



Annual Report

A recap of our work for our members in 2012



To our members

“We didn’t flinch. We kept pushing forward to protect the places we love and advance the environmental values we share.”



Margaret Hartzell
Policy Advocate

Dear Environment North Carolina members,

As we strived to protect the Blue Ridge, the Outer Banks, Jordan Lake and other places we cherish in North Carolina this past year, we faced parliamentary tricks in Raleigh, the backroom influence of big developers, and the power of out-of-state oil companies.



Eva Jones
Citizen Outreach
Director

We overcame some of these hurdles—but not others. Yet with supporters like you on our side, we didn’t flinch. We kept pushing forward to protect the places we love and advance the environmental values we share.

What were the results of our work? Cleaner cars will reduce global warming pollution and North Carolina’s dependence on oil. A plan to fast-track a reckless development that could threaten Jordan Lake was derailed. Barriers to conserving land in the Blue Ridge were removed. We can all be proud of these important victories.



David Rogers
Field Director

Plenty of challenges remain, of course. But with you by our side, we’re determined to protect and preserve what makes our state so special. Thanks again for making this important work possible.

Sincerely,


Elizabeth Ouzts
State Director

Protecting Jordan Lake

In 2009, we successfully backed a plan to restore Jordan Lake to health. But in 2012, powerful developers threatened this progress on multiple fronts. Despite our opposition, lawmakers voted to delay pollution reductions from developers. But in the win column, we helped block a plan to fast-track a reckless development near the lake.

