

South Cumberland

REGIONAL LAND TRUST

A Leap Into What We Wanted

Carolyn Hoagland
JCLT Resident and Secretary

Before we arrived in the Northern suburbs of Atlanta, we had followed a pretty typical path. We were the son and daughter of working class parents who had seen their dreams come true. Like our brothers and sisters, we had finished high school, gone on to college, and were making our living with our heads and not our hands. We kept the sidewalks neatly edged at our new house in a popular gated swim/tennis sub-development. The nearest grocery store had a sushi chef and a full-scale floral dept. But there was one problem: we were not fast enough. We couldn't drive, talk, or shop fast enough to keep up. We didn't turn our air conditioner on until August, and, to the dismay of neighbors, our children liked to wade in the creek and look at the minnows – sometimes within plain sight of the main entrance! It turned out that the fine print of our resident's agreement for the subdivision prohibited gardens, clotheslines, and that scourge of all that is suburbanly pleasant: a little wading pool for the toddlers in the back yard. We had to get out! But where to go?

And so began our search for 'a place to settle down.' We had been married for more than a dozen years and had lived in several different houses and neighborhoods. The combination of schooling, career changes, and later running our own internet business had helped us to see a quite a few different lifestyles and different areas of the country so we were beginning to understand what we liked, and what made us uncomfortable. A friend told us about 'The Guide To Intentional Communities,' which you can access online at www.ic.org. So we started the search for a place that would enable us to try to make a difference, - some place that encouraged meadow and forest gardening, green housing and alternative energy generation. We were hoping for a university nearby, and small group of neighbors who make decision by consensus.

Since moving to the Jumpoff Community Land Trust (JCLT), I've had a number of people tell me, "I so admire what you folks are doing." I never know quite what to say this. My hesitation is based partly upon the acknowledgement that some (perhaps many?) of these comments are just a polite way of saying, "Thank goodness I don't have to live like that!"

The basic idea of JCLT residency is that we are paying for

land we will never own. Yet our leasehold gives us the security of knowing that we will enjoy our lives here for the long term. Our membership fees go directly to pay the land debt, taxes and insurance, so that South Cumberland Land Trust can own the property and not be encumbered by the yearly maintenance expenses that go along with it. But I am always surprised when folks express the idea that they 'admire this' or that we are somehow 'giving up something' in order to make this happen. Most people do what they think is best for themselves, and we are no different. No one here is allowed to use pesticides, herbicides, or housing mortgages; we are not allowed to build near the bluff. We are not allowed to clear-cut the forest around us. We cannot garner a majority and force our idea of land use upon a stubborn hold out. But is this some kind of sacrifice? No. For a small monthly fee, my family gets to live in a place with reduced chemical hazards, with a 900-acre hiking/greenbelt buffer, on land that will be securely protected from development, in a situation that allows me to reduce my own debt load. We get to engage in a community process where we are enabled to learn how to trust each other, and to know that we will always have an active part in decisions about land use around us. Looking back, it wasn't so much a decision to get away from what we didn't like, as it was a chance to leap into that which we wanted.

Sustaining a Community

Susan Freeman Binkley
Founder and Director, Blue Monarch
Owner, The Blue Chair Bakery & Coffee Shop, Sewanee, TN

"If I had not come to Blue Monarch, I'm sure I'd be in jail, prison or even in my grave." The first time I heard this comment from a resident of Blue Monarch, it made an enormous impression on me. In 2003, I started a residential non-profit organization for women and their children with the primary focus on giving women opportunities, which would enable them to become self-sufficient, therefore eliminating the tendency to make poor choices out of desperation. What I discovered after only a few months in operation, however, was that we were in the business of saving lives

Most of the women who come to Blue Monarch actually do come directly from jail. They have reached the point I refer to as the "black hole" where they seem to have very few options, their families have given up on them and they have developed drug or alcohol addictions as methods to numb themselves from the tragedies they have experienced. This usually includes sexual abuse as children and domestic violence as adults. The women who come to Blue Monarch are broken, emotionally beaten down and see very little hope. They make the courageous step to enter the Blue Monarch program as one last effort





Sustaining a Community—cont.

to “make it on their own.”

And courage is exactly what it takes. The twelve-month Blue Monarch program is not a treatment program but an intensive self-help program where only the most determined and courageous can complete the year. It is not easy. It is necessary to learn, grow, mature, and feel the pain from past choices in order to move beyond them when it would be much easier to return to the old lifestyle and numb the pain. Many of the young mothers of Blue Monarch have missed their children’s early days as they were abusing drugs and not present for that stage of their children’s lives. Once the drugs wear off and their minds clear, they begin to realize what they missed and it is a painful challenge to use this knowledge to grow rather than to crumble.

