

# Land Trust Protects Nature, Helps Owners Reach Goals

BY SUSAN USHER

Eleven acres of bottomland hardwoods in New Hanover County. More than 530 acres of marsh in Carteret County. A Carolina Beach lake. The Indigo Plantation Marshes near Southport that flank the mainland ferry terminal for Bald Head Island.

What do they have in common other than the natural beauty of coastal Carolina that attracts more and more new residents, retirees, second-home buyers and vacationers each year? Assurance that they will continue relatively undisturbed. All four are conservation projects of the North Carolina Coastal Land Trust.

The trust got its start two years ago, shortly after Camilla Herlevich returned to Wilmington and opened a private law practice. At the time, The Conservation Trust for North Carolina in Raleigh was looking at ways to develop trusts to pursue conservation protection projects of regional value.

"I thought I could do it and benefit the area I grew up in," said Herlevich, whose father, the late V.W. Herlevich, was a forester known throughout southeastern North Carolina. "I had been working the past 12 years as a staff lawyer for the Nature Conservancy in Florida."

The North Carolina Coastal Land Trust works, its brochure states, to "bring people together—citizens and landowners, natives and newcomers—toward the common goal of protecting the coastal region's habitats and important natural areas."

Herlevich, who earned a bachelor's degree from Duke University and a law degree from Boston University, serves as the trust's part-time director while maintaining her practice. She reports to a board of directors that includes President Michael Murchison of Wilmington and Vice President Minnie Hunt of Sunset Beach.

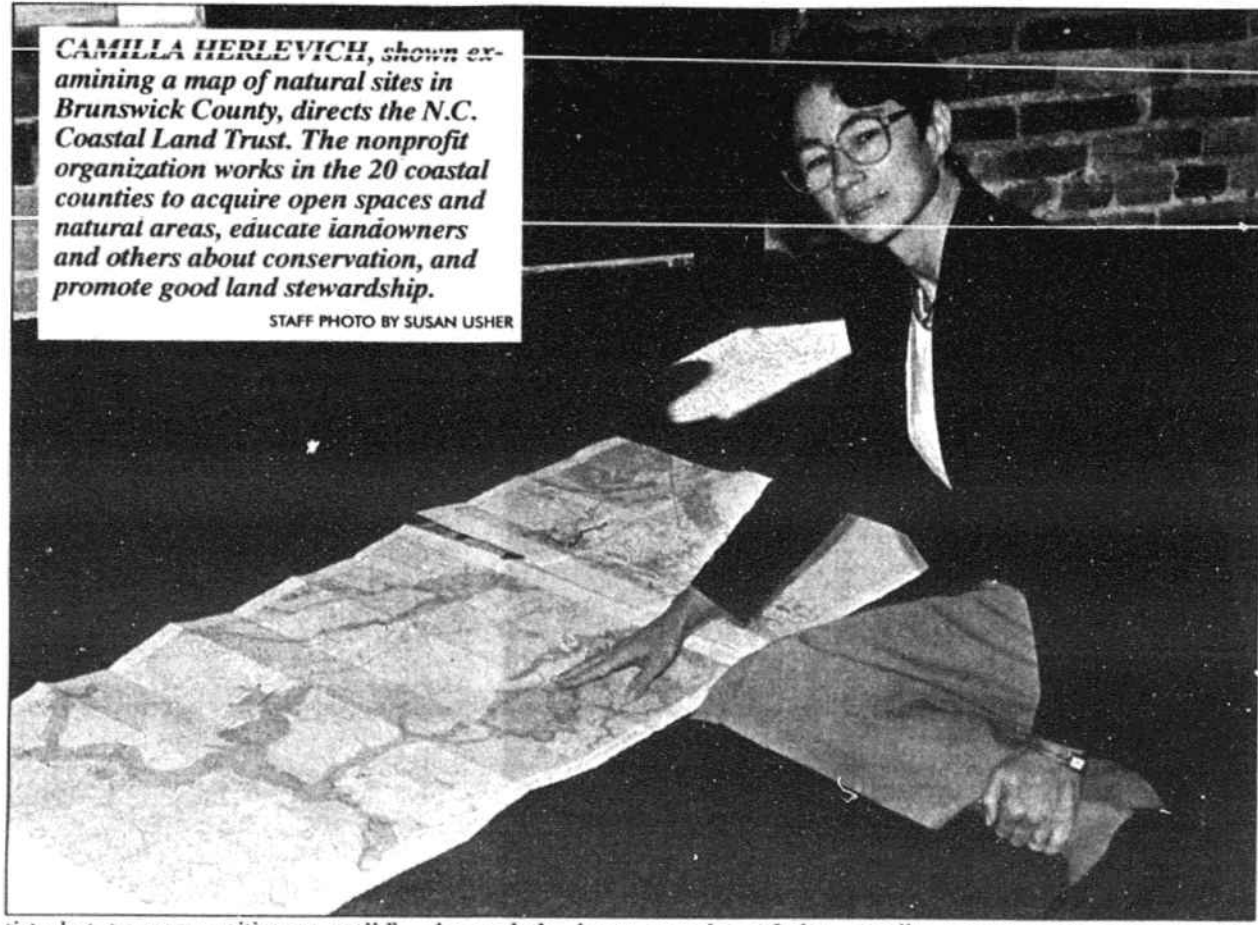
Entering its third year of operation, the Coastal Land Trust has approximately 200 members, an annual budget expected to reach \$90,000, several projects already under way, and a plan of work that reflects its priorities.