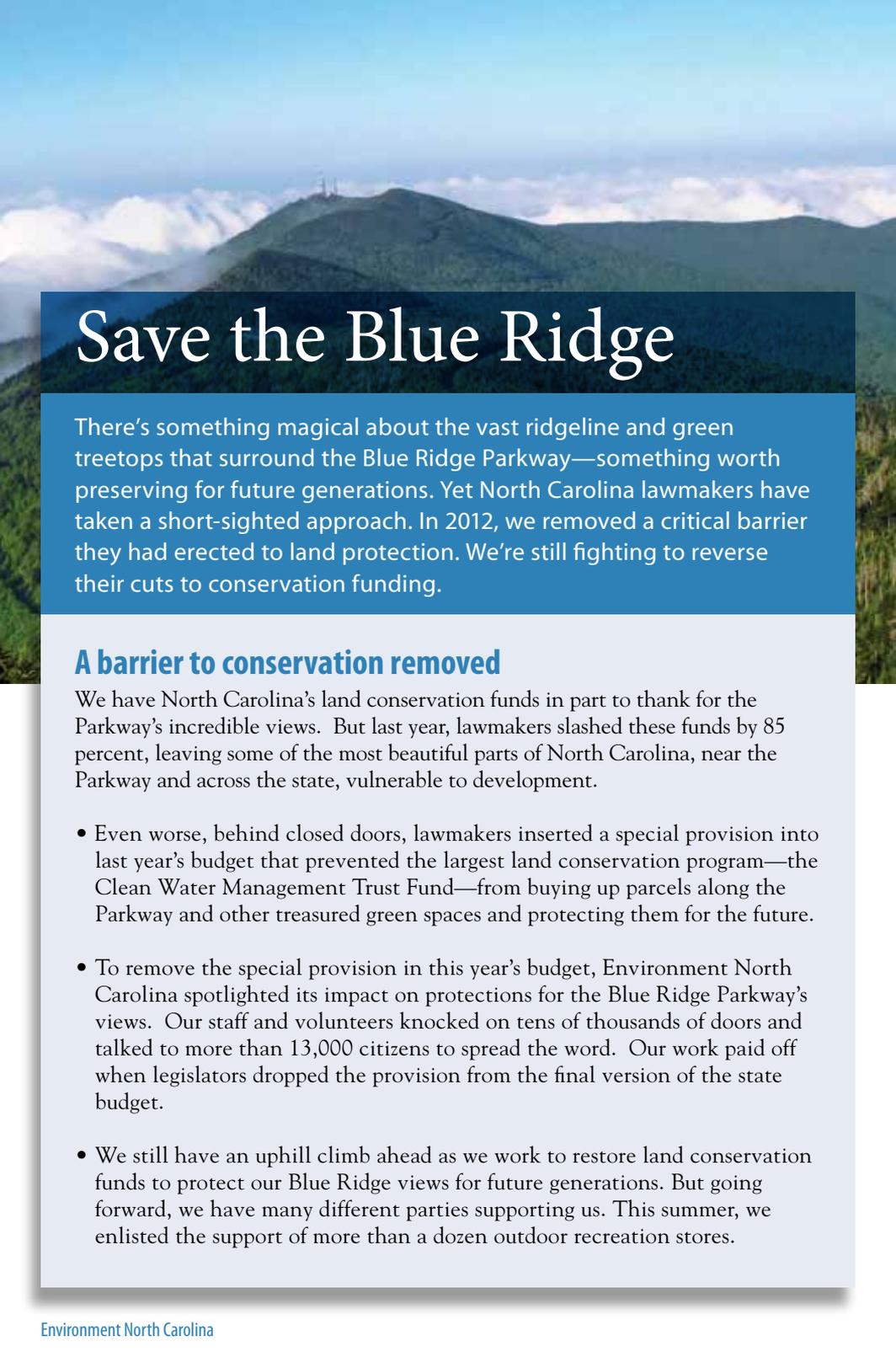
A reckless development slowed

Jordan Lake draws more than a million visitors each year and provides drinking water to hundreds of thousands. But the lake has long suffered from pollution caused largely by overdevelopment, which triggers algae blooms and beach closings. In 2009, Gov. Bev Perdue signed into law a plan to restore the lake to health. However, this past year, developers attempted to chip away at this progress.

- Advocates and lawmakers designed the 2009 plan to reduce pollution by up to 35 percent, requiring all pollution sources to help clean the lake. But in the waning days of the 2012 legislative session, lawmakers voted to allow developers two extra years to comply.
- Meanwhile, the developers of 751 South, a controversial project near Jordan Lake, convinced the N.C. House to decide in favor of fast approval. But thankfully, we helped convince the Senate to shoot down the scheme.



Jordan Lake is a nesting ground for many birds, including the bald eagle.



Save the Blue Ridge

There's something magical about the vast ridgeline and green treetops that surround the Blue Ridge Parkway—something worth preserving for future generations. Yet North Carolina lawmakers have taken a short-sighted approach. In 2012, we removed a critical barrier they had erected to land protection. We're still fighting to reverse their cuts to conservation funding.

A barrier to conservation removed

We have North Carolina's land conservation funds in part to thank for the Parkway's incredible views. But last year, lawmakers slashed these funds by 85 percent, leaving some of the most beautiful parts of North Carolina, near the Parkway and across the state, vulnerable to development.

- Even worse, behind closed doors, lawmakers inserted a special provision into last year's budget that prevented the largest land conservation program—the Clean Water Management Trust Fund—from buying up parcels along the Parkway and other treasured green spaces and protecting them for the future.
- To remove the special provision in this year's budget, Environment North Carolina spotlighted its impact on protections for the Blue Ridge Parkway's views. Our staff and volunteers knocked on tens of thousands of doors and talked to more than 13,000 citizens to spread the word. Our work paid off when legislators dropped the provision from the final version of the state budget.
- We still have an uphill climb ahead as we work to restore land conservation funds to protect our Blue Ridge views for future generations. But going forward, we have many different parties supporting us. This summer, we enlisted the support of more than a dozen outdoor recreation stores.

