in coordination with the Mackinac City School District. “We were gifted a property a few years ago in Mackinac City that had an easement when the TransCanada pipeline crossed, so we talked to people at the company and gradually built a relationship,” Fleming says. “When they heard about our new immersive program in the Mackinac City schools at a nature preserve within walking distance from the schools, they were very interested. TransCanada chose to give $100,000 to the environmental education portion of our endowment fund, a gift that will support the immersive programming and help us expand it to other schools.” LTE is able to draw from the investment and take children out to learn in the property, Fleming says. “The primary motivation behind our education program is that we are up here in beautiful Northern Michigan. It’s not as easy to get kids to get outside and spend hours there as it was when I was a kid. One belief is that our children have to develop an appreciation for what is so wonderful about northern Michigan if we are going to expect them to be good decision-makers on conservation in the future.”

Building relationships
Cheryl Forder, membership director of the accredited Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy (SAHC) in Asheville, North Carolina, agrees on the importance of local engagement, and adds that identifying a common element, such as water protection, can be key to building relationships.

SAHC says a strong relationship with local Wickled Wood Brewing’s “Wickled Wood is one of our new partners. They have a bar called Apalachia Station IPA, and they are donating 10% of proceeds from all sales of that beer to us. This year they hope to make it in more western states and eventually go national,” Forder says. “Our main end goal is the packaging of this beer.”

She says Wickled Wood “was our corporate partnership growing. They want to invest in the preservation of our local mountains for clean water.”

“Being a local from Western North Carolina and having the ability to grow up living the mountains, railing the trees and visiting all the wooded nature brings us, I am thrilled to be partnering with SAHC,” says Wickled Wood founder Rusty Gattis. “As Artisus continues to grow, it is crucial to help preserve what makes this area so special. We need to focus on protecting it for the generations to come.”

Forder also talks about a long-term relationship that became something more. Oscar Wong, former ceo of Highland Brewing, has been a SAHC member since the 70s, “so he was already invested in our mission, for the business had not yet converted.”

“Just building that initial relationship was crucial,” Forder says. “Oscar would come to events and then a SAHC stuff member’s husband started to volunteer his time at Highland and he started to talk about the different ways that we can partner.”

Now Highland, owned by Oscar’s daughter Lani Wong Ambrose, has become a local corporate partner that names its seasonal beers after properties that have been protected by SAHC, and then we receive a part of the proceeds at the release party. Highland is truly proud to support SAHC and that makes us feel good.”

SAHC keeps building relationships with these partners. Forder says, spending time with them throughout the year, teaching them pertinent of how their donations have been utilized in SAHC and “just making them feel really good by showing them that because of their support, that’s what we were able to make happen.”

Also local to North Carolina, SAHC’s partner Mast General Store donates 20% of its sales to the brand behind the Original Mast General Store in historic Valle Crucis, North Carolina. “We keep to use the land as a discovery of sustainable agriculture and environmental stewardship. The idea of community conservation will generate new opportunities connecting people to the land and engaging new audiences to support conservation.”

Thinking of Customers
“The program has really grown and evolved over time,” says Jess Henson, corporate giving director of TransCanada’s U.S. business. “We have found that companies are getting involved in conservation when it affects their supply chain. If we can help solve 100 users, they don’t know it’s big or small, but if we can help solve the problem when your customers get their drinking water, that’s when they have to start to have some level of understanding of what being relevant to our company.”

She says U-Haul’s mission statement. “It’s hard to define in words, but it affects our business in some way,” he says. “We do that by being involved in the local community and staying involved in what’s going on.”

Robinson, says, “This partnership with Mast Store fits particularly well. The owners are avid conservationists and through their business model they promote values such as cultural heritage, outdoor recreation and community. They are open to creative ways to collaborate and help BRC get our focus out into the communities we serve.”

She adds, “This is not only support for financially, but the owners donated a 28-acre farm to BRC that sits behind the Original Mast General Store in historic Valle Crucis, North Carolina. ‘We keep to use the land as a discovery of sustainable agriculture and environmental stewardship. The idea of community conservation will generate new opportunities connecting people to the land and engaging new audiences to support conservation.”

By Kelly Saxton

“Harnessing the power of the sun: Finding common ground working with corporations.”

“Land trusts and corporations partner for conservation and community.”

