



BUILDING **RESILIENCE**



UNIQUE PLACES
TO SAVE
2025 ANNUAL REPORT

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A Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Supporters, Partners, and Friends of Unique Places to Save,

It is my great privilege to share the following Unique Places to Save 2025 Annual Report. We have a lot to celebrate, including the stand-out accomplishments of expanding our organization's impact through completion of 12 new projects, and forever protecting 1,000+ acres of wetlands and rare habitat in southern Brunswick County, NC; one of the fastest developing counties in the nation.



While it is fairly typical in the land trust industry to measure success in “dollars and acres,” Unique Places to Save is **not** a typical land trust.

To meet our mission of restoring and conserving natural and working lands and aquatic resources, Unique Places to Save goes beyond valuing dollars and acres. Therefore, our success and accomplishments reflect what we value:

We value our professional partners whose restoration work needs a committed steward that understands the nuances of protecting these sites. Our projects now permanently protect over 129 miles of streams and over 3,300 acres of wetlands.

We value our landowners, who depend on us to be their conservation partner who understands the legacy they are securing for generations to come. We honor the connection they have formed to the land through our careful and reliable stewardship activities and by sharing their stories with you.

And of course, we value our supporters, whose dedicated time and resources inspire our team daily. We are grateful to you all and hope you'll be inspired by the next phase of our organization: **Building resilience and implementing our Five Year Strategic Plan.** We'll share how we will take innovative, efficient, and evidence-based approaches to conservation of functioning natural resources and agricultural systems.

Thank you for being on this journey with us!
Sincerely,
Christine

Our mission is to restore and conserve natural and working lands and aquatic resources through conservation protections and sustainable natural resource restoration and management.

Restoration Overview

Over the last several years, the Restoration Program at Unique Places to Save has combined our in-house ecological expertise with our project coordination skillsets to result in some incredible successes. These complex, multi-year projects involve numerous partners and require a solutions-oriented approach. Once complete, these projects support healthy, naturally-flowing rivers, connect local communities to greenspace, and protect habitat for vulnerable wildlife.

While we will continue to coordinate our existing projects, our organizational focus will be shifting towards expanding our role in conserving restored sites across the U.S. by utilizing the lessons learned from our Restoration Program.

Our experienced team fully understands and appreciates the effort, science, time, and resources that go into a restoration project. Going forward, we will leverage that expertise to enable stronger conservation and stewardship of restored natural resources.



Venus Flytraps in North Carolina

Our Progress in 2025



12

Projects Completed

603

Acres Conserved

71,500+

Linear Feet of
Streams Protected

283

Acres of Wetlands
Conserved

As the title of our annual report reflects, 2025 was a year focused on building resilience—without slowing our progress toward our mission. While implementing meaningful organizational and programmatic improvements, we completed several projects that clearly embody the purpose of Unique Places to Save: restoring and conserving natural and working lands and aquatic resources through permanent conservation protections.

In 2025, we completed twelve projects that protected more than 71,500 linear feet of stream and conserved over 603 acres in total.

Our work continues to prioritize the protection of high-quality aquatic ecosystems and working lands, supporting a future that values ecological diversity while reinforcing long-term economic sustainability.

Notable Milestones



Westervelt

Through our work at Point Farm, Unique Places to Save has forged a new partnership with Westervelt Ecological Services, a national leader in mitigation and restoration. Together, we're advancing long-term conservation by protecting more than 1,300 acres of tidal marsh and adjacent uplands in the Edisto River Basin in SC.



Tara Disy Allden

We're pleased to welcome Tara Disy Allden to the Unique Places to Save Board of Directors. Tara brings 30 years of leadership in environmental consulting and mitigation banking and is both a Professional Wetland Scientist and attorney. She recently launched the Law Offices of Tara Disy Allden, LLC, focusing on the intersection of law and science to advance practical conservation solutions.



Hello Missouri!

Unique Places to Save completed its first conservation easement in Missouri, protecting 72+ acres along Apple Creek in Perry and Cape Girardeau Counties. This project conserves forests, wetlands, and waterways that support vital habitat and biodiversity and marks UP2S's expansion into Missouri conservation work.



Five Year Strategic Plan

To help achieve our mission, Unique Places to Save will be guided by this focused five year strategic plan.

This plan charts our course for creating sustainable growth, building organizational resilience, and maximizing conservation impact from 2026 to 2030.

