

A STRATEGIC CONSERVATION PLAN

# FOREVER TENNESSEE

*Conserving the places we call home*





*Front cover: Rolling hills of  
Ozburn Hollow, protected in 2005*

*This page: Spring clover on  
Bag End Farm, protected in 2002*

## INTRODUCTION

The Land Trust for Tennessee was founded in 1999 by a group of visionary citizens committed to the idea of a robust, statewide organization that would protect private and public landscapes forever. I joined the team just a few years after its founding, and since that time, I have seen us grow from a small, young land trust to a sophisticated organization with statewide impact and a strong, national reputation. In our first 20 years, our protected acres grew to more than 125,000 in almost every corner of Tennessee. We know how far we've come, but we are not stopping here.

In 2018, as we approached our 20th anniversary, we knew it was the right time to embark on the monumental task of creating a statewide conservation vision. Tennesseans are alarmed about the state's rate of development. This is a sentiment we've heard time and time again while working across the state. Whether chatting in farm stores and coffee shops or walking the land, people have shared variations of the same story with us: beloved places—farms, forests, and fields—are disappearing. We are not trying to halt development, but we know that some places are irreplaceable. Development and conservation must work hand-in-hand to best serve our state and our citizens. The time to act is now.

This publication represents hundreds of hours of research, mapping, discussions, and analysis by staff, volunteers, landowners, and citizens, all with one goal—to deepen our understanding of conservation values in order to most effectively carry out our mission. By honing our focus for today's challenges and opportunities, we will increase the quality, pace, and impact of our work over the next 20 years and beyond.

We are excited to share *Forever Tennessee* with you. Enjoy.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "E Parish".

**Emily Parish**

*Vice President of Conservation*



## VISION:

The Land Trust for Tennessee conserves forever the fabric of landscapes and places for the benefit of residents and visitors. We understand the natural and human worlds are interwoven. We work to conserve the rich agricultural, forested, scenic, historic, and recreational attributes of Tennessee in order to support the collective benefit of productive farms and forests, thriving wildlife, authentic communities, healthy watersheds, and vibrant green spaces.

While staying true to our principles and committed to our mission, The Land Trust for Tennessee evolves to meet the changing needs of landscapes and communities. Resilience, organizational excellence, and financial strength will allow us to uphold our promise to protect and steward land forever.

**Our vision is for a Tennessee whose irreplaceable landscapes are protected forever.**





**MISSION:** TO CONSERVE THE UNIQUE  
CHARACTER OF TENNESSEE'S NATURAL  
AND HISTORIC LANDSCAPES AND SITES  
FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In Tennessee, you don't have to go far to see rolling farmland, find an historic site, or enjoy one of the state's countless trails or breathtaking vistas. Our woods and rivers are teeming with wildlife. Natural resources are abundant and the soils are rich. It's all at your doorstep, and that's why so many people are proud to call Tennessee home.

We believe people will look back on this era as a defining one for the state. As some areas are undergoing changes that make landscapes unrecognizable, we must acknowledge the economic, ecological, and social benefits that our open spaces and natural lands provide to us all. We all need places to live, work, shop, and congregate. But if we fail to pause and take into account the importance of farms, parks, clean water, forests, and historic sites, we will lose them forever.

The following is an overview of the multifaceted, strategic conservation plan we've named *Forever Tennessee*. It represents our most comprehensive examination of conservation values and threats across the state, and is a blueprint for our work over the next decade. To protect the land most important to the vitality of our state, we must be prepared, proactive, and adaptable to our communities' needs, now and into the future.

*Forever Tennessee* is founded on research, geospatial data, and analysis performed by our team and by others, and is guided by public input. Its tenets will help us maximize philanthropic dollars to protect the places we call home.

*Family hikes at  
Rainbow Lake  
Wilderness,  
protected by the  
Town of Signal  
Mountain in 2014*





THE LAND TRUST FOR TENNESSEE

# HOW WE WORK

We work with communities and willing landowners to permanently protect public and private land using a range of tools and strategies.

## Conservation Easements

These voluntary legal agreements made between a landowner and The Land Trust for Tennessee protect lands with important conservation values forever. The landowners continue to own and manage the land, and the agreements permanently limit how the land may be developed and subdivided, no matter who owns the land in the future. These agreements are the tools we use most frequently to protect land.



## Land Acquisitions

From time to time, The Land Trust acquires land through purchases or donations. We typically do not own or manage the land long-term. We work to transfer ownership of the land to another entity or to an individual with a conservation easement in place.



## Stewardship

We take our promise to permanently protect land seriously. Through our stewardship program, we visit every protected property annually, help landowners understand how a conservation easement applies to their land, and work with landowners when they wish to do things like add structures or manage a forest. We work with landowners to remedy easement violations and, in some cases, take legal action to uphold the terms of a conservation easement.

## Community Projects

The Land Trust works with communities, government entities, and other nonprofit conservation groups to expand and protect public parks, natural areas, wildlife refuges, and other public land. We use a variety of tools to protect these special places, including holding conservation easements on public land, negotiating land purchases on behalf of government partners, conducting open space planning, and securing funds for special projects.



