

CONSERVATION IN THE LAKELANDS

SERVING EIGHT COUNTIES IN THE WESTERN PIEDMONT OF SOUTH CAROLINA

► SPRING 2020

Land Trust Protects its 50,000th Acre

The Upper Savannah Land Trust exceeded the 50,000-acre mark in July of last year. Our 50,000th acre was one of 157 acres which were placed under conservation easement by long-time supporter and co-founder **L. B. Adams Jr.** The tract is near the town of Ninety Six, planted with longleaf pine, bordered by a Saluda River tributary, an old sunken road, and a National Historic Site. It is very likely that our 50,000th acre was once scouted, hunted, farmed, traded upon, and fought over by both Cherokees and colonial-era settlers, on what was once the South Carolina frontier. Our 50,000th acre is accessed by a lonely dirt road, as is much of rural South Carolina, which still feels a bit like the frontier. Its future will be one of many possible outcomes, whether farm or forest, wild or cultivated, but thanks to our conservation easement it will never be paved, mined, urbanized, commercialized, or industrialized. It is private land, and will likely remain so, but it will also remain rural, and will help hold the rest of the world together in ways that too many people take for granted.

Of course, that's asking quite a lot of one acre, or 157 acres, but it is emblematic of all 50,740 acres now protected by the Upper Savannah Land Trust across ten counties of South Carolina, 99% of which are in our eight-county service area. That is a staggeringly large number for a small-town land trust with a dedicated staff of half a person! That number was accumulated over almost twenty years of hard work, most of it volunteer work. We can be proud of that number, and proud of all the great conservation easements it represents, like the others established in 2019:

Curtis Tuten's 365 acres in Saluda County, well-managed timberland assembled by Curtis, an enthusiastic tree farmer and



View across a wildlife opening on the 157-acre conservation easement, established by L.B. Adams Jr. in July 2019, on land previously owned by John W. and Holly Self Drummond, to whose memory the Adams family dedicated this easement, which put the Upper Savannah Land Trust's protected area over the 50,000-acre mark. The Drummonds were pioneers in promoting conservation and environmental education in South Carolina.

conservationist who had just celebrated his 90th birthday.

William Crawford's 225 acres in Laurens County, with a working forest, a beautiful pond, and a family hunting preserve surrounding an historic nineteenth century home.

And even **Dave Hildebrand's** 2.8-acre addition to an existing conservation easement on a cove of Lake Greenwood, also in Laurens County, protecting a road intersection that was otherwise "prime real estate," a parcel he

UPPER SAVANNAH LAND TRUST



CONSERVATION EXCELLENCE

Visit us at our web site:
www.scuslt.com
Or follow us on Facebook at
www.facebook.com/scuslt

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 14, Issue 1



USLT Officers & Board, 2020-21

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Wade Harrison

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Rossie Corwon honored with Conservation Award

Rarely does the Upper Savannah Land Trust make a decision without the full knowledge and approval of its Board President, but in this case the Board members and staff went renegade, and presented the Land Trust's annual Peggy Adams Conservation Award to Board President Rossie Corwon. Named in honor of co-founder and past-president Peggy Adams, who along with husband L. B. Adams provided much of the organization's initial vision and energy, the award is presented each year to a person who has made outstanding contributions to further the mission of the Upper Savannah Land Trust.

As Peggy herself said, "*B and I may be the land trust's past, but Rossie has guided its future. Our organization has benefited so much from her professional experience, her dedication to conservation, and her genuine personality. Under her leadership, USLT has achieved the level of accountability and respect necessary to continue as one of the top land trust organizations in the state. What an amazing contribution! Thank you, Rossie!*" **Rossie Honored, Continued on Back Page**



Board President Rossie Corwon (right) is congratulated by Peggy Adams (left) on her selection as recipient of the 2020 Peggy Adams Conservation Award at the Land Trust's 2020 Annual Meeting, held on March 12, 2020.

From the President's Desk . . .

Greetings Fellow Quarantinians,

The Upper Savannah Land Trust executive committee debated and ultimately decided in early March to convene our required Annual Meeting on schedule. We respect the decisions of those that chose not to attend, enjoyed visiting with all of you who did attend, and are glad we all managed to stay safe and healthy. As always, we certainly appreciate your support and the support of our event sponsors.

