

FREE
CONSERVATION
PUBLICATION

A NORTH CAROLINA WILDLIFE HABITAT FOUNDATION PROGRESS REPORT



“DON’T LET THE DREAM DIE”

-MR. EDDIE BRIDGES, FOUNDING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

FEBRUARY 2024

MISSION STATEMENT

The North Carolina Wildlife Habitat Foundation, Inc., is a Nonprofit Organization formed to assist in the acquisition, management and protection of wildlife habitat within the State of North Carolina and to promote conservation education for the benefit of future generations.



FOUNDER'S VISION

In 1992 Mr. Eddie Bridges established the North Carolina Wildlife Habitat Foundation (NCWHF) in Greensboro by creating an unexpendable endowment fund to sustain wildlife habitat and to conduct habitat preservation projects that affect a broad range of species throughout the state.

Mr. Bridges envisioned the principle would always be maintained and only the earnings were designated for habitat preservation and improvements based on the donor's pledges. Mr. Bridges achieved his vision and the Foundation continues to operate on his principle concept today. The Founder also invested in wildlife habitat conservation to ensure our future generations will have access to wildlife habitat in North Carolina. The NCWHF is managed by an all-volunteer Board of Directors (Trustees) with only one paid full-time employee, the Operations Director.



Founding Executive Director

Eddie Bridges (1933 – 2021)

Executive Committee

Greg Erwin – Chairman

Teena Koury – Vice Chairman

Richard Vanore Jr. – Treasurer

John Hagan – Secretary

Operations Director

Theodore C. Bethea II

Trustees

Thomas Berry | John McKee

Sandy Brady | Phillip Murdock

Tracy Brooks | Mark Ruffin

Rocky Carter | Allen Sharpe

Gary Graham | Harrison Stewart

Greg Harrell | Will Stewart

Kelly Harrill | Jay Stuart

Scott Love | Tom Wall

William McIvor | Jess Washburn

Eric Winter

Administrative Assistant

Michelle Sharpe



CONSERVATION EASEMENT PROGRAM

The North Carolina Wildlife Habitat Foundation monitors a broad portfolio of 83 Conservation Easements in order to protect over 4,194 acres wildlife habitat in partnership with the landowners. A Conservation Easement is a voluntary legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust or government agency that permanently limits uses of the land in order to protect its conservation values. Landowners retain many of their rights, including the right to own and use the land, sell it and pass it on to their heirs. Conservation Easements must provide public benefits, such as: water quality, farm and ranch land preservation, scenic views, wildlife habitat, outdoor recreation, education, and historic preservation.



CONSERVATION EASEMENTS PROTECT WILDLIFE HABITAT IN PERPETUITY

As a Conservation Easement steward, the NCWHF is responsible for ensuring the specific terms of all Conservation Easements are fully honored. The NCWHF Operations Director conducts annual site visits to our Conservation Easements to ensure compliance with all legal requirements and restrictions specific to each property. The NCWHF works in partnership with the landowners to protect and preserve wildlife habitat across the state.



The Operations Director monitors over 60 Conservation Easements on an annual basis throughout North Carolina.

ANNUAL YOUTH SPORTSMAN CAMP AT BEAVER POND SPORTING CLUB IN SNOW CAMP

In keeping with the Founder’s vision, the North Carolina Wildlife Habitat Foundation continues to promote conservation education for the development of our Future Generations. The NCWHF, in close partnership with the National Wild Turkey Federation, Ducks Unlimited, North Carolina Bowhunters Association, Boy Scouts of America, and North Carolina Wildlife Resource Commission, conducts an annual 2-day Youth Sportsman Camp

at the Beaver Pond Sporting Club in Snow Camp, North Carolina. State Wildlife Officers and Subject Matter Experts volunteer to provide youth with firearms safety training; as well as instruction on: tree stand safety, fishing techniques, conservation techniques, and how to call for waterfowl and turkeys. Our volunteers and sponsors are the key to enabling this meaningful educational experience.



2018: 65 Youth Trained
2019: 89 Youth Trained
2020: Cancelled / Pandemic
2021: 84 Youth Trained
2022: 65 Youth Trained
2023: 70 Youth Trained

NORTH CAROLINA WILDLIFE HABITAT FOUNDATION YOUTH SPORTSMAN CAMP



July 13, 2023: Todd Walters, Major League Fishing Touring Professional, provided a fishing clinic to all Youth Sportsmen and Sportswomen at Beaver Pond Sporting Club.

