

# MOUNTAIN CONSERVATION TRUST

Newsletter Vol. 13, Issue 1

Winter/Spring 2011

## Celebrating 20 Years of Conservation in North Georgia Our Founders...Our Future....

**I**n 1991, a group of 10 like-minded people gathered at the home of Miriam and John Kiser to begin the conversation about protecting the Southern tip of the Blue Ridge Mountains they called home. This group met in response to the imminent threat of clear cutting almost 800 acres of the steep forested mountain sides abutting Oglethorpe Mountain. These slopes demanded protection due to the prospect of immediate soil erosion which would lead to the siltation of Grandview Lake, the fouling of the water supply for the City of Jasper, and the disturbance of five miles of Long Swamp Creek.

Their first challenge was to address the timber contracts already in process on the highest ridges of Burnt Mountain. While the sale of timber would legitimately reward the owner of the property, the subsequent damage to the land would make it even less valuable for years to come. This led to a series of public meetings to discuss the wisdom of such timbering. Their successes in preserving the property empowered them to form a nonprofit land conservation association named the Oglethorpe Wilderness Land Trust (OWLT).

Lynnell Reese, one of the original organizers, recalls, "I believe one of the reasons we got off to such a good start and became successful was because we [respected everybody's ideas]. We told Georgia Pacific that we knew they would cut trees as long as we demanded forest products - we just wanted them to spare the high ridges and use the best management practices. Georgia Pacific let the timber contracts expire and never cut a single tree. So, in a way,

they donated over \$300,000 to our fledgling land trust."

The efforts of this dedicated group were supported by a variety of local businesses, corporations, and foundations. Their shared vision could not have become a reality if it hadn't been for the cooperation, collaboration, and support of Georgia Pacific, the Turner Foundation, the Pickens County government, the Trust for Public Land, the *Pickens County Progress*, and more.

Lynnell recalls, "My dominant memory of our beginnings is that we had fun and drew from each other's strengths, and I might

add - strong personalities. The humor and mutual respect kept us cooking."

In 1998, the OWLT changed its name to the Mountain Conservation Trust of Georgia (MCTGA). That same year, with MCTGA as the applicant and Pickens County as the sponsor, \$750,000 in Transportation Enhancement (TE) funds from the Georgia Department of Transportation were awarded for the purchase of 756 acres of the Burnt Mountain acreage.

During this same time frame, some adjacent land (now known as Monument Falls) was sold to an out-of-state developer. Pickens County agreed to provide a match of the TE funds to assist MCTGA with purchase of the remaining lands on Burnt Mountain. Pickens County maintained ownership of the property and MCTGA manages the conservation easement, ensuring that the forests will remain intact and undisturbed, the watershed is protected, and passive recreation is encouraged.

By 2000, Phase I of land procurement was completed with the



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*The Mountain Conservation Trust of Georgia is dedicated to the permanent conservation of the natural resources and scenic beauty of the mountains and foothills of North Georgia through land protection, collaborative partnerships and education.*



# Mountain Conservation Trust of Georgia

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MCTGA celebrates our 20th year of serving North Georgia with conservation easements and other conservation projects.

Since 1991, the Mountain Conservation Trust of Georgia (MCTGA) has worked to permanently protect the natural resources and scenic beauty of the mountains and foothills of North Georgia through land protection, collaborative partnerships and education. Throughout our history, we have been an organization dedicated to preserving our region's natural resources for the enjoyment of future generations.

As we celebrate MCTGA's 20th Anniversary, our organization is gradually expanding its footprint across North Georgia. We are forming alliances with local governments, businesses, organizations and recreation groups and are in the initial stages of collaborating on a wide range of conservation initiatives. MCTGA's expanded coverage and programs are a result of input we have received from membership communications and community meetings. What we hear from you is directly reflected in our actions and activities.

We are excited to report that over the upcoming months, MCTGA will be focused on:

- Proactively pursuing conservation easements with willing land owners throughout North Georgia
- Developing a Greenprint for Pickens County to identify areas for future conservation as well as passive recreation needs
- Collaborating with State and Local agencies along with conservation groups to provide canoe access points along the Upper Etowah River corridor.
- Partnering with the Jasper Rotary Club and Pickens County to create a new playground and expand walking trails throughout Roper Park

Our Board of Directors wishes to thank you for your support and commitment to conservation in North Georgia. The charitable contributions of our membership have enabled the Trust to place more than 2,000 acres in permanent protection. We value and appreciate each of you and look forward to your continued suggestions and support.