By Kelly Saxton

“As a new executive director, I’ve set a goal for myself, and the corporate giving to our mission,” says Jennifer Chandler, executive director of Dumbarton Oaks Park Conservancy in Washington, D.C. In her article “Connecting Corporate Support for Your Nonprofit” on the National Council of Nonprofits’ blog:

“Fundraising game rule is that whether you are approaching a large corporation or a small business is to support it if it just approaching any other donor,” Chandler says. “You have to build a relationship and discover what they are excited about.”

“Land trusts, with their unique assets of place and property, can be very persuasive about the exciting opportunities they can offer corporations. Starting on a local level, corporations just people who live and work in your community and care about the same things you do.”

Planning explains that LTE’s corporate relationship with TransCanada is grounded in shaping the decisionmakers of the future through its environmental education program.
Mount Diablo and the program, and have abilities," says Ann Notarangelo, external relations and individuals with a wide range of programs that would be attractive to families and a chance to offer an outdoor opportunity for environmental education.

The program, now in its third year sponsored by Shell Martinez Refinery, boasts about a thousand participants each year, with about a quarter of the attendance made up of families. "We were impressed with about a thousand participants each year, and giving back to their community." The program was simply a great fit. It incorporates everything they are trying to do — outreach and stewarding the environment in the East Bay — with a great fit. It incorporates everything they are trying to do — outreach and stewarding the environment and giving back to their community.

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"We enjoy being able to promote Save Mount Diablo and the program," says Notarangelo. "We are currently planning a video to showcase the partnership. It is nice to be able to highlight something that is important to us." Notarangelo has some good advice for land trusts seeking corporate partners: "Sit down and talk! Many of the best programs we have involved in are the result of talking through what the organization want and seeing how that fits with our sponsor's priorities. It's even easier to get to 'yes' when organizations like Save Mount Diablo come with clear guidance on how the money will be spent, what the benefits of the program will be and how many people will be reached or impacted. More and more companies are asking for metrics. Save Mount Diablo makes it very easy to give and to understand how the social investment we make on behalf of our employees is reaching its objectives.

Meeting the Bottom Line
Several recent studies have measured how corporate partnerships are increasingly influenced by brand, social purpose and impact, and corporations are likely to gain on many fronts by showing their involvement in things that are good for everyone. For instance, 66% of consumers and 77% of all Americans — are willing to pay more for sustainable goods. Overall, 78% of Americans are particularly concerned about helping the environment as they go about their daily lives.

Another study found that 68% of consumers would buy a product from a purpose-driven company and 78% would stop doing business with a purpose-driven company, with the environment ranking as the number one cause consumers want companies to support. This research made the case that land trusts and corporations have a lot of reasons to get together. Other benefits to corporations include increased employee retention, stronger ties to local leaders, easy to support quality of life and resources needed for work in communities where employees and customers live.

"The stories we've shared here are such good examples when everyone wins," says Land Trust Alliance Corporate Relations Manager Marisa Mas. "We hope the most important is that land trusts and corporations make great partners for achieving common goals."

A Menu of Partnerships
There are a variety of ways for nonprofits to connect with corporations, including some of the following:

Corporate Philanthropy: A nonprofit investing in a nonprofit's strategic initiatives or general operating support without expectations of direct corporate gain.

Marketing Partnership (also called "cause-related marketing"): A marketing partnership between a business and a nonprofit entity that links a corporate brand to a charity's cause to advance both business interests and provide benefits to society (may be regulated in some instances).

Corporate Practices: Working with corporations to transform the impact of key industries (such as decreasing waste or water use).

Corporate Sponsorship: Support for a nonprofit's strategic initiatives or operating costs that is recognized by the nonprofit with public acknowledgment of the company's support.

YOU MAKE US STRONG.
Supporters of the Land Trust Alliance are our most valuable asset. Through your charitable giving we're able to do so much, including:

- Playing a leading role in securing federal funding and policies for conservation.
- Establishing standards and practices for the land trust community and providing training and funding to land trust leaders, staff and volunteers.
- Hosting our signature event, Rally: The National Land Conservation Conference, which brings together conservation professionals from across the nation to share lessons learned, explore emerging trends and connect with each other.

With you on our team, we can create more opportunities to shape and advance the future of land conservation.