Sustaining Self-Confidence

I feel very fortunate for my business to be able to play a role in the exciting mission and vision of Blue Monarch. The women are employed through The Blue Chair at an on-site commercial kitchen where they are taught to produce delicious baked items and beautiful desserts. (The Blue Monarch residents produce all the gift baskets as well.) This provides an income for the women during their stay at Blue Monarch as well as an opportunity to learn a valuable job skill, which they can take with them when they leave. In addition, The Blue Chair teaches good work ethic and helps the women develop an impressive resume and work record for their job when they graduate from the program. Self-confidence is developed through learning a skill and doing it well.

It is our hope to serve as a model for other businesses to do the same. I feel very strongly that private businesses should accept social responsibility for some of the issues crippling our communities. After all, we are all affected when people in our communities are unemployed, in poor health, committing crimes, losing children to foster care and depending on government assistance. As an employer it is extremely rewarding to watch the amazing transformation, as someone considered “unemployable” becomes a valid contributing member of our community. What better reason could there possibly be for being in business than to give hope to a woman and her children – and their future generations to come? At Blue Monarch, sustaining a woman’s valuable life not only helps her precious little family, but it helps the future of our own families as well.

Readers may seek further information about Blue Monarch at www.bluemonarch.org or email info@bluemonarch.org. Blue Monarch is peacefully located near the Cumberland Plateau.

This issue of the SCRLT Annual Newsletter is dedicated to expanded concepts of sustainability. It is an exploration of ‘what’s out there’ in terms of this region. What are people of vision thinking and doing with sustainability in mind? As author Sue Hubbell would say, ‘What are they up to?’ In this issue are edited excerpts of articles submitted by various friends of SCRLT. They are presented in the order of the scale of sustainability they address, from personal to corporate. The views expressed are not necessarily those of the SCRLT. Each article may be read, unedited and in its entirety, by visiting our website, www.scr.lt.org.

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Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)

Miriam and Bill Keener

Food is a basic human need. Yet for most of us in the U.S., it is merely an inexpensive commodity that we take for granted. Issues surrounding how, where, or by whom food is grown are not generally the topic of conversation around the dinner table. Food in the U.S. travels an average of 1,300 miles from the farm to the market shelf. Almost every state in the U.S. buys 85-90% of its food from some place else.

CSA is a unique model of local agriculture whose roots reach back 30 years to Japan where a group of women concerned about the increase in food imports and the corresponding decrease in the farming population initiated a direct growing and purchasing relationship between their group and local farms. This arrangement, called "teikei" in Japanese, translates to "putting the farmers' face on food." This concept traveled to Europe and was adapted to the U.S. and given the name "Community Supported Agriculture" at Indian Line Farm, Massachusetts, in 1985. As of January 1999, there are over 1000 CSA farms across the US and Canada.

Although local food production would add considerable food dollars to local economies, the nation's best farmland is being lost to commercial and residential development at an accelerating rate. At the same time, the retirement of older farmers, rising land and production costs, low food prices, competing land uses, the lack of incentive for young people to enter farming, and the fundamental restructuring of the national and global economy all combine to make farming and local food production in the U.S. an increasingly difficult task. At present, farmers constitute less than 1% of our nation's population. This figure is so insignificant that the commerce census bureau no longer counts farming as an occupation. Of the 1% that are farmers, 90% are supplemented by off-farm income. Community Supported Agriculture represents a viable alternative to the prevailing situation and the long-distance relationship most of us have with the food we eat.

The CSA members, families, or shareholders, gather around a farm to support and share the financial responsibility of its activity. Each week these individuals are given whatever fruit and vegetables are in season. The produce is not for sale; rather members of the farm receive an equal share. CSA reflects an innovative and resourceful strategy to connect local farmers with local consumers; develop a regional food supply and strong local economy; maintain a sense of community; encourage land



stewardship, and honor the knowledge and experience of growers and producers working with small to medium farms.

Sequatchie Cove Farm

Sequatchie Cove Farm is a sustainable farm of 300 acres nestled in the shadows of the Cumberland Plateau, located 35 minutes west of downtown Chattanooga. Bordered by the Little Sequatchie River, the farm is surrounded by thousands of acres of pristine Tennessee wilderness full of caves, springs, cliffs, and one of the most diverse forests of the northern hemisphere. Sequatchie Cove Farm is owned and operated by Bill and Miriam Keener, their children, Ann and Kelsey, and Miriam's parents, Jim and Emily Wright, with the help of Nathan Arnold, Trae Moore, and an assortment of interns.

