

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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**Images & Map:** <https://goo.gl/5JHPLm>

### **MARITIME FOREST CONSERVED THROUGH SALE TO SUPPORT THE LOST COLONY OUTDOOR DRAMA**

*The Conservation Fund purchases 20 acres adjacent to Fort Raleigh National Historic Site*

**DARE COUNTY, N.C. (February 15, 2018)** — The Conservation Fund and Roanoke Island Historical Association (RIHA) announced today a unique partnership that will support the future of America's longest running symphonic outdoor drama and preserve the historic and natural landscape surrounding the Fort Raleigh National Historic Site. On February 2, RIHA sold 20 acres along U.S. Highway 64 to the national environmental nonprofit for conservation. The Association will add proceeds from the sale to its endowment to perpetuate The Lost Colony outdoor drama, one of the top tourist attractions in the Outer Banks.

“It is an exceptional moment in the life of a nonprofit when its board of directors can strengthen its financial undergirding while allowing us to be stewards of land with both historic and community value,” said **William P. Massey, chair of RIHA's Board of Directors**. “Purchase of this property by The Conservation Fund permits RIHA's Board of Directors to add to its endowment that annually supports operations for The Lost Colony. Additionally, preservation of the property benefits our community by retaining the natural state of land adjacent to The Lost Colony, Fort Raleigh National Historic Site, and The Elizabethan Gardens.”

The Conservation Fund will temporarily own the property until funding becomes available to transfer the site to North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. Support for this project will be provided by the North Carolina Clean Water Management Trust Fund, Fred and Alice Stanback, and other private funding. The National Park Service and RIHA will assist the Fund with management of the property during the hold period.

“This land acquisition essentially finishes the protection of the Fort Raleigh National Historic Site and the site of the Lost Colony by securing an inholding in the Park and removing any threats from development,” said **Mike Leonard, Board Chair for The Conservation Fund**.

“This site is such a special place in our State – a place that truly brings together North Carolina's rich history, natural beauty and some of our most treasured cultural experiences,” said **Susi H. Hamilton, secretary of the N.C. Department of Natural and Cultural Resources**. “I am

thrilled that this acquisition will secure its future for generations to come, and so proud that the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources has a role to play in this effort.”

The Fort Raleigh National Historic Site preserves and interprets the rich cultural history of the Native Americans, European Americans and African Americans who lived on Roanoke Island. Known sections of England's first New World settlements from 1584 to 1590 are protected within the National Historic Site along with the Roanoke Island maritime forest. Under future State ownership, the land will be managed by the National Park Service, enhancing protection for the significant resources of the National Historic Site.

“Fort Raleigh National Historic Site, the location of the First English settlement in the United States and a location that preserves the cultural heritage of the Native Americans, European Americans and African Americans who have lived on Roanoke Island, is a location of National significance,” said **David Hallac, National Park Service Superintendent of the Outer Banks Group**, which includes Fort Raleigh National Historic Park. “We are grateful to The Conservation Fund for their generous efforts to protect these lands, the State of North Carolina's Clean Water Management Trust Fund's financial support, and the Roanoke Island Historical Association's hard work to find partners in conservation.”

The Conservation Fund has worked on land and wildlife protection efforts in the Outer Banks since the organization's founding. Recently, the Fund has made a loan to North Carolina Coastal Land Trust for the conservation of land at a new North Carolina State Natural Area 50 miles to the west of Fort Raleigh —where archaeologists have recently found strong evidence that at least some of the Lost Colonists moved over 400 years ago. “Essentially, we are working to preserve both the Lost Colony and possibly a ‘found colony’ at the same time,” added **Leonard**.

#### **About The Conservation Fund**

At The Conservation Fund, we make conservation work for America. By creating solutions that make environmental and economic sense, we are redefining conservation to demonstrate its essential role in our future prosperity. Top-ranked for efficiency and effectiveness, we have worked in all 50 states since 1985 to protect nearly eight million acres of land, including more than 225,000 acres in North Carolina. [www.conservationfund.org](http://www.conservationfund.org)

#### **About Roanoke Island Historical Association**

The Roanoke Island Historical Association commemorates the history of the first English colonies in North America on Roanoke Island, North Carolina. This mission is primarily accomplished by the annual production of Paul Green's symphonic outdoor drama, The Lost Colony. First staged in 1937, The Lost Colony is the nation's longest running symphonic outdoor drama and was awarded the 2013 TONY Honor for Excellence in Theatre by the American Theatre Wing. The 81st season of The Lost Colony opens May 25, 2018 and plays through August 22, nightly, except Mondays, at 7:45 p.m. in The Waterside Theatre at Fort Raleigh National Historic Site.

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