



January 31, 2016

Pathways Donor
Address
City, State, Zip

Re: Pathways Land Acquisition Grant Program of the Cumberland Trails Conference (CTC)

Dear Pathways Capital Campaign Donor,

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of our planned Pathways Land Acquisition Grant Program (LAGP) and invite you to send us any comments on the program that you may have after reviewing this letter and the enclosed information. Comments may be submitted by letter or by email to the addresses shown at that bottom of this page and we ask that you please get them to us by March 31, 2016, so we can consider them prior to finalizing the guidelines for the LAGP and commencing the grant program. The LAGP is designed to disburse the funds remaining on hand from the "Pathways for People . . . People for Nature" Capital Campaign that was conducted during 1999-2004 and thereby bring closure to that campaign. Records show that you were one of the donors to that campaign. A one-page document highlighting many of the successes to date that are associated with that fundraising effort is enclosed. We intend for the LAGP to disperse the funds that remain from the capital campaign in a timely manner and in coordination with Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam's and the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation's stated goal and diligent efforts to substantially complete the construction of the Cumberland Trail (CT) and protect its corridor within the next 4 years. It is encouraging that Tennessee State Park's success in the land acquisition program is now at the 91-93% completion level. CTC is providing support both financially through this grant program and through its vigorous trail building activities, a description of which is enclosed with this letter.

Through the structured LAGP, which sets priorities and establishes criteria, CTC will consider grant applications for eligible projects, i.e. land and easement acquisitions, that are submitted by the State and other applicants. The grant program is expected to award "a maximum of \$100,000 per calendar year, beginning in 2016, and continuing until the approximately \$500,000 in the 'Pathways for People . . . People for Nature' land acquisition capital campaign fund has been fully expended." We will retain necessary flexibility, but believe providing funding assistance over a period of years is the best way to maintain momentum toward the goal of completion. The grant program will adhere to the broad overall purpose stated at the commencement of the capital campaign that the funds are "to be used to purchase the Cumberland Trail corridor and associated key recreational, historical, and natural areas, creating a linear park system across Tennessee from the Kentucky/Virginia border in the north, to the Georgia border in the south."

We thank you for your past support of the Cumberland Trail and appreciate your continued support and involvement.

Rob Weber
Chairman, Cumberland Trails Conference

Pathways Program Highlights 1999 to 2015:

Black Mountain Crest... To the Cumberland Trail's Founding Father Bob Brown, Black Mountain is a beloved site on the Cumberland Plateau. A geological wonder rising to over 3,000 ft., Black Mtn. offers the best views of eastern Tennessee and motivated the Conference to request and contribute to TennGreen's acquisition of the 550-acre crest of Black Mountain for the Cumberland Trail.

Black Mountain Western Slope... The Conference assisted financially in the completion of the purchase of 300+ acres on the western slope creating a landscape hub that now anchors the Grassy Cove Segment providing 850 acres of hiking, backpacking, climbing, and just plain contemplation.

Southern Watershed Initiative... The eastern escarpment of Walden's Ridge and its 10 principal gorges were rugged, deep, and isolated and more importantly they remained un-fragmented in large block timber ownership. The gorges, with curious names like Possum and Rock, offered an experience of cascading waters under an intact canopy of hardwood forest and towering bluffs. This terrain would allow the Conference and Tennessee State Parks the opportunity to manage the corridor for foot traffic only, while providing a recreational system offering hiking, camping, backpacking, kayaking, hunting, and day use activities. The conservation and recreation benefits of protecting the great Cumberland Trail State Park became self-evident and led to the Conference's Southern Watershed initiative...a targeted program to acquire and protect the gorges of Walden's Ridge on the Cumberland Plateau.

- *Rock, Possum, Soddy Gorges...* The first critical acquisitions from Bowater Inc. set a benchmark for Cumberland Trail by purchasing the gorges and their upland connecting corridors in a single package. The results defined a recreational landscape system inclusive of 35 miles of Cumberland Trail and protected three major watersheds, ten creek systems, four kayak creeks, and 5,000 acres of habitat for the federally endangered large-flowered skullcap (*Scutellaria Montanan*). CTC provided a significant portion of the funding for this addition to the CT.
- *North Chickamauga, Laurel-Snow, Stinging Fork, and Piney River Pocket Wildernesses...* Our field teams continued their work by finding the overland trail connections between Bowater Inc.'s valued Pocket Wildernesses and assisted in the costs and transition of these landscapes to Tennessee State Parks.
- *Roaring and McGill Creek Gorges...* key in linking the Laurel-Snow Pocket Wilderness to Rock Creek Gorges, CTC field teams worked in partnership with private and public partners and assisted financially in this private land acquisition.
- *Soak Creek Gorge...* a critical link between the Piney River & Stinging Fork Pocket Wildernesses and the Grassy Cove Segment, this 1,000 acre acquisition *anchors and completes* the Southern Watershed Initiative gorge acquisitions. CTC assisted in costs associated with this acquisition.

Ozone Falls State Natural Area/Black Mountain Link... Long a desire to link the isolated Ozone Falls, we provided financial assistance for a linear 5-mile CT corridor linking to the crest of Black Mtn.

Crab Orchard Mountain... We continue to assist in finding a solution on Crab Orchard Mountain that will link Ozone Falls State Natural Area and our current trail work on Daddy's Creek in Cumberland County.

Thank you to all of our private and public partners in this work, too numerous to count.