Many of America’s most important natural areas are home to our most economically and socially distressed communities. Our Resourceful Communities program works with grassroots organizations to create opportunities that preserve the rural landscape, strengthen local economies and celebrate our communities’ unique cultures.

Our Approach
Across the Southeast, Appalachia and in distressed communities across the country, we support a network of community organizations, faith-based groups and resource partners who provide additional support through training, materials or funding. Our triple-bottom-line approach generates economic, environmental and social justice benefits. We help strengthen community organizations through capacity building, support on-the-ground projects through small grants and nurture a growing network of grassroots partners and resource providers.

Our effective combination of direct support, skills building and connections to resources nurtures real change where it’s needed the most. Rather than addressing community challenges as isolated issues, our integrated approach nets sustainable, comprehensive improvements. By bringing together communities and conservation, people and places, we have helped local leaders create or retain over 2,200 jobs, and for every $1 we provide or help communities secure, an additional $12 in funding and in-kind contributions is raised by the community.
Projects at a Glance

**Strengthening Organizations.** Our experience demonstrates that building the capacity of local organizations supports stronger communities. We provide a range of training and technical assistance to achieve local goals. For Men & Women United for Youth & Families CDC, that meant intensive support in program and youth leadership development, building more equitable partnerships and fundraising. We’ve also provided opportunities for participants to connect with other food-focused youth projects, statewide intermediaries, and additional funding. Men and Women connects elders and youth and generates revenue through innovative pick-your-own and pop-up markets in a USDA-designated food desert.

**Investing in Communities.** Resourceful Communities’ small grant program, the Creating New Economies Fund, provides direct investment in community-based efforts. Seed money supports a range of projects: eco- and heritage tourism, youth conservation programs, farmers markets, alternative energy production and more. For one grantee, Growing Change, assistance helped launch an innovative “prison flip” program, which reduces youth imprisonment by creating agricultural entrepreneurial ventures and connecting youth to the land, with the longer-term goal of converting a closed prison into a sustainable farm facility and training center.

**Nurturing the Network.** We facilitate connections between our dynamic network of community organizations and resource providers—encouraging collaboration, peer-to-peer learning and access to much-needed resources. We help communities secure funding and other resources, share triple-bottom-line strategies and create partnerships to replicate innovative efforts.

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With help and guidance from friends like Resourceful Communities, we've learned how to refine our programs, build partnerships and develop strategies for long-term results.

Owen George
Founder, Trees NC
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About The Conservation Fund
At The Conservation Fund, we make conservation work for America. By creating solutions that make environmental and economic sense, we are redefining conservation to demonstrate its essential role in our future prosperity. Top-ranked for efficiency and effectiveness, we have worked in all 50 states since 1985 to protect over 8 million acres of land.

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