

NORTH AMERICAN LAND TRUST

ANNUAL REPORT

2025

we protect beautiful places



OUR MISSION

is to permanently conserve and steward natural and cultural resources through innovative land preservation partnerships.

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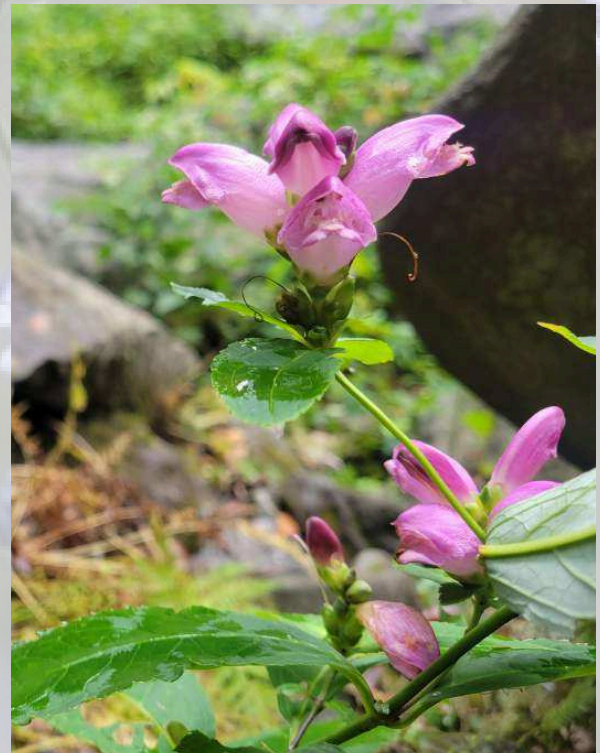
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Cover Photo: Wyatt Moyer, (top) Will Gandy

SUPPORT LAND PROTECTION AND STEWARDSHIP IN 2026

As a non-profit land conservation organization, we rely on contributions from our supporters to not only conserve more land, but to steward that land in perpetuity.

www.northamericanlandtrust.org/donate for ways to contribute*

Want to join a team of compassionate conservationists?

Learn more about our internship program, open positions, board opportunities, and ways to partner or volunteer on our website.

Scan here:



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

As we reflect on another extraordinary year at North American Land Trust, I am filled with gratitude and pride for all that our team and partners have accomplished together. NALT continues to grow, expand, and deepen its impact, guided by the same collaborative spirit that has defined our mission since the beginning. Everything we do is made possible through the steadfast support of our friends, partners, and donors; individuals and organizations who share our belief in the lasting importance of land conservation.

This year's report highlights just a few of the many exciting milestones from across the country. You'll read about our habitat protection efforts across the country, working with landowners and municipalities, like in Saratoga County, New York, [helping safeguard vital lands for the federally endangered Karner Blue Butterfly](#). You'll also find an update on our [pollinator grant partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources](#), and the joyful grand opening of the [Baldino Family History and Nature Center at Brinton Run Preserve](#), named in honor of our dear friend and supporter Sandra K. Baldino. That July ribbon-cutting marked a new chapter for one of NALT's flagship public preserves.

Closer to home, we are proud to share the story of our [acquisition of the 1755 Preserve in Chadds Ford](#)—NALT's future headquarters and an important addition to the Brandywine Battlefield landscape. Across our portfolio, we continue to build momentum both locally in southeastern Pennsylvania and nationwide, including new projects like Broadleaf Preserve in Lake Toxaway, North Carolina, and updates from our Richland Trust 509 supporting organization.



In 1992 Andrew L. Johnson (right) and a small group of professionals established North American Land Trust (NALT) with the primary purpose of preserving and managing open space with ecological, agricultural or historical significance.

This report also offers moments of reflection. We bid a fond farewell to our longtime colleague Susan Chase Levin, who retired this year after nearly three decades of dedicated service. Susan's steady hand and deep commitment helped shape NALT into the organization it is today. We also [welcomed Andy Schaum to our Board of Directors](#) in June 2025, whose leadership and experience will help guide us into the future.

As we look ahead, I remain deeply grateful for the trust, friendship, and generosity of all who stand with us in this work. NALT's achievements are the product of many hands and hearts, and it is that shared commitment to conservation that continues to move us forward. Thank you for being part of the NALT family—and for believing, as we do, that the landscapes we protect today are the legacies we leave for tomorrow.

With gratitude,

Steven Carter, President
North American Land Trust



WHO WE ARE

We are a partner for life

North American Land Trust (NALT) is a 501(c)(3) conservation charity dedicated to the permanent conservation and stewardship of natural and cultural resources through innovative land preservation partnerships. Since its inception in 1992, NALT has successfully preserved over 141,000 acres of natural land across 24 states, primarily through permanent conservation easements.

Conservation Partnerships

NALT collaborates with landowners, municipalities, the real estate community, and various organizations to safeguard environmentally and culturally significant landscapes that might otherwise be lost to other uses. Once a property falls under NALT's permanent stewardship, our skilled team of conservation professionals conducts regular monitoring to ensure the integrity and sustainability of the conservation resource.

Local and National Impact

Originating from Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania, we have a strong focus area in Southeast Pennsylvania that we are continually expanding with the support of our committed landowners and partners, including our first public preserve, Brinton Run Preserve. Our influence spans across the United States and continues to grow each year.



*Our home is in Chadds Ford, PA with field staff around the country, giving us a national perspective on a variety of conservation needs.
Reach out to us anytime: info@nalt.org*

NALT BY THE NUMBERS

2853+
ACRES
PROTECTED
IN 2025

We are committed to enhancing and continuing to expand our vision of preserving as much land as possible.

