

FAMILY

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grams, the Women's Studies Project is funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development. The National Institutes of Health also fund much of Family Health's work.

Private foundation funding is limited, but the dollars are valuable beyond their numbers.

"To us, foundation money is very precious," says McKay. "It's private money, so it allows you flexibility."

It was with grants from the American Foundation for AIDS Research and U.S.A. for Africa that Family Health International launched its AIDS prevention work in 1987. The foundations provided the seed money, says McKay, and the government followed with funding later.

In 1991, the Agency for International Development awarded Family Health a \$168 million, five-year grant to help developing countries slow the spread of AIDS. In late 1993, the National Institutes of Health contracted with Family Health to manage clinical trails on experimental AIDS vaccines overseas.

"We're a public health organization," says Herndon, the spokesman, so adding AIDS prevention to the organization's mission was a logical extensive of its work in preventing sexually transmitted diseases.

Private dollars also have paved the way for Family Health's work in family planning. For example, Family Health will begin work this spring on a non-surgical sterilization study in Vietnam with private funding.

Although Vietnam is the 12th-largest country in the world in population, and its citizens don't have access to birth control, strained U.S.-Vietnam relations make federal funding for projects in that country impossible.

Although the bulk of Family Health's work targets developing countries, that doesn't mean its findings aren't transferable to the U.S.

"The fact of the matter is, the world is quite small," says McKay, the development director. Indeed, studies conducted by Family Health International did in Colombia convinced the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to simplify the instructions that come in packets of birth control pills.

And in 1992, Family Health began an HIV prevention project in Belle Glade, Fla., modeled after its projects in developing countries. Family Health International started out in 1971 as a small project on international planning by the Carolina Population Center at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. A few years later, the U.S. government made a commitment to international family planning and Family Health International was born.

The organization has made a lot of progress in the past 20 years, but its biggest challenges, both in AIDS prevention and family planning, lie ahead.

"If things don't get better, it's pretty scary," says McKay. Even under the best-case scenario — with a slow rate of growth — the population probably will increase by 50 percent, or possibly double, early in the next century. Currently, the world population is 5.6 billion.

The question, says McKay: "Can we stabilize it at 7.5 billion or will it grow much, much higher?"

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ARLENE MCKAY
Development Director



Longleaf pine trees on North Carolina's coastal plain need fire to thrive. The Nature Conservancy plans and helps to execute burns.

Photo courtesy of The Nature Conservancy

NATURE

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Phillips. State projects cited by the international headquarters as outstanding were the Grandfather Mountain preserve, a new wildlife refuge on the Roanoke River and a major biological inventory of North Carolina's largest military base.

Linda Gintoli, the southeast coastal plains' land manager, says the environmental importance of North Carolina's coast and its complicated land management needs made it the obvious choice for the state's first regional land management office.

One of the biggest challenges is the area's need for fire.

"Our mission is to protect biological diversity," says Gintoli, and in the case of the Longleaf Pine, protecting that diversity means burning it occasionally.

Many plants need fire to grow, she

explains. Without fire, they won't even sprout. The Venus Fly Trap is one such species. It's also a species that grows naturally only on North Carolina's coastal plain. It's also a species that is in danger of extinction.

The Longleaf pine trees themselves, and many of the thousands of other plant species that grow on the forest floor, also need fire to thrive.

The needles that collect on the forest floor are acidic, stopping bacteria from decomposing and in turn keeping nutrients from getting into the soil. Historically, the forest floor was swept by fire every few years, neutralizing the soil and letting light shine on the ground.

"When lightening strikes in the wilderness, it causes fires," says Gintoli. "These fires roared across the countryside and burned thousands of acres at a time." Since the turn of the century, however, humans have suppressed fire and the Longleaf pine community has suf-

fered. In fact, fire suppression is the primary threat to many rare plant species.

But after an area is burned, says Gintoli, it "explodes with grasses and herbs. It's all triggered by fire."

A main part of Gintoli's job is planning for and executing burns, a project that requires close cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service. In fact, much of what the Conservancy does is in collaboration with state and federal government agencies.

For example, the Conservancy, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission together established the Roanoke River wildlife refuge along a 137-mile corridor of the river basin. The Fort Bragg inventory also was a joint program.

Working under contract with the Department of Defense, the Conservancy and the state's Natural Heritage Program combed 100,000 acres of the military base, uncovering a thriving Longleaf Pine community.

Experts say the discovery isn't surprising, considering that live ammunition from military exercises often causes fires on the base.

More than 1,000 species of plants, 56 of which are rare, were discovered, as were six plant species that never had been identified before.

Later this year, the Conservancy will begin a similar project at Pope Air Force base.

One thing the Conservancy doesn't do is advocate, lobby or argue.

"Fighting isn't our mission," says Gintoli. "If we see a problem and a piece of land that needs protection, we'll buy it. The Nature Conservancy is very silent in its activities."

But, she adds, if land needs protecting, they'll find a way.

"They'll use whatever it takes to get that piece of property protected."

And so far in North Carolina, that determination has translated into 337,928 acres of land now protected from development.

HOUSING

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RENTAL HOUSING:

- Twin Gables, Ahoskie — a shared residence for the elderly developed by the nonprofit Mid-East Development Corp. and financed by the federal Farmers Home Administration.
- 28 Elizabeth Street, Asheville — historic district apartment building owned and rehabilitated by contractor David Miller Dunn, assistance from Asheville Housing Authority.
- New Garden Place Apartments,

Greensboro — developed by the nonprofit Project Homestead Inc. and New Garden Associates, a partnership of private developers and the city.

HOME OWNERSHIP:

- Eastside Park Revitalization, Phase 1, Greensboro — a neighborhood rebuilding project by Greensboro Episcopal Housing Ministry, Habitat for Humanity, Home Inc., the city of Greensboro and Neighborhoods United of Greensboro, a nonprofit formed by local rotary clubs.
- First Step Housing Program, Henderson — developed by Gateway Community Development Corp. and

the city of Henderson.

Judges for the competition were Susan Perry-Cole, assistant secretary for housing and community development at the N.C. Department

of Commerce; Roger Earnhardt, executive director of the Community Investment Corp. of N.C.; and Charles Mullen, president-elect of the National Home Builders Association.

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