



**For Immediate Release**

**Contact: Cameron Sheffield  
919-882-1977**

## **Unlikely Partnership Between Government Agencies and Local Conservation Groups Results in More Clean Water for North Carolinians**

**RALEIGH, N.C., May 10, 2006** — An unlikely partnership that emerged between the N.C. Department of Transportation, N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and North Carolina's local land trusts across the state has saved many of North Carolina's streams and wetlands and protected the state's drinking water, according to a report released today.

This initiative, the Ecosystem Enhancement Program (EEP), has resulted in land preservation projects that have protected more than 177 miles of high-quality streams and 7,194 acres of wetlands across the state.

"We knew this partnership had the potential to achieve tangible results for conservation of the state's highest-quality natural areas and benefit all our residents," said Bill Ross, Secretary of the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

By law, each state must offset any effects caused to streams and wetlands by road construction. While most other states only focus their efforts on restoration of damaged areas, North Carolina is leading the nation in preserving natural systems before there is any chance of them becoming damaged.

"The EEP has already achieved substantial environmental dividends in a short period of time, and it will continue to help protect our natural treasures for generations to come," said Lyndo Tippet, Secretary of the N.C. Department of Transportation.

DOT Board member Nina Szlosberg added, "EEP's work with North Carolina land trusts helps to balance environmental protection with the transportation needs of our people, and it is a partnership we can all be proud of."

The EEP is headquartered at the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources, in Raleigh, N.C., and receives most of its funding from the N.C. Department of Transportation. Through the EEP, land trusts are provided funding to negotiate with landowners to buy land or form conservation agreements to protect land that supports clean streams and keeps wetlands intact.

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“I believe all of us, as human beings, have a moral obligation to be good stewards of our natural resources and to leave our world a better place,” said Randall Guthrie, a Granville County native who signed conservation agreements to protect streams on his farm. “EEP presented me with a wonderful opportunity, by making it possible for me to preserve more than two miles of pristine stream frontage for future generations to use and enjoy.”

The Conservation Trust for North Carolina, the statewide resource center for North Carolina’s 23 local land trusts, and the North Carolina Chapter of The Nature Conservancy released a report today, “Land Trusts and the Ecosystem Enhancement Program: A Historic Partnership,” that details the progress made by this team of organizations.

Sixty land preservation projects have been completed since EEP’s inception in 2003, and 87 additional projects are currently approved and in progress.

For more information regarding EEP, please visit the Conservation Trust for North Carolina’s Web site at [www.ctnc.org](http://www.ctnc.org) or call 919-828-4199 to receive a copy of the program’s progress report: “Land Trusts and the Ecosystem Enhancement Program: A Historic Partnership.”

#### ***About Conservation Trust for North Carolina***

*The Conservation Trust for North Carolina is a statewide service provider for North Carolina’s 23 local and regional land trusts. North Carolina’s land trusts preserve land and water resources to safeguard our way of life. Land trusts work in local communities to ensure that critical lands are protected for clean drinking water, recreation, tourism and working farms.*

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