



Catawba Lands Conservancy Receives \$50,000 Grant from the Wal-Mart Foundation State Giving Program

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NORTH CAROLINA - Catawba Lands Conservancy has been awarded a \$50,000 grant from the Wal-Mart Foundation State Giving Program to support the land trust's efforts to permanently preserve farmland, provide land conservation information to agricultural landowners, and educate the public about the importance of protecting farming land resources in the agency's six-county, southern Piedmont service area.

Agriculture is a leading industry in North Carolina. The Conservancy's land protection strategies, including voluntary, permanent conservation easements, ensure that farmland is available for agricultural use by future generations of farmers. Permanent protection also ensures that our communities continue to experience the benefit of protected open space, including the protection of the forests and wildlife habitat that are frequently found on farms.

Unfortunately, North Carolina leads the nation in farmland conversion. Since 1997, more than 6,000 North Carolina farms and nearly one million acres of farmland have been converted to other land uses. Funding to stem the tide of farmland losses has not kept pace with agricultural conversion. Public agencies provide vital resources for farm families, but those funding sources rarely have the capacity to complete permanent farmland protection through conservation easements. The \$50,000 Wal-Mart Foundation State Giving Program award to the Conservancy will be used to promote farmland conservation in the southern Piedmont, to inform farmers about the myriad conservation options for their working farms and to educate the public about the benefit of protected farmland in the southern Piedmont.

About Catawba Lands Conservancy

Catawba Lands Conservancy is a regional land trust that permanently protects land, water and wildlife habitat to enhance your quality of life. The Conservancy protects over 7,850 acres in Catawba, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Mecklenburg and Union counties and is one of 24 land trusts serving North Carolina. Catawba Lands Conservancy is the lead agency for the Carolina Thread Trail, an initiative that links more than two million citizens with hundreds of miles of trails that wind through fifteen counties in North and South Carolina.

About The Carolina Thread Trail

The Carolina Thread Trail (The Thread) is a 15-county, two state initiative designed to inspire and facilitate the creation of a regional network of trails, blueways, and conservation corridors that is growing over to link more than 2.3 million citizens. With technical resources and catalytic funding from The Thread, local communities plan and implement their portions of this green interstate system. Catawba Lands Conservancy is the lead agency for The Thread, working in partnership with the Trust for Public Land, Foundation For The Carolinas, and many local partners.

Additional Resources:

- www.catawbalands.org
- www.carolinathreadtrail.org