



For Immediate Release

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Mixed Results for Land Conservation in 2013 Legislative Session

Raleigh, N.C. – In the budget bill finalized by the General Assembly this week, legislators took a step forward by providing ongoing funding for the state’s conservation trust funds and streamlining the trust fund structure. The strong foundation for conservation in the budget bill was particularly important following tax reform legislation that eliminated a key land conservation tool.

The state budget bill includes several positive items for land conservation. The bill:

- Allocates – over the two year budget cycle – \$24 million to the Clean Water Management Trust Fund (CWMTF), \$24 million to the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) and \$3.4 million for the Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund (ADFPTF).
- Streamlines the state’s trust funds by combining the operations of the CWMTF and the Natural Heritage Trust Fund. The budget will also increase the focus of the newly combined fund on land conservation projects.
- Further increases funding available for conservation by allocating to the general fund the repayment of previously incurred debt by the Clean Water Management, former Natural Heritage Trust Fund, and the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund.

Land for Tomorrow will continue to work with legislators to mitigate the impact of other budget bill and tax reform provisions that restrict land conservation. The budget bill eliminates the long-standing dedicated source of revenue (a small portion of the deed stamp tax) for land conservation. This reliable source of funding helped create and expand numerous state and local parks and conserve other natural areas.

While Land for Tomorrow is grateful that the legislature’s tax reform bill preserves complete deductibility for charitable contributions, the legislature eliminated the the income tax credit for land owners who donate land or easements for conservation. The North Carolina Conservation Tax Credit has leveraged significant outside funding and helped protect more than 230,000 acres at a fraction of the cost of an outright purchase of the land.

With the inclusion of funding for critical land conservation in the budget bill, the General Assembly has shown it recognizes the benefits of protecting our state’s natural wonders for future generations. These land conservation investments will create tremendous economic

benefits, including boosts to our state's tourism, agriculture, and outdoor recreation industries, while also helping to protect land around military bases and providing clean drinking water to our communities. Land for Tomorrow looks forward to working with Governor Pat McCrory and legislators to build on this year's budget, to account for the loss of the conservation tax credit and to ensure adequate investment in conserving our state's land and water resources continues.

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[Land for Tomorrow](#), a coalition of conservation, agriculture, wildlife, business and local government organizations, is committed to preserving and protecting North Carolina's land and water resources. Its goal is to increase public awareness of the need to protect additional lands that are critical to the economic well-being and quality of life. Land for Tomorrow seeks to help the state reach its declared goal of conserving a million acres, and ensure that critical land will be available to provide clean air and drinking water, strengthen our communities, promote job growth and enhance the quality of life for generations to come. For additional information about Land for Tomorrow, visit www.land4tomorrow.org.