



CONSERVATION IN THE PIEDMONT



SERVING EIGHT COUNTIES IN THE WESTERN PIEDMONT OF SOUTH CAROLINA ► SUMMER 2023



Dr. J. Drew Lanham (left) addresses an appreciative audience of conservation supporters at Lake Greenwood's Drummond Center at Upper Savannah Land Trust's 2023 Annual Meeting in April. More Annual Meeting News on p. 4-5.

Dr. J. Drew Lanham headlines Land Trust Annual Meeting with thoughts on land, love, and learning

At its 2023 Annual Meeting, on a rainy night in April, Upper Savannah Land Trust was privileged to welcome Dr. J. Drew Lanham, Clemson professor, ornithologist, landowner, conservationist, philosopher-poet, and native son of Edgefield County, as its guest speaker.

While Drew's projects at Clemson initially focused on the relationships between forest management and habitat for birds and other wildlife, he has increasingly been able to combine his expertise in conservation science with personal, historical, and cultural narratives around the relationships between people and nature. He has become a story-

teller, a poet, and an advocate for understanding and celebrating one's historical and cultural connection to the land.

As a model for conservation, this combination of science and story is in large part what inspired the prestigious McArthur Foundation to name Drew last fall to its list of 2022 McArthur Foundation Fellows, an honor popularly known as the "genius grant."

Introduced at the podium by USLT Board member and past-president Rossie Corwon, Drew spoke humbly and eloquently of his Edgefield County origins, his love for family, and his love for land. But the power of his voice and writing boomed as he shared an essay, from his first book, *The Home Place: Memoirs of a Colored Man's Love Affair with Nature*. "I think about land..." he intoned, with dramatic pause, "in fact, I am possessed by it... the lay of the land, how it came to be, what natural forces have changed it, what human forces have mangled it, how concrete and asphalt doom it. I think about the promise it holds for the future and what history it preserves from the past... how it rises and runs, lifts and falls..." and we were off on a tour of South Carolina's geography and ecology,



USLT past president Rossie Corwon (L) presents Drew Lanham with a gift of "Ninety Six pottery" in appreciation for his address to the Land Trust membership.

BREAKING NEWS! USLT's application to RENEW ACCREDITATION for the period 2023-2028 has been accepted by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission!

Demonstrating commitment to these rigorous standards every 5 years can be a tedious process, but it ensures our continual improvement. We are humbled by your letters of support and encouragement, grateful for your trust, and proud to be recognized for 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 pursue conservation of natural, historic, and scenic lands—farms, forests, waterways, and open spaces in the western Piedmont of South Carolina.

USLT's 8-county service area encompasses **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 Piedmont**
Volume 17, Issue 1

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CONSERVATION EXCELLENCE

USLT Officers & Board, 2023-24

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Wade Harrison

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Latest USLT Projects span 5 counties, and make increasing use of Conservation Bank

From late 2022 through the summer of 2023, USLT strengthened and expanded an existing conservation easement in Edgefield and Saluda Counties, closed a new conservation easement in Saluda County (see photos at right) and closed two new conservation easements in Greenwood County, cumulatively 1,170 acres.

Projects currently underway, approved by the USLT Board and expected to close in 2023, include acreage in Abbeville County, Greenwood County, and even a small foray into Aiken County. Together these projects will add another 940 acres for a total of some 2,110 acres since December of last year.

The recent Saluda County project was partially funded by the SC Conservation Bank, which contributed about 30% of the appraised value of the conserva-

tion easement. The landowner donated the remaining value. This approach to land conservation is becoming increasingly popular, as we have requested Conservation Bank support on the pending projects in both Abbeville and Aiken Counties, and will likely make an additional request this fall for at least one other project near Bradley in Greenwood County.

Meanwhile two Greenwood County projects completed this month in the vicinity of Epworth and Ninety Six were fully donated by none other than “B” and Peggy Adams. One expands a previously protected area at Epworth along the Savannah-Saluda divide by 635 acres, and includes what B says was the last cotton field in the county, which has now been through at least one rotation of loblolly pine, and is now replanted in longleaf pine! The



This year, Mark Kiser of Newberry SC completed his 2nd project with USLT since 2016, this one being 288 acres in Saluda County, partially funded by the SC Conservation Bank, including diverse working forest and a large reserve of mature hardwoods along Halfway Swamp Creek.

See [Latest USLT Projects](#), back page

From the President’s Desk . . .