7,424

Total Number of Protected Acres

3,326

Total Number of Wetland Acres

129

Total Miles of Protected Streams

114

Total Number of Successful Projects

Featured Projects

The following two pages feature two of our long-term projects that represent the impact of conservation in partnership



Boiling Spring Wilderness

Located in Brunswick County NC

In 2025, Unique Places to Save recorded a state-held conservation easement on approximately 1,040 acres of land in Brunswick County, North Carolina. Featuring headwaters of Orton Creek, riparian habitat, wetlands, Carolina bays, pocosin, and longleaf pine savanna, the Boiling Spring Wilderness is part of a globally-ranked natural heritage and wildlife habitat area. The project provides habitat for many rare species including the endangered Red-cockaded Woodpecker.

Situated between Boiling Spring Lakes Plant Conservation Preserve and Historic Orton, this project contributes towards significant landscape-scale conservation. The site also serves the local community by helping protect the Castle Hayne Aquifer that supplies water for Brunswick County residents and benefits Military Ocean Terminal Sunny Point by preventing further development within their installation buffer area.

This project was made possible by a generous \$3.68M grant from the North Carolina Land and Water Fund.



1,040
Total Acres

[View Project](#)

Ramseur

Located in Randolph County NC

What started out as a vision for river health and community vibrance by Jeffrey Fisher, our former Board Chair, is coming to light at Ramseur, NC. Our work in Ramseur truly represents what can be accomplished with partnerships, determination, and a shared goal of conservation.

Unique Places to Save worked with the Town of Ramseur and numerous grant and conservation partners to conserve river frontage, establish a new trailhead and extend the Deep River State Trail, and enable removal of Ramseur Dam, an obsolete dam. Today, the Deep River is beginning to reestablish its natural flow and now residents and visitors can directly access the river that has been central to the Town's history.

When a project is located at the intersection of a growing community and an exceptional aquatic resource, complications are sure to arise, and they did! Our team ensured protection of natural resources was prioritized while supporting the Town to manage an underground water utility line at the project site. And when a grant requirement from decades past required additional approval to enable dam removal, our team got it done. Currently, we're finalizing the conservation agreement that will protect water quality and outdoor public recreation.



27
Total Acres

[View Project](#)



Our task must be to free ourselves by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature and its beauty. - *Albert Einstein* -

Completed Projects

The following pages include brief summaries of other properties we were able to conserve in 2025

Hickory Jack

Located in Perry County MO

This project encompasses a diverse landscape of native forests, riparian buffers, and essential wetland ecosystems, serving as a critical wildlife refuge and a cornerstone for regional biodiversity.

72.2
Total Acres

[View Project](#)



Labelle

Located in Jefferson County TX

This project focused on restoring coastal prairie wetlands and expanding contiguous habitat corridors, enhancing natural hydrology and native vegetation to support migratory species and regional flood resilience.

216
Total Acres

[View Project](#)



Hitchcock Creek

Located in Galveston County TX

This project focuses on enhancing historically altered stream corridors and lowland areas by restoring natural flow patterns and native vegetation to reduce erosion into the San Bernard River watershed.

57.1
Total Acres

[View Project](#)



Camp Creek

Located in Durham County NC

This project rebuilt stream channels and re-established floodplain wetlands to enhance habitat complexity and reduce sediment inputs through permanent legal protection.



24.6
Total Acres

[View Project](#)



Three Paces

Located in Van Buren County TN

This project used science-based restoration to repair eroded stream channels and re-establish native vegetation, bringing waterways back to life while securing habitat for fish and wildlife.



20.6
Total Acres

[View Project](#)



Slowplay

Located in Alexander County NC

This project restores eroded and altered streams to their natural flow patterns, focusing on reestablishing native plants and reducing downstream sediment and pollution.



19.7
Total Acres

[View Project](#)



Speedman

Located in Wayne County NC

Located in the Cape Fear River Basin, this site underwent reforestation, channel realignment, and removal of drainage ditches to improve hydrology, water quality, and wildlife habitat.



53.6
Total Acres

[View Project](#)



Dirty Boots

Located in Chatham County NC

This project focuses on the perpetual conservation of restored streams and wetlands, emphasizing channel stability and native plants to provide enduring watershed-scale benefits.



9.7
Total Acres

[View Project](#)



Sandy Branch

Located in Chatham County NC

This project restored headwater streams and riparian corridors, reconstructed channels, and planted native vegetation to reestablish connectivity and permanent protection.