*L-R: Sweet Easy Farm, protected in 2006; Riley property, protected in 2007; Rainbow Lake Wilderness, protected in 2014; Manier family farm, protected in 2018*

*“This land has always been a refuge for me, a place to call home...I am grateful to The Land Trust for Tennessee for helping keep it forever intact.”*

*—Hal Manier (pictured bottom right)*

*Lost Cove,  
portions of which  
were protected in  
partnership with  
The University of  
the South in 2008*

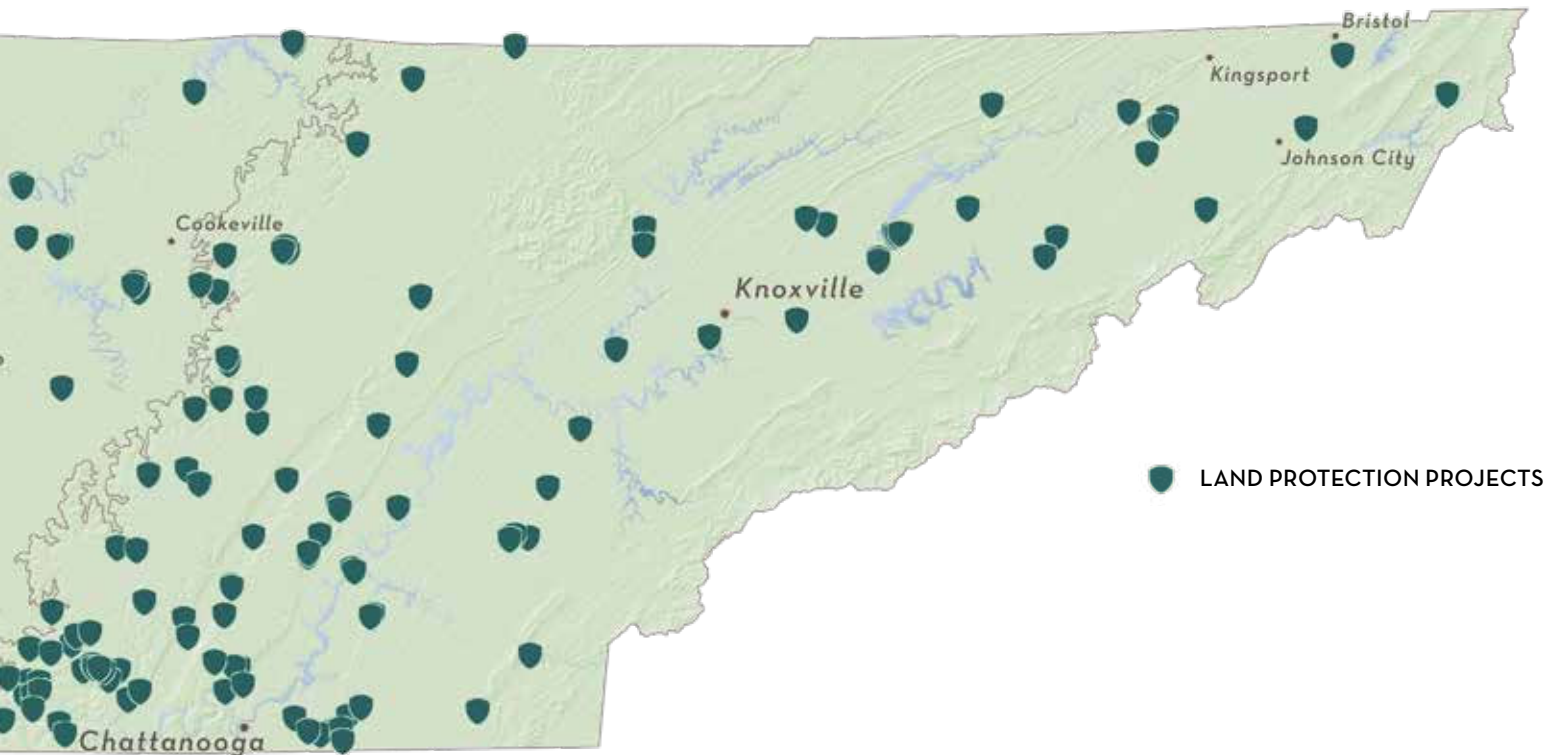


## PROTECTED LANDS

Between 1999 and 2018, The Land Trust for Tennessee protected more than 125,000 acres of land in 73 counties through 390 individual projects. This includes working farms, urban open spaces, vast forested landscapes, historic sites, river and stream corridors, public parks, and scenic vistas. These projects range in size from less than a ½ acre in downtown Nashville to thousands of acres of forestland on the Cumberland Plateau.

The vast majority of these protected lands are owned and managed by private individuals and families. These private properties are protected through conservation easements

that are binding for both present and future owners of the land. In addition to protecting private land, The Land Trust has helped state and local governments acquire land for public recreation and rare species protection. These properties have been added to state and local park systems for the public to use and enjoy. On rare occasions, The Land Trust owns and manages property on both short- and long-term bases. The most notable example of land owned by The Land Trust is our 64-acre Glen Leven Farm, which is located four miles from downtown Nashville and is home to our Middle Tennessee office.



# RESOURCE PROTECTION PRIORITIES

Vast in size and varied in resources, Tennessee is home to three distinct regions: west, middle, and east. Each region has different geology, soils, climate, local economies, and ways of life; and each contains natural features of tremendous value. This is evident in some of the iconic areas of the state: the scenic Appalachian Mountains, the rich biodiversity of the Duck River, the rolling hills of Middle Tennessee, the fertile soils along the Mississippi River, and the wildlife habitat of the Cumberland Plateau.

Areas like these are essential to the character, culture, and beauty of Tennessee. Protecting them and other healthy ecosystems for future generations will provide benefits to citizens and communities, including a stronger economy, diverse food products, improved well-being, and clean water.

**The Land Trust prioritizes the following six land resources for protection:**

- ▶ Farmland
- ▶ Forests
- ▶ Habitat
- ▶ Historic
- ▶ Recreation
- ▶ Scenic



A woman with long brown hair and bangs stands in front of a red wooden barn door. She is wearing a blue t-shirt, a brown vest, blue jeans, and brown boots. Her arms are crossed. The barn door is made of vertical red planks and has a large wooden X-brace. The background is a wall of vertical red planks. The ground is covered in green grass and some dirt.