Dear Friends,

I am honored to be serving as Board President for The Upper Savannah Land Trust, an organization that I have been involved with since 2012 – initially as a landowner and then as a board member in 2018. I am privileged to be associated with caring, outstanding Board members, easement landowners, and supporters. I am grateful to all the past leaders for their successes in developing an exemplary organization!

USLT’s mission is to “encourage and pursue the conservation of natural, historic, and scenic lands — farms, forests, waterways, and open spaces in the western

Piedmont of South Carolina.” This mission will be my focus during the coming year. As a lifelong forester, I don’t know of a more worthy cause than to contribute my time and experience to USLT’s mission of encouraging the conservation of forests, waterways and natural spaces. Without conservation efforts many acres and special places would be lost forever to development. This loss would certainly be detrimental to our environment and resources. America’s first forester, Gifford Pinchot, summed it up: “Without natural resources life itself is impossible.... without abundant natural resources prosperity is out of reach.” During my life I have been blessed by experiencing the

uniqueness of nature and want future generations to have that same opportunity. None of us really “own” land – what we own is the responsibility to improve upon what we pass on to others.

I appreciate and look forward to the support and guidance of all our friends in continuing to fulfill this mission and will serve USLT and its members to the best of my ability.

Sincerely,

Wayne Steffen

Board President 2023-24

The American Revolution happened here!



Events associated with the American Revolution occurred with remarkable frequency here in the western Piedmont of South Carolina. The 250th Anniversary (formally known as the “Sestercentennial”) of these events is upon us, and so it is an excellent time to renew our acquaintance with the places and stories we’ve long known, like the Old Star Fort at the Ninety Six National Historic Site, the battleground trails of the Musgrove Mill State Historic Site, roadside markers and museum exhibits you remember. A state commission has been working since 2018 to discover, re-discover, celebrate, educate, and interpret the history of the American Revolution, with committees distributed around the state where the events occurred.

USLT is working with at least one of these committees, seeing to document and evaluate events of the “Greater Ninety Six” area that occurred beyond the well-known footprint of the Ninety Six National Historic Site. Our expectation is that several of our existing conservation easements already protect sites of some Revolutionary stories and events, and future projects may protect others. And we suspect there are people, places, and events connected to our geography who have been mostly forgotten, or their locations lost, or their stories untold.

Great drama played out on these lands we know well. Combatants and convoys on foot, horseback, and carriage traveled up and down old roads and trails, many of which we still use today. Not only was blood spilled in battle, but great councils were held, and pivotal decisions were made— in farmhouses, under tents, in muster fields and battlefields that now grow pine trees, or peaceful pasture grass.

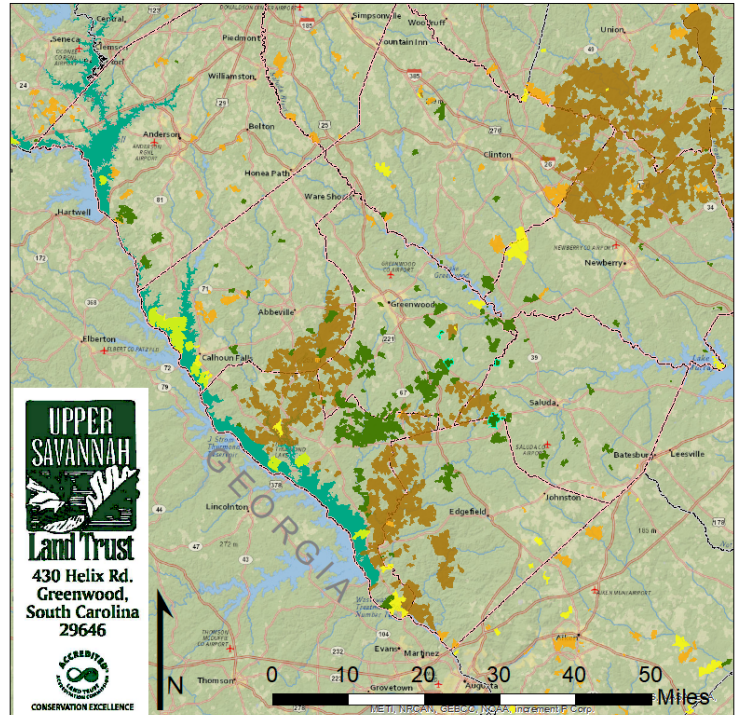
Does protecting these places help preserve their stories?

We think so.