Respectfully,

Roger Schultz.  
Chairman

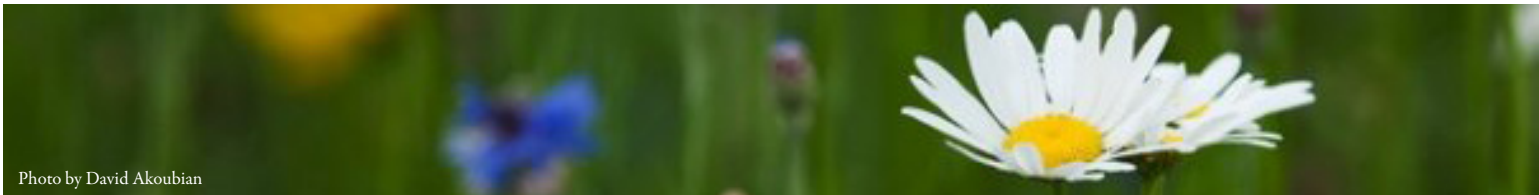


Photo by David Akoubian

# MCTGA Holds New Easement in Cherokee County

The Mountain Conservation Trust of Georgia (MCTGA) holds an easement on the new 541-acre Yellow Creek Road greenspace. The property is heavily wooded, has never been developed, and has 9,133 feet of frontage on the Etowah River. This tract of land protects the headwaters of the community's water supply since the natural forest filters water runoff and reduces potential sources of water pollution.

Cherokee County purchased the parcel with the understanding that a conservation easement would be placed on the land, assuring that the property would be preserved in its natural state and made available to the public. This public benefit easement restricts recreation to activities such as hiking, fishing, bird-watching, nature study, and other passive activities. Ball fields and active sports are not permitted, and for reasons of public safety, hunting is restricted to limited managed hunts supervised by the Department of Natural Resources.

A conservation easement is similar to a deed restriction, but also

contains a monitoring provision enforced by a nationally recognized and accredited organization such as MCTGA. The property will be inspected regularly to ensure that the land is being preserved in its natural state and no violations of the easement occur.

This property adds to the string of parks along the Etowah River, including Boling Park, Heritage Park, Brown Park, Cherokee Veterans Park, and the McGraw Ford WMA. Commissioner Harry Johnston envisions a riverside hiking trail from Boling Park to Yellow Creek Road for the enjoyment of the public.

According to Liz Cole, Executive Director of MCTGA, "This could not have happened without the hard work of many dedicated people who recognize the value of preserving natural land for the public to enjoy."

Funds for the purchase of this parcel came from the Cherokee Parks Bond, and the funds to enact the easement came from a Coosa River Basin Initiative settlement with the Sembler Company which developed Canton Marketplace. 🐾

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## 13th Annual Meeting and Picnic



More than 150 members attended our 13th Annual Membership Meeting and Picnic. Cody Laird once again hosted the event at his home in Tate Mountain Estates, as always, the most gracious of hosts. The weather was perfect, the food was delicious, and Janisse Ray, our speaker, was inspiring.

Each year, we work to make our Annual Picnic more environmentally responsible. It began with using compostable picnic items.....everything was either composted or recycled so we didn't send any waste to the landfill. This year, the majority of the meal was grown here in Georgia. The salad greens, peppers, arugula, and garlic was from Roots Farm in Winterville, the tomatoes were from Talking Rock Produce on Highway 136 West, and the wild salad was grown at Whitestone Farm, also of Talking Rock. The pork was raised in Ranger at Riverview Farms and the organic bread was baked in Canton by Magnolia Bread Company. When purchasing additional produce, we made every effort to ensure it was grown in the southeast. Even the beer was from Sweetwater Brewing, an Atlanta-based brewery. The food seems to taste better when you know where it's grown.... The vegetables were prepped by some dedicated MCTGA volunteers for our chef, Alice Craig, and Rick Jasperse, once again, smoked our pork. Thanks everyone for

making the meal one to remember!

Janisse Ray treated the crowd to some of her most recent writings focusing on the importance of preserving land as well as humorous stories relating to life in a small southern town during the 1950s and 60s. Ms. Ray is the author of several books including *Ecology of a Cracker Childhood*. Her most recent work, *A House of Branches*, will soon be available.

We thank everyone who donated items to our silent auction, and we appreciate everyone who made the auction a success by taking the treasures home with them.