22.5
Total Acres

[View Project](#)



Roller

Located in Warren County TN

This project enables long-term conservation of restored streams and wetlands within the Collins River Basin, securing channels and enhanced floodplains with native reforestation.



28
Total Acres

[View Project](#)



Marsh Creek

Located in McCreary County KY

This project focused on self-sustaining stream and wetland systems with habitat complexity, backed by a conservation easement and a fully funded long-term management endowment.



56.2
Total Acres

[View Project](#)



Toadstool

Located in Caswell County NC

This project restored over 19,000 linear feet of stream and reestablished wetlands by reconnecting floodplains to improve aquatic habitat and support downstream water quality.



79.7
Total Acres

[View Project](#)



Our Current Impact

7,424

Total Acres in Conservation

10 States Represented

3,326 Conserved Wetland Acres

129 Conserved Stream Miles

114 Projects Completed

\$4.1M

Stewardship Funds



UNIQUE PLACES
TO SAVE

Five Year Strategic Plan

To help achieve our mission and prepare for a brighter future, the Unique Places to Save team worked together to create a focused five year strategic plan.

This plan charts our course for creating sustainable growth, building organizational resilience, and maximizing conservation impact from 2026 to 2030.



Our work will achieve a lasting, significant downstream impact for communities and natural resources across the United States.



EXPAND LAND & WATER CONSERVATION IMPACT

We will increase our impact by focusing on our core strengths while exploring new opportunities.

- Scale Core Services for Mitigation Projects
- Expand Traditional Land Conservation
- Explore New Markets
- Honor Our Legacy

20K

Total Acres Conserved

An additional 13,000 acres of protected natural and working lands

300+

Stream Miles Conserved

An additional 200 miles of healthy, functioning stream ecosystems

6K+

Wetland Acres Protected

An additional 3,000 acres of vital wetland habitats



ENSURE PERMANENT CONSERVATION THROUGH EXCELLENCE IN STEWARDSHIP

We are committed to the perpetual stewardship of the lands and waters in our care.

- Enhance Easement Monitoring
- Strengthen Stewardship Operations
- Support Our Landowners

0

Major Violations

Maintain exemplary compliance across all conservation projects

\$8M+

Stewardship Fund

Double our Stewardship Fund dedicated to legal defense and monitoring

10+

Multi-State Capacity

Expertise and capacity to monitor and legally defend easements in more states



BUILD A RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE FINANCIAL FOUNDATION

We will secure our financial future to guarantee the permanence of our work for generations to come.

- Grow Operating Reserves
- Operate Efficiently
- Diversify Revenue

Grow Our Reserve Fund

Have a Reserve Fund that is more than one full year of operations

Focus on Funding Programs

Ensure a majority of our expenses are dedicated to mission-driven programs

Maintain Financial Discipline

Keep our expense totals well below our annual gross revenue



INVEST IN OUR TEAM AND OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

We will invest in our expert team and internal systems to create a resilient foundation required to support our ambitious growth.

- Grow Our Team
- Optimize Systems
- Foster Our Culture

Expand Team Size

Grow staff capacity focusing on increased project capacity, outreach, and administrative support

Keep Raising Standards

Implement robust non-profit and other business policies and best-in-class technology and processes

Cultivate Our Team

Invest in professional development and culture-building activities to foster a knowledgeable, cohesive team



AMPLIFY OUR VOICE AS A TRUSTED CONSERVATION LEADER

We will deliberately cultivate our brand to be recognized as an influential, trusted, and expert voice in the conservation sector.

- Solidify Our Position
- Share Our Story
- Strengthen Networks

Public Perception

Build our social media followers to over 30,000 followers across all accounts, a 20X increase

Thought Leadership

Establish team members as thought leaders through asset creation, speaking, and hosting events

Build Partnerships

Connect with other forward-looking organizations guiding the future of conservation

Our Guiding Current

Science is the foundation of our decisions and actions.

Where we work and how we work is first and foremost informed by science. Each natural community has different needs and approaches, which all fall within a greater landscape that interacts with human needs and uses.

Innovation inspires, drives, and motivates our work on solutions within and beyond the organization.

Solving complex issues with comprehensive solutions fuels our success and amplifies our impact. This motivation drives us to excel and fosters collaboration and leadership, helping us address outdated thinking and changing regulations. Together, we aim to achieve more sustainable positive impacts, inspire one another, fulfill our organizational mission, and share the benefits of our work with others.