"We view the farm as a living organism: all of its parts make up one living whole. A variety of animals, plants and people coexist here, bringing a sense of balance and wholeness, which in turn brings strength and vitality to the farm and the land. Our aim is to develop models of agriculture that are culturally, economically and environmentally sound and to assist in the stimulation and duplication of these models.

The health of the land, soil, plants, water, air, livestock, our health, and your health are all linked inextricably. We make decisions and work with this basic philosophy close to our hands and our heart. All of our food is produced using Biodynamic/Organic methods of agriculture."





Regional Sustainability Through Collective Action

Paige Schneider
Assistant Professor of Political Science
University of the South

The Cumberland Plateau has a rich history of organized resistance and grassroots movements. It is the birthplace of popular educator and community organizer, Myles Horton who founded the Highlander Center in Monteagle, TN in the 1930s. More recently, this region has spawned a number of highly effective grassroots political organizations. 'Save our Cumberland Mountains' (SOCM - pronounced sock'em) was organized in 1972 in five of the northern Plateau's coal counties and successfully fought for an equitable local tax structure that would require wealthy land owners who leased land to coal companies to pay their fair share of taxes. During the late 70s and 1980s, SOCM organizers and members risked physical assaults and arson to try to stop wildcat strip mining companies from destroying land and watersheds. SOCM survives today with a number of active chapters throughout middle Tennessee. Members continue to work on environmental issues such as mining, logging, and toxic waste disposal, while expanding their agenda to address other issues pertinent to this region.

Environmental threats posed by vacation and retirement home development, as well as the expansion of corporate logging in our forests, presents new challenges for the residents of the Cumberland Plateau. Effective opposition to well financed adversaries requires collective action, but mobilizing people to join together and work cooperatively for a common political goal isn't easy. What do political movements need to do to be effective agents of change?

The organizing experiences of both the Appalachian coal miners, and civil rights activists demonstrate the importance of 'free spaces' such as community centers, churches, coops, and living rooms for launching a movement. In order to go beyond acts of individual resistance towards collective action, people who have experienced some injustice or oppression need a safe space to gather with others who have shared similar experiences. Face to face contact with neighbors or others similarly situated is the first step in developing a group identity and political consciousness that will foster a commitment to organize and challenge the status quo.

Communications Vital

Building an effective communication network is vital to sustaining movements, and fortunately this has become easier. Many scholars who study social movements have noted the tremendous benefits of new technology such as emailing and Internet websites for facilitating contact among activists, and sharing information with an interested or 'latent' public who may be receptive to group goals and provide support.

The movement must meet potential supporters where they are in the development of a political consciousness, not where you wish they might be.



In order for the movement to attract crucial allies, movement activists must communicate group goals in a way that recognizes the values, and accepts the limitations of the audience—the movement must meet potential supporters where they are in the development of a political consciousness, not where you wish they might be.

Framing a Vision

Sustaining a movement requires a long term strategy that looks beyond an immediate crisis or response to one or two hot button issues, and instead envisions a movement of people interested in a broader vision of protecting and enhancing a way of life. How a movement ‘frames’ this vision is a crucial component of attracting—rather than alienating—potential allies. Framing is the process of constructing shared meanings through which

individuals understand or perceive their reality. Effective framing of group goals should foster a sense of solidarity among individuals who may come from diverse backgrounds but who share some positive affective response to the values, symbols, or vision of the movement. Therefore, the strategies and tactics employed by a movement should reflect some understanding of and respect for local sensibilities.

At the end of the day, most social and political change occurs because a relatively small portion of an aggrieved population accepts the challenge and personal sacrifice required to change the status quo. Growing a movement will help ensure its success, but success often comes down to the commitment of a small group of individuals who stand fast in the face of corporate greed, complacency and personal aggrandizement at the expense of the public interest, to challenge the political power structure in a community, state, or nation.

The JCLT would like to extend a warm welcome to its newest members, Paige Schneider and David Carroll.

Paige is Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of the South, where she teaches courses on American Politics, Social Movements, and Global Gender Issues. David is director of the Democracy Program at the Carter Center, where he manages programs to observe elections and support the strengthening of democratic institutions and processes. He recently organized Carter Center election missions in Liberia and Palestine, and is collaborating with the UN and 20 other international organizations to develop consensus on standards for democratic elections. Paige and David have three children: Daniel Nicodemo (21 yrs),

Allie Nicodemo (16 yrs) and Lucy Carroll (4 yrs).

