



freshwater
LAND TRUST

25TH ANNIVERSARY

EST.

1996

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

A LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Freshwater Land Trust Community,



I hope you and your families are safe and healthy. In 2021, our team celebrated [Freshwater Land Trust's 25-year anniversary](#) in a big way! Throughout the year, we made major strides in all areas of our mission of conserving, connecting and caring for land and water throughout Central Alabama.

I am excited to share Freshwater Land Trust's progress and accomplishments in our 2021 Annual Report. During the year, we conserved 400+ new acres, [increasing our total footprint to over 8,000 acres](#); enhanced multiple endangered species habitats; removed almost

8,000 pounds of litter from local waterways, [totaling over 13,000 pounds of trash removed](#) since December 2019; and [initiated two critical trail connections](#) in downtown Birmingham, which [will be known as the Hugh Kaul Trail](#).

In addition, our Red Rock Trail System [was prominently featured in The Hoover Institution at Stanford University's Innovate Alabama Plan](#) on the crucial need to develop Alabama's outdoor recreational infrastructure.

As we strive towards cleaner, greener communities, we rely on partners and donors to help make it happen. Please consider [supporting Freshwater Land Trust](#) to invest in creating and stewarding dynamic green spaces for future generations.

Rusha Smith
Executive Director



2021 HIGHLIGHTS

FEBRUARY

Birmingham
Coca-Cola Bottling
Company [sponsors East
Lake Park litter gitter](#)

APRIL

[FLT breaks ground
on urban trail
connection](#) from
Rotary Trail to
Avondale

MAY

[FLT relocates office to M2
building](#), between Pepper
Place and Avondale

JULY

FLT Jr. Board hosts the
[most successful Land Aid](#)
fundraising concert to
date

SEPTEMBER

[11th litter gitter in
Jefferson County installed](#)
in Five Mile Creek in
Tarrant, sponsored by
ABC Coke, a division of
Drummond Company

NOVEMBER

[FLT finalizes conservation
easement](#) in Powderly
neighborhood to
protect endangered
watercress darter

DECEMBER

FLT reaches milestone of
[8,000+](#)
[acres conserved](#)



IMPACT

25 years of conserving land and building trails

1

Groundbreaking trail connection

Connecting Rotary Trail to Avondale

420

New acres conserved

For the betterment of humanity, wildlife, and ecosystems

616

Volunteer hours served

Caring for land, water, and trails

7,700

Pounds of litter removed from local waterways

As part of Project Litter Gitter

7,716

Acres monitored and managed

Improving land, waterways, and forests



CONSERVATION

Total land conserved: 8,025 acres

420 acres conserved in 2021

180

acres in
Walker County

149

acres in
Turkey Creek
watershed

27

acres in
Powderly
neighborhood along
Seven Springs

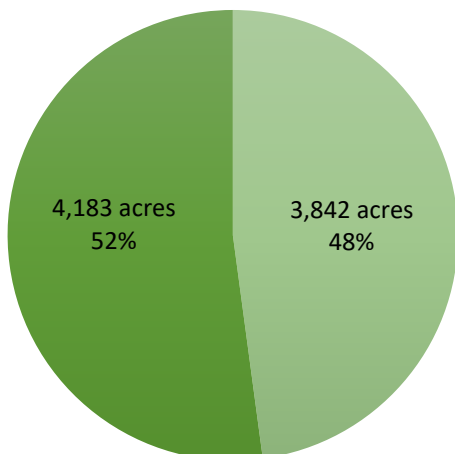
64

acres in
Blount County



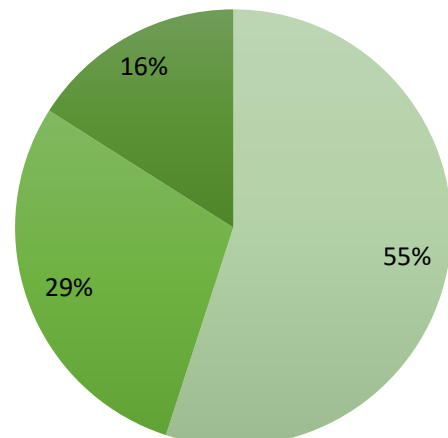
Conservation efforts

■ Fee properties ■ Conservation easements



Acres conserved in river basins

■ Black Warrior ■ Alabama ■ Tallapoosa



STEWARDSHIP

Stewardship staff monitored and managed 7,716 acres in 2021

Highlights

Feb

Land Stewardship Director attended prescribed fire training

Apr

[Turtle ramp installed on Turkey Creek property](#) to help box turtles climb out of a 6-ft deep structure foundation

May

[Blue Springs Bioblitz](#) in St. Clair County identified 213 species in 24 hours



Habitat Improvement

4

Workdays at endangered species sites: Tapawingo, Glen, and [Roebuck Springs](#)

3

[Endangered darters](#) benefited: watercress, vermilion, and rush

2

THOUSAND pounds of invasive taro removed from Tapawingo Springs

Project Litter Gitter

11

Litter gitters in seven cities in Jefferson County, including [one new litter gitter in 2021](#)

7.7

THOUSAND pounds of [litter collected in 2021](#) for a project total of 13,000+ pounds since December 2019

RED ROCK TRAIL SYSTEM

Total trail mileage: 125 miles in Jefferson County



APR

Broke ground on first Hugh Kaul Trail segment to connect Rotary Trail to Avondale

SEPT

Kicked off Red Rock Action Plan to identify the next five to seven priority trail projects



OCT

Outdoor recreation, including Red Rock Trail System efforts, were featured in Innovate Alabama's report by The Hoover Institution at Stanford University prepared for the Alabama Innovation Commission

NOV

Unveiled new Red Rock Trail System logo, featured above

FINANCES

TOTAL INCOME: \$2,095,711



- 46% Foundations & Trusts
- 20% Corporate
- 19% Government & Agency
- 7% Programs & Investments
- 5% Individuals
- 3% Board

TOTAL EXPENSES: \$1,638,511



- 41% Conservation & Stewardship
- 39% Red Rock Trail System
- 20% Administration & Fundraising

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Diversity and inclusion are foundational values of Freshwater Land Trust and primary drivers of our work in the community and our workplace culture. A central tenet of our mission is to provide outdoor spaces and recreational opportunities to everyone in our geographical footprint, regardless of their location, income level, neighborhood demographics, or physical ability. As a result, our work helps grow the collective consciousness for protecting and enjoying the natural environment and strengthen social bonds between diverse populations. We intentionally seek work in marginalized communities in order to help build a more inclusive community in the Greater Birmingham and Central Alabama area.

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STAFF

Rusha Smith, Executive Director
Carolyn Buck, Red Rock Trail System Director
Sam McCoy, Land Stewardship Director
Tina Simonton, Finance & Development Director
Elizabeth Sims, Land Conservation Director
Sally Sperling, Communications & Special Projects Coordinator
Outgoing staff and interns: Karen Inouye, Maggie Palmer, Dominique Foreman, Ruby Maghoney