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**For Immediate Release**

**Preserving Paradise: Coastal Land Trust Launches Campaign to Protect South Topsail Beach**

[Topsail Beach, NC] – South Topsail Beach, affectionately known as "The South End" or "The Point," stands as a testament to the beauty of North Carolina's coastline. This pristine 149+ acre property boasts over 1.6 miles of shoreline, including stretches along the Atlantic Ocean, New Topsail Inlet, and Banks Channel. Here, an array of coastal wildlife finds refuge, from Loggerhead sea turtles to Wilson's Plovers, amidst dunes, estuarine wetlands, and maritime shrub forests. Residents and visitors alike enjoy long walks along the undeveloped beach. The Point is unparalleled in coastal conservation values and is currently unprotected from future residential development.

The urgency to conserve this natural treasure has led the North Carolina Coastal Land Trust to embark on an ambitious campaign. The Coastal Land Trust has negotiated and signed a contract to purchase The Point, marking a pivotal step towards its permanent preservation. However, this endeavor comes with a daunting challenge – raising nearly \$8.0 million by March 2025 to complete the acquisition.

"The Point represents one of the last vestiges of undeveloped, privately-owned land on North Carolina's barrier islands," remarked Harrison Marks, Executive Director of the Coastal Land Trust. "Its protection hinges on community support. Together, we will ensure this ecological haven remains intact for generations to come."

Although the Coastal Land Trust is already pursuing grants from state and federal programs, private support will be essential to secure The Point's future. "We encourage individuals and organizations to join us in realizing this tremendous opportunity," Marks added. "Together, we can make a lasting impact on conservation and preserve The Point for future generations to enjoy."

Once the purchase is complete, the Coastal Land Trust plans to transfer the property to the State of North Carolina to be managed by the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality's Division of Coastal Management. The goal is to permanently protect the property and manage it in a way that balances conservation and public access.

"We recognize the invaluable significance of conserving South Topsail Beach for its ecological importance and as a cherished community asset," said Tancred Miller, Director of the Division of Coastal Management. "We are committed to partnering with the Coastal Land Trust and other stakeholders to ensure the public benefits of preserving this pristine coastal gem."

On behalf of the McLeod, Oppegaard, and McCullen families, Renée McCullen summed up the process by saying, "The owners are proud to entrust the future of our property to the Coastal Land Trust and the Division of Coastal Management. It's our hope that by preserving the South End, future generations will enjoy the restorative power the coastal environment provides and be reminded of what the entire island once resembled."

To engage the community and garner support, the Coastal Land Trust plans to meet with Town officials and host a public meeting in the near future. Meeting details will be announced on Coastal Land Trust's website, social media channels, and community calendars.

For those interested in contributing to the Save the South End campaign, donations can be made through the Coastal Land Trust's website. More information can be found at [www.coastallandtrust.org/south-topsail-beach](http://www.coastallandtrust.org/south-topsail-beach).

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### **About the NC Coastal Land Trust**

The North Carolina Coastal Land Trust enriches North Carolina through conservation of natural areas and working lands, education, and the promotion of good land stewardship in our coastal communities. Founded in 1992, the Coastal Land Trust has protected over 87,000 acres of places with scenic, recreational, historic and/or ecological value. [www.CoastalLandTrust.org](http://www.CoastalLandTrust.org).



Pictured above: a view of South Topsail Beach from the sky above Banks Channel. Photo courtesy of Wilton Wescott.

Pictured: a satellite image showing the approximate boundaries of the 149+ acre property.



Pictured below: a loggerhead sea turtle making its way up the beach. Photo courtesy of the NC Wildlife Resources Commission

