

ALLEGHENY HIGHLANDS

In 2002, The Nature Conservancy protected over 9,000 acres in the heart of the Allegheny Highlands at Warm Springs Mountain. Headquartered in Hot Springs, our Allegheny Highlands Program continues to protect special places such as Warm Springs Mountain Preserve and the Cowpasture River.

Adjacent to the historic Homestead resort and George Washington National Forest, our preserve represents one of the largest and most ecologically significant private forests in the Central Appalachians, stitching together hundreds of thousands of acres of conservation lands that form an impressive wildlife corridor. This key preserve anchors and showcases our work to protect and restore the region's special lands and waters.

With threats from climate impacts and energy development mounting, the Conservancy works to conserve the Allegheny Highlands' mountain forests and streams not only for the myriad plants and wildlife they harbor, but also for the millions of people who depend on them for natural services ranging from outdoor recreation to drinking water.

ANIMALS

- Black bear
- Migratory songbirds and raptors
- Dragonflies and rare moths
- Timber rattlesnake

PLANTS

- Bunchberry
- Catawba rhododendron
- Flame azalea
- Fraser's marsh St. John's wort

NATURAL COMMUNITIES

- Montane pine and shale barrens
- High elevation wetlands

THREATS

- Invasive species
- Altered fire regimes
- Forest pests and pathogens
- Incompatible forestry
- Residential development

PRIME TIMES

Best Seasons for Recreation and Conservation Activities

SPRING

- Birding (also Summer and Fall)
- Controlled burns
- Festivals (also Summer and Fall)
- Fishing
- Wildflowers

SUMMER

- Hiking
- Wildlife sightings

FALL

- Foliage viewing

WINTER

- Snow sports



Our Virginia

IT'S IN OUR NATURE

OUR CONSERVATION STRATEGY

Guided by science, the Conservancy collaborates with a variety of partners to protect the forests, caves, rivers and unique habitats of the Allegheny Highlands. Below are some of the ways we work.

LAND PROTECTION

We purchase land or interests in land from willing sellers and accept donations of land or conservation easements.

SCIENCE-BASED CONSERVATION

Having developed a fire management plan for Warm Springs Mountain, we work with partners through the Appalachian Fire Learning Network to promote best practices for the entire Allegheny Highlands landscape. We established and continue to lead monitoring programs on thousands of acres owned by the Conservancy and the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests, including studies of how forest habitat responds to controlled burning.

ECOLOGICAL LAND MANAGEMENT

Our fire teams are working to restore lost elements of Appalachian forest diversity such as open-canopy woodlands. Working to control invasive plants is another example of how effective land management helps us accomplish conservation goals.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

We foster a conservation ethic and appreciation for nature through education and outreach. The Conservancy works to encourage thoughtful land-use planning and is helping local communities identify development approaches that preserve local character, history, traditions and, ultimately, the ecosystem itself.

PUBLIC POLICY

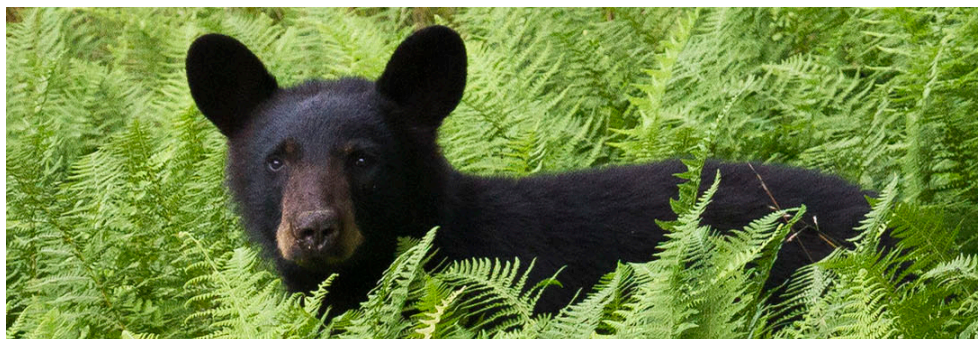
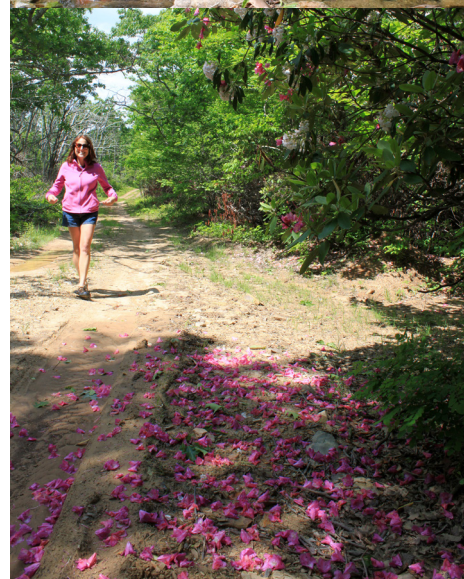
We work in conjunction with state and federal partners to further our collective understanding of controlled burning practices; collaborate with other organizations in support of the Cowpasture River Partnership; and advocate for additional public funding for land conservation, forest management and restoration, and water-quality improvement.

COMMUNITY-BASED CONSERVATION

From our office in Hot Springs, Virginia, we work in close partnership with local communities, public-land managers and private landowners. Together, we share an incredible opportunity to protect the health and beauty of the Allegheny Highlands.

PROGRAM MILESTONES

- Acquired more than 9,000 acres of critical native forest on Warm Springs Mountain
- Targeted a core 5,000-acre area for invasive species control
- Opened a community-based program office, now based in Hot Springs
- Created Ingalls Overlook, Sandy Gap and Bear Loop trails for hiking and nature study



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