



City Forest Credits Preservation Project Application

1. Project Name

Chattanooga, TN - St. Elmo Trail Preservation Project

2. Project Type

Preservation

3. Project Location

Chattanooga, TN

4. Project Operator

Organization: Lookout Mountain Conservancy

Address: 3085 Broad Street

City: Chattanooga

State: TN

Zip: 37408

Contact(s):

Holly Odell -Community Engagement Coordinator, holly@lookoutmountainconservancy.org

Robyn Carlton – Executive Director, robyn@lookoutmountainconservancy.org

5. Project Description

The St. Elmo Trail Preservation Project began as an effort to simply connect trails from St. Elmo to Lookout Mountain but turned into a community wide effort to preserve forested land at risk of development. The stand is primarily oak-hickory and is estimated to be around 75-years old. Due to the proximity of the area to rapidly developing land, it was important to preserve and protect this viewshed before it was lost forever.

The 56 acre project area, comprised of 39 parcels, is situated between the Chickamauga & Chattanooga National Military Park and St. Elmo, a historic neighborhood in Chattanooga, TN. The protection of this property will enable us to connect the Lookout Mountain trail system to the base of the mountain by connecting the St. Elmo Trail to the Guild-Hardy Trail.

The goal of the project is to protect mature forest of historical and ecological importance, improve water quality, and expand the Lookout Mountain trail system while earning Carbon+ Credits that will be used to generate much needed revenue to support the conservation and education efforts of Lookout Mountain Conservancy.

6. Project Impacts

The St. Elmo Trail Preservation Project is expected to provide a multitude of benefits to the surrounding community as well as the local environment.

Lookout Mountain is in one of the most biologically diverse and critically imperiled ecoregions in the world. It stretches 90+ miles from Chattanooga, Tennessee to Gadsden, Alabama, with three miles in Tennessee, 35 miles in northwest Georgia and 52 miles extending into northeast Alabama. This property at the base of the mountain provides essential wildlife habitat for several animal species including eastern box turtles, red tailed hawks, black bears, and spotted salamanders, to name a few. By remaining protected, this area ensures connectivity between habitat corridors across Tennessee and Georgia.

As part of the Chattanooga Creek watershed, this area greatly contributes to water filtration, erosion prevention, and flood control. Chattanooga is in the Tennessee Valley near the Tennessee River so maintaining large areas of forest and minimizing impervious surface is of the utmost importance to managing frequent flooding. The Chattanooga Creek is listed as impaired by the Environmental Protection Agency and happens to run through many neighborhoods and communities including some of the most impoverished and environmentally burdened in our area. Therefore, all efforts to increase rainfall interception, prevent runoff, and improve water quality are significant.

Tennessee is ranked among the most obese states in the country with Chattanooga being no exception. By expanding trails and enabling convenient access to outdoor recreation, especially so close to the city, projects like these encourage physical activity and can help improve both mental and physical human health.

7. Does your project fall within an Urban Area mapped by the U.S. Census Bureau, or within the boundaries of a city or town? (Click here for Census Bureau mapping information).

<https://www.census.gov/geographies/reference-maps/2010/geo/2010-census-urban-areas.html>