— Wade Harrison



Latest USLT Map & Easement Tally



County	Projects	Acres
Abbeville	10	2933
Aiken	1	342
Anderson	7	3335
Edgefield	6	5018
Greenwood	47	17273
Laurens	8	2815
McCormick	14	18276
Newberry	12	2280
Oconee	2	126
Saluda	17	3069
Total	124	55466

Conservation Land in the western Piedmont of South Carolina, August 2023

- Upper Savannah Land Trust
- Recent USLT Projects
- Counties in USLT service area
- National Forests & Parks
- South Carolina DNR
- Other Conservation Land
- Army Corps of Engineers Land & Water

Now protecting 55,466 acres, USLT has added approximately 1100 acres since the 2022 newsletter was published. The 124 projects represent a revised accounting which consolidates some adjacent prior easement projects with common land-owners. Also, projects that straddle county boundaries are tabulated only in the county with a majority of the acres rather than counted as separate projects in each county. One easement in upper Oconee County is not shown on this map.



SAVE THE DATE!

6th ANNUAL SPORTING CLAYS
FOR CONSERVATION

Friday, October 27th, 2023

Sponsorships available!
\$1000 - \$500 - \$250 - \$150

Each \$1000 sponsorship will be matched dollar-for-dollar by Green Diamond. See Page 5.

For updates and registration check www.scuslt.com

Palmetto Shooting Complex
535 Gary Hill Rd
Edgefield SC

Drew Lanham

Continued from front page

rivers and wetlands, coast and mountains, highways and backroads, until his lyrical narrative landed back at home, in Edgefield and Ninety Six, with stories that might've been composed on a deer stand, or wandering the edge between the managed loblolly pine holding together the tired soil, and the deep shade and lingering wildness of creek-bottom hardwoods. Drew's words remind us that these lands we love carry for him an undeniable legacy of enslavement and oppression, which colors his own relationship with nature, his stories about the cattle-raising labors of his father, the folklore shared by his grandmother, and the resilience of people, places, and wild things. Drew's love of the land, and his aspiration for what it can teach us and how it can bring us together, touched everyone in the audience.



Guest Speaker Drew Lanham (L) and USLT founder and past-president Peggy Adams, two of the SC Piedmont's greatest philosophers of land stewardship, confer amid the mingling crowd at the Drummond Center.

Passing the Torch...



Doug Bell presides over one last USLT business meeting with smooth dignity befitting an experienced attorney.

Outgoing USLT Board President **Doug Bell** presided over his second Annual Meeting, at which he passed the torch to incoming President **Wayne Steffen**. **Chuck Gresham** is the Board's new Vice-President; **Rick Green** and **Andy Robinson** will continue their respective roles as Secretary and Treasurer. We extend BIG THANKS for the long service of **John Patrick** and **Frank Wideman**, who stepped off the USLT Board this year, and a big WELCOME to our newest Board member, **Bess Park**, who brings her non-profit experience, deep roots in the Greenwood area, and creative passion that springs from a career in performing arts.



Wayne Steffen (L) recognizes our many generous sponsors, and begins working on his "managing Wade Harrison" skills.

Bill Stringer, champion of native plants, awarded USLT's 2023 Peggy Adams Conservation Award

Each year the Land Trust presents the Peggy Adams Conservation Award, named after our founder and long-time president, to someone for their outstanding work in furthering the USLT mission. With great pleasure, Executive Director Wade Harrison presented the award at the USLT Annual Meeting to Dr. Bill Stringer, Professor Emeritus of Agronomy at Clemson University, and past president of the SC Native Plant Society. In addition to several other positions at the Native Plant Society, he is the long-time site



Bill Stringer (L) accepts the 2023 Peggy Adams Conservation Award from Executive Director Wade Harrison.

manager for the Parks Mill Spider Lily Preserve on Stevens Creek in McCormick County. Managed by the Native Plant Society, owned by the Naturaland Trust, and protected in perpetuity by USLT Conservation Easement, the site is one of the crown jewels of cooperation and collaboration among partners in land conservation. Bill is not only passionate about *Hymenocallis coronaria*, the native spider lily of Parks Mill, but all native plants, including the native grasses he's helped many of us learn on roadsides and in oak savannas, and he's also a great student of history, or has certainly become one because the Parks Mill site includes a mostly intact water-powered grist mill which he and his team have protected and restored as lovingly as they're protecting the habitat for spider lilies.



