

## QUOTES FROM BLUE RIDGE FOREVER LAND TRUST PARTNERS

“Conserving agricultural lands in western North Carolina not only protects the beautiful rural landscape, it protects the basic foundation on which we need to grow our food. If we lose our rural farms we lose something that is uniquely American, we lose part of our historic identity and cultural heritage.” – *Walter Clark, Executive Director, Blue Ridge Rural Land Trust (BRRLT)*

"Farming communities such as Mills River, located in the Upper French Broad River Watershed Focus Area, are at risk of disappearing for all time. The land trusts work with these farmers to help preserve their land for productive use, so they can continue to play a key role in the culture and economy of Western North Carolina." – *Kieran Roe, Executive Director, Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy (CMLC)*

“Agriculture and tourism are the backbone of North Carolina’s economy. Not only do they bring millions of dollars to the state, but also they enrich our cultural heritage and our reputation as one of the country’s uniquely beautiful places. We put these qualities at risk every time poorly planned development swallows critical natural areas such as working farms and forests, or the mountain landscapes, lush wetlands, and lakes and rivers that draw so many visitors.” – *Margaret Newbold, Associate Director, Conservation Trust for North Carolina (CTNC)*

“By coordinating our efforts and speaking with one voice, the ten Blue Ridge Forever land trusts can magnify and connect our regional land and water conservation efforts. Together we can forever protect the cloud-shrouded ridges and creek-laced slopes and valleys of the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains.” – *Susie Hamrick-Jones, Executive Director, Foothills Conservancy of North Carolina (FCNC)*

“The welfare of the human race is deeply linked to nature and to the existence of a vast diversity of wild animals and plants. The High Country Conservancy, and all our Blue Ridge Forever partners, are focused on protecting biologically unique lands to sustain that diversity.” – *Carol Coulter, Executive Director, High Country Conservancy (HCC)*

“In some sense there is a race going on to protect those places that we value, unique habitats and rare species, from ourselves as we move forward with development. The Blue Ridge Forever coalition can help us identify and protect some of those places for all.” – *Gary Wein, Executive Director, Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust (HCLT)*

“We are proud to be protecting the important water resources in the region through land conservation. The Land Trust for the Little Tennessee has been part of conserving a third of the total river frontage on the free-flowing Little Tennessee as well as five upland watershed projects over the past decade.” – *Paul Carlson, Executive Director, Land Trust for the Little Tennessee (LTLT)*

“In these times of drought in western North Carolina, everyone begins to understand the importance of high quality water resources. Protecting the land important to the New River, through projects like Pond Mountain and the Bower addition to our New River

State Park, focuses attention on a watershed-sized conservation view. Blue Ridge Forever is uniquely suited to promoting these kinds of projects.” – *George Santucci, Executive Director, National Committee for the New River (NCNR)*

“It’s good to have these focus areas defined because it demonstrates to everyone what an ecological treasure this part of the state – and nation – is.” – *Sally Walker, Executive Director, Pacolet Area Conservancy (PAC)*

“As oil and food transportation prices climb, locally grown agriculture is stepping into a critical food supply and economic role. By protecting the farmland, the land trusts can help the farmers continue to serve the local community.” – *Carl Silverstein, Executive Director, Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy (SAHC)*

### **QUOTES FROM SUPPORTERS**

“As our farming population ages and young people move away from the farm, we must prepare for the transfer of land to accelerate in the coming years. Most of our natural resources belong to private landowners- in many cases, farmers. Protecting the family farm and preserving farmland have been the top priority of my administration. I strongly believe that we must maintain the ability to feed ourselves so we don’t have to rely on other countries to sustain us.” – *Steve Troxler, North Carolina Commissioner of Agriculture, from “Planning for an Agricultural Future: A Guide for North Carolina Farmers and Local Governments”*

“Land trusts serve a vital role in protecting the rich ecology of North Carolina's Mountains. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources looks forward to our continued partnership and I am grateful for the leadership the western land trusts have shown in developing the Blue Ridge Forever Conservation Vision.” – *Secretary Bill Ross, North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources (NCDENR)*