Restoration of aquatic and terrestrial resources is a viable approach towards regaining natural functions of degraded ecosystems.

The stress that human land use has placed on our planet is undeniable. By restoring land, rivers, wetlands, and other critical natural resources, we help boost biodiversity and ecological resilience today, while working towards the greater goal of ensuring a healthy balance between our communities and our environment.

Conservation of working lands and ecosystems supports current and future communities.

Protecting high quality aquatic systems along with natural areas and working lands is critical for healthy and sustainable communities. Perpetual conservation ensures our natural and working land resource base is available for future generations.

Collaboration is critical to ensure lasting conservation.

Working in isolation is typically counterproductive. Just as the land and water we restore and conserve have a place within a larger landscape, our organization and our work must also fit within a larger framework of stakeholders, partners, and the public. Only through an understanding of where our goals and priorities align can we achieve a more sustainable impact.

Confidence to lead in the face of difficulty and uncertainty creates success.

Our world is ever-changing and becoming more complex and difficult to navigate. We embrace these uncertainties and adapt to meet the world's challenges. We do not turn away from difficulties, but instead treat them as complexities that need solutions and we see ourselves as part of those solutions.

Permanence of our organization is necessary to achieve our goals.

It is imperative that we operate in a manner that is financially and environmentally sustainable in the long term. Ensuring the longevity and efficacy of our organization requires careful planning, resource management, and partnerships that provide ongoing support and adaptation to changing conditions.

Principles and goals become meaningful only when we put them in action. Our team is united in our commitment to these standards as we work to restore and conserve land and water. We are proud of our accomplishments and are focused on building upon that success.

Our projects have direct positive impact on millions of lives and we are dedicated to expanding this influence with every project.

Expert Content

In 2025, our team continued their long-term commitment to share our work and knowledge through posts that not only speak to our mission, but also provide perspectives on our industry and related issues.

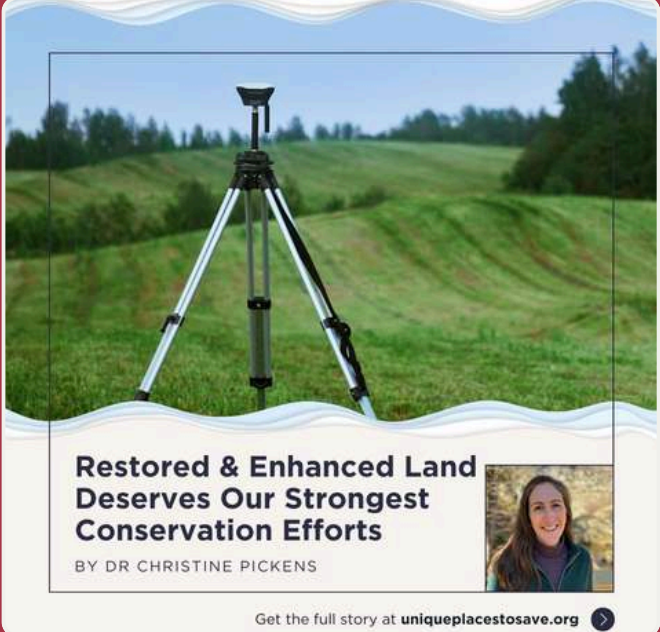
Christine Pickens

Ecology & Restoration in Practice


As an accomplished ecologist, Dr. Pickens' blog posts focus on raising awareness and educating others about the scientific foundations that underscore our restoration and conservation work.

Her blog posts have explored river ecology, wetland conservation, and the impact of human activities on these vital ecosystems. They also illustrate the positive impact that healthy rivers and wetlands have on local communities.

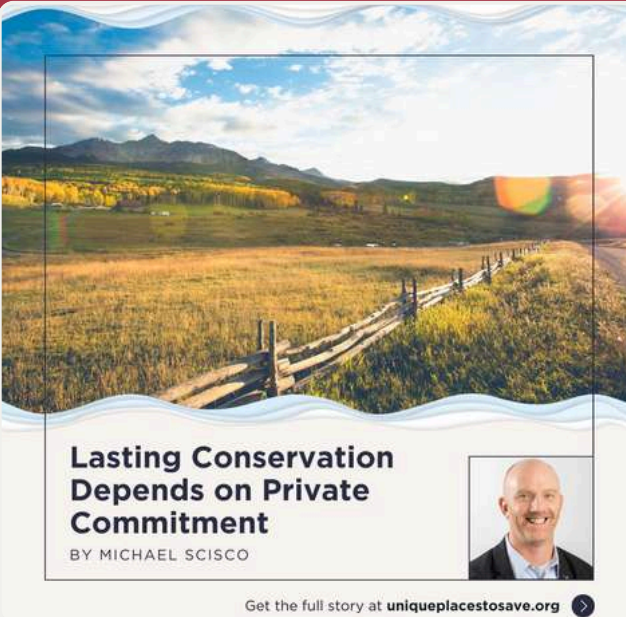
[Read Christine's Posts](#)