In my work experience as an engineer, working for the textile, paper, and utility industries, my job description always included duties of "Environmental and Special Projects Engineer." I was a young engineer in the 80's when industry was coming to terms with the Clean Water Act and hazardous waste regulations. While a distinction was always implied, one boss actually asked me, "Are you an environmentalist or an industrialist? You need to decide." Very much an either/or proposition. I decided that I can be both.

This is one reason that I am such a strong advocate for the mission and methods of the Land Trust. It is not an either/or proposition. It is a perfect vehicle to incentivize private land owners in our mission to encourage and support conservation of natural and scenic lands, farms, forests, waterways, and open spaces. Even without allowing public access and use, land is preserved for the greater public benefit.

There must be a balance. I mention this to draw attention to a bill introduced by State Senator Vincent Sheehan (D-Kershaw) with co-sponsors from both parties, which includes the Thirty by Thirty Conservation Act, aiming "to conserve 30% of South Carolina's land by the year 2030." SC has almost 20.5 million land acres; 30% of that is approximately 6.1 million acres. According to the SC Conservation Bank, only about 14%, or approximately 2.9 million acres, are under protection as conservation land, about one-third of which is by private conservation easements, slightly more than a third by the federal government, a fifth by state government, and the rest by local governments. Another interesting factor in this equation is that already in SC there are 13 million acres of timberland, with 11 million of that in private hands, with small but growing percentage protected by conservation easements like most of ours, which allow sustainable timber harvesting to continue. This will be an interesting legislation to watch.

I appreciate our hardworking board members, volunteers, and two Executive Directors with whom I have had the pleasure to know and support. I was humbled and honored to be awarded the Peggy Adams Conservation Award this year, and I want to share this award with these folks who also take the mission of the Land Trust to heart.

As I write this, it looks like SC may be re-opening in the next few days and weeks; Y'all be safe out there.

Sincerely,
Rossie Corwon

Land Trust Supporters in 2019

We also thank all of you that have already made 2020 contributions, and are especially grateful to the businesses that sponsored our 2020 Annual Meeting: AgSouth, Enviva, Finite Carbon, Greenwood County Soil & Water, Manley-Garvin, McDonald-Patrick, Norbord, Pollard Lumber, Sanders Wealth Mgt, SC-SIC, Stone & Associates, and Tinsley & Adams.

We gratefully acknowledge the support of members, sponsors, and participants in 2019:

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

Capsugel Holdings, US
Davis Family Foundation Inc.
Sanders Wealth Management, LLC*
Timberland Holdings & Mgt, LLC

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

Steve Mullins
Log Creek Timber, Inc
Storey Foundation Inc.
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Sponsor, \$500 - \$999

Norbord Inc.
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Steve Priskey
J. William Rogers, II
Charlotte Ross
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Sandy and Wayne Steffen
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Friend, up to \$99

Frank and Lisa Wideman
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Kathleen Culp
Rick Green
Wade Harrison
Lucia and Ned Jaycocks
Greenwood County Forestry Assoc.
Lee Padgett
Hugh Riley
Clark Rushton
Jill Warner
Caroline Jones Jenkins
Drew Lanham
Paul Palmer
Curt Rone
Meg and Dan Holcombe
Thelma Michelle Moore

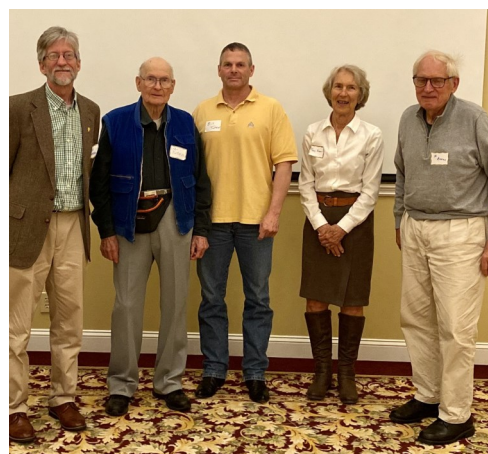
Easement Donors also contributing Administrative and Stewardship Fees

Curtis Tuten (B&B Tree Farms),
William Crawford (Cedar Valley Farm),
L. B. Adams Jr., David Hildebrand

Sporting-Clay Teams contributing Entrance Fees

Boscobel Golf, Commercial AC,
Control Stop, Enviva, McDonald-Patrick,
Voya Financial, Gimme Another Shot
(Mike Corwon), John Patrick,
Thompson Forest Consultants.

