creek since the 1830s, is pleased to serve the Land Trust as its new Executive Director. Wade has degrees from the University of Georgia and Virginia Tech, spent 20 years in the timber industry with Westvaco around Charleston, and 15 years in land conservation with The Nature Conservancy in Georgia. Wade and his wife Sara Gottlieb split time between their home in Atlanta and Wade’s family homestead near Bradley.



Freshwater Mussels: Harbingers of healthy streams, and worth protecting!

Turkey Creek, Cuffeytown Creek, and a few of their tributaries in the Stevens Creek watershed of McCormick and Edgefield Counties represent one of the last places one can still find a freshwater mussel called the Carolina Heelsplitter, which has been called the most endangered animal in South Carolina. A number of more common native mussels inhabit the same waterways, although its unlikely any of them are as abundant as these mollusks were before so many Piedmont streams were impounded, surrounding lands plowed and later paved, increasingly carrying sediment and toxins to the watery habitats where these creatures live.

Streams like Turkey and Cuffeytown demonstrate an appealing feedback loop: They are clean enough that the rarest of mussels can still be found in them, and the more mussels they can support, the cleaner and healthier they will be! Mussels are filter feeders, and actually remove impurities from the water as they feed, as long as what they filter isn’t so bad that it kills them, or so much that it buries them.

Fortunately for many of these mussels, and the streams they inhabit, several land-owners along these waterways have chosen to protect their properties with conservation easements held by the Upper Savannah Land Trust, and all of them may be

Freshwater Mussels, Continued on back page

US Fish and Wildlife biologist Morgan Wolf shows off one of her favorite inhabitants of the Upper Savannah watershed, at a site protected by the Land Trust.

Freshwater Mussels (continued from page 4)

eligible for grant funding to enhance mussel habitat, improving the overall water quality and ecology of the watershed, and also helping keep an endangered species alive.

The Land Trust is working with the US Fish and Wildlife Service to identify and implement habitat improvements, including stabilizing crumbling streambanks, replacing undersized culverts, and removing neglected or unwanted dams. If you think you might have an eligible project that could attract grant funding and help our freshwater mussels, contact the Land Trust at info@scusst.com, or call us at 706-536-0110.



Mac Stone/Naturaland Trust

MUSSELS AND FISH, CLEAN FLOWING WATER, AND SPIDER LILIES TOO!

The shallow bedrock of the Carolina Slate Belt not only creates scenic rocky shoals, it delivers water quickly and cleanly to our streams, and to the flora and fauna they harbor. Stevens Creek is also well known for its outstanding population of the rare **Shoals Spider Lily**, which like the Carolina Heelsplitter mussel has been diminished by dams, sedimentation, and runoff. Don't miss this spectacular display of spider lilies every May, at the **Park's Mill Preserve** near Plum Branch, hosted by the SC Native Plant Society and under protection by the Upper Savannah Land Trust and the Naturaland Trust. **This May, the Land Trust joined the Native Plant Society at Park's Mill to celebrate the expansion of the Preserve.** Check www.scusst.com for spider lily news, and details on upcoming events.

**Conservation
easements conserve
vital lands while
easing tax burdens
on donors**

We Need Your Support

Please consider a tax-deductible donation to the USLT in one of our membership categories. Form may be downloaded from our web site or you may donate through PayPal.

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Sponsor (\$500 – \$999) Guardian (\$1,000 – \$1,499)
Savannah/Saluda Society (\$3,000 or more)



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