



City Forest Credits Preservation Project Application

INSTRUCTIONS: Provide information about how the project meets the eligibility criteria as outlined in the City Forest Credits (CFC) Tree Preservation Protocol version 13.40 or version 13.100. Submit a draft application in word format to CFC before signing the final version. Include a map of the project area with the application. All project information will be shared on the public-facing project webpage on the Carbon Project Registry.

1. Project Name

For example: Sandy Cross Forest

Big Woods Forest Preservation

2. Project Operator

Provide name of organization/entity and contact information

Organization/Entity: Triangle Land Conservancy

Address: P.O. Box 1848

City: Durham

State: North Carolina

Zip: 27702

Primary and/or secondary contact(s):

Primary:

Chloe Ochocki

Phone: 919-908-0056

Email: cochocki@triangleland.org

Secondary:

Robert Howes

Phone: 919-908-0052

Email: rhowes@triangleland.org

3. Project Location

Project must be in or adjacent to one of the following. Describe which one of the criteria the project meets and provide the name of the city, town, or jurisdiction where project is located. Provide the parcel numbers.

- *“Urban Area” per Census Bureau maps*
- *An incorporated or unincorporated city or town*
- *A planning area for a regional metropolitan planning agency or entity*
- *Land owned, designated, and used by a municipal or quasi-municipal entity for source water or watershed protection*
- *A transportation or utility right of way through one of above*

The project is in Chatham County which is in central North Carolina (parcel number 19351). The property meets CFC urban criteria by its location within the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro metropolitan planning organization boundary.

4. Project Description

Provide short narrative of the project goals, Project Area acreage, land ownership, forest characteristics, and land use/zoning. Provide details about when the property was acquired or potential timeline for acquisition. Include information about when carbon crediting was first introduced into the overall project scope.

The Big Woods Forest Preservation project is an effort to protect 230-acres of mature upland forest in the Research Triangle region of central North Carolina. Named after its state-recognized natural community, the project supports a mix of loblolly pine, sweetgum, yellow-poplar, wooded wetlands, and other mixed upland hardwood tree species. In addition to the significant ecological value of the land, the property helps protect clean drinking water for several downstream communities. Located in the Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro metropolitan planning area, the Big Woods Forest project has faced significant development pressure from neighboring residential growth. Large, forested tracts of land in this region have become increasingly rare, as rapid development continues to change land use.

Triangle Land Conservancy's long-term goals for the project are to protect the land in perpetuity through fee simple acquisition and a state held conservation easement. The organization purchased the property in June 2023, with the hope to open it up to the community in the future as a public nature preserve. It is currently split between R-5 and R-1 Chatham County zoning districts, which allow for low-density residential development.

Big Woods Forest would be Triangle Land Conservancy's first carbon crediting project. The organization has been exploring carbon crediting options for several years to help serve its mission in creating a healthier and more vibrant Research Triangle region by safeguarding clean water, protecting natural habitats, supporting local farms and food, and connecting people with nature. Triangle Land Conservancy envisions that funding from this project could be reinvested into protecting neighboring forested land facing similar development pressures.

5. Project Impacts

Provide a short narrative of the environmental, social, and health impacts this project will achieve. Examples include how the project addresses increased access to green spaces for under-resourced communities, flood control or watershed protection, benefits for human health and well-being, improved recreation opportunities, or protects bird and wildlife habitat.

A carbon-crediting project on the Big Woods Forest property would have numerous conservation co-benefits for protecting both natural habitats and local community health. The 247-acre parcel of land contains two different natural areas of special biodiversity importance, as defined by the North Carolina Natural Heritage program. They include Bush Creek marshes (43 acres) and Big Woods Road upland forest (159 acres). It is also located directly adjacent to an Audubon Continentally Important Bird Area around Jordan Lake, which hosts the largest population of Bald Eagles in North Carolina and one of only two nesting sites for the Double-crested Cormorants known in the state. The project would provide a crucial buffer for this habitat, which is noted to be continually threatened by encroaching residential development. Its land is also designated as important for local climate resilience, according to the Nature Conservancy's 2016 Resilient and Connected Landscapes assessment.

The project has additional positive impacts for the health of local communities in the area. Since the project's initial inception, there has been a long-term vision to open it up as a public nature preserve. This would offer passive recreation opportunities for the surrounding communities. The project is also located approximately 7.5 miles upstream of the city of Cary's public drinking water intake on Jordan Lake. Watershed protection is paramount in this area, as the lake supports drinking water for numerous communities but continues to struggle with excessive nutrient enrichment from upstream runoff.

6. Additional Information

Provide additional information about your project. If the Project Area is part of a larger program or preservation effort, include one sentence with more information. Examples include collaboration with other partners to preserve forestland or how this project fits into a regional initiative.

This property has been identified as highly valuable in several different regional conservation plans, including [A Landscape Plan for Wildlife Habitat Connectivity in the Eno River and New Hope Creek Watersheds, North Carolina \(2019\)](#). This landscape-level connectivity plan was developed by a group of individuals representing over 20 different organizations and covers land within four different counties in central NC. The plan recognizes the value of relatively pristine large tracts of land for wildlife sustainability and migration in the region. It identified a network of habitat corridors and designated the land in this project as being of high value for connecting disparate patches of habitat.