* 2019 Sporting Clays Event Sponsor.



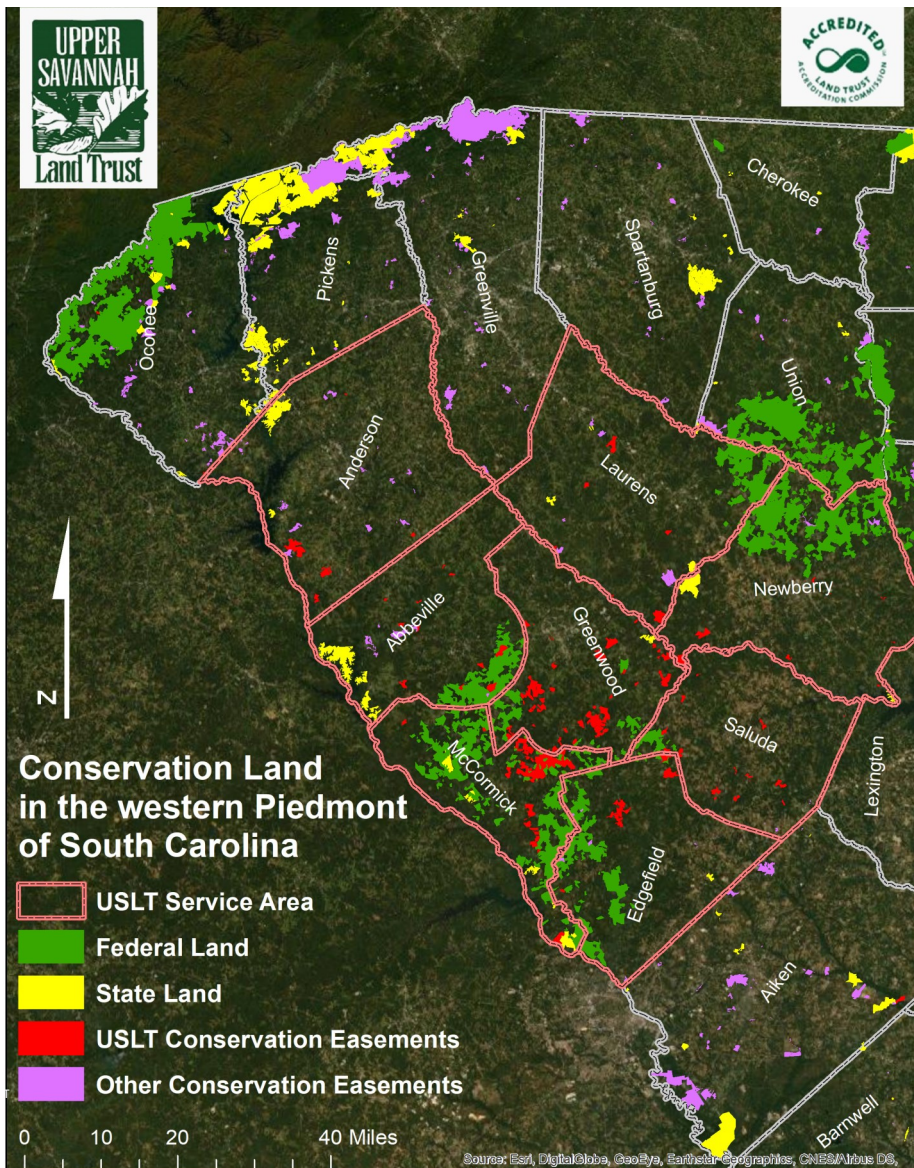
2019 Conservation Easement Donors recognized at 2020 Annual Meeting

Pictured here (left to right) are Executive Director Wade Harrison, Curtis Tuten and his son Bill (365 acres in Saluda County), and Peggy and B. Adams (157 acres in Greenwood County). Not pictured are William Crawford (225 acres) and Dave Hildebrand (3- acre addition), both in Laurens County. These four easements projects totaled 751 acres in Greenwood, Laurens, and Saluda Counties.



\$2,500 Grant awarded to Upper Savannah Land Trust from the Greenwood County Community Foundation!