FUTURE GENERATIONS PROGRAM

The North Carolina Wildlife Habitat Foundation's Future Generations Program offers volunteer opportunities for young adults to develop leadership skills and positively impact the environment through local clean ups and habitat projects. The Future Generations also volunteer at the Annual Wildlife Extravaganza, the Annual Youth Sportsman Camp, and at various fundraising and community events.



February 6, 2021: Future Generations Cleanup at Cypress Park Stream in Greensboro



July 14, 2023: NCWHF Youth Sportsman Camp at Beaver Pond Sporting Club

April 1, 2023: NCWHF Youth Turkey Hunt at Summerfield Farms



November 19, 2023: The North Carolina Wildlife Habitat Foundation Future Generations, Board Members, and Gate City Rotary Club Volunteers conducted their third annual Daffodil bulb planting in Latham Park in Greensboro.

To date, a grand total of 5000 bulbs were planted to enhance wild bee habitat in Greensboro.

HABITAT PROJECTS

The NCWHF conducts a diverse range of habitat projects in partnership with other reputable conservation groups to protect wildlife habitat and enhance conservation education throughout North Carolina. Grants and sponsorships are the source for the NCWHF to conduct meaningful habitat projects as well as provide for conservation education opportunities that benefit our Future Generations. We are so thankful for the corporations, government organizations, groups, and individuals who graciously donate to the NCWHF and enable us to "Keep the Dream Alive".



In May 2021, noted conservationist and Bass Pro Shops founder Johnny Morris announced the expansion of White River Marine Group with the acquisition of Hatteras Yachts. To honor the legacy of dear friend and North Carolina conservation hero Eddie Bridges, Morris announced a \$1 million conservation pledge focused on the coastal area of North Carolina. Specifically, a portion of this incredible pledge was dedicated to the North Carolina Wildlife Habitat Foundation. Mr. Eddie Bridges enjoyed a very meaningful personal and professional relationship with Mr. Johnny Morris. The NCWHF will ensure Mr. Morris' pledge in honor of Mr. Eddie Bridges will have a lasting impact on Coastal Habitat in North Carolina.

NEW RIVER OYSTER HIGHWAY

In 2018, the NCWHF originally partnered with the City of Jacksonville and the NC General Assembly to create the New River Oyster Highway that achieved scientifically measurable success. On April 11, 2022, the Bass Pro Shops and Cabela's Outdoor Fund announced a grant to the NCWHF, as part of a larger donation in honor of the late Mr. Bridges. The NCWHF subsequently funded \$100,000 to the City of Jacksonville to expand the New River Oyster Highway in Jacksonville from 6 total acres to 12 total acres. The New River Estuary Oyster Highway is creating oyster habitat stepping stones in the central portion of the New River Estuary that support biogenic reefs via local hard-substrate subsidies, as well as river-wide enhanced oyster larval supply. The improved oyster reef fitness in the upper and middle New River Estuary improves biofiltration of sensitive estuarine waters, as well as supports a diverse aquatic animal community of ecologically and economically prized species via provision of essential fish habitat.

Benefit of Oyster Reefs:
Increased oyster biomass in the New River improves water quality



CURRENT HABITAT PROJECT:

RESTORING THE UPPER ROANOKE RIVER ALONG POLLOCK'S FERRY



To date, the NCWHF has committed \$200,000 of the \$500,000 grant in honor of Mr. Bridges from The Bass Pro Shops and Cabela's Outdoor Fund to the North Carolina Wildlife Resource Commission-led high-priority project with The Nature Conservancy to restore critical flood plain connectivity on the Upper Roanoke River along Pollocks Ferry in Halifax County.

Currently, barriers along the river have caused road flooding to neighboring communities and trapped water in the back swamps which leads to low dissolved oxygen that harms aquatic life.



BEFORE

North Carolina Wildlife Resource Commission and The Nature Conservancy restoration example from the Big Swash property on the Roanoke



AFTER

This important project includes restoring four impediments on the Pollock's Ferry Upper Game Lands property bordering Halifax County and Northampton County to open over three miles of Looking Glass Run and connect the surrounding floodplains. The primary goals of the project consist of significantly increasing diadromous fish habitat, reducing flooding, and improving water quality in the Roanoke River for both rare species and humans. This important restoration seeks to build upon the extensive work of multiple federal, state, and local partners to benefit the river for both rare species and humans. The project has a planned completion date of October 2024

RECENT PROJECTS

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliant Kayak and Canoe Access at Sutton Lake

On October 11, 2021, the NCWHF contributed \$15,000 to the North Carolina Wildlife Resource Commission to build the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliant Kayak and Canoe Access at Sutton Lake.



Riparian and Flood Plain Restoration along the Little Tennessee River

On October 11, 2021, the NCWHF provided \$15,000 to the North Carolina Wildlife Resource Commission to enhance riparian and flood plain connectivity along the Little Tennessee River in Macon County, North Carolina.



