

**ENVIVA FOREST CONSERVATION FUND AWARDS 2018 GRANTS**

*Expands restoration and conservation of sensitive forest ecosystems and wetlands*

**U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities, Greenville, SC**

For IMMEDIATE RELEASE (May 23, 2018)

**Bethesda, Md. and Greenville, S.C. (May 23, 2018)** – The Enviva Forest Conservation Fund (the Fund) today announced the recipients of its 2018 suite of grants. The projects funded will help conserve a total of more than 5,000 acres, protecting ecologically sensitive bottomland forests in the coastal regions of Virginia and North Carolina.

“We are so proud to work with our conservation partners in the Virginia-North Carolina coastal plain, one of the most biodiverse and beautiful areas in the country,” said Enviva Chairman and CEO, John Keppler. “This work will lead to the protection of thousands of acres of sensitive forest lands and ensure that these forests provide ecosystem and economic benefits for generations to come.”

The 2018 Enviva Forest Conservation Fund grant recipients include:

- **The North Carolina Coastal Land Trust, in partnership with North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission:** The Fund is providing \$100,000 to help acquire more than 3,000 acres of bottomland hardwood forest for conservation along the Waccamaw River in Columbus County, North Carolina (NC). The wetlands are home to federally and state-listed species of concern, as well as many coastal dependent migratory bird species. Approximately 2,000 acres of the property will be owned by the NC Coastal Land Trust, held in a conservation easement and managed for ecosystem restoration and conservation of native wildlife. The remaining 1,000 acres of the property will be transferred to the State of North Carolina and will be open to the public for hiking, fishing, and hunting. *This is the Fund’s first award in our newly expanded region of southeastern North Carolina.*
- **Virginia Department of Forestry:** The Fund is contributing \$175,000 towards the protection of two high conservation value riverfront tracts including 270 acres of lowland forest along the Nottoway River and 545 acres of wetlands on the Meherrin River in Southampton County, VA. The properties will be held in conservation easements and will be a combination of working forests with riparian and habitat protection, as both are home to plant and animal species of concern including the rare Crowfoot Sedge (*Carex crus-corvi*) and the Yellow Lampmussel (*Lampsilis cariosa*).
- **Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation:** The Fund is providing \$100,000 towards the acquisition of two properties in Isle of Wight County, Virginia along the Blackwater River and Antioch Swamp. The purchase, totaling more than 300 acres, will expand the Antioch Pines Natural Area Preserve. The properties include 90 acres of bottomland, featuring bald cypress as well as diverse hardwoods, and approximately 215 acres that will be restored to native longleaf pine. Once a thriving and biodiverse ecosystem, home to myriad plant and animal species, the longleaf pine forests have lost more than 90 percent of their original extent in the U.S. South.

- **The Nature Conservancy (TNC):** The Fund is awarding \$50,000 to help with the acquisition of a permanent conservation easement on approximately 900 acres of wetlands, including 400 acres of cypress-tupelo swamp forest and 500 acres of freshwater tidal marsh. The property runs along the North Landing River, part of the Intercoastal Waterway in the City of Virginia Beach, Virginia. The easement, which will be co-held by TNC and the VA Department of Conservation and Recreation, will link over 7,800 acres of conservation land and will become part of Virginia’s North Landing River Natural Area Preserve System which boasts one of the highest diversities of rare species east of the Blue Ridge Mountains in Virginia.

“In this third year of the Fund, I continue to be amazed at the caliber of organizations represented and the breadth and depth of conservation objectives reflected in these proposals,” said Endowment President and CEO, Carlton Owen. “These grants not only contribute to forest health and the restoration and conservation of habitats for innumerable species, but they also provide landowners with financially attractive alternatives to selling their land or converting it to non-forest uses.”

Including those announced today, the Enviva Forest Conservation Fund has supported eleven projects totaling almost \$1.5 million in grants. An estimated 15,500 acres will be protected when these projects reach completion. The forests conserved as a part of the Fund help clean drinking water, purify the air, buffer structures from storms, and provide habitat for many species of wildlife, while at the same time providing jobs and economic opportunity for rural families and private landowners.

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**About the Enviva Forest Conservation Fund** The Enviva Forest Conservation Fund is a \$5 million, 10-year program established by Enviva Holdings, LP in December 2015 to permanently protect environmentally sensitive bottomland and wetland forests. Administered by the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities, the Fund awards grants annually to nonprofit organizations and government agencies for conservation projects in North Carolina and Virginia. The next grant cycle will begin in late 2018. To learn more about the Enviva Conservation Fund, please visit [envivaforestfund.org](http://envivaforestfund.org). In 2018, the Fund expanded into southeastern North Carolina to include additional high-priority conservation areas. Now most counties in the North Carolina coastal plain as well as counties in southeastern Virginia are eligible for the Fund.

**About the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities** The U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities (the Endowment) is a not-for-profit public charity working collaboratively with partners in the public and private sectors to advance systemic, transformative, and sustainable change for the health and vitality of the nation’s working forests and forest-reliant communities. To learn more about the Endowment, please visit our website at [www.usendowment.org](http://www.usendowment.org).

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