Awarded in December 2019, the grant will fund the Land Trust's Community Conservation Priorities spatial analysis, a mapping exercise to identify land conservation priorities in Greenwood County. Pictured (left to right): Jeff Smith, GCCF President; Wade Harrison, USLT Executive Director; Rossie Corwon, USLT Board Chair; Mary Woodiwiss, GCCF Director of Grants and Projects.



The Upper Savannah Land Trust exceeded 50,000 acres in 2019, adding 751 acres in new or expanded easements to its list of conserved lands in the Upstate. The map above and the table below show the 123 easements (shaded red on map) totaling 50,740 acres held by the USLT as of December 31, 2019. Acreage total may be affected by rounding to the nearest acre.

CONSERVATION EASEMENTS AND ACRES BY COUNTY 2019		
County	Number of Easements	Acres
Abbeville	10	2,811
Aiken	1	342
Anderson	7	2,731
Edgefield	6	4,524
Greenwood	44	15,092
Laurens	8	2,815
McCormick	16	16,795
Newberry	12	2,280
Oconee	2	126
Saluda	17	3,223
Total	123	50,740

Conservation Bank Director Raleigh West Addresses 2020 Annual Meeting



The Guest Speaker for the Land Trust's 2020 Annual Meeting was Raleigh West, originally of Moncks Corner, who was selected to head the SC Conservation Bank in May 2019. Raleigh shares his perspectives on the importance of land conservation to South Carolina's natural resources, recreational opportunities, business climate, and quality of life, and suggested that our Piedmont operating area was threatened by encroachment from Greenville Spartanburg, Columbia, and Augusta and that we need to sustain its rural character while we still can. West gave high marks to the Upper Savannah Land Trust for such an impressive record of volunteer-based land conservation.

Land Trust's 50,000th acre

Continued from front page

acquired for the sole purpose of protecting it, generously establishing the easement at his own expense with no claim of tax benefits.

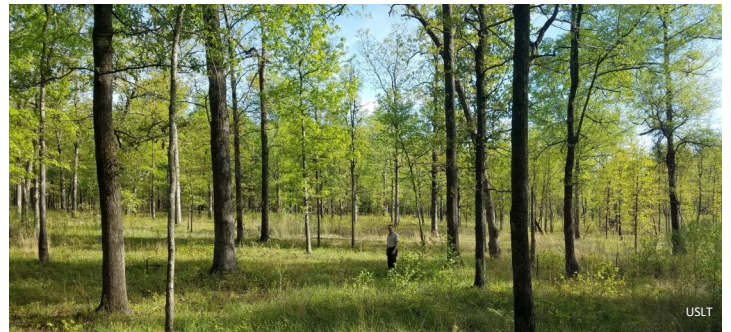
50,000 is also a small number, and not a place to stop. On average, since the 1990s, SC has lost about that many acres of rural land to urban or suburban development every year. So let's keep it going.

THANK YOU for your own support of private land conservation. If you received this newsletter, you have helped our cause, whether by donating a conservation easement on your own land, or donating badly needed funds to help us operate, or simply donating your own time and efforts to advance our work.

Let's celebrate this 50,000-acre milestone, but then get back to work and protect 50,000 more.



Landowner Curtis Tuten shows off the Upper Savannah Land Trust sign on his easement-protected land in Saluda County, which brought our acreage tally up to 50,740 in December of 2019.



The Nature of Social Distance

by Wade Harrison, Executive Director

As I write this, it is a very odd and alarming time in human affairs, and yet, as we watched our medical, social, economic, and political institutions reel from the emergence of a global pandemic, we also watched winter turn to spring, and nature go about its business of leafing out, greening up, building nests, and finding mates. Pretty much as usual, and thankfully very pretty.

For those of us fortunate enough to have access to a significant expanse of nature, enjoying our woods and waters has been particularly gratifying this spring. We are admonished to practice "social distancing," to prevent, or at least to slow, the spread of this globetrotting viral infection. The nominal approach has been to remain "sheltered in place," exposed only to close family members, except when venturing out on essential errands, and provided that we maintain at least six feet of distance between neighbors, store clerks, and passers-by. A more creative approach to social distancing, rightly or wrongly, has been to venture out of doors, unsheltered, to places where you or your family are assured of being alone, with little or no probability of placing yourselves, or others, at risk from unintended infection.