*Karen Guy at  
Hunter's Hill Farm,  
protected in 2007*

*A refined focus on  
these resources will  
guide our future  
work and maximize  
the impact of our  
conservation efforts  
across Tennessee.*

*Herefords graze on  
Greensward Farm,  
protected in 2017*



## RESOURCE PROTECTION PRIORITIES:

**FARMLAND**

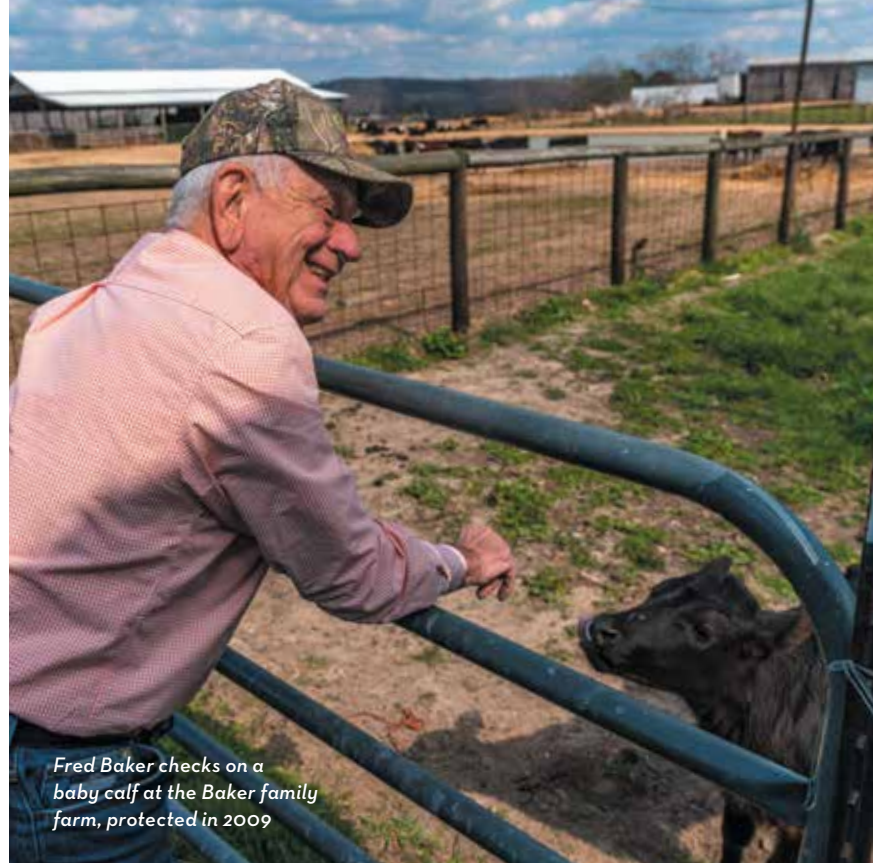
Agriculture is a pillar of Tennessee's economy, contributing billions in economic impact and employing hundreds of thousands of Tennesseans each year. Furthermore, agritourism is on the rise, bringing visitors and dollars to rural counties.

Despite the economic and cultural value that agriculture offers in Tennessee, farms are disappearing. Farms that have been in families for generations are being cut up into smaller lots or sold for commercial and residential development. Farmland acres continue to decline as demand for development increases, making our state more susceptible to farmland loss than most states in the nation.

The Land Trust is the only conservation organization in Tennessee with a proactive, statewide, farmland conservation program. We will continue this legacy, prioritizing the protection of multigenerational family farms, lands with fertile soils, and properties in active agricultural production.

Agriculture has a  
**\$58 BILLION**  
 impact on Tennessee's  
 annual economy.

Source: *UT Institute  
 of Agriculture*



*Fred Baker checks on a baby calf at the Baker family farm, protected in 2009*




## RESOURCE PROTECTION PRIORITIES:

# FORESTS

Tennessee's forests transcend regional boundaries and county lines, covering just over half of the state's land area. Some of these forests are actively managed for pulp and timber. Others serve as critical habitat for Tennessee's most iconic species. Locals and visitors hike, hunt, and enjoy these forests in countless ways. Forests are also critical resources for public health: filtering water to improve the quality of streams and rivers, increasing environmental resilience to changing weather patterns, and providing places to disconnect from daily stressors while reconnecting with ourselves and nature.

While fires, insects, droughts, and disease cause harm to these resources, increased development and urbanization are two of the largest risks facing forests. The Land Trust works to protect Tennessee's forests from these threats. We're prioritizing conservation of forested wetlands and buffers along locally, regionally, and nationally important waterways; partnering with landowners who sustainably harvest timber; and creating and expanding corridors of connected forests with significant habitat.





*The Tennessee General Assembly selected the tulip poplar as the state tree in 1947, in part, because it grows from one end of the state to the other—demonstrating that in spite of geographic differences, we are all united as Tennesseans.*



## RESOURCE PROTECTION PRIORITIES:

# HABITAT

As one of the most biologically diverse states in the country, Tennessee is home to an exceptional array of plants and animals. According to the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, more than 325 species of fish, 89 of mammals, 61 of reptiles, 70 of amphibians, 340 of birds, and 2,300+ varieties of plants are currently known to live in or migrate through our state. Our forests and rivers provide much of the habitat for these species, with some—like the Cumberland Plateau and the Duck River—considered to be among the most diverse places in the world.

These unique habitats also give residents and visitors the opportunity to revel in outdoor recreation and exploration. Tennessee's natural lands play an important role in our quality of life by providing clean drinking water, climate regulation, and clean air—what scientists call *ecosystem services*. These services have invaluable impacts on both property values and public health.

By incorporating data from state and federal agencies, as well as other non-governmental organizations, we are able to identify habitat areas of greatest conservation need. Moving forward, we plan to accelerate our pace in conserving diverse habitats across the state, including connecting and expanding existing protected land.



## RESOURCE PROTECTION PRIORITIES:

# HISTORIC

Historic sites and landscapes are a unique window into the past and provide context for who we are today. Tennessee is home to historic parks, battlefields, forts, and other cultural resources that remind us of the history of the state, spanning back to the Cherokee, Shawnee, and Chickasaw tribes.