Restored & Enhanced Land Deserves Our Strongest Conservation Efforts
BY DR CHRISTINE PICKENS



Get the full story at uniqueplacestosave.org



Lasting Conservation Depends on Private Commitment
BY MICHAEL SCISCO



Get the full story at uniqueplacestosave.org

Michael Scisco

Practical & Progressive Applications

Michael has been creating informative content on land and resource conservation. His blog posts have focused on topics such as conservation easements, working lands conservation, and mitigation banking.

By explaining conservation strategies and concepts in a clear and concise manner, Michael has empowered landowners to make informed decisions about land protection.

[Read Michael's Posts](#)

Sam Warnock

Financial & Capital Sustainability

Sam's focus on the economic value of nature has explored topics such as ecosystem services, natural capital, and sustainable real estate development.

By highlighting the financial benefits of conservation, Sam advocates for policies and practices that promote both economic prosperity and environmental sustainability. He emphasizes the role of restoration and conservation in protecting natural capital and the long-term benefits for communities.


[Read Sam's Posts](#)




The Enduring Impact of the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act - Part One
BY SAMUEL WARNOCK



Get the full story at uniqueplacestosave.org



Conservation: Deeper Than Natural Resources
BY MANDI TAYLOR



Get the full story at uniqueplacestosave.org

Mandi Taylor

Shared Benefits & Public Impact

Mandi Taylor, a recent addition to the Unique Places to Save team, is focused on connecting the impact of our work and the daily lives of people in the surrounding communities.

By highlighting common benefits that come from our efforts, Mandi is making conservation more relatable and accessible for everyone. In 2025, she will continue to emphasize the direct impacts of our work on the communities we work within.

[Read Mandi's Posts](#)

These blog posts are available on our website, monthly newsletter, LinkedIn, Bluesky, and Facebook



Meet The Team



Christine Pickens
Executive Director



Sam Warnock
Aquatic Resources Manager



Mandi Taylor
Conservation Specialist



Michael Scisco
Conservation Consultant



Nathan Phillips
Communication Consultant



Caroline Sevier
Conservation Intern

Caroline joined the team this summer as our Conservation Intern. During that time, she gained valuable experience in land conservation, field work, and GIS. By the end of her internship, Caroline had completed eleven site visits, assisted in writing four baselines, and wrote seven monitoring reports.

Caroline's attention to detail, dedication, and positive attitude made her an invaluable asset to our team and we look forward to seeing the great things she will achieve in her future endeavors.

Meet The Board



Clark Harris

Entrepreneur
New Chapter Ventures



Lee Lance

CEO
Ecobot



Lee Kane

President
Trinity Design & Build



Joanna Baker

Founder
Resonant Realty



Tara Disy Allden

Professional Wetland
Scientist & Attorney



Spencer Tuttle

Former Board Chair

Our deep appreciation is extended to Spencer Tuttle, who served on our Board from 2021-2025, including serving in the role of Board Chair.

Spencer applied his executive leadership skills to the position making our organization stronger and navigated challenges through impactful decision-making.

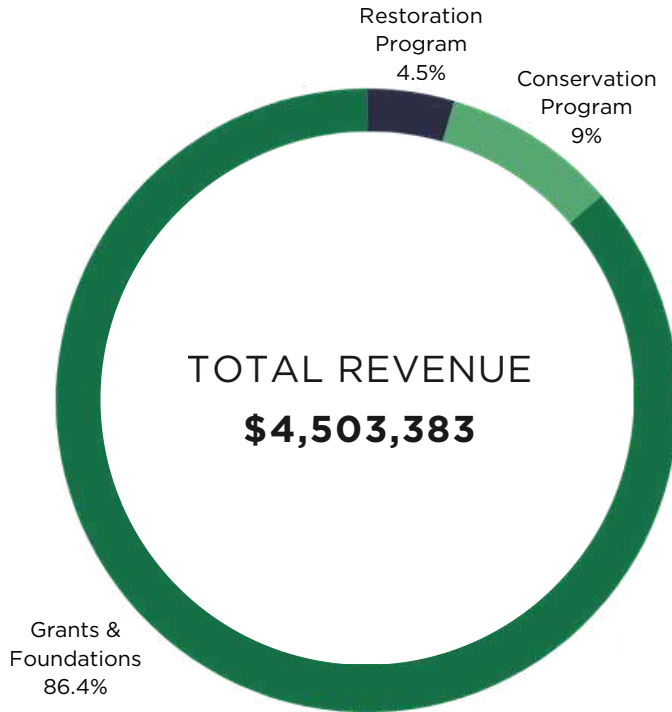
Thank you for your service and dedication, Spencer!