Please support our silent auction donors: 61 Main, 74 Ranch, Appalachian Bobcat Service, Bargain Barn, Birding Adventures, Burnt Mountain Trading Company, Community Bank of Pickens County, Container Gardens of Atlanta, Dee Ann Boggus, First Mountain Art Gallery, It's a Grind, Jasper Drugs & Gifts, Karen Parsley, Kathe Hall, Sole to Soul, Southern Paint & Body Works, State Farm Insurance - Casey Warnock, Torrey Mountain Properties, Wendy Richards, and all the participants in our photography workshop who donated their prints.

The 2011 Annual Meeting and Picnic is already being planned....we look forward to seeing you there!



transfer of 396 acres into Pickens County ownership. In 2001, an additional \$750,000 was awarded to complete the purchase of the remaining 360 acres of Phase II. In addition to the now protected 756 acres of Phase I and Phase II lands, 327 adjoining acres have been placed under conservation easement to create what is known as the Burnt Mountain Preserve.

Dr. Barbara Decker was instrumental in the development of the Mountain Conservation Trust of Georgia. She remembers:

I had come back to my beloved North Georgia after 10 years of doing research in a remote area of South Africa. I attended a meeting in Big Canoe during which I met Lynnell. The topic was the need for conservation efforts in North Georgia. I became very involved and thru the hard work of many, [We] were able to secure funding thru two TE grants to assist with the protection of Burnt Mountain. We were fortunate to be provided with office space by the *Pickens County Progress* and, as interest grew in our organization, we were able to develop and gain the support of membership.

When Lynnell left to pursue opportunities out West, I became the part time Executive Director. We began education programs and continued to meet with land owners throughout the counties that surround Pickens to discuss conservation easements.

After I left the organization, I was very pleased to see it grow under Executive Director Dr. Robert Keller. Gaining LTA accreditation, increasing the areas MCTGA covered and furthering education programs was very important in the increased development and support of the organization.

As MCTGA moves forward I am glad the organization has the leadership of its founding fathers and new board members that are vibrant and active. I am grateful that MCTGA continues to care for the conservation of North Georgia.

These were the early days of what has now become a community-based organization that continues to collaborate with many private landowners, focus groups, and local governments. Through the dedication and leadership of our board, membership and staff, MCTGA has placed over 2000 acres of land in North Georgia in permanent protection through conservation easements.

### *Our Future – The Next 20 Years*

The Mountain Conservation Trust of Georgia continues its original mission of helping public and private landowners protect their property via conservation easements. These allow landowners to continue to occupy and enjoy their property while permanently precluding activities or development that would destroy or endanger the scenic beauty or natural resources of the property. As we celebrate the achievements of our first 20 years, we are inspired by the vision of what we will achieve with your support over the next 20 years. The input we have received from our membership and communities we serve have led us to expand our efforts and define a future that will

further protection of the North Georgia region. As we move forward our programs will be focused on:

### *Conservation*

MCTGA will provide assistance to willing land owners to protect habitat, waterways, scenic views, farmlands and historically significant sites through voluntary conservation easements.

### *Community*

MCTGA will promote the building of public and private partnerships that foster the long-term economic and environmental health of our North Georgia Communities by providing assistance with:


- Land use and green infrastructure planning
- Expansion of parks and nature preserves
- Creation of walking, biking, paddle, and horse trail networks

### *Education*

MCTGA will provide a wide variety of educational opportunities that enhance environmental awareness and will host events that include:

- Guest Lecture Series
- Environmental Stewardship Workshops
- Guided Adventure Outings

One of the significant efforts MCTGA will complete in 2011 is Greenprint Pickens. Greenprinting is a planning process through which the community identifies areas for cultural and natural resource protection as well as lands for park, greenway and blueway development. The process focuses on creating a land conservation master plan that is used to guide the selection of lands for permanent protection. Initially, an existing conditions base map is developed that documents existing protected lands. Through a series of community meetings, lands are identified for future protection and mapped. This community-based initiative results in a Greenprint that provides a graphic inventory of scenic corridors, cultural and natural resources to be protected, as well as lands for park, greenway and blueway development. Greenprints provide cities, counties, and communities with a broad understanding of their resources and is used as a road map to secure public and private funding for the purpose of protecting lands and developing public recreational facilities. Funding for Greenprint Pickens is being provided through a grant award from Pickens County Community Resource Association, Inc. and a generous contribution from Community Bank of Pickens County.

MCTGA appreciates the support that you have shown over the last 20 Years, and we look forward to your participation as we continue with our mission of conserving the natural resources and scenic beauty of the mountains and foothills of North Georgia. 