Historic tourism experiences—like battlefield tours, visits to cultural sites, and antebellum home tours—are increasingly popular for locals and visitors, supporting economic growth, tourism, public education, and dialogue.

When we think about historic places, we think of buildings and structures that have stood the test of time—Andrew Jackson’s Hermitage, Carnton Plantation in Franklin, or the church in historic Rugby. These iconic structures are important, but when an old building stands surrounded by a cultural landscape, that context can activate our imagination. When we lose these landscapes, we lose the framework for the stories and teachings they hold.

The Land Trust for Tennessee is rather unique in the land trust community, as we have prioritized historic initiatives and projects since our founding. Moving forward, we will focus on conserving sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places, Civil War battlefields, areas significant to Native American history, and places that showcase our origins and ongoing relationships with the natural world.



*Historic Conner Toll House, owned and managed by The Land Trust*



*"I believe we're the only state in our nation with a land conservation organization that prioritizes cultural and historic resources statewide. I've been fortunate to partner with The Land Trust for Tennessee for over 20 years to forever conserve places that would surely be lost without their work."*

*– Dr. Carroll Van West, Tennessee State Historian & Director of MTSU Center for Historic Preservation*



## RESOURCE PROTECTION PRIORITIES:

## RECREATION

Tennessee has quickly grown to be a powerhouse in the outdoor recreation domain. Outdoor enthusiasts and national publications like Outside Magazine have hailed Chattanooga as one of the best outdoor cities in the country. Shelby Farms Park in Memphis is one of the largest urban parks in the United States, five times larger than Central Park in New York City. Great Smoky Mountains National Park is the most visited national park in the country, drawing over 11 million visitors a year.

For those of us who live, work, and play here, it is no surprise that Tennessee is attracting new residents and visitors because of the wealth of biking, horseback riding and hiking trails, welcoming campgrounds, world-class climbing and paddling, and unparalleled scenery.

Access to parks and open space benefits all of us by lowering stress levels, encouraging exercise, providing places to gather, and promoting overall feelings of well-being. With increased urban sprawl, sedentary lifestyles, and excess screen time, it is more important than ever for all Tennesseans to have access to green space to connect to our natural surroundings and to one another.

Protecting recreation areas for current and future generations is a clear goal of The Land Trust for Tennessee. We're committed to working in collaboration with communities, local and state governments, and conservation partners to find solutions that strategically increase opportunities for people to enjoy both public and private land.

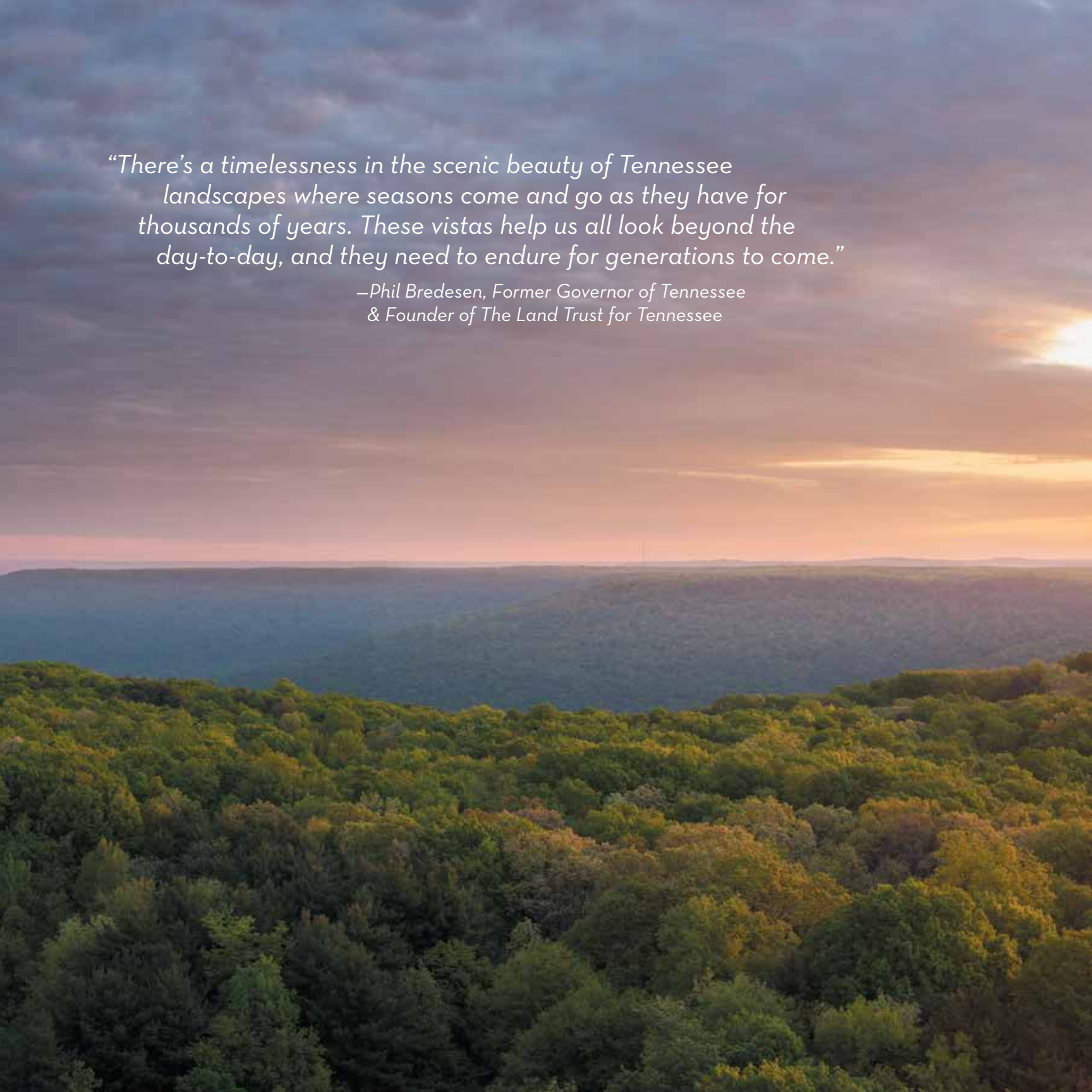
Outdoor recreation  
in the state generates

**\$21.6 BILLION**

in consumer spending and  
188,000 jobs, supporting both  
urban and rural communities  
across Tennessee.