Within an Urban Area

Within a city or town

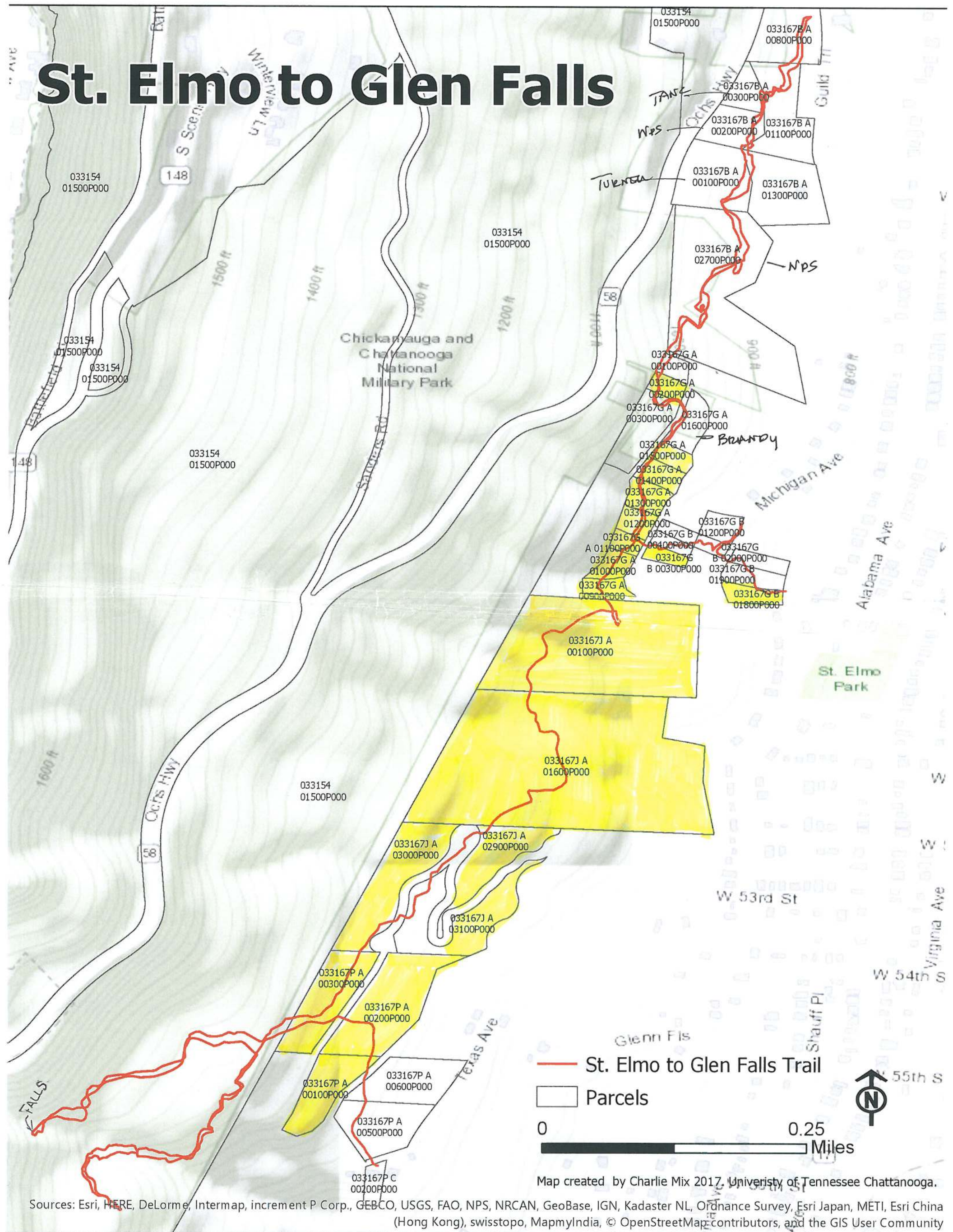
8. Additional Information

To raise the necessary funds to purchase this property and expand the trail system LMC reached out to the community for support. The St. Elmo Neighborhood Association helped rally the St. Elmo community to raise money and volunteer their time. Wild Trails, a local grassroots organization focused on the promotion of outdoor recreation and the protection of natural spaces, took part in organizing the fundraiser, provided financial support, and took the lead on trail maintenance and expansion along with St. Elmo volunteers once the purchase was complete.

This is just the beginning of protecting land at the base of Lookout Mountain and around the St. Elmo neighborhood. Thanks to this project, many private landowners have expressed their interest in preserving their lands long term through conservation easements with Lookout Mountain Conservancy.

Although this particular property was not involved in any historically significant Civil War battles, it is still considered to be core battle ground due to regiment activity that took place at the time. The National Park Service will continue to be a partner going forward considering its proximity to the Chickamauga & Chattanooga National Military Park.

St. Elmo to Glen Falls



Map created by Charlie Mix 2017. University of Tennessee Chattanooga.

Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), swisstopo, MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community