

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA

SESSION 1997

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SENATE BILL 178*

Agriculture/Environment/Natural Resources Committee Substitute Adopted 4/22/97

House Committee Substitute Favorable 7/3/97

Short Title: Amend Natural Heritage Trust Fund.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

February 18, 1997

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO ALLOW THE SECRETARY OF CULTURAL RESOURCES TO PROPOSE LANDS TO BE ACQUIRED WITH FUNDS FROM THE NATURAL HERITAGE TRUST FUND, TO AUTHORIZE EXPENDITURES FROM THE FUND FOR CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION PLANNING AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS FOR OWNERS OF NATURE PRESERVES UNDER THE NATURE PRESERVES ACT, AND TO AUTHORIZE THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE FUND TO ENTER INTO AGREEMENTS FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF ACQUIRED LANDS WITH QUALIFIED NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

Section 1. G.S. 113-77.7(c) reads as rewritten:

"(c) When the State acquires land pursuant to this Article, the ~~Chairman of the Board of Trustees shall~~ may direct a request to the State Treasurer to set aside an amount from the Fund not to exceed twenty percent (20%) of the appraised value of the land acquired, or the land affected if less than a fee interest was acquired, to be placed in a special stewardship account in the Fund. The special stewardship account shall be a nonlapsing account, and income derived from investment of the account shall be credited to the

1 account. The special stewardship account shall be used for the management of land
2 acquired pursuant to this Article, ~~as directed by the Trustees, so long as such land remains in~~
3 ~~the Trust.~~ Article under the direction of the Trustees."

4 Section 2. G.S. 113-77.9 reads as rewritten:

5 "**§ 113-77.9. Acquisition of lands with funds from the Natural Heritage Trust Fund.**

6 (a) From time to time, but at least once each year, the Secretary, the Chairman of
7 the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, ~~and the Commissioner of Agriculture~~
8 ~~shall Agriculture, and the Secretary of Cultural Resources may propose to the Trustees~~
9 lands to be acquired with funds from the Fund. For each tract or interest proposed, the
10 Secretary, the Chairman of the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, ~~and the~~
11 ~~Commissioner of Agriculture Agriculture, and the Secretary of Cultural Resources~~ shall
12 provide the Trustees with the following information:

13 (1) The value of the land for recreation, forestry, fish and wildlife habitat,
14 and wilderness purposes, and its consistency with the plan developed
15 pursuant to the State Parks Act, the State's comprehensive plan for
16 outdoor recreation, parks, natural areas development, and wildlife
17 management goals and ~~objectives; objectives.~~

18 (2) Any rare or endangered species on or near the ~~land; land.~~

19 (3) Whether the land contains a relatively undisturbed and outstanding
20 example of a native North Carolina ecological community that is now
21 ~~uncommon; uncommon.~~

22 (4) Whether the land contains a major river or tributary, watershed,
23 wetland, significant littoral, estuarine, or aquatic site, or important
24 geologic ~~feature; feature.~~

25 (5) The extent to which the land represents a type of landscape, natural
26 feature, or natural area that is not currently in the State's inventory of
27 parks and natural ~~areas; areas.~~

28 (6) Other sources of funds that may be available to assist in acquiring the
29 ~~land; land.~~

30 (7) The State department or division that will be responsible for managing
31 the ~~land; land.~~

32 (8) What assurances exist that the land will not be used for purposes other
33 than those for which it is being ~~acquired; and acquired.~~

34 (9) Whether the site or structure is of such historical significance as to be
35 essential to the development of a balanced State program of historic
36 properties.

37 (b) The Trustees may authorize expenditures from the Fund to acquire:

38 (1) Land that represents the ecological diversity of North Carolina,
39 including natural features such as riverine, montane, coastal, and
40 geologic systems and other natural areas to ensure their preservation and
41 conservation for recreational, scientific, educational, cultural, and
42 aesthetic purposes.