Bill Stringer stands on a carefully selected rock amid the shoals and spider lilies of Stevens Creek. The USLT mission involves conservation of "natural, historic, and scenic lands;" the Parks Mill site which Bill manages has all three of these virtues.

Thanks to our Land Trust Supporters!

We gratefully acknowledge the support of our members, donors, sponsors, & event participants in 2022!

Savannah/Saluda Society, \$3,000 and higher

Estate of Gene Berry
David & Deborah Brett
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Foundation, \$1,500 - \$2,999

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Jennifer Scruggs
Sandy & Wayne Steffen
Fred Suggs, Jr.
Brad & Pam Thompson
Jill Herrin Warner
Aaron & Elizabeth Wood

Our friends at Green Diamond are offering an amazing opportunity this year...

The Green Diamond Challenge!

Make a tax-deductible gift of \$1,000 or more to USLT during the balance of 2023, and **Green Diamond will match your gift, dollar-for-dollar, up to as much as \$25,000.**

If you've ever considered a gift of this magnitude, please make it happen this year!

Help us expand our land protection and stewardship capacity!

(see enclosed Giving Envelope)



Conservation Easement Donors 2022-2023

Scott & Sharon Turner (2022)
Stoney Hill LLC (2022)
Timberhaven LLC (2022)
Mark Kiser (2023)
L.B. Jr & Margaret Adams (2023)
Kim Fleming (2023, pending)
Dean Acres LLC (2023, pending)
Bob McCartney (2023, pending)
Dr. Bryan Green (2023, pending)

USLT's 2022 Sporting Clays for Conservation

Teams

American Forest Management
Beal Lumber
Canal Wood
Charles K. Doolittle (3rd Place Team)
Clemson Tigers (2nd Place Team)
Davis Land & Timber
Darby's Boys
Enviva
First Citizens
Freightliner of Augusta
Green Diamond
Jim Whitehead's Best One Tire
Kleinschmidt—Near Miss
Kleinschmidt—Near Hit
Team Loners
Orange Crush
Ridge Parts & Supply
Rocky Knoll (1st Place Team)
The Territories
Thompson Forest Consultants
Tidewater Equipment Company
Upper Savannah Shooters Assn
West Fraser
Youth Team—Emerald High School
Youth Team—Mid-Carolina 4H Shooting (Youth Champion)

Join us again Oct 27, 2023!
\$1000 sponsorships will be matched by Green Diamond!



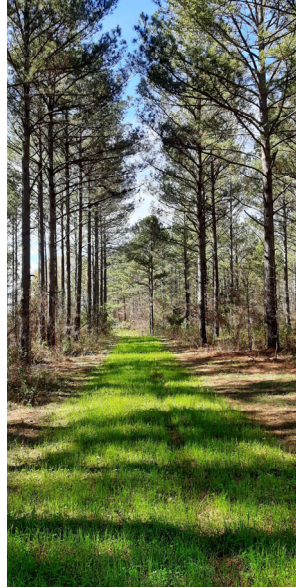
USLT salutes the Rocky Knoll team (above left), and the Mid-Carolina 4H Youth Shooting Team (above center & far right) for highest overall score and highest Youth Team score at the 2022 Sporting Clays for Conservation fundraiser. Many thanks to all participating teams, sponsors, and our hosts at the National Wild Turkey Federation's Palmetto Shooting Complex.

Latest USLT Projects (continued from page 2)

other property includes upland, floodplain, and slopes on either side of Henley Creek, just west of Ninety Six National Historic Site, protecting 298 acres of working forest with embedded features that represent Native American legacies.



Beaver dam on Six Mile Creek near the Savannah-Saluda divide. USLT Conservation Easement donated by B & Peggy Adams in August 2023.



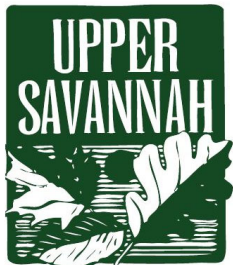
Woods road through mature loblolly pine (left) and hardwood slope with blooms of pawpaw and redbud (above) near Henley Creek. USLT Conservation Easement donated by B & Peggy Adams in August 2023.

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

We Need Your Support (See Page 5!)

Please consider a tax-deductible donation to USLT in one of our membership categories. Use the enclosed envelope, or visit www.scuslt.com to download our membership form or donate through PayPal.

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Sponsor (\$500-\$999) **Guardian (\$1,000 - \$1,499)**
Foundation (\$1,500 - \$2,999) Savannah/Saluda Society (\$3,000 or more)



Land Trust
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