Effective framing of group goals should foster a sense of solidarity among individuals who may come from diverse backgrounds...

Massive Land Sales on the Cumberland Plateau

Nate Wilson

SCRLT Board Member and Treasurer

In November, the paper company Bowater announced that it would sell all of its remaining land holdings in the southeast, which includes 100,000 acres on the Cumberland Plateau. Bowater's announcement mirrors those of other large timber companies who have sold almost 1 million acres of timberland in Tennessee in recent years.

While few in the conservation community have embraced all the management practices of the forest industry, industrial timberland has been an important component of open space in the State, providing undeveloped buffers to many of the state and federal public lands and preserving corridors of undeveloped lands connecting many of our wild spaces. The divestiture of this land presents a new challenge to the conservation of open space.

The amount of private timberland changing hands is staggering. One estimate states that since 1999, the MAJORITY of privately owned timberlands in TN has been sold or is being sold. While much of this land is remaining in timber at the moment, new owners are recognizing parcels valuable for development and selling them at a rapid rate. Numbers from the 2005 Tennessee Forest Survey indicate that at least 300,000 acres of land classified as forest in 1999 is now in another land use category.

Need for Corporate Partners

The conservation community now finds itself in the position of needing to keep these forestlands under active forest management in order to protect them from development. However, there are several buyers stepping forward who have the potential to manage these lands well.

In the case of the Bowater tracts on the Plateau, Representative Mike Turner and the Tennessee Environmental Council have both proposed that the state purchase the lands by issuing 20 year- bonds to cover the estimated \$300 million cost of purchase. The proposal includes active timber management on most of the properties to help defray the costs of the bonds. Representative Turner's proposal is in committee at the time of this writing and will be heard on March 22nd.

Lyme Timber Company has also expressed an interest in buying 90,000 acres of the Bowater lands, including 55,000 acres on the plateau that the state has identified as conservation priorities. Lyme Timber's interest is a favorable development for the plateau because they are a timber company that specializes in managing properties of high conservation values. Many of their properties are certified by the Forest Stewardship Council, (a project of the Rainforest Alliance), and some of their properties have conservation easements on them to protect them from future development.

Another recent buyer of forestland tracts in TN is the Forestland Group, one of a growing number of Timber Investment

Management Organizations (TIMOs) who manage timber for institutional investors such as pension funds and foundations. The Forestland Group is unique among TIMOs because the 1.8 million acres they manage across the country are all certified sustainable by the Forest Stewardship Council, and much of it is protected through working forest conservation easements.

It is fortunate that such conservation-minded investors are available to purchase and manage some of this land. They are part of a growing number of groups proving that sustainable forestry can be profitable and therefore one of the best tools we have to save these large tracts from development.

SCRLT welcomes its new board member and treasurer, Nate Wilson

Nate, a Magna Cum Laude graduate of the University of Georgia with a B.S.F.R. degree in Forestry and Wildlife Ecology, is the owner of Timeless Way Land Management, Monteagle, TN, and Timeless Way Builder, Monteagle, TN. Nate also resides in Monteagle, along with his wife, Jess, and son, Ely.



About the photos

The photos in this newsletter depict the life cycle of the Monarch butterfly, from laying eggs, through caterpillar, pupa, hatching, and preparing for life as an adult. With the exception of the photo above, all are by Jim Ann Howard. The photo above, "Mantis and Monarch," courtesy of Elizabeth Rickert, reminds us that every living thing is a predator as well as prey.

A Note From the SCRLT President

Dear Friends of the Land

The role of South Cumberland Regional Land Trust in our local community and the region continues to change and evolve. Our Shakerag Hollow project of two years ago was a great success, thanks to the generous contributions made by many of you who receive this newsletter. Over 200 acres of protected forest ecosystems was donated to The University of the South. Our collaboration with The Land Trust for Tennessee established the first conservation easement on the University domain.

Local and regional interests in developing a network of groups and individuals, who are working on all aspects of sustainability, has prompted SCRLT and Jump Off Community Land Trust to sponsor a consortium to look at what is being done now and how we can connect to make things better in the future. Your membership is vitally important to this work, and I invite you to renew, either by using the membership form below or by finding one of us at the annual meeting on April 23, 2006.