The trust focuses on local acquisition of open spaces and natural areas in the state's 20 coastal counties. It also provides information and education for landowners, civic groups, attorneys and land planners on ways to conserve and protect environmentally significant lands through conservation easements, tax incentives for conservation land donations and innovative public funding sources for land conservation.

With a small budget, its basic tools are research, cooperation and education.

"Everything we do is voluntary," said Herlevich, U.S. Geological Survey maps spread about her in the trust's small, but attractive second floor space in the Bear Building of Wilmington's Cotton Exchange, overlooking Front Street. "We do nothing other than in cooperation with the landowners."

Focus is on protecting places that contain ecological resources of regional significance, often those that also have archaeological or historical values, or other assets. "Places that are important not only to scien-



**CAMILLA HERLEVICH, shown examining a map of natural sites in Brunswick County, directs the N.C. Coastal Land Trust. The nonprofit organization works in the 20 coastal counties to acquire open spaces and natural areas, educate landowners and others about conservation, and promote good land stewardship.**

STAFF PHOTO BY SUSAN USHER

tists but to communities as well," said Herlevich.

Beyond that the trust gives top priority to projects not being taken care of by other organizations or agencies; projects where private conservation efforts might be workable; and projects that are within its capabilities.

"We don't have enough money to acquire maritime forests on a barrier island, for example," said Herlevich, "but we might be able to establish a conservation easement for a maritime forest on the mainland."

The trust basically works with local communities to acquire conservation lands by easement or fee-simple title by voluntary donations from land owners, cooperative projects with local and state agencies and partnership projects with other conservation organizations.

Possibilities are abundant. Its "road map" over the next few years will be a Coastal Protection Plan recently completed by the Conservation Trust for North Carolina. The plan establishes project selection criteria, compiles a list of potential projects—a number of them in Brunswick County, and sets some priorities.

On the trust's list of potential projects are, the Cape Fear River corri-

ridor and the lower stretches of the Brunswick River and Town Creek; Sunset Beach's wood stork ponds; colonial bird nesting islands now in private ownership; lime sink ponds and Carolina bays; remnants of mainland maritime forests and longleaf pine savannas; and remaining undeveloped barrier islands in private ownership, such as Bird Island.

"To begin with, we're trying to identify one major project and several smaller ones within each of the three coastal areas," said Herlevich. "We're seeking some funding to do the 'courthouse' research."

That preliminary research involves identifying property ownership, gaining some idea of the owner's plans for the property and exploring conservation alternatives that might interest or benefit the property owner.

