



THOMAS C. MOORER JR.

Bringing People and Place TOGETHER

As land trusts, we work at the vital intersection of nature and culture, integrating responsible care for the land with the ordinary and extraordinary needs of modern life. To protect our beloved places we must bring to light the meaning of them in our lives—both physically and spiritually—and recognize how our well-being is utterly dependent upon it.

In 2012, Lowcountry Open Land Trust called upon the community to explore and articulate its relationship to the Lowcountry's abundant natural resources and beauty; to envision a future where growth and conservation are in harmony.

We heard from people in small towns and large, farmers and fishermen, old and young, the idealists and the pragmatists. A common theme emerged: as a community we need to understand the value of land conservation and the increasing trend of younger generations who lack a strong connection to the land.

Consequently, the land trust found itself asking, "How do we help connect the community, particularly the next generation, with what is special and unique about the Lowcountry?"

The result has been transformational. We have rewritten our mission to include people, defined what community conservation means to our organization and responded to a call to protect an iconic lowcountry landmark.

The Angel Oak is one of the largest living live oaks, with a girth of 25 feet, a height of 65 feet and a canopy that stretches more than 1,889 square yards. Last

Celebrating the Angel Oak campaign from left to right are Richard "Shorty" Legare, who grew up on the property; Lorna Hattler with grassroots group Save the Angel Oak; Bob Capers, pastor at the church across the street; Queen Quet, chiefess of the Gullah Geechee Nation; Elizabeth Hagood and Elizabeth Brown with LOLT; and Samantha Seigel with Save the Angel Oak.

spring and summer, thousands of lowcountry residents, along with friends from around the world, came together to safeguard this sacred tree. Black and white, young and old, urban and rural, citizens dropped coins in jars at local businesses, added a donation at the local Piggly Wiggly grocery check-out, put up lemonade stands and sent checks ranging from \$3 to \$10,000.

With the support of public land bank grants, generous foundation gifts, significant corporate and nonprofit contributions and over 10,000 individuals, the Angel Oak Campaign raised a total of more than \$4 million in just four months. The community has come together and accomplished an amazing achievement in a very short time. I believe it stems from the power of the Angel Oak to inspire and unify us.

Situated at a community crossroads in the heart of Johns Island, this publicly accessible park will provide an opportunity for visitors to gather, learn and celebrate the region's cultural and natural history. Queen Quet of the Gullah Geechee Nation summed the project up well: "When you walk around the Angel Oak, you realize how small you are in this world. The tree wraps its branches around you and you immediately sense its breadth and depth as beyond your reach. The Lowcountry Open Land Trust is creating more than a park; it is creating a preserve. The campaign to save Angel Oak shows us how a community can shape its landscape."

As a result of the incredible impact of the visioning process and the Angel Oak project, Lowcountry Open Land Trust has defined community conservation for our organization as conservation that returns demonstrable value to both residents and visitors alike, by protecting iconic landmarks and landscapes that will ultimately be accessible by all. Bringing people and place closer together, we are telling a story today that will be handed down tomorrow and for generations to come.

What does community conservation mean for your organization and your community? 🌱

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