Scouts Fishing Pier for Camp Durant, Boy Scouts of America

On May 12, 2022, the NCWHF provided \$15,000 to Occoneechee Council, Camp Durant, Boy Scouts of America, to build a Scouts Fishing Pier at Lake Nello Teer in Carthage, North Carolina. The staff at Camp Durant train over 45,000 scouts a year and the new pier provides them access to bass, crappie, brim, bluegill, and catfish at Lake Nello Teer.



Courthouse Wildfield Project in the Pisgah National Forrest

On May 31, 2022, The NCWHF provided \$15,000 to the Pisgah Conservancy, a nonprofit organization, for the Courthouse Wildlife Field Project in the Pisgah National Forest in Transylvania County. The project consisted of clearing 3-acres of fully forested field in order to create habitat for a diverse group of species such as deer, grouse, and turkey.

Causey Farm Wildlife Habitat Study

On August 15, 2022, the NCWHF provided \$25,000 to the Greensboro Science Center to study Wildlife Habitat at our Conservation Easement Causey Farm in Liberty. The study seeks to determine how wildlife responds to habitat change on stream / wetland restoration projects. This is the most comprehensive baseline study ever conducted on stream and wetland restoration in North Carolina.



LEGACY PROJECTS

NCWHF and NC Department of Motor Vehicles License Tag Program

The NCWHF and NC DMV License Tag Program generates funds that protect our state's wonderful natural resources. Purchase your tag today.



Adopt an Acre Land Acquisition Project

The NCWHF created the Adopt-an-Acre program to purchase additional land for the North Carolina Game Lands program.



Jordan Lake Bass Habitat Project

The NCWHF funded \$25,000 for researchers at North Carolina State to lay gravel beds that enhance the survival of bass and bluegill populations.



Sandhills Quail Habitat Project

The NCWHF contributed \$43,000 toward a cooperative effort to improve quail habitat at the J. Robert Gordon Sandhills Field Trial area.



Core Sound Waterfowl Museum, Willow Pond Restoration

The NCWHF joined with the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission and Ducks Unlimited to restore a public waterfowl viewing site and resting area at Core Sound Waterfowl Museum, Harkers Island.



Wildlife Enhancement Project in Cataloochee Valley

The NCWHF partnered with the National Park Service and Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation to support a prescribed burn project that improved forage for elk, bear, grouse and small game in the Great Smoky Mountains.



Trout Stream Restoration in Peak Creek, North Carolina

The NCWHF and Trout Unlimited funded a project to stabilize stream banks and protect fish on Peak Creek in Ashe & Alleghany counties.



Frank A. Sharpe, Jr. Wildlife Education Center at Bur-Mill Park

The NCWHF contributed \$150,000 toward the \$300,000 Frank A. Sharpe, Jr. Wildlife Education Center at Bur-Mill Park as a joint effort with the city of Greensboro and Guilford County.



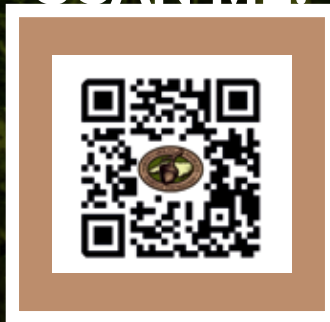
THANK YOU

The North Carolina Wildlife Habitat Foundation expresses a sincere Thank You to all of the Sponsors, Corporations, Government Agencies, and Individuals that enable us to acquire, manage, and protect wildlife habitat and promote conservation education for our Future Generations in North Carolina.





SCAN ME!



or visit our website at

NCWHF.ORG

Please explore the benefits of providing an estate giving contribution to the North Carolina Wildlife Habitat Foundation through your will or a living trust. A gift from your estate can provide on-going financial support as if you were continuing to make annual contributions in perpetuity. The principle of a gift to our Endowment Fund is never spent, so a portion of the earnings will always be available for habitat projects. Your estate planning attorney can draft a codicil, which is a legal document that amends an existing will, to include a gift to the NCWHF. Your contribution will help sustain wildlife habitat, support preservation projects that affect numerous species, and ensure our Future Generations will have access to numerous natural wonders throughout North Carolina.

For more information on the NCWHF, please contact Beau Bethea,
the Operations Director at beau@ncwhf.org.

The North Carolina Wildlife Habitat Foundation (NCWHF) is a 501 (C) (3) Nonprofit Organization and a portion of your donation is tax deductible. Consult your tax advisor for deductibility.

“KEEP THE DREAM ALIVE”