Our achievements are made possible through the unwavering dedication and enthusiasm of our donors, partners, and colleagues within the conservation community and beyond. Together, we have successfully expanded our efforts across North America, assisting landowners and community members in uniting towards a common objective: **safeguarding the open spaces that are significant to them.**

View the full map, with stories from each focus area, on our website



141,000+
TOTAL ACRES
PROTECTED

>\$2.3 MILLION
IN GRANTS
AWARDED IN 2025

585+
TOTAL
PROJECTS



13 PARTNER
ORGANIZATIONS
AND GROWING

2025 Projects & Stories

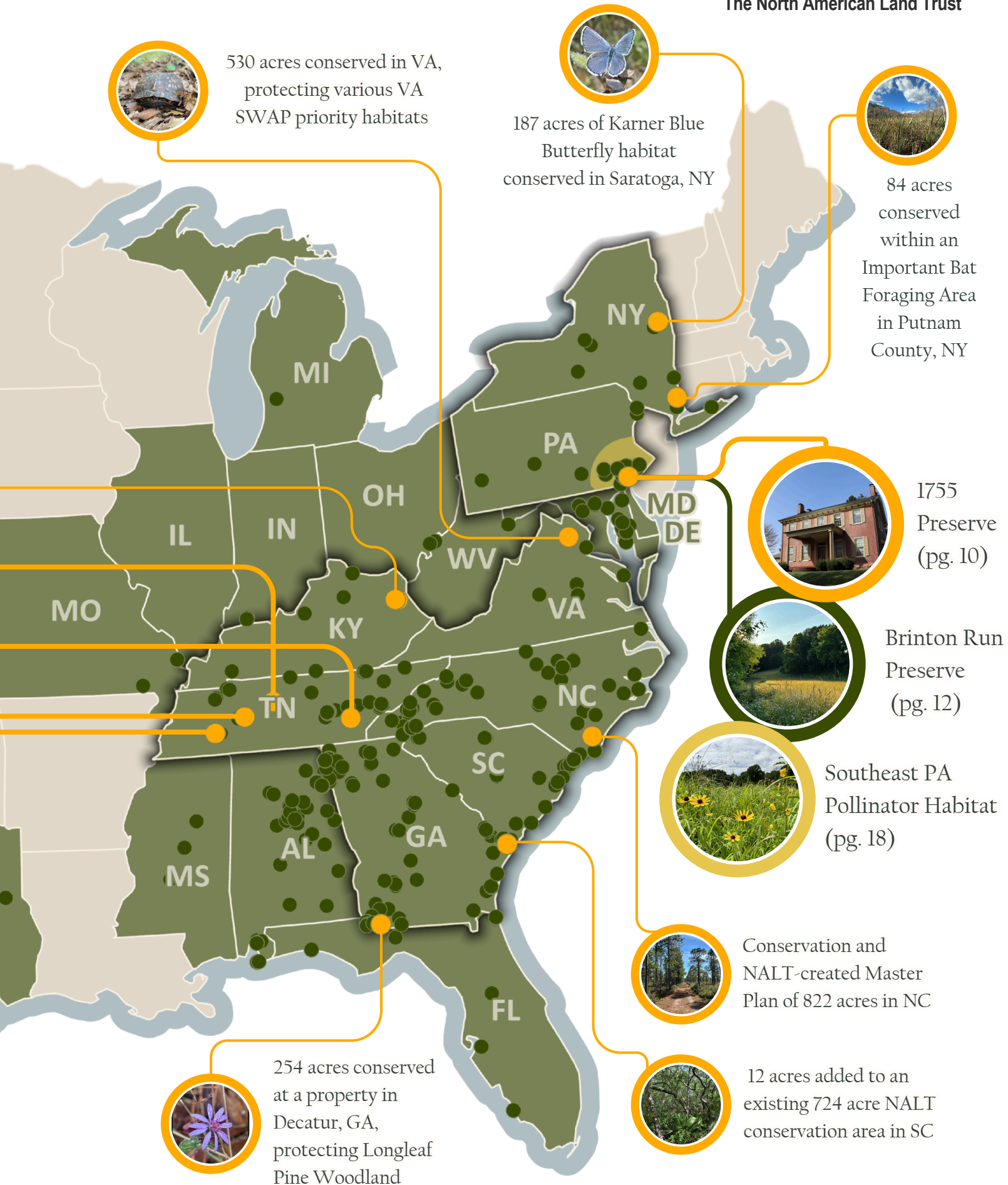


● 13 New Projects Protected by NALT in 2025

● 585+ Total NALT Projects

■ 24 States with a NALT Project

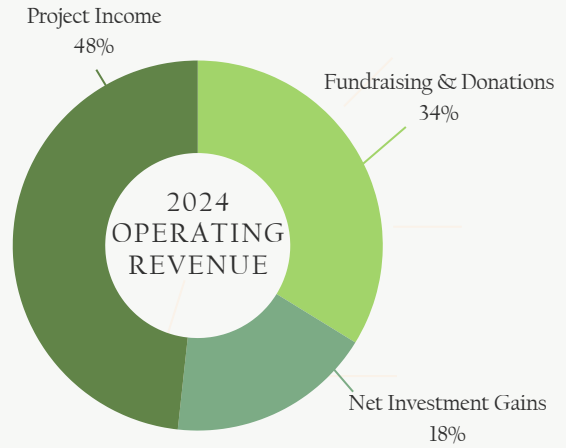
NALT'S mapping team created 220 maps in 2025, not including this one!



ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

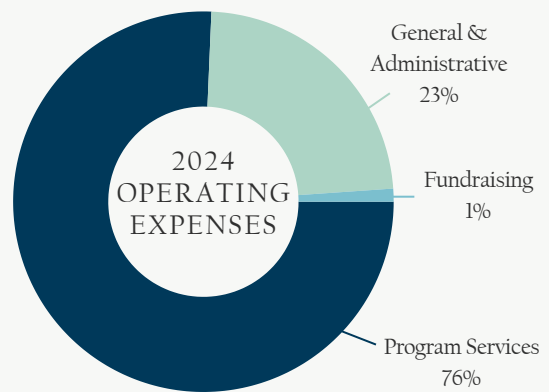
OPERATING REVENUE

	Total 2024
Project Income	\$1,145,681
Net Investment Gains	\$425,912
Fundraising & Donations	\$801,652
TOTAL	\$2,373,245



OPERATING EXPENSES

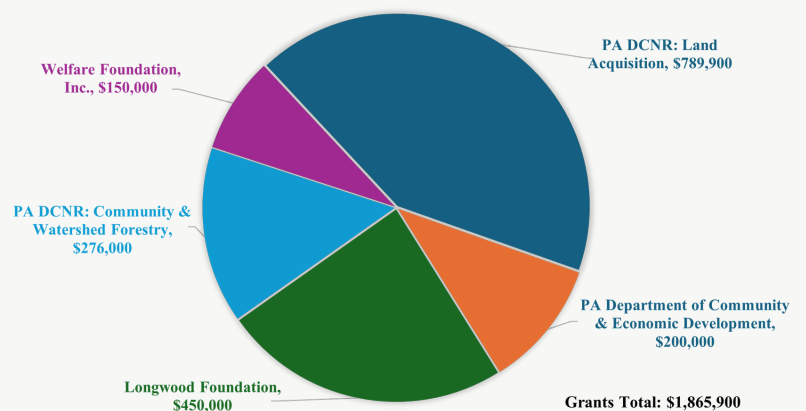
	Total 2024
Program Services	\$1,722,609
General & Administrative	\$528,713
Fundraising	\$25,073
TOTAL	\$2,276,395



NET ASSETS

	Total 2024
Year Start	\$50,906,680
Year End	\$51,010,060
CHANGE	\$103,380

2024 AWARDED GRANTS



This information has been prepared based on the 2024 audited financial statements and related forms, including Form 990, are available on our website or by request: <https://northamericanlandtrust.org/about/policies-documents/>

SUPPORT OUR MISSION

We can't do what we do without YOU

Conservation starts with you! At home, in the field, and with organizations like North American Land Trust. Donate today to support our mission of protecting and stewarding beautiful places.

Your donations:

- support our **Internship Program**.
- fund **programming** and **infrastructure** at our public preserves.
- support **acquisition** and **land conservation** efforts.
- enable **stewardship** and **restoration** on protected lands.

LAND
DONATION

DONATE
\$



LEGACY
PLANNING

Contribute
Stock, Bonds,
and Mutual
Funds



IRA
DISTRIBUTIONS

Learn more:

A QR code located within a circular graphic, intended for users to scan and learn more about the organization's mission and donation options.

NALT ACQUIRES THE 1755 PRESERVE

A Landmark Addition to the Brandywine Battlefield Landscape

BY STEVE CARTER



In April 2025, North American Land Trust proudly finalized the acquisition of the 1755 Preserve, formerly known as the Joseph Davis Tract, located at 1597 Baltimore Pike in Chadds Ford Township, Delaware County, Pennsylvania. This achievement followed more than a year of dedicated fundraising and collaboration to secure one of the most historically and culturally significant properties in the Brandywine Battlefield National Landmark.

Building upon the success and momentum of NALT's 2021 acquisition of Brinton Run Preserve—NALT's first public preserve within the Battlefield—this latest effort represents a major milestone in the organization's ongoing commitment to preserving the natural and cultural heritage of the region. Working alongside its trusted partners, NALT brought together a broad coalition of public and private supporters to make the dream of permanently protecting this landscape a reality.

The 1755 Preserve encompasses a rich tapestry of natural and historic features. Its meadows and open fields are being restored to native and pollinator-friendly habitat, advancing both conservation and community education goals. The property also includes the historic Joseph Davis House, which will become the future headquarters for North American Land Trust, providing a permanent home that embodies NALT's mission and deep roots in the Chadds Ford community.



Another remarkable feature of the site is its historic carriage house, once used by famed artist N.C. Wyeth between 1908 and 1911, where he created illustrations for Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Treasure Island*. This connection to Wyeth and the broader Brandywine artistic legacy adds to the property’s cultural resonance and interpretive potential.

The acquisition of the 1755 Preserve also safeguards a property that was once vulnerable to redevelopment, ensuring that it will now remain a protected landscape for generations to come. The preserve creates a meaningful link between NALT’s conservation work and the Chadds Ford business and cultural community, complementing the area’s unique identity as both a historic and living landscape.

NALT extends its deep gratitude to the many partners and funders who made this acquisition possible, including the [Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources](#), the [Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development](#), the [Longwood Foundation](#), the [Welfare Foundation](#), [Atira Conservation](#), [Chadds Ford Township](#), the [American Battlefield Protection Program \(NPS ABPP\)](#), and the [American Battlefield Trust](#). Their generosity and shared vision were instrumental in protecting this extraordinary property. NALT was granted a total of \$3,473,288.62 to make the acquisition of this historic property possible.

As NALT staff continue work on a comprehensive site master plan, the organization is envisioning a future that will include public trail access, interpretive exhibits, and an improved entrance from Route 1, designed to welcome visitors safely and meaningfully. The team hopes to open the preserve fully to the public after these improvements are completed—potentially within the next year.

President Steven Carter reflected on the milestone:

“We are so proud of our staff, who worked tirelessly to make this dream a reality. The 1755 Preserve represents a defining moment for NALT—a place where our mission, our community, and our history come together. This preserve will serve as both a public resource and a lasting legacy for land conservation.”

