

**WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA PUBLIC LANDS COUNCIL
RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT
FOR THE EAST FORK HEADWATERS TRACT**

Whereas, the Western North Carolina Public Lands Council was established to encourage recognition and protection of scenic and recreational resources in the mountain region of Western North Carolina that occur in the vicinity of existing public lands; and

Whereas, the North Carolina State Constitution in Article XIV, Section 5, stipulates that it is the policy of state government "to conserve and protect its lands and waters for the benefit of all its citizenry;" and

Whereas, the French Broad River flows through the most heavily populated areas in WNC providing benefits today and into the future for economic development, drinking water supply, tourism and recreational based opportunities, and protection of this significant natural resource is critical to maintaining and preserving the economic and environmental health of the region and the communities it passes through; and

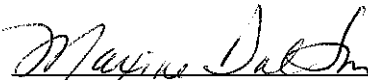
Whereas, the aptly named "East Fork Headwater Tract" in southwestern Transylvania County comprises approximately 8,000 acres of land near existing federal and state public forests, and encompasses the majority of the headwaters of the East Fork of the French Broad River, and has ecological and recreational values including rare and endangered species habitat, landscape level connectivity for trails and habitat, exceptional water quality and watershed protection, and potential public access for hunting, fishing, hiking, and other outdoor pursuits; and

Whereas, The Conservation Fund has signed an option to purchase the property from Champion Cattle and Tree Farms for a sum of \$33 million financed over a 5-year period; and

Whereas, the North Carolina Clean Water Management Trust Fund, has already committed \$1 million towards this project, and the North Carolina Natural Heritage Trust Fund may be another partial source of funding for this acquisition along with private funds raised by the conservation community; and

Whereas, the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission has expressed its intent to provide the necessary stewardship of the property to perpetuate conservation and recreational opportunities for the citizens of North Carolina;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Western North Carolina Public Lands Council supports all state, local, community and North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission efforts to purchase, preserve and protect the property known as the "East Fork Headwaters Tract".



Maxine Dalton, Chairperson
Western North Carolina Public Lands Council

Attest:



Judy Francis
Staff to the Council