The project also lies within the service area of the [Jordan Lake One Water](#) Coalition. This partnership of local governments, organizations, individuals, and businesses aims to develop unique solutions for the health and management for the Jordan Lake Watershed. Upstream land protection is a key part of the coalition's goals for improving the hydrologic and ecological function of the watershed and enhancing local community health. This project scored high in a model developed in 2018 to identify priority lands for conservation protection, developed as part of the overall One Water initiative.

Triangle Land Conservancy plans to encumber the Big Woods Forest project land with a conservation easement held by the State of North Carolina.

7. Map

Provide a map of the Project Area.

PROJECT OPERATOR SIGNATURE

Signed on February 20, 2024, by Sandra Sweitzer, Executive Director, Triangle Land Conservancy.

Sandra Sweitzer

Signature

Sandra Sweitzer

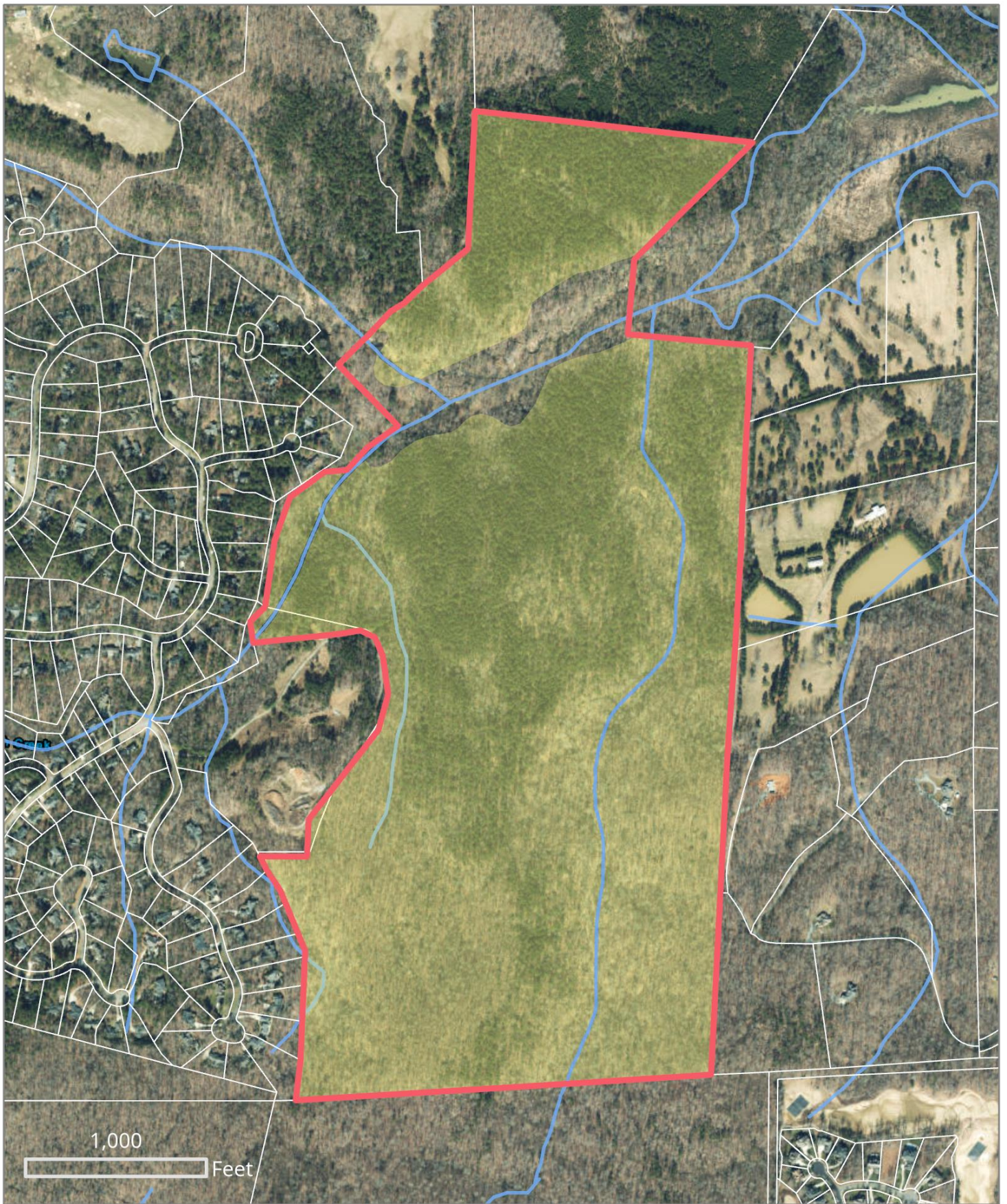
Printed Name




919 908-8809

Phone

ssweitzer@triangleland.org

Email



-  Parcel Boundary
-  Streams
-  Project Area

Big Woods Forest
Preservation
Triangle Land Conservancy