"The owner may or may not know something special is there," said Herlevich. "We're not out to take their land, but if they are interested, we tell them about the projects and programs that are available."

Many of those options offer income and/or estate tax benefits, while still allowing the owner some use of the property. Possibilities include a special use program, tax

credits, a conservation easement that provides income and estate tax benefits, and state tax benefits.

Herlevich is available to speak to any group interested in learning more about North Carolina's coastal resources and the public and private

benefits of land conservation.

"One of the areas I'm interested in is how natural areas and natural beauty don't drain a county economically," said Herlevich, referring to a recently completed study and a Nov. 10 workshop in Beaufort co-sponsored by the trust and the N.C. Coastal Federation. "People are moving to Brunswick County because of its natural beauty, which is one reason that beauty needs to be

protected.

"That's something I like to talk to groups like chambers of commerce about. It's an area of common concern. Too often business interests and environmental interests are adversarial and there is common ground."

Herlevich and the N.C. Coastal Land Trust can be reached at 910-763-0332, or 313 North Front Street, Suite A, Wilmington, N.C. 28401.

## Natural Site Inventory Of Brunswick Under Way

Through a contract with biologist Richard LeBlond of Swansboro, the N.C. Coastal Land Trust is in the first year of a three-year, \$30,000 inventory of Brunswick County for the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program.

"We're sitting on a gold mine here," said trust Director Camilla Herlevich. "Brunswick County is believed to have the highest biological wealth of any county in the state."

The purpose of the inventory is to locate and map areas within the county that are of greatest significance in terms of natural biological diversity, mainly those that are in near-natural condition and/or support rare species or distinct natural communities.

The study will provide planners, land use managers and property owners with information they can use in making decisions about land use. The Brunswick County Planning Department, for instance, has already asked for information to aid in its land use planning. Inventory data also can help developers avoid costly construction delays by providing advance information about the location and importance of sensitive lands and habitats.

Already LeBlond has found new occurrences or sites in Brunswick County for rare and endangered species and some good examples of natural communities.

At the end of the study his findings will be published and also included in the state Natural Heritage Program's information database.

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- Prostate cancer has become the #2 cause of death in men;
- Most urologists recommend yearly checkups to rule out any possibility of cancer;
- Additionally, one out of every three men over the age of 50 suffer symptoms of Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (BPH), characterized by frequent nighttime urination, a weak urine stream, and/or the inability to completely empty the bladder;
- Diagnosis of both prostate cancer and BPH involve use of the American Urological Association (AUA) Symptom Score Index, a rectal exam by a physician, and a Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) blood test.

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**IT COULD SAVE YOUR LIFE!**

	SYMPTOM SCORE		SYMPTOM SEVERITY			
	1-7	8-19	Mild	Moderate/Severe		
<b>NOCTURIA</b> Over the last month or so, how many times did you most typically get up to urinate from the time you went to bed at night until the time you got up in the morning?	0	1	2	3	4	5
<b>INCOMPLETE EMPTYING</b> Over the past month or so, how often have you had a sensation of not emptying your bladder completely after you finished urinating?	0	1	2	3	4	5
<b>FREQUENCY</b> Over the past month or so, how often have you had to urinate again less than two hours after you finished urinating?	0	1	2	3	4	5
<b>INTERMITTENCY</b> Over the past month or so, how often have you found that you stopped and started again several times when you urinated?	0	1	2	3	4	5
<b>URGENCY</b> Over the past month or so, how often have you found it difficult to postpone urination?	0	1	2	3	4	5
<b>WEAK STREAM</b> Over the past month or so, how often have you had a weak urinary stream?	0	1	2	3	4	5
<b>STRAINING</b> Over the past month or so, how often have you had to push or strain to begin urination?	0	1	2	3	4	5

From the American Urological Association (AUA) Symptom Index for BPH. 310-501-2780-35(25) • February 1994 • Printed in U.S.A.

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\*\* If you have Moderate (total score 8-19) or Severe (total score 20-35) urinary symptoms, please contact your family doctor or local urologist to schedule a thorough examination.

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