

## NEWS

---

### **NORTH CAROLINA COASTAL LAND TRUST AND PARTNERS PROTECT CRITICAL HABITAT IN COLUMBUS COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA**

*--Enviva Forest Conservation Fund at work--*

#### **U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities**

For IMMEDIATE RELEASE (August 20, 2018)

Greenville, S.C. and Durham, N.C. – Nearly 3,000 acres of wetlands, critical bottomland hardwood forests, and Waccamaw River frontage have been acquired by the North Carolina Coastal Land Trust. The project was made possible thanks to the support of a dozen partnering organizations, including the Enviva Forest Conservation Fund.

Considered one of the Southeast's wildest, most beautiful, and most ecologically significant rivers, the Waccamaw River runs approximately 140 miles across southeastern North Carolina and eastern South Carolina. The iconic river drains an area of approximately 1110 square miles in the coastal plain and is revered for its conservation value. The river water chemistry and geology are rare on the coast; as a result, many of the plants and animals that flourish in the Waccamaw are unique to its habitat and not found anywhere else on Earth. Nine rare and endemic fish and mollusk species have been documented. Rare bird species such as the Wayne's black-throated green warbler, a race of the species found only along the South Atlantic Coastal Plain, and swallow-tailed kites are known to occur in the area. American Rivers, a non-profit organization which protects wild rivers, restores damaged rivers, and conserves clean water for people and nature, designated the Waccamaw River in North and South Carolina as a National Blue Trail to promote outdoor recreation and conservation along the waterway.

The acquisition will protect seven miles of river frontage and is directly across the river from the Columbus County Game Lands which encompasses more than 20,000 acres and connects to 17,000 acres of The Nature Conservancy's Green Swamp Preserve, resulting in one of the largest conservation corridors in North Carolina. "These healthy, well-managed forests clean water for drinking, reduce flood damage, and provide wildlife habitat. More than one-third of this land will eventually be open to the public, providing much needed recreation lands," said Carlton Owen, President and CEO of the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities, which administers the Enviva Forest Conservation Fund.

The property features cypress-gum swamp, blackwater bottomland hardwoods, remnant Atlantic white cedar forest, loblolly pine and additional wetlands. Acquisition of this parcel protects a large portion of the Cross Swamp Significant Natural Area. According to the North Carolina

Natural Heritage Program, this area hosts, "one of the best examples of the Blackwater Bottomland Hardwoods remaining in the state; maybe one of the best in the world."

Coastal Land Trust transferred approximately 1,000-acres in fee title to the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, to be managed as public game lands. Coastal Land Trust will retain the remaining 2,000 acres to be managed as a nature preserve. Both entities will develop site-specific management plans and will coordinate on future enhancement and/or restoration activities such as prescribed burning and Atlantic white cedar restoration.

Many distinguished conservation groups partnered to make this possible including: the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Open Space Institute, The Conservation Alliance, North Carolina Clean Water Management Trust Fund, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Enviva Forest Conservation Fund, and North Carolina Environmental Enhancement Grant Program. A portion of the funding was provided through privately-raised funds.

"The Enviva Forest Conservation Fund grant was critical to the success of this project which represented a major tour de force of partners coming together for land conservation along the Waccamaw River. The Coastal Land Trust is so appreciative of Enviva's support," stated Janice L. Allen, Deputy Director of the Coastal Land Trust.

The Enviva Forest Conservation Fund was launched in December of 2015 by Enviva, the world's largest producer of wood energy pellets. After three years of a planned 10-year partnership, eight projects have been funded, committing more than \$1.5 million. When these projects are completed, an estimated 14,000 acres of sensitive wetland forest and other habitats will have been protected.

#### **About North Carolina Coastal Land Trust**

Founded in 1992, the mission of the North Carolina Coastal Land Trust is to enrich the coastal communities of North Carolina through conservation of natural areas and working landscapes, education, and the promotion of good land stewardship. The Coastal Land Trust has become the largest land trust geographically in the state of North Carolina, serving 31 counties along the entire coastal plain. The Coastal Land Trust is committed to saving and restoring special places in the coastal plain like barrier islands, nature parks and preserves, family farms, and longleaf pine forests. To learn more about the Coastal Land Trust, please visit their website at [www.coastallandtrust.org](http://www.coastallandtrust.org).

#### **About the Enviva Forest Conservation Fund**

The Enviva Forest Conservation Fund is a \$5 million, 10-year program established by Enviva Holdings, LP in December 2015 to permanently protect environmentally sensitive bottomland and wetland forests. Administered by the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities, the Fund awards grants annually to nonprofit organizations and government agencies for conservation projects in North Carolina and Virginia. The next grant cycle will begin in late

2018. To learn more about the Enviva Conservation Fund, please visit [envivaforestfund.org](http://envivaforestfund.org). In 2018, the Fund expanded into southeastern North Carolina to include additional high-priority conservation areas. Now most counties in the North Carolina coastal plain as well as counties in southeastern Virginia are eligible for the Fund.

**About the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities**

The U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities (the Endowment) is a not-for-profit public charity working collaboratively with partners in the public and private sectors to advance systemic, transformative, and sustainable change for the health and vitality of the nation's working forests and forest-reliant communities. To learn more about the Endowment, please visit our website at [www.usendowment.org](http://www.usendowment.org).

**For more information contact:**

**Alicia Cramer**, Senior Vice President, 205-792-8650, [alicia@usendowment.org](mailto:alicia@usendowment.org)