The national news noted the unintended consequences of such behavior early on, in which the demand for nature sometimes outstripped supply, creating crowded trails, parks, beaches, and boat landings, making social-distancing difficult, and creating challenging enforcement issues. As a result, we found that public campgrounds, picnic areas, or other visitor facilities that can draw a crowd were closed. Debates ensued over how to manage popular outdoor recreational venues consistent with social-distancing requirements. Different agencies, geographies, and jurisdictions are handling these decisions differently, sometimes changing course, and there are usually no perfect answers.

In rural South Carolina, we are fortunate that National Forests and the state's Wildlife Management Areas, the lands if not the facilities, are generally open. And of course, our many private lands are open to their owners and invited guests. The very existence of private farms, timberlands, and hunting preserves helps enable a culture and an economy in which land can remain less-developed, communities further apart, crowding of people less common. It's easy to take that for granted in rural South Carolina. I've heard many folks say things like "Social distancing is easy for us country folk... we measure it in miles, not feet." Or, from a forester, "I've made a career out of social-distancing, it's called cruising timber." But it isn't like that for people in the metropolitan areas. Unless you own your land, and can get out to it, there are people everywhere, walking the streets and sidewalks, looking for pieces of nature, often the same special place that everyone else is looking for.

Social Distance, Continued on back page

Sporting Clays in Edgefield!

The Land Trust held its second annual "Sporting Clays for Conservation" fundraiser in November at the amazing Palmetto Shooting Complex in Edgefield, hosted by the National Wild Turkey Federation. The Federation's motto "Save the Habitat, Save the Hunt" is perfectly aligned with the Upper Savannah Land Trust's efforts to save natural lands for traditional uses and values. We improved our return-on-investment over last year, raising close to \$8,000 toward our operations and stewardship. We couldn't have done it



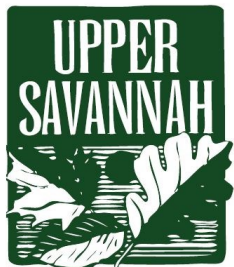
without the cool heads and helping hands of our organizing committee, consisting of former boardmember Stan Todd, and current members Rossie Corwon, Andy Robinson, John Patrick, Charles Kemp, Robyn Agnew, and Sandy Gresham. And especially not without the TEAMS and SPONSORS listed on Page 5.

Rossie Honored (continued from page 2)

Retired in 2018 as Greenwood County Engineer, Rossie joined the Land Trust Board in 2012, and was elected Vice-President in only her second year, rising to the Presidency in 2014. Serving in that capacity for six years running, Rossie led the organization through its first ever accreditation, a five-year strategic plan, expanded fundraising, and a nearly 50% increase in protected acreage. She also earned the distinction of serving the longest consecutive Board presidency in the Land Trust's 20-year history, and it's not over yet!

The award was presented by past-president Brad Thompson, who had nominated Rossie for the award, and noted her special interest in watershed protection, a hallmark of the mission of the Upper Savannah Land Trust.

**Conservation Easements
conserve vital lands
while easing tax burdens
on donors.**



Land Trust
430 Helix Rd.
Greenwood,
South Carolina
29646

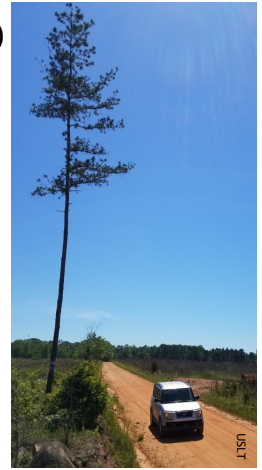


CONSERVATION EXCELLENCE

Social Distance (continued from page 4)

Maybe this is yet another virtue of conservation easements, preserving the social distance that rural living has always afforded. That lonely road, that long view, those miles of pine trees, are actually safe and healthy places in a world where population density has turned dangerous in a way we haven't had to face for a hundred years.

You have to wonder... will we now strive to protect more of these lonely places from development? Or will more of us seek them out, these rural lands and wild places that are still left, inadvertently making them less rural and less wild? I like option one.



A lonely dirt road...
social distance.

We Need Your Support

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

Friend (up to \$99) Family (\$100 - \$249) Patron (\$250 - \$499)
Sponsor (\$500 - \$999) Guardian (\$1,000 - \$1,499)
Savannah/Saluda Society (\$3,000 or more)