Source: Outdoor Industry  
Association, 2017





*“There’s a timelessness in the scenic beauty of Tennessee landscapes where seasons come and go as they have for thousands of years. These vistas help us all look beyond the day-to-day, and they need to endure for generations to come.”*

*–Phil Bredesen, Former Governor of Tennessee  
& Founder of The Land Trust for Tennessee*

## RESOURCE PROTECTION PRIORITIES:

## SCENIC

No matter where you go in Tennessee, you'll see something beautiful: a tree-covered mountaintop, a foggy creek bottom, contented cattle grazing a hillside, a wheat field waving in the wind. Scenic landscapes provide more than just visual relief. They nurture a sense of place, binding us to our communities and to one another.

Despite our collective love of these landscapes, Tennessee's iconic views are being erased. One month, you might see a fertile family farm and the next it is cleared for a sprawling strip mall. We all need places to shop, work, and live, but without deliberate conservation alongside strategic growth, we risk permanently wiping out the landscapes that make our communities distinctive.

The Land Trust for Tennessee understands the power and potential of scenic places, which is why we work to protect them. Partnering with both private landowners and public entities, we conserve the views and places that make Tennessee distinctive, which in turn boosts our tourism and stimulates our economy.

We know that many people experience Tennessee's beauty while on the move, and we recognize the economic impact of tourism, especially in rural communities. With that in mind, our plan emphasizes protecting places visible from scenic highways and byways, hiking trails, and navigable waterways to ensure that some of Tennessee's most recognized and enjoyed views are prioritized for conservation.



## CHARTING A PATH FORWARD

Creating a statewide conservation vision to guide the future work of The Land Trust required evaluating scientific data and gathering community input. We knew that both were integral to the process and outcomes. We used sophisticated mapping software to identify Tennessee's exceptional conservation resources, and we relied on a unique public survey to identify the assets most important to Tennesseans. *Forever Tennessee* is the result of this process.





## Public Input

We spent three months gathering public input to learn more about what is important to citizens, visitors, and communities across the state. We designed a 15-question survey and distributed it statewide to get a better understanding of

what matters most to people who live in or visit Tennessee. We received over 1,000 responses from across Tennessee and beyond—and we considered each one as we drafted *Forever Tennessee*.

82%

of survey respondents identify working farms as important to their local community and economy.

75%

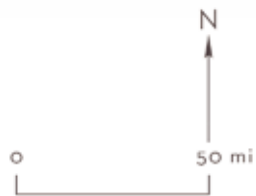
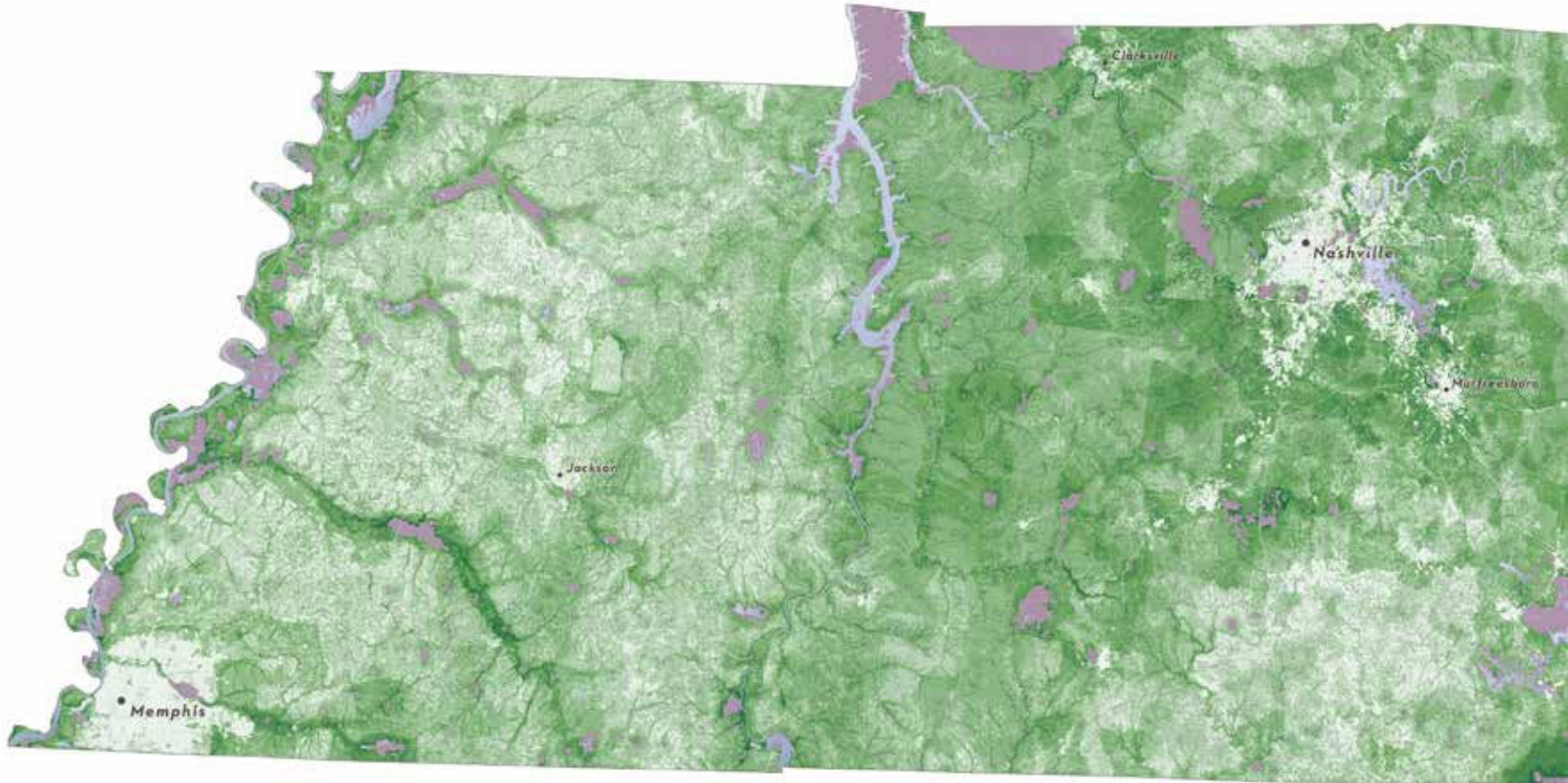
of respondents indicate that commercial and residential development is a high threat to Tennessee land.