While there is not a current date set for a grand opening, NALT aims to move their headquarters to the property by end of 2026. While certain buildings and areas are not yet open to the public, there are accessible trails. Please visit our website for the most up to date information regarding the [1755 Preserve](#).





BRINTON RUN PRESERVE



Connecting Chadds Ford to our shared history and natural world.

2025 was the best year yet at Brinton Run Preserve, and it was all thanks to you!

This year saw:

- 150 Volunteers
- 350 Volunteer Hours Total
- 3.2 total miles of trail to enjoy
- more than 300 trees planted at BRP (to date, over 750 have been planted!)
- 16 programs (public, scouts, and more!)
- 3 monarchs tagged
- 116 observations on iNaturalist!
- Continued to work with our conservation partners and local community partners (e.g. East Bradford Township, Chadds Ford Township, Chadds Ford Residents Association, Chester Co. Planning Commission, the Lenape Nation of PA, and more) to collaborate and share our mission

We have accomplished so much, but there is still work to do! As always, thank you for your continued support and we hope that you are enjoying your public preserve.

Help us do even more in 2026 by donating your time, or your dollars, to Brinton Run Preserve.

www.northamericanlandtrust.org/donate



Thank you Cub Pack 231 for spending the day beautifying our preserve, by planting ~175 trees and shrubs!



Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps and Student Conservation Association volunteers helped with maintenance and improvements along Brigade Trail.



New infrastructure improvements like signage, little free libraries, benches, trail markers, nest boxes, and equipment, all thanks to your support!

Monarchs, Milkweed, and Community Science!

NALT hosted 45 volunteers from Sewa International and the JPMorganChase Green Team for a pop-up monarch monitoring event at the preserve. This gathering was part of our monarch tagging efforts and contributed valuable data to the [Monarch Larva Monitoring Project \(MLMP\)](#), during a critical collection window.

This was our first large-scale community science event—and what an incredible experience! It was a day focused on awareness, hands-on learning, and real engagement with monarch conservation. Participants left inspired, thinking deeply about the monarch life cycle and the importance of protecting their habitat.

Special thanks to Elizabeth Randolph, volunteer ambassador with [The Xerces Society](#), for her continued support and for providing valuable pollinator conservation resources. This community-collected data will be submitted to the MLMP in support of the 2025 International Monarch Monitoring Blitz.



The Results:

- ~3,500 milkweed plants documented
- 11 monarch eggs
- 9 first instar caterpillars
- 2 second instar caterpillars
- 4 fourth instar caterpillars
- 21 monarch butterfly sightings (Across just 2 acres!)



Welcome to Kinsey Cuoco: Intern to Preserve Manager

The NALT internship program opens the door to meaningful, full-time work in conservation. It began in 2018 with Adrian Gatewood, who is now a key part of our team as the GIS and CAD Manager. In 2023, Nino Tomlin became our first intern at the Chadds Ford Preserves. In 2025, Kinsey Cuoco joined the program and quickly stood out for her energy and commitment, leading her to a full-time role as a preserve manager. Today, Kinsey supports maintenance, interpretive projects, and educational experiences across our public preserves.

Learn more about Kinsey and the NALT internship program on our website:



The Baldino Family History and Nature Center: “Gateway to the natural and historic richness of Brinton Run Preserve”



2025 marked the dedication of the “Baldino Family History and Nature Center,” a renovated building at Brinton Run Preserve that now will serve as a community and educational center, thanks to the generosity of the Baldino Family.

For more information, visit the Brinton Run Preserve [website](#) and follow the preserve on social media for upcoming events and news about the opening of the Baldino Family History and Nature Center.

Read the full story on our website:



PROTECTING WETLANDS



Joe Pye Weed lines a stream restoration in Tompkins County, NY.



A gulf coast box turtle exploring the floodplain habitat in Baldwin County, AL.



Heartleaf Plantain, a rare semi-aquatic species, protected in Georgia.

Wetlands often face the greatest pressure from development and shifts in land use. Many are drained, reshaped, or filled to make way for farming or growing communities. While NALT works to prevent harm to these sensitive places, we also support restoring and caring for them through wetland and habitat banking, which protects land to balance unavoidable loss.

North American Land Trust (NALT) is a 501c3 conservation charity whose mission is to permanently conserve and steward natural and cultural resources through innovative land preservation partnerships. NALT is in its 34th year of operation and has permanently preserved more than 141,000 acres of natural land in 24 states, mostly through permanent conservation easements.

NALT partners with landowners, municipalities, the real estate community, and other groups to protect environmentally and culturally significant landscapes that otherwise may be lost to alternative uses. Once a property is under NALT's permanent stewardship, our experienced team of conservation professionals regularly monitor the land to ensure the integrity and longevity of the conservation resource.

We conserve land through:

- Charitable Conservation Easements
- Mitigation Conservation Easements
- Municipal Conservation Easements
- Preserves and Land Acquisition

To learn about the tools we use to protect wetland habitat and beyond, read more on our website:



RECENT PROJECTS



MARTIN CREEK

This 279-acre conservation area in Putnam County, Tennessee protects pristine riparian areas and their surrounding toe slopes, including some of the most robust and diverse plant assemblages in NALT's portfolio in the region. Incredible variety in spring ephemeral species were observed amongst microhabitats in the understory below a mixed deciduous forest canopy of oaks, poplar, and maple, as well as dogwoods, mountain laurel and redbud. In the fall, the forest is awash with color and the evergreen of mosses and ferns.



BATTLE RIDGE

328 acres in McMinn County, Tennessee protects a range of habitats, including mature hickory, oak, and beech forest, with a number of significantly large specimens. The understory was rich with ferns and an abundance and variety of native orchids, including cranefly and little club spur bog orchids. The cove forests and stream corridors provide important habitat for frogs and salamanders, as well as a number of birds and other wildlife.