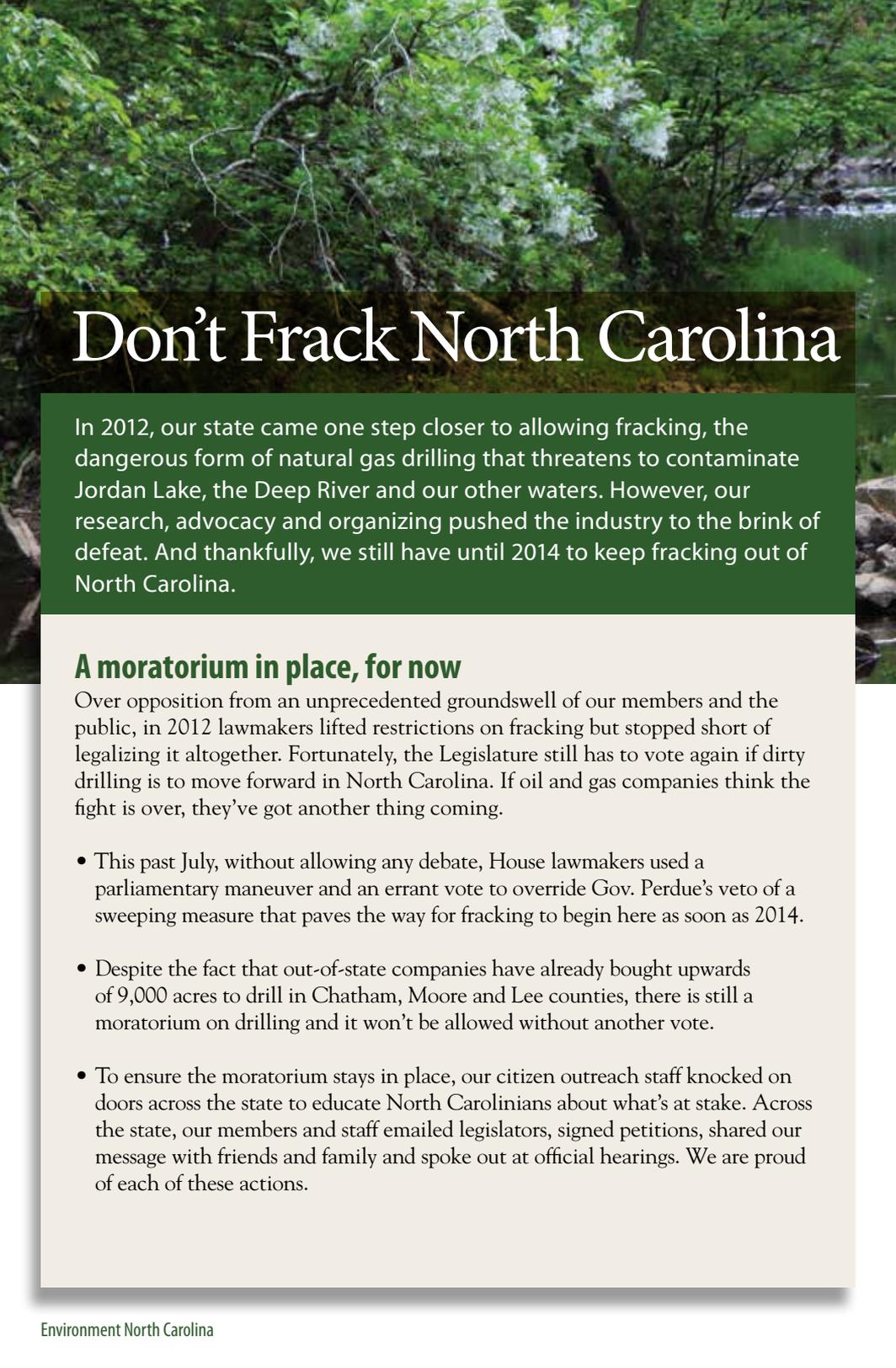
20,000 acres targeted for protection

North Carolina's forests, farms and wetlands, including those that surround the Parkway, contribute to our health, economic prosperity and quality of life. This past year, Environment North Carolina Research & Policy Center partnered with the Land for Tomorrow Coalition to assess the state's progress in protecting these priceless landscapes over the last seven years.

- Since 2005, the state's land conservation programs have saved more than 13,000 acres along the Blue Ridge Parkway, according to the report, "Securing North Carolina's Future: A five-year plan for investing in our land, water, and quality of life." While 13,000 acres protected is indeed real progress, the pace of land protection fell dramatically in 2009.
- In response, Environment North Carolina and the Land for Tomorrow coalition went to work setting goals for the next five years—calling on state leaders to protect an additional 20,000 acres of land along the Blue Ridge Parkway and nearly 400,000 acres of treasured green spaces overall statewide.



Left: Environment North Carolina talked to thousands to build support for saving the Blue Ridge Parkway from development; Right: North Carolinian hiking the Blue Ridge Mountains.



Don't Frack North Carolina

In 2012, our state came one step closer to allowing fracking, the dangerous form of natural gas drilling that threatens to contaminate Jordan Lake, the Deep River and our other waters. However, our research, advocacy and organizing pushed the industry to the brink of defeat. And thankfully, we still have until 2014 to keep fracking out of North Carolina.