70%

of respondents think protecting land for improved quality and supply of drinking water would benefit their community.



# CONSERVATION RESOURCE ANALYSIS



**MULTIPLE RESOURCES  
FOR CONSERVATION**

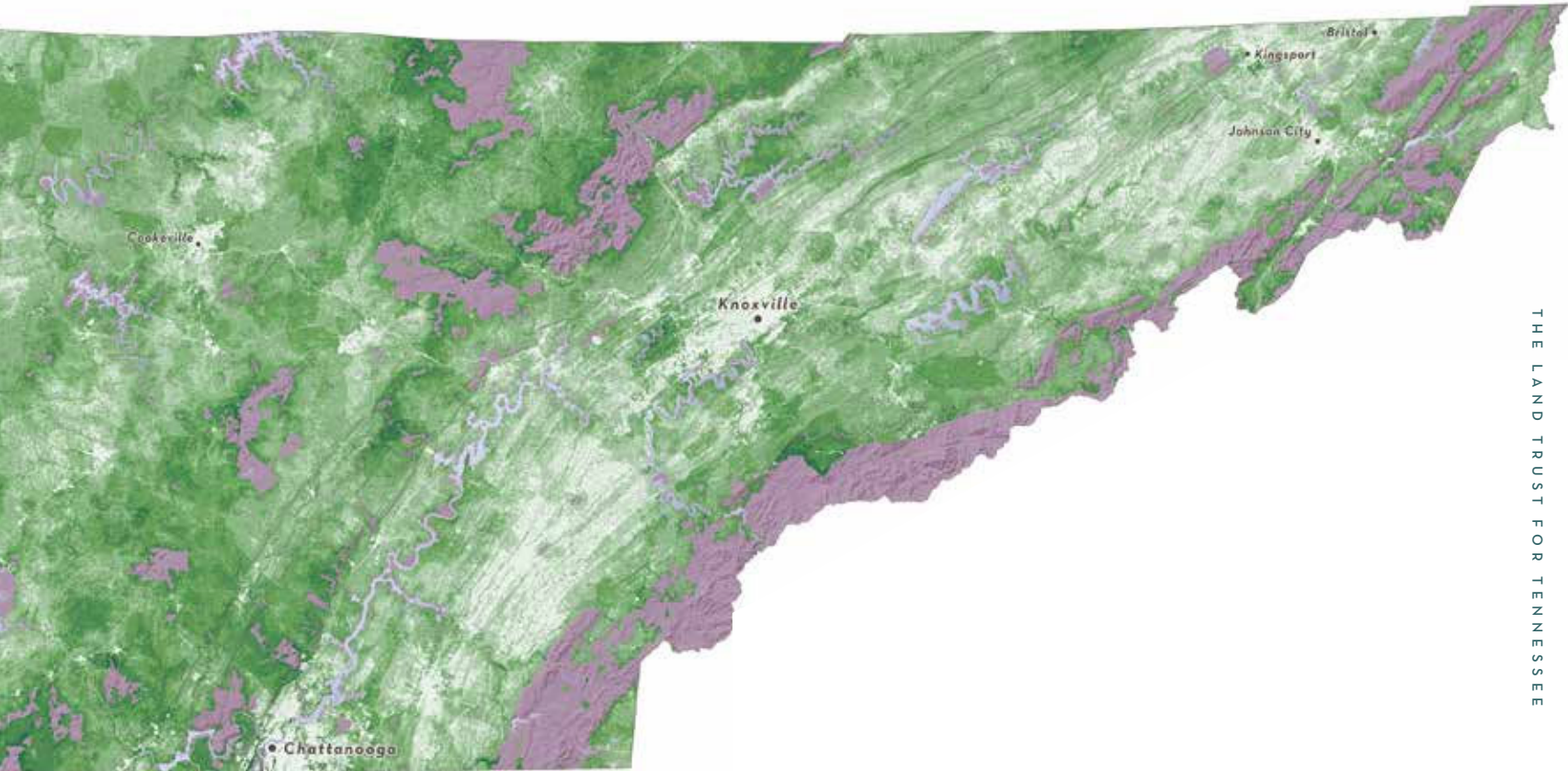
**AT LEAST ONE RESOURCE  
FOR CONSERVATION**



**EXISTING PROTECTED LAND  
(federal, state, local, private)**



[Open Full-Size Map](#)



THE LAND TRUST FOR TENNESSEE

All data and maps property of The Land Trust for Tennessee. Not for reproduction or distribution.