# Congratulations!

## Thanks For Your Dedication to Our Environment!

The Mountain Conservation Trust of Georgia is proud to announce the well-deserved recognition of two of our board members, Cody Laird and Edward Daugherty.



E. Cody Laird, Jr. was named the 2010 Distinguished Conservationist by the Georgia Conservancy. Cody was lauded for a lifetime of conservation work that has spanned the entire state, from the north Georgia mountains to the coast to the pine tree-covered farms in southwest Georgia. He was instrumental in the founding of MCTGA and his work to restore the state's native longleaf pine-wiregrass

habitat has been ground breaking. His efforts are giving new life to species like the red-cockaded woodpecker and the Bachman's sparrow that thrive in this habitat.

Cody traces his love of the outdoors to one special place: Tate Mountain, the Pickens County retreat where his uncle, Howard Dobbs, owned a home. Growing up, Laird spent his summers at Tate, rowing fishing boats for guests and spending the rest of his time exploring the mountains with his pals. He learned to fish in the north Georgia mountains and even commissioned a painting of his favorite fishing spot, Lovinggood Creek.

Laird says his interest in conservation began when he got out of the Air Force in the mid-1960s. He returned to Lovinggood, only to find the stream in terrible shape. The entire area had been clear cut by timber companies. That experience galvanized Laird to take a more active role in conservation matters, including helping establish the Mountain Conservation Trust of Georgia.

"That's what really started my passion for natural resources, seeing that clear cut," Laird says. "That was a turning point. We really need to protect these areas."



Edward Daugherty has been awarded the ASLA Medal. The ASLA Medal is the highest honor the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) may bestow upon a landscape architect whose lifetime achievements and contributions to the profession have had a unique and lasting impact on the welfare of the public and the environment. Daugherty's career spans 50 years

of excellence. Born in Summerville, South Carolina and raised in Atlanta. He first studied architecture at Georgia Tech and then landscape architecture at the University of Georgia. Following military service during World War II, he graduated from Harvard University's Graduate School of Design in 1951. He earned a Fulbright Scholarship the following year to study town planning in the United Kingdom, and then returned to his Southern roots by starting a practice in Atlanta where he mentored generations of landscape architects. His many works include the Georgia Governor's Mansion, the Atlanta Botanical Garden, Avon corporate headquarters, and a collaboration with Thomas Church on the School for Continuing Education at the University of Georgia.

Thank you, Cody and Edward, for your dedication to our environment. And thank you for your instrumental role in starting the Mountain Conservation Trust of Georgia! 🐾

## Welcome New Members!

(May 15<sup>th</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2010)

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Ms. Aime K. Baars  
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    Ms. Renee Kastanakis  
Ms. Dee Anne Boggus  
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## Foundations & Corporate Matching Programs

Bank of America Matching Gifts  
Grassroots Arts Program  
IBM Corp Matching Grants Program  
Pfizer Foundation Matching Gifts  
R. Howard Dobbs, Jr. Foundation  
Raymond James Charitable Endowment Fund

## Support MCTGA Monthly

A monthly gift offers a convenient and effective way for donors to support MCTGA throughout the year. Each dollar you contribute is so vital to saving the foothills and mountains of North Georgia.

Using your online banking, you can establish a recurring payment to MCTGA. Please check with your bank for details.

*Thank you for your generosity!*

# Thank You!

## New Members & Renewals Aug. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009 – Dec. 31<sup>st</sup>, 2010

(Donations Received after December 31<sup>st</sup> will be recognized in Summer/Fall 2011 Newsletter)

\* please contact us if we've omitted your name or made an error

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 Mr. & Mrs. Doug E. David  
 Mrs. Henry L. deGive  
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 Dr. & Mr. Calvin DuBose, Jr.  
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 Ms. Sharon Worsham  
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 Ms. Elma W. Ettman  
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 Mr. & Mrs. Henry Q. Hall  
 Mr. & Mrs. Hugh S. Hassell  
 Mr. & Mrs. Richard L. Helm  
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 Mr. & Mrs. Donald A. Jackson  
 Mr. & Mrs. W. Howell Kiser