Our 2025 Partners

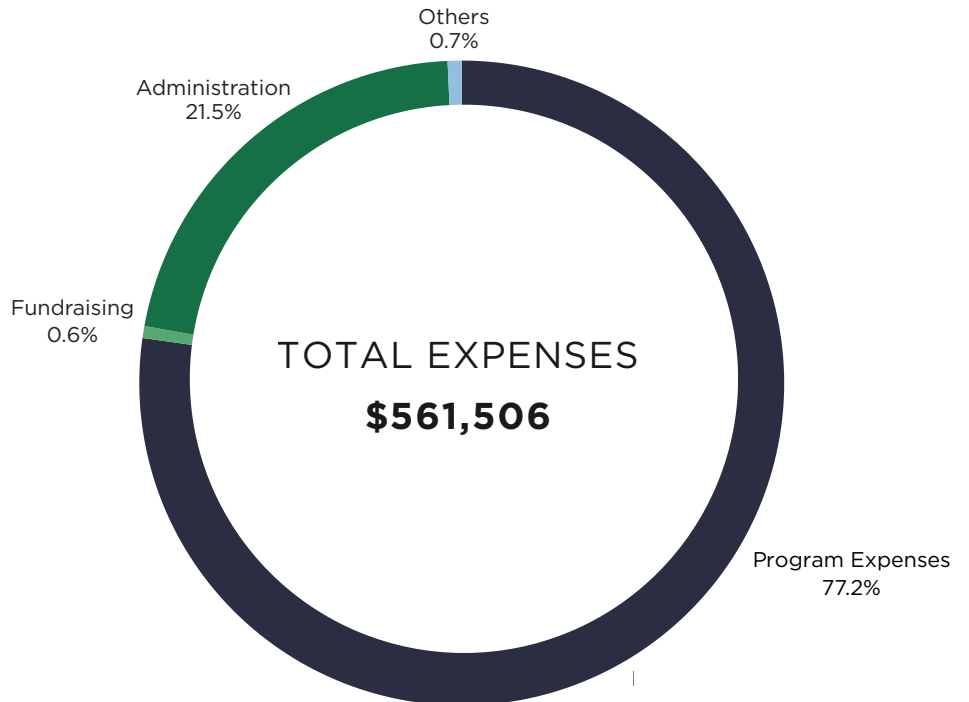


2025 Financial Report

- **INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS**
\$7,376
- **CONSERVATION PROGRAM**
\$407,109
- **GRANTS & FOUNDATIONS**
\$3,884,299
- **RESTORATION PROGRAM**
\$203,585
- **OTHER**
\$1,014



- **PROGRAM EXPENSES**
\$433,869
- **ADMINISTRATION**
\$120,270
- **OTHERS**
\$3,807
- **FUNDRAISING**
\$3,560



In 2025 Unique Places to Save received a \$3,500,000 grant and a \$148,000 grant that were used to acquire fee-owned interest in conservation lands. While these grants appear as revenue in our financial summary, they represent a capital investment in land protection rather than operating income. The full value of the grants are reflected as conservation land assets on our balance sheet.



SUPPORT OUR WORK IN 2026 AND BEYOND

JOIN US FOR OUR BEST YEAR YET

This year, we deepened our impact by protecting vital habitats and securing legacies for the future. By prioritizing partnerships and dedicated stewardship, we continue going beyond typical metrics to ensure lasting conservation.

As we launch our new Five Year Strategic Plan, we are focused on innovative, evidence-based solutions to build ecosystem resilience. Your support remains the foundation of our success. Join us as we protect our natural world together!

Make A Financial
Donation

Refer Us To
Future Partners





CONTACT

US TO LEARN MORE



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TO SAVE

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