1 (2) Land as additions to the system of parks, State trails, aesthetic forests,
2 fish and wildlife management areas, wild and scenic rivers, and natural
3 areas for the beneficial use and enjoyment of the public.

4 (3) Subject to the limitations of subsection ~~(b1)~~, (b2) of this section, land
5 that contributes to the development of a balanced State program of
6 historic properties.

7 ~~(b1) The Trustees may designate managers or managing agencies of the lands so~~
8 ~~acquired to receive grants from the Fund's stewardship account.~~ In authorizing
9 expenditures from the Fund to acquire land pursuant to this Article, the first priority shall
10 be the protection of land with outstanding natural or cultural heritage values. Land with
11 outstanding natural heritage values is land that is identified by the North Carolina Natural
12 Heritage Program as having State or national significance. Land with outstanding cultural
13 heritage values is land that is identified, inventoried, or evaluated by the Department of
14 Cultural Resources. The Trustees shall be guided by any priorities established by the
15 Secretary, the Chairman of the Wildlife Resources Commission, ~~and the Commissioner~~
16 ~~of Agriculture~~ Agriculture, and the Secretary of Cultural Resources in their proposals
17 made pursuant to subsection ~~(a)~~, above, ~~(a)~~ of this section.

18 ~~(b1)~~ (b2) The Trustees may authorize expenditure of up to twenty-five percent
19 (25%) of the funds credited to the Fund pursuant to G.S. 105-228.30 during the preceding
20 fiscal year to acquire land under subdivision (3) of subsection ~~(b)~~, (b) of this section. No
21 other funds in the Fund may be used for expenditures to acquire land under subdivision
22 (3) of subsection ~~(b)~~, (b) of this section.

23 (c) The Trustees may authorize expenditures from the Fund to pay for the
24 inventory of natural areas ~~by the Secretary's~~ conducted under the Natural Heritage
25 Program ~~conducted pursuant to Chapter 113A, Article 9A, of the General Statutes.~~ established
26 pursuant to the Nature Preserves Act, Article 9A of Chapter 113A of the General
27 Statutes. The Trustees may also authorize expenditures from the Fund to pay for
28 conservation and protection planning and for informational programs for owners of
29 natural areas, as defined in G.S. 113A-164.3.

30 (d) The Department of Administration may, pursuant to G.S. 143-341, acquire by
31 purchase, gift, or devise all lands selected by the Trustees for acquisition pursuant to this
32 Article. Title to any land acquired pursuant to this Article shall be vested in the State.
33 ~~State agencies~~ A State agency with management responsibilities for lands management
34 responsibility for land acquired pursuant to this Article may enter into a management
35 ~~agreements in the form of leases with counties, cities, and towns~~ agreement or lease with a
36 county, city, town, or private nonprofit organization qualified under G.S. 105-151.12 and
37 G.S. 105-130.34 and certified under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code to
38 aid in managing the lands, and such lease agreements land. A management agreement or
39 lease shall be executed by the Department of Administration pursuant to G.S. 143-341.

40 (d1) In any county in which real property was purchased pursuant to subsection (d)
41 of this section as additions to the fish and wildlife management areas and where less than
42 twenty-five percent (25%) of the land area is privately owned at the time of purchase, that
43 county and any other local taxing unit shall be annually reimbursed, for a period of 20

1 years, from funds available to the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission in an
2 amount equal to the amount of ad valorem taxes that would have been paid to the taxing
3 unit if the property had remained subject to taxation.

4 (e) The Secretary shall maintain and annually revise a list of acquisitions made
5 pursuant to this Article. The list shall include the acreage of each tract, the county in
6 which the tract is located, the amount paid from the Fund to acquire the tract, and the
7 State department or division responsible for managing the tract. The Secretary shall
8 furnish a copy of the list to each Trustee and to each House of the General Assembly
9 after each revision.

10 (f) No provision of this Article shall be construed to eliminate hunting and fishing,
11 as regulated by the laws of the State of North Carolina, upon properties purchased
12 pursuant to this Article."

13 Section 3. This act is effective when it becomes law.