Events will occur during Earth Day Weekend on both campuses of the University and St. Andrews-Sewanee School. Our annual meeting will culminate with the weekend events at JCLT on Sunday, April 23 (see directions, above). Our program, Sustainability in our Bio-region, will be an informal sharing of ideas from participants including students and faculty from the University and SAS, others include Bill Keener (Sequatchie Cove Farm), folks from Sequatchie Valley Institute and Jeff Pfitzer, board member, who will represent our urban connection in Chattanooga. After the program SCRLT invites you to enjoy a supper made from locally grown food. The food we put on our tables travels an average of 1500 miles to get there. Consuming locally grown food and products, fosters regional economy, pollutes less and is just plain fresher and healthier. After supper hope you can stay for some music and a bonfire.

Hope to see you April 23rd here at Jumpoff.

G. Sanford McGee, Board President

Join SCRLT for

EARTH DAY Week-end Celebration

Saturday, April 22

St. Andrew's-Sewanee TRAILS & TRILLIUMS
8:30 – 3:30 full details at www.trails.sasweb.org featuring a 1:00 Keynote Presentation by Tennessee State Naturalist **MACK PRITCHARD**

Sunday, April 23

GALA SCRLT EARTHDAY ANNUAL MEETING

At Alf's Field on Jumpoff Community Land Trust

- 2:00 Nature Hike starting at Alf's Field and led by Gale Link
- 2:00 - 5:00 The Alf's Field KID'S TENT led by Paige Schneider
- 3:00 - 5:00 SCRLT Annual Meeting plus a **Panel Discussion on Regional Sustainability Networking.**

{Panel includes representatives from SCRLT, The University of the South, The Sequatchie Valley Institute, Sequatchie Cove Farm, Crabtree Farms, and, adding an uptown perspective, The City of Chattanooga's Urban Planner}

- 5:30 FEAST on foods that are all Locally Grown & Organic and bring a dessert to share!

After Supper – Live Music & Bonfire

Directions to Alf's Field

From I 24 turn towards Sewanee. After 3 miles turn left at caution light onto Rt. 156. Turn left at STOP sign and back right around base of airfield. Proceed 3 miles to Marion County line and turn left onto Jump Off Road. Turn left onto Tate Road. Go 1 mile to first left (Tate Trail unmarked). Alf's field is @1 mile on the right. Follow signs for parking.

We Invite You to Join Us

Name	One Year Individual \$15-\$75 Non-Profit Organizations \$50+ Corporate \$200+ Life \$250+ (one-time donation) Please make checks payable to SCRLT PO Box 3188 Sewanee, TN 37375 All donations are tax deductible
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South Cumberland

REGIONAL LAND TRUST

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Sewanee, TN 37375



Basics on Conservation Easements

What is a Conservation Easement?

A conservation easement is a legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust or government agency that permanently limits uses of the land to protect its conservation values.

Do the landowners give up ownership of the Land?

No. It simply means that as a landowner you voluntarily give up certain rights associated with that land, such as the right to build additional structures, while retaining the right to grow crops on the land. Landowners continue to own and use their land and retain the right to sell it or pass it on to their heirs. However, the future owners are also bound by the easement's terms. In this sense, an easement is binding in perpetuity.

How are conservation easements structured?

A conservation easement offers more flexibility than you might think. While an easement on a property containing rare wildlife habitat might prohibit any development, another easement on a farm might allow continued farming and the building of additional agricultural structures and may only apply to a portion of the land. The key is that all of the terms and conditions of each easement are laid out in advance with the full participation of both the owner and the land trust.

How does the public benefit from land trusts and conservation easements?

Conservation easements protect a key public good by keeping the land undeveloped and its natural resources protected. Easements protect clean water sources, wildlife habitats, scenic vistas, prime farm and forest land, and historic landscapes and provide relief from urban crowding

Do landowners benefit from a conservation easement?

Landowners can realize tax savings in several different ways. And, for many landowners, knowing that their land will remain intact, open and undeveloped, thereby preserving its benefits to the public and their heirs, is the best benefit of all.

Are there many conservation easements in the U.S.?

Land trusts and conservation easements can be found throughout the United States. The oldest land trusts are 100 years old! There are more than 1,300 local and regional land trusts around the country that conserve and protect open spaces and the resources they provide.

Who supports conservation easements?

Many of us want to leave a legacy for our children and grandchildren of protected and conserved open space and resources. Conservation easements help achieve this goal in a way that still allows for many of these tracts of land to remain as working farms, forests, scenic views and wildlife habitat.

Provided by our partner in conservation, the LTTN. Contact Eileen Hennessy at 615-244-LAND. <http://www.landtrusttn.org/>