A moratorium in place, for now

Over opposition from an unprecedented groundswell of our members and the public, in 2012 lawmakers lifted restrictions on fracking but stopped short of legalizing it altogether. Fortunately, the Legislature still has to vote again if dirty drilling is to move forward in North Carolina. If oil and gas companies think the fight is over, they've got another thing coming.

- This past July, without allowing any debate, House lawmakers used a parliamentary maneuver and an errant vote to override Gov. Perdue's veto of a sweeping measure that paves the way for fracking to begin here as soon as 2014.
- Despite the fact that out-of-state companies have already bought upwards of 9,000 acres to drill in Chatham, Moore and Lee counties, there is still a moratorium on drilling and it won't be allowed without another vote.
- To ensure the moratorium stays in place, our citizen outreach staff knocked on doors across the state to educate North Carolinians about what's at stake. Across the state, our members and staff emailed legislators, signed petitions, shared our message with friends and family and spoke out at official hearings. We are proud of each of these actions.



Hundreds turned out for hearings

While some lawmakers, along with out-of-state oil companies such as Whitmar Co., are eager to bring fracking to our state, we're pushing back harder and stronger—mobilizing people to take action for the health of the environment and their families. In response to the rush to frack, along with an Environment North Carolina-backed bill from 2011, state officials this past spring conducted a study of what fracking could mean for North Carolina.

- During fracking, water, sand and chemicals are injected into horizontal wells to extract shale gas trapped below the surface. The practice has contaminated rivers and drinking water supplies, increased air pollution, and marred landscapes around the country.
- Nationally, fracking has been linked to 1,000 cases of water contamination. For our state, the impact could be incredibly severe. More than 400,000 people who rely on private well water in the area could be impacted.



Dangerous fracking waste held in flowback pits like the one pictured (bottom right) pose a real risk of contaminating drinking water across much of North Carolina .



Repowering N.C.

In 2012, Environment North Carolina enlisted new support for wind and solar power, including that of more than 40 business owners, environmental leaders and public officials. Environment North Carolina Research & Policy Center also documented the environmental and economic benefits, including 10,000 new jobs in offshore wind and 28,000 jobs in solar.

Leaders banded together behind offshore wind

The winds off North Carolina's coast powered the Wright Brothers' first flight in 1903, and they've been going strong ever since. In fact, more than 100 years after the first flight, converting just a fraction of the winds off our shores to energy could provide a huge percentage of North Carolina's energy needs. We have more wind off our shores than any other state on the Atlantic coast, but we're dragging our feet to begin using it.

- Unfortunately, too many in North Carolina remain focused on energy sources of the past. A bi-partisan group of lawmakers introduced a bill to promote offshore wind—but rather than promote it, they concentrated their efforts on drilling off our coast.
- More than a year of organizing citizens from across the state to take action paid off when we finally defeated the pro-drilling SB 709 in the Legislature.
- Environment North Carolina is also working hard to extend critical tax incentives that support wind and renewable energy development that could expire and put our progress toward a clean energy and healthier future at risk. We enlisted more than 40 businesses, environmental groups and local elected officials from up and down the coast to support policies to promote offshore wind.



Our report detailed jobs and other benefits

The benefits to using the renewable resources that are right at our fingertips are immense and widespread. Not only could we protect our cherished landscapes and our health from dirty energy, such as oil drilling and fracking, but we could also boost our local economies by investing in the various forms of clean energy that are all around us here in N.C.

- Our report, “Windmills Not Oil spills,” showed that wind power could create three times as many jobs as from offshore drilling. According to the Department of Energy, North Carolina has the potential to gain 10,000-20,000 new offshore wind-manufacturing jobs.
- Just a fraction of the wind energy resources off North Carolina’s coast could help the state meet 20 percent or more of its total energy needs.
- North Carolina has nearly as many sunny days as Florida, and like wind, solar could provide 28,000 jobs or more in the state and give people across N.C. a healthier alternative to powering their homes and businesses.



Left: a wind turbine installation in Massachusetts; Right: Catawba Valley Habitat for Humanity’s Zero Energy House in the Ridgeview neighborhood of Hickory, North Carolina.

2012 Annual Report

Environment North Carolina
112 South Blount St., Ste. 102
Raleigh, NC 27601



Address service requested

NON-PROFIT
ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
BROCKTON, MA
PERMIT NO. 430