Mr. Oren L. Kleinberger  
 Ms. Janis Kleinberger  
 Mr. Robert Levine  
 Mr. & Mrs. Andrew Lipscomb  
 Ms. Martha Mars  
 Mr. & Mrs. Phillip T. Moen  
 Ms. Louise M. Morgan  
 Mr. James Neely & Ms. Ann English  
 Mr. Richard N. Odden &  
 Ms. Mariah E. Shackelford  
 Dr. & Mrs. Walter Omainsky  
 Ms. Mary Jane Palmer  
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 Mr. John Rasmussen &  
 Ms. Theresa Hartz  
 Mr. & Mrs. Steve Robinson  
 Ms. Ellen F. Rolader  
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 Mr. & Mrs. John W. Seferian  
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 Ms. Dorothy J. Suberk  
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 Ms. Helen P. Taylor  
 Mr. & Mrs. Kerry Teel  
 Mr. & Mrs. Jack G. Thompson  
 Mr. & Mrs. John B. Traylor  
 Ms. Patricia M. Turner  
 Mr. & Mrs. Joseph M. Vess  
 Mr. & Mrs. David A. Viker  
 Mr. & Mrs. Neal Whitten, Jr.  
 Ms. Joan S. Wilder  
 The Rev Dr. & Mrs. Allison Williams  
 Mr. Willis Wilson  
 Mrs. Russell E. Woerheide  
 Ms. Louise S. Wright  
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## Become a Member!

### Help Preserve the North Georgia Mountains!

Enclosed is my gift of:

- New Member  Renewal  Additional Gift  
 I wish to remain anonymous  
 I would like to volunteer my time:  
 Administrative  Special Events  Stewardship

- Student – \$10.<sup>00</sup> (electronic communication only)  
 Partner – \$25.<sup>00</sup> – 49.<sup>99</sup>  Supporter – \$1,000<sup>00</sup> – \$2,499.<sup>99</sup>  
 Protector – \$50.<sup>00</sup> – 99.<sup>99</sup>  Sponsor – \$2,500<sup>00</sup> – \$4,999.<sup>99</sup>  
 Caretaker – \$100.<sup>00</sup> – 249.<sup>99</sup>  Patron – \$5,000<sup>00</sup> – \$9,999.<sup>99</sup>  
 Conservator – \$250.<sup>00</sup> – 499.<sup>99</sup>  Benefactor – \$10,000<sup>00</sup> – \$24,999.<sup>99</sup>  
 Steward – \$500.<sup>00</sup> – 999.<sup>99</sup>  Founder's Circle – \$25,000<sup>00</sup> +

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Fax ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please make your check payable to:  
**Mountain Conservation Trust of Georgia**  
 104 North Main Street, Suite B3 | Jasper, GA 30143

**Thank you for your contribution!**

Make a Note....

Mark Your Calendar!  
The 6<sup>th</sup> Annual  
Spring Celebration  
on  
April 30th, 2011  
More Details Soon.

Do you get our e-newsletters?  
If not, contact us to register  
so you'll receive updates.

### Programs & Events

We will be hosting a series of  
events that will include area hikes,  
nature photography workshops,  
community picnics and guest  
speakers. MCTGA Community  
Events will be posted on  
our website.

### Corporate Members 2010

#### *Mountain Patron*

Bear Woods Photography  
Pendley Creek Stables  
The Pickens County Progress

#### *Foothills Supporter*

Community Bank of Pickens County  
The Edge Group  
Wildflower Bunch Garden Club

#### *Foothills Partner*

Anderson Creek Retreat  
Dawson County Women's Club  
Pickens County Board of Realtors  
Trouts Beverages

#### *Foothills Member*

61 Main  
Bent Tree Lake and Wildlife Committee  
Foothills IGA Market  
Jones Oil Distributor, Inc.  
Lakota Cove  
Renesant Bank  
The Renner Companies

Thank You  
to everyone who supported our  
Special Appeal at the end of 2010!

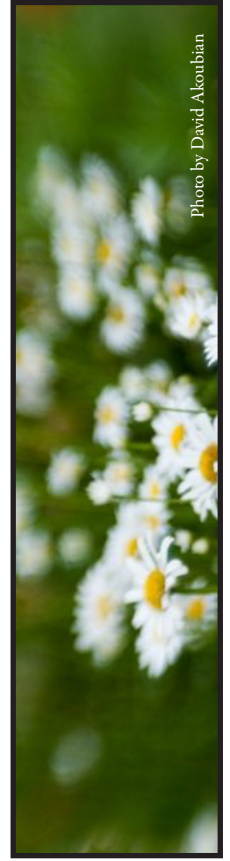


Photo by David Akoubian



MOUNTAIN  
CONSERVATION  
TRUST

Connecting Land, Water, Community

104 North Main Street, Suite B3  
Jasper, GA 30143  
(706) 253-4077

If you prefer to receive the MCTGA Newsletter electronically,  
please contact us at [info@mctga.org](mailto:info@mctga.org)