

The Conservation Fund, the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (NCDA&CS) and other partners recently celebrated an effort to conserve and establish the new 402-acre Broyhill State Forest in Lenoir.

The forest property boasts high conservation value, supporting natural resources, water quality, recreational access and increased connectivity for nearly 2,500 acres of surrounding protected lands.

“This property has been managed as a working forest for over a century, and that legacy will continue,” said North Carolina Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler. “Broyhill State Forest will be managed as a dedicated nature preserve, and conserving the outstanding examples of North Carolina’s natural heritage will be a primary goal of management.”

National environmental nonprofit The Conservation Fund purchased the land for conservation in February 2022 and will soon transfer it to NCDA&CS thanks to funding from the North Carolina Land and Water Fund (NCLWF), Fred and Alice Stanback, and other supporters.

The previous landowners, the Broyhill Family Foundation, were the founders of Broyhill Furniture. The Broyhills trace their roots to the working forests in the Grandin community on Kings Creek. Western North Carolina’s high quality forests, especially hardwoods, were a large reason the furniture industry was such a driving force for the state’s economy. The Broyhill family and local historic groups wanted to see this land protected for the community and to help demonstrate the important role the furniture industry played in the state’s history.

“We can think of no more fitting legacy for this property than a sale to the state,” said Hunt Broyhill, president of the Broyhill Family Foundation. “We greatly appreciate the opportunity to work with the state of North Carolina and The Conservation Fund on this initiative.”

“This new state forest will be such a strong outcome for the Broyhill family who stewarded this land, and for the community moving forward,” said Bill Holman, North Carolina state director at The Conservation Fund. “High-quality forestland like this can support both our local economies and our larger fight against climate change.”

The Yadkin River and W. Scott Reservoir — two major drinking water sources for northwestern North Carolina residents — are downstream from the Broyhill State Forest. Kings Creek, which flows through a small section of the property and downstream into the watershed, is also a classified trout stream.

The new state forest will enhance public recreational access and important forest and wildlife habitats identified in the State Forest Action Plan and State Wildlife Action Plan. The entire property will be managed as a working stewardship forest by the state Forest Service and will serve as a model for multi-use natural resource management, blending sustainable forestry, wildlife conservation, habitat management and restoration.

“Restoration will focus on declining community types and species of concern such as Montane oak-hickory and fire adapted pine forests,” said State Forester David Lane. “Low impact, dispersed recreation will be emphasized, and opportunities for teaching and demonstrating forest management practices will be primary objectives for this forest.”

Funding for this effort is being provided by Fred and Alice Stanback and the NCLWF — a leading source of conservation funding in the state that supports the protection of land for natural, historical and cultural benefit.

“Over our 26-year history, NCLWF has awarded over \$33 million in grants to protect land in Caldwell County, including popular destinations like Wilson’s Creek and Buffalo Cove Game Land,” said Will Summer, executive director of NCLWF. “We are thrilled to be a part of another public access opportunity in a growing area of the county and know citizens from all over the state will soon enjoy visiting Broyhill State Forest.”

“Conservation efforts like this are crucial to maintaining the natural resources of our state,” said Representative Destin Hall. “We are so grateful to the Broyhill family and all others involved for helping secure this forest for our state, our citizens, and future generations.”

The Conservation Fund is working to transfer the property to NCDA&CS in 2022.