BRIAR POND

This 133-acre conservation area in Hickman County, Tennessee includes the protection and restoration of bottomland hardwood stream-wetland complexes, including forested riparian buffer habitat, wet meadows, and prairie wetlands. The numerous snags and fallen logs create habitat for several woodpeckers, and a diverse fungal community. A rich seed bank of wet meadow species like mixed wildflowers, sedges, and grasses, create an abundance of breeding habitat for amphibians and reptiles like the Eastern Musk Turtle.



JACK'S CREEK

Set in the middle of rural Chester County, Tennessee, this 90-acre Conservation Area includes the protection of 16-acres of upland forest, the restoration and enhancement of ~58 acres of wetland, and the realignment of streams previously channelized for cattle grazing and row crop agriculture. Abundant wetland species and wet meadow habitat is protected, including open shrub habitat important to bird species like the Yellow-breasted Chat, a species of greatest conservation need for Tennessee, observed during initial site surveys.

BROADLEAF PRESERVE

NEW OPPORTUNITY IN WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA



North American Land Trust (NALT) has a unique and wonderful opportunity in western North Carolina to create an extraordinary public preserve. In the heart of the Appalachian Mountains—between Cashiers and Brevard—lies the community of Lake Toxaway, one of the richest temperate broadleaf forests in the world, breathtaking public recreational lands, dramatic waterfalls, and some of the region’s most iconic hiking terrain.

BY PATTY KENNEDY

In 2007, NALT partnered with a local family to protect 44 acres of highly developable land through a conservation easement in the Sapphire Valley. With gentle topography, vital headwaters, and a waterfall shared with [Gorges State Park](#), it is considered one of the flattest and most accessible tracts in the Lake Toxaway/Sapphire Valley region—a rare and valuable landscape.

Over the past three years, the Broadleaf Preserve Initiative has taken shape. NALT, in conjunction with the Historic Toxaway Foundation, the Village at Longcliff, and other regional partners, have been developing a vision not only to establish this property as a public preserve, but also to build a vibrant network of partners across western North Carolina. These include school groups, the Transylvania County school system, senior-focused programs, regional academic institutions, and natural resource agencies—all united around creating an accessible and well-programmed natural resource for the community.

In 2019, NALT was approached by the [Historic Toxaway Foundation](#) and the [Longcliff Developers](#) who had purchased the tract. The two groups were partnering to implement the community master plan which included a “Village Center” for this small area. These groups envisioned this private preserve, if made public, becoming an anchor for the region.

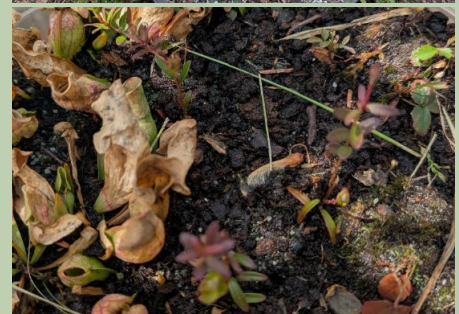
The Preserve will also become the regional headquarters of NALT’s work conserving North Carolina lands and the greater southern Appalachian region, with over 22,000 acres already protected, much of it in the western part of state. It is our hope that in 2026, this extraordinary preserve will become a reality, offering a lasting legacy for Lake Toxaway and a meaningful public space for generations to come.

RESTORING MOUNTAIN BOGS IN NORTH CAROLINA

BY WILL GANDY

It's amazing what a bit of money will do in a charitable setting. We were awarded a \$5,000 grant from the [Broyhill Foundation](#) in 2023 with the request from the donor to use it towards a western North Carolina conservation project. In the end, we did that and more. We ended up using it at an established conservation project to take inventory after more than 20 years, ecologically lift known areas of importance on-site, and what came of it was a renewed zeal in a small little floodplain, its surrounding forests, coves and tributaries. Most of that money went towards the biological inventory conducted by [Tangled Bank Conservation](#) (eDNA), and [Joe Pye Ecological Consulting](#) (botanical). Those groups were nice enough to give us a break on their work and in the end we had about \$800 left. In mid-winter I begin to dream of the oncoming invincible spring, and January of 2025 was no different. Our mountain bogs on-site were intact but could use some love.

The hydrologic regime was there, as well as some of the usual suspects, but if some intervention wasn't undertaken to combat past human alterations, then we just wouldn't get to a better place in these bogs in my opinion. I ordered some of the most showy and popular bog plants that would get a rise out of visitors and residents (me included), but also some inconspicuous denizens of mountain bogs that would further realize a more complete demonstration area that diversified the planting and hopefully fleshed out some of the ecological structure. The plants lived in my basement under lights with the seedlings for my vegetable garden until mid-spring. Then they lived in a hot and sunny portion of the yard in standing water until late fall, when Betty and I drove to Lake Toxaway and after a couple of years in the works, we sat them out on October 10th of 2025. I've checked on the plants twice since then, and they seem to be reasonably healthy in dormancy. The invincible spring of 2026 will reveal our efforts.



(top) *Kalmia caroliniana* blooming in pots. (bottom) Carnivorous plants emerging from dormancy in spring and ready for planting at the mountain bog.



Planting of the mountain bog. Photo Credit: Will Gandy

LAWN TO POLLINATOR HABITAT IN SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA



BY WYATT MOYER

North American Land Trust (NALT) continues to expand and strengthen our Pollinator Program. This year marked a meaningful step forward in restoring biodiverse habitats across southeastern Pennsylvania.

In 2025, NALT was honored to receive a grant from [Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources \(PA DCNR\)](#). This funding has allowed NALT to build a sustainable, long-term meadow management program, advancing our non-profit mission.