Primary model data sources: Southeast Gap Analysis Land Cover, Biodiversity & Spatial Information Center, USGS North Carolina Cooperative Fish & Wildlife Research Unit, North Carolina State University; USDA-NRCS Soil Survey Geographic Database (SSURGO); Middle Tennessee State University's Center for Historic Preservation; Tennessee State Wildlife Action Plan; Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency; Tennessee Department of Environment & Conservation; ESRI Green Infrastructure Program; National Park Service; National Register of Historic Places (NPS); Tennessee Geographic Information Council; Tennessee Department of Transportation; USGS National Elevation Dataset (30m); Thrive Regional Partnership; Cumberland Trails Conference; Appalachian Trail Conservancy; Davidson County Metropolitan Historical Commission; American Battlefield Protection Program (NPS); American Battlefield Trust; Tennessee Department of Agriculture's Division of Forestry; US Fish & Wildlife Service, National Wetlands Inventory; FEMA National Flood Hazard Layer; The Nature Conservancy; USGS PAD-US v1.4; Metro Parks Nashville; US EPA EnviroAtlas; ESRI Demographics.

Other map data sources: USGS NHDPlus HR; US Census Bureau TIGER.

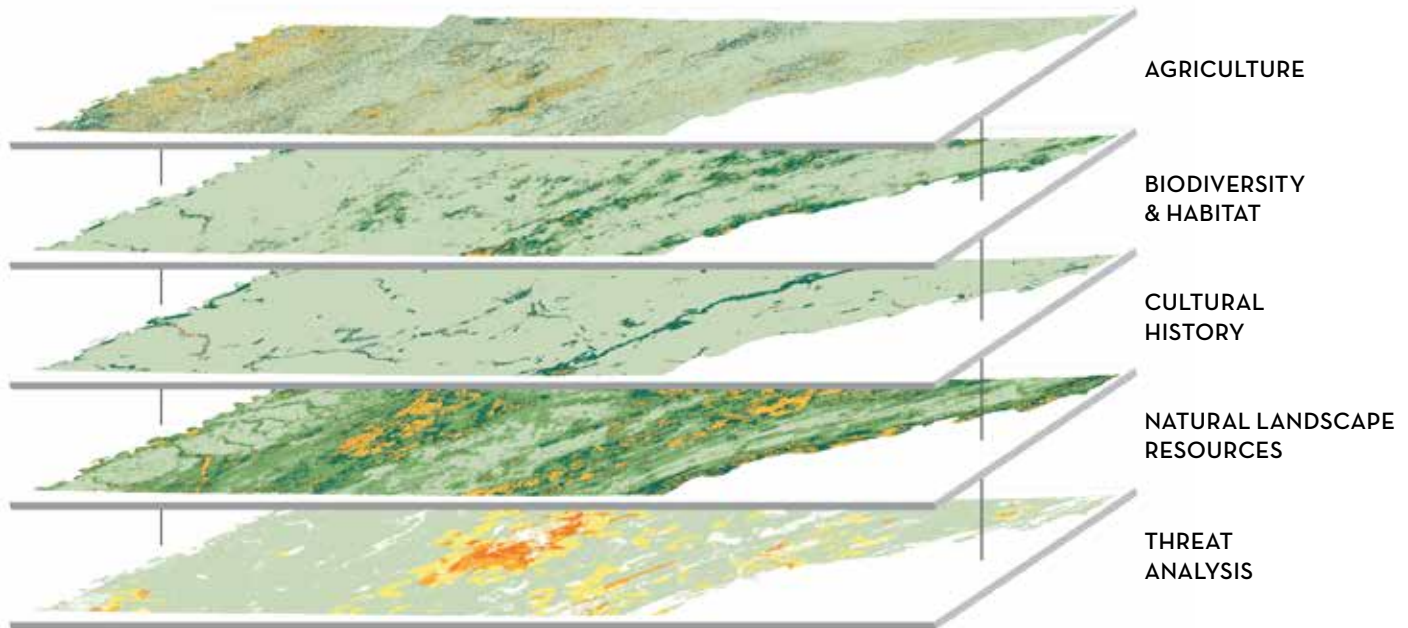
Maps and analysis by Luke Iverson, Conservation GIS Manager, The Land Trust for Tennessee, 2018-2019.



## Data Driven

The Land Trust relied heavily upon Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to map conservation values across the state. GIS is a framework for analyzing many kinds of data, particularly those with a spatial or location component. We compiled over 25 different datasets from a variety of authoritative sources, including state and federal government entities, scientific research organizations, and other

conservation groups. Ultimately, we were able to map conservation resources across Tennessee—like fertile soils for farming, diverse wildlife habitat, and historic landscapes—and identify areas with the highest concentration of conservation resources. We then analyzed census data and population growth projections to prioritize those places in most immediate need of our work.





# CONSERVATION OPPORTUNITY REGIONS

From this extensive work and analysis emerged The Land Trust for Tennessee's Conservation Opportunity Regions (CORs). While we will continue to be available to landowners across the state, these CORs represent places where we will prioritize our proactive conservation work over the coming decade and beyond.

## WEST

### Mississippi River

The Mississippi River forms the western border of Tennessee, creating diverse landscapes, including forested wetland habitats, agricultural lands, and bluffs. This corridor is also recognized for its scenery and recreation areas, such as Reelfoot Lake, the largest natural lake in Tennessee and an important stop for migrating birds.

### Lower Hatchie & Wolf Rivers

Dense wetlands in and around the Hatchie National Wildlife Refuge provide critical habitat for wintering waterfowl and other bird species. In the lower Hatchie and Wolf river corridors, there are fertile soils for raising crops, rich habitats, intact forested corridors, and outdoor opportunities for boaters, hunters, and bird-watchers. With increasing development on the outskirts of Memphis, these values are threatened.

### Lower Tennessee River

The lower Tennessee River provides important habitat in the river channels, floodplains, and surrounding uplands. The river is home to rare species of mussels, fish, and important terrestrial species along the river. This area also contains large, contiguous blocks of undeveloped forestland.

