The Forestlands Conservation Foundation Protects 93 acres of Blue Ridge Mountains Forest for Nature

Charlotte, NC Nonprofit Connects Virginia Protected Areas Through Conservation Land Acquisition



Blue Ridge Mountains oak-hickory forest, Amherst County, Virginia

CHARLOTTE, NC, UNITED STATES, September 15, 2026 / EINPresswire.com/ -- The Forestlands Conservation Foundation, a Charlotte, North Carolina–based nonprofit, has conserved 93 acres of mature oak-hickory forest in Amherst County, Virginia, in the Blue Ridge Mountains. The property will be permanently protected as a nature preserve through a conservation easement.

The conservation acquisition will connect and enlarge existing federal and privately owned conservation lands in the area. It was identified for acquisition using conservation science geographic data produced by government agencies and nonprofit organizations. “The scientific data drives our property selections, so that we can ensure we are applying limited financial resources most effectively to protect the most important landscapes for natural systems,” explains founder and Executive Director Pam Pannozzo.

The property has significant biological and structural diversity associated with elevation changes. It includes breeding habitats for amphibians and insects, mature mast-producing hardwood trees that produce food and nesting places for wildlife, and lichen-covered granitic outcroppings that provide cover. The Southeast Conservation Blueprint and Conserve Virginia designate it as a protection priority, and the Virginia Wildlife Corridor Action Plan identifies it as a critical Wildlife Biodiversity Resilience Corridor. Protecting the property will provide refuge for imperiled species and allow natural systems to adapt to climate change. “Natural systems need space to adapt and evolve as planetary-scale climatic changes occur, and the systems must be connected across the landscape to adapt effectively,” explains Executive Board Member Sapna Gupta.

The Forestlands Conservation Foundation’s mission is to preserve biological diversity and natural ecological and evolutionary processes through land acquisition. Founded in 2025, the organization works across seven states in the eastern United States. The organization acquired 101 acres of oak-hickory forest in the Brushy Mountains of Alexander County, North Carolina, last October.

Concern about the global deterioration of natural systems and increasing species extinction rates drives the organization’s work to conserve land. “Increased private funding to protect Nature is urgently needed. The price of undeveloped land is rapidly increasing; at the same time, pressure is rising for development, resource extraction, and recreation and land uses. It’s a race against powerful structural and financial forces that are dismantling natural systems,” says Board Member Jamie Plastina-Koch. “Science has provided the knowledge and tools to reverse this trend; the only thing we need is increased private financial investment while there is still biologically important land left to acquire,” says Pannozzo.

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