NALT worked closely with landowners to convert lawns to thriving pollinator habitat. Each site receives a seed mix designed for site conditions with more than 40 species native to Pennsylvania. Each lawn conversion project included on-site landowner meetings, site assessments, ArcGIS mapping exercises, habitat design, planting timelines, and landowner agreements. These collaborative steps culminated in the conversion of 15 additional acres to native meadow, bringing the total lawn conversion project footprint to approximately 65 acres of pollinator habitat under NALT's conservation management.



Converted lawn to meadow project, planted in 2024 and blooming and receiving mowing management in 2025.

Establishing native meadow communities requires frequent, ongoing care, season after season. Much of the early meadow establishment occurs underground, as deep root systems develop, soils stabilize, and the wildflower collects nutrients needed for long-term resilience. Once sprouted, NALT staff implement best meadow management practices to reduce invasive species and weed competition, paving way for new meadow growth.

As these meadows become established, the change on the landscape has become unmistakable, becoming vibrant landscapes filled with color, motion, and life. Butterflies, native bees, beetles, insects and various forms of wildlife now fill spaces that once supported little more than mowed turfgrass. Monarchs are seen gliding between milkweed stands, swallowtails nectaring on blooming wildflowers, and the hum of native bees moving through the meadow are all signs of a dynamic ecosystem returning, an activity that was virtually absent when these areas were managed as lawn. This is living proof that with intention and care, even small stewardship decisions can create lasting ecological change.

NALT extends sincere gratitude to our partners that make this program possible. Our partners include the Pennsylvania DCNR, the Bee & Butterfly Habitat Fund, Monarch Joint Venture, Ernst Conservation Seeds, and the dedicated landowners whose commitment to ecologically sound land management makes this work possible.

Learn step-by-step how we make this work possible



Blue Vervain blooming in a project meadow planted in 2024.



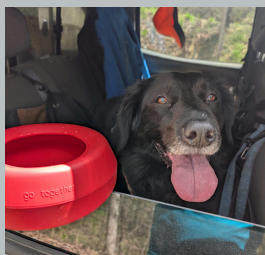
Partridge Pea blooming in a project meadow



STEWARDSHIP & MONITORING

Working together to improve stewardship of our land

Conservation easement monitoring and stewardship are fundamental responsibilities for every land trust. NALT is devoted to annually overseeing each conservation area it manages, with our stewardship team dedicated to cultivating and sustaining harmonious relationships with landowners. These monitoring visits not only provide a chance to assess each conservation area but also present an opportunity to collaborate with landowners in realizing their conservation goals, examining restoration endeavors, check on rare plant populations, and discover new, breathtaking landscapes. We take great pride in fostering uplifting connections with our landowners, and we revel in the joy of our shared exploration. In 2025, our team got boots on the ground at over 265 conservation areas!



(from left to right, top to bottom) Mountain Laurel in North Carolina Conservation Area, NALT field vehicle in central Tennessee, field dog Betty joining for site visits, Cows at a Tennessee Conservation Area, observing fossils with Jackie at Turkey Neck Bend, daylighting the bog at Richland Trust with an exceptional volunteer crew, NALT field biologist Sara Johnson observing the canopy of a central Tennessee woodland at a new conservation area.



(from left to right, top to bottom) NALT Environmental Scientist Wyatt Moyer tours [Santa Susana Field Laboratory](#), elk on North Carolina Conservation Area, Coastal High School programming meetup in South Carolina, Seasonal waterfall in New York, volunteer team conducting hemlock treatment in NC, stream in Oregon conservation area, ruby-crowned kinglet in tree, tabletting event in Southeastern Pennsylvania, NALT staff attends and tables at the Environmental Markets Conference.

STEWARDSHIP ON THE ROAD:

Caring for Conserved Lands, One Visit at a Time

BY WYATT MOYER



The Appalachian Plateau of southeastern Ohio.

At North American Land Trust (NALT), conservation doesn't end when a Conservation Easement is recorded. Rather, that moment marks the beginning of a long-term commitment between NALT and the landowner, one focused on safeguarding conservation values while supporting those who actively steward the land. Conservation easement monitoring is a core and ongoing responsibility of the land trust, ensuring protected resources remain intact in perpetuity while reinforcing partnerships with the landowners who care for them.

Monitoring visits demand extensive desktop preparation supported by modern tools and a consistent, replicable planning process. This pre-monitoring work includes a review of both current and historical aerial imagery, analysis of the conservation easement and baseline documentation, evaluation of previous monitoring reports, confirmation of property ownership, and finally, landowner outreach. Thorough preparation ensures that each visit is productive and that land trust staff arrive fully informed and prepared to uphold NALT's stewardship commitments. After landowner coordination is complete, attention turns to vehicle readiness and the development of a carefully planned travel itinerary. With logistics finalized, it is time to choose field gear. Field gear greatly varies depending on geography and the enduring environmental factors to ensure comfort and safety in the field.

A frequent topic of discussion with landowners is concern over the gradual degradation of their conservation area as environmental stressors such as drought, flooding, windstorms, disease, and invasive species interact and intensify. These conversations provide valuable opportunities for NALT's stewardship staff to address questions, share observations and, when appropriate, offer technical guidance on best management practices that support conservation goals while allowing continued, sustainable land use in an ever-changing natural environment.

In late September, I departed NALT headquarters in Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania, embarking on a 1,700-mile journey across Maryland, West Virginia, and Ohio. While the landscapes changed with every mile, the purpose remained constant: verifying that conservation values were upheld, documenting current site conditions, and engaging with landowners as perpetual partners in conservation.