## MIDDLE

### Highland Rim

Like much of Middle Tennessee, Clarksville and the north Highland Rim area are experiencing unprecedented growth and farmland loss. This area has some of the most fertile and productive soils in the state, while also containing rolling scenic hills along the Red and Cumberland rivers, a historic Trail of Tears corridor, and Century Farms.

### Central Basin

The area around Nashville, known as the Central Basin, is characterized by a mosaic of land uses and extensive urbanization. A drive, bike, or walk along the Natchez Trace Parkway highlights this historic landscape, with scenic views of productive farms, forests, historic sites, and communities in an area experiencing unprecedented development pressure.

### Buffalo & Lower Duck Rivers

The Buffalo and lower Duck rivers are among the state's most scenic waterways, while also supporting an abundance of freshwater animals and birds. In fact, the Duck River is one of the most biodiverse rivers in the entire world. The river systems, expansive forests, and other habitats of this area are threatened by timbering and fragmentation.





## EAST

### **North Cumberland Mountains**

The northern Cumberland Plateau is noted for large swaths of uninterrupted forest, clear mountain streams, and rare and unique plants and wildlife. This remote area provides recreation opportunities for birders, hunters, and other outdoor enthusiasts to enjoy the rugged beauty.

### **South Cumberland Plateau**

The south Cumberland Plateau is a sanctuary for an outstanding diversity of wildlife that thrives in the extensive contiguous forests, steep coves, and large network of caves. The natural landscapes of this region also make it a popular outdoor recreation destination for locals and tourists who enjoy hunting, hiking, and rock climbing.

### **Smoky Mountain Foothills**

People flock from near and far to visit the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, making it the most visited national park in the country. While its popularity has many social and economic benefits, it also poses challenges. Areas just outside of the park are at risk of development, threatening some of the state's longest-standing communities.

### **Valley & Ridge**

From its resilient forested ridges and exceptional water quality to its productive land in the valleys, this part of Southeast Tennessee contains diverse resources and topography. The river valleys are among the most scenic areas in the state, boasting unsurpassed cultural heritage, rolling farmland, and ecological diversity.

*Our commitment is to increase the quality, pace,  
and impact of land conservation across the state.*



# STRATEGIES

The Land Trust for Tennessee's conservation opportunities are tremendous. In order to conserve places that matter while we have the chance, this plan sharpens our focus and demands both creativity and strategy. The following is a set of actions we will employ to best serve the people and places of Tennessee.



**ENGAGE** citizens, foundations, donors, and corporations in discussions about the power of our work and the need for their support.



**EXPAND** our use of conservation easements and other tools to protect places for the benefit of landowners and their families, the community, and our state.



**INVOLVE** communities within our Conservation Opportunity Regions (CORs) through focused, personal engagement, and media strategies.



**CULTIVATE** and sustain effective partnerships with government entities, businesses, educational institutions, and other nonprofits to protect high-priority places and resources.



**BOLSTER** our stewardship program to continue to uphold our conservation easements and serve as a resource for new and existing landowners who own and manage protected land.



**EMPHASIZE** our role as a local and national leader by serving as a trusted advisor and resource to maximize our collective conservation impact.



# METRICS

## THE RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Land trusts measure success in acres conserved and dollars raised, but that disregards our lasting impact in communities. In the context of “means and ends,” this plan compels us to look at the ends first. When you invest in The Land Trust, we will measure the return on your investment using these metrics.

Acres of priority habitat conserved

Number of volunteer ambassadors who share our mission and vision

Number of donors who support our programs

Miles of waterways protected

Number of community conversations, workshops, and field trips conducted

Number of people who tell us about the places that matter to them

Acres of prime soils protected

Number of conservation corridors expanded or established

Amount of funds brought to conservation projects

Number of culturally significant sites protected

Number of conversations with planning decision-makers in high-growth areas

Number of public recreation areas expanded or established

Number of stories told in local, regional, and national media



## OUR CALL TO ACTION: TENNESSEE NEEDS YOU

Thanks to the support and vision of so many, The Land Trust for Tennessee protects more private land in Tennessee than any other conservation organization, and our conservation impact on public land grows each year. We who live here now have a rapidly disappearing window of opportunity to help shape the future and nature of Tennessee for the benefit of all.

People and communities remain at the heart of what we do. Establishing relationships based on a reputation of trust and excellence is core to our mission. Thank you for joining us as we protect the places we cannot afford to lose. To that end, we invite you to:

- ▶ **Make a financial gift to support our work**
- ▶ **Volunteer with us**
- ▶ **Tell us about a place that matters to you**
- ▶ **Conserve your land with us**
- ▶ **Sponsor one of our events**
- ▶ **Discuss donating land to us**
- ▶ **Plan a legacy gift**

Together, let's give our great-great-grandchildren a gift from a generation that thought of them, and got it right.

With gratitude,



**Liz McLaurin**

*President & CEO*



# THANK YOU

We owe a debt of gratitude to The Land Trust for Tennessee staff, Board of Directors, Trustee Council, and Working Group members whose passion and direction made this process and product possible. Thank you to the Stowe Land Trust in Vermont and many other land trusts across the country who were willing to share their experiences and lessons learned with us. Thanks to the other Tennessee conservation organizations who met with us early on in developing our plan. Thanks to the IGTLab at UT Chattanooga for sharing GIS expertise. Thanks to our supporters who made this plan—and all that we do—possible. Finally, thanks to the 1,000+ people who took the time to fill out our public input survey. All of your collective work and input made this plan a reality.

Our endless gratitude to award-winning National Geographic photographer Stephen Alvarez, who donated his time and gift of photography. His beautiful work can now be seen throughout this publication, on our website, and in other printed materials.

Thanks to the landowners across Tennessee who opened their properties to us for photo sessions, and to the hundreds more who have partnered with us to protect their treasured landscapes forever.

*We appreciate the support of our in-kind and financial sponsors:*

**INTERNATIONAL  PAPER**



**TOWER**  
COMMUNITY BANK  
*A Higher Standard*



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*THANK YOU!*



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