This journey began on Maryland's Eastern Shore, where tidal marshes, pine forests, and agricultural fields are intricately woven into diverse and ecologically significant landscapes. These habitats are known support species such as the Delmarva Fox Squirrel, once endangered, are now thriving due to sustained conservation efforts. NALT conserves nearly 1,400 acres across the state of Maryland, with most of the conservation easements distributed throughout the Eastern Shore. Monitoring visits included in-depth meetings with landowners to address questions, strengthen relationships, and document on-the-ground conditions to ensure conservation values continue to be protected.



Leaving the coast, the route carried west through central and western Maryland, where rolling farmland transitions into forested ridgelines and cold, clear headwater streams. In this region, many conservation easements safeguard working farms and the forested waterways that sustain them, illustrating how conservation and productivity coexist on the land.



Crossing into West Virginia, where NALT conserves more than 120 acres, the landscape opens into expansive wooded hills and winding rivers that underscore the scale and significance of protected working lands.

Monitoring in these settings calls for thoughtful navigation, careful documentation, and a close eye on core conservation values, including water quality, wildlife habitat, and the preservation of open space.

Sustainable agriculture practices meet protected landscapes.

The journey concluded in Ohio, where expansive open fields and autumn hues framed the final monitoring visits across more than 150 acres of conserved land. One highlight was encountering a recently established pollinator meadow, planted by the landowners to support biodiversity and serving as a tangible example of thoughtful, sustainable land management.



A monarch butterfly resting on goldenrod, a quiet moment in a late-season meadow.

After dozens of easements monitored and hundreds of miles traveled, one message was clear: conservation is a shared responsibility that extends across state boundaries, county lines, watersheds and generations. Conservation easement monitoring is a collaborative effort grounded in communication, trust, and mutual respect. Through this work, North American Land Trust ensures that conservation is not only permanent in principle, but active in practice. Stewardship is how we honor our commitments today and for generations to come.

PARTNERSHIPS ARE PARAMOUNT

As a national land trust, we heavily rely on the partnership of other conservation organizations around the country to help us to connect with people in all of our focus areas. These partners help facilitate projects, funding, and land protection efforts, in addition to sharing our mission of protecting as much land as possible.

The Heritage Garden at Brinton Run



BY AMY BRUCKNER



The Contemporary and African American Gardens

A grant from the [Hardy Plant Society, Mid-Atlantic Group](#), was awarded to North American Land Trust (NALT) in February of 2025 for \$1000 to purchase plants for the Heritage Garden at Brinton Run Preserve in Chadds Ford, PA. The garden was intended to showcase plants traditionally used for food and medicine by the Lenape as well as plants used by the colonial settlers and African American as they established their communities.

Seeds were purchased and planted in April 2025. Raised bed planters were constructed May through September and seedlings purchased and planted in May through July. Bare root, potted plants, and bulbs were purchased and planted in August and September. Some seeds had to undergo cold and/or heat stratification and were planted in the fall for overwintering. A path will lead visitors through time as they traverse from the Lenape Garden to the early European Colonial Kitchen Garden, then to the African Settler Garden and the Contemporary Herb and Colonial Gardens.



Hagopian Arts, a BRP and NALT partner in Chadds Ford

All plants have been labeled with their common and scientific names and the plants used by the Lenape have also been labeled with their Lenape names. NALT had a successful Open House fundraiser at Brinton Run Preserve to highlight the Heritage Garden and raised \$1700. Speakers and musicians gave talks about each of the gardens, including the [Lenape Nation of Pennsylvania](#), [West Chester Garden Club](#), [Chrisetta's Kitchen Restaurant](#) in West Chester, [Stephen Lyons](#) – singer, songwriter, actor, and Beverlee Barnes, historian from [Delaware County Planning Department](#). Many of these folks have become regular volunteers helping to maintain the gardens.



(cont'd) NALT has also partnered with [Hagopian Arts](#) on their Eco-Mural Program which is a series of ecologically themed public art pieces that have two goals: to beautify blank walls and educate the public about environmental degradation. NALT has given input on their botanical information and hopes to have a mural at Brinton Run Preserve as part of the Heritage Garden.

NALT has just begun to educate the community about the gardens and the history they represent as the garden beds plantings were completed in September.

It is hoped that funding will be obtained to create interpretive signs and a map which will highlight the plants used by settlers to survive in this new land, as well as contemporary medicinal and culinary uses of plants. The whole garden area will eventually be fenced with deer fencing but each garden bed is temporarily enclosed with chicken wire to prevent deer browse as much as possible.

More incredible land protection partnerships

Collaborating to protect the Coast

Aransas County, Texas, with [Aransas First Land Trust](#), recently acquired the NALT protected Copano Cove Ranch, also known as the Bailey Ranch, a 972-acre tract of native prairie, marshes, and wetlands that will now be preserved forever as a protected natural habitat. This property is home to over 61 bird species, including 16 that are “threatened” and listed as “Species of the Greatest Conservation Need” under the Texas Conservation Action Plan. [Read More:](#)



Conserving Land for Cranes

2,230-acres of land, protected by NALT in Port O'Connor, Texas, was purchased by the [Coastal Bend & Bays Estuary Program](#), ensuring that this extraordinary landscape will forever become a public resource. This property protects critical habitat for the endangered Whooping Crane, amongst other wildlife: [Read More:](#)



WeConservePA: Partners in Preservation

BY LAURA SYLVESTER

Each year [WeConservePA](#) holds the Pennsylvania Land Conservation Conference in a different location throughout the state of Pennsylvania. This year, the Conference was held at the Penn State Hotel and Conference Center located in State College, PA and exemplified a part of WeConservePA’s mission of bringing together conservation volunteers, professionals and supporters and providing educational training, networking, and inspiring events.

In addition to the educational training sessions that were provided at the Conference, which ranged in subject matter from reviewing the actual construction of the conservation easement document to best practices in stewardship and land management to donor engagement, there were “off-site” programs offered, one of which Laura Sylvester was able to attend. The program took attendees to the Palmer Museum of Art located at the [Penn State Arboretum](#). The Museum, which officially opened its doors to the public on June 1, 2024, uses LEED certified technology to bring natural light into the galleries and provide views of the surrounding landscape.



The Conference program was designed to showcase the connectivity between art and nature as well as the impact nature has on all of us. The creativity on display from the art presented at the Museum to the trails that led participants through the Arboretum was certainly inspiring to all the attendees.

The Conference continues to be a source of inspiration, education, and comradery for NALT and we look forward to attending the upcoming Conference in 2026.

PANO Standards for Excellence® Accreditation

In 2024, the North American Land Trust (NALT) achieved the Standards for Excellence® Seal of Excellence from the Pennsylvania Association of Nonprofit Organizations (PANO), a nationally recognized framework that sets benchmarks for nonprofit organizations across mission and strategy, leadership and governance, legal compliance and ethics, financial management, resource development, and public engagement and advocacy. This significant milestone affirms NALT's dedication to strong governance and transparency.



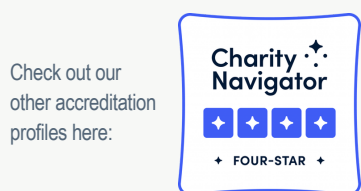
The accreditation process, recognized nationwide, evaluates nonprofits across mission focus, leadership, ethics, financial management, and public engagement. NALT's multi-year effort included policy updates, staff and board training, strategic planning, and a thorough internal review. Over the course of the application process, NALT staff and board members participated in six in-depth webinars produced by PANO, covering key areas of nonprofit governance and management. These sessions informed a comprehensive internal review that strengthened NALT's systems, policies, and practices.

To earn accreditation, NALT voluntarily opened itself to an in-depth review by a jury of trained nonprofit peers. The peer review team examined NALT's compliance with the Standards for Excellence®: An Ethics and Accountability Code for the Nonprofit Sector, evaluating everything from programs and services to management, fundraising, and financial practices.

PANO leadership praised the strength of NALT's application. "NALT's accreditation application was so strong that our team of specially trained reviewers were in disbelief that this was the organization's first time applying," said Heather S. Giampapa, PANO's Director for Standards of Excellence and Development. She added that, in earning accreditation, NALT demonstrated adherence to the highest standards of nonprofit governance and operational management while remaining focused on its mission to conserve and steward natural and cultural resources.

Steven Carter, President of NALT, credited the organization's staff and board for the achievement. "We are honored to earn accreditation from such a prestigious organization like PANO, and we are particularly proud of having met all the requirements of the national Standards for Excellence® accreditation program," Carter said. "This designation sends a powerful message of confidence to our partners and stakeholders and reflects the diligence, professionalism, and commitment of our staff and board."

NALT's PANO accreditation complements other independent measures of nonprofit transparency and accountability, including Charity Navigator and Candid. Together, these recognitions reinforce NALT's commitment to ethical leadership, responsible stewardship, and organizational excellence as it advances its conservation mission nationwide.



Learn more about PANO and the accreditation process here:



A heartfelt thank you to Susan Chase Levin, Assistant to the President

BY STEVE CARTER

North American Land Trust celebrates the remarkable career and lasting contributions of Susan Chase Levin, who retired in 2025 after nearly three decades of service. Susan joined NALT in 1996 under the leadership of the organization's founder, Andrew Johnson, and went on to become one of its longest-serving and most trusted team members.



With a degree in Plant Science from the University of Delaware, Susan brought deep knowledge and passion for the natural world to every aspect of her work. Throughout her tenure, she supported NALT's leadership and staff with steadfast dedication, helping to guide the organization through a period of extraordinary growth and achievement. Her professionalism, warmth, and institutional knowledge have left an indelible mark on NALT's history and culture.

Susan was extremely talented and helped with any number of organizational needs, including bookkeeping, vendor control, fundraising coordination, and essentially keeping NALT's headquarters running smoothly and efficiently. She had a long and successful career and was both a dedicated conservationist and a strong believer in NALT's nonprofit conservation vision. Outside of her professional life, Susan is a devoted mother to three daughters and a proud grandmother of several grandchildren. She continues to nurture her lifelong love of nature as an avid gardener, working alongside her husband to cultivate native and pollinator-friendly plants around their home.

NALT extends its heartfelt gratitude to Susan for her years of loyal service, steady guidance, and friendship. Her contributions have helped shape the organization into what it is today, and her legacy will continue to flourish for years to come.

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our communications team



NALT's story is best told through our visual storytelling, because... we protect beautiful places! It highlights the true diversity and importance of our work.

- Sara Johnson, NALT
Communications Lead



NALT has an important story to tell. It's a story of conservationists dedicated to protecting natural lands and wildlife for future generations. It's an honor to help tell that story

- Sean Connolly, NALT Public
Relations

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STAY IN TOUCH

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North American Land Trust is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that conserves and stewards more than 141,000 acres at 585+ conservation areas in 24 states. Based in Chadds Ford, PA, North American Land Trust is proudly Accredited under [Pennsylvania Association of Nonprofit Organizations](#) and as such is recognized as having met all the requirements of The Standards for Excellence®: An Ethics and Accountability Code for the Nonprofit Sector. *Read more on pg. 34 of this report.*



100 Hickory Hill Rd, Chadds Ford, PA, 19317

Land protection is more important now than ever, but we can't do it alone. When you give to NALT, you're not just making a donation. You're ensuring that land is protected forever and responsibly managed.

Thank you for being part of the conservation solution.

Donate now at northamericanlandtrust.org or scan the QR code below.



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