

# PLATEAU

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a wide-brimmed tan hat, a white and blue striped shirt, and blue jeans, is sitting on a dark brown leather chair. She is looking off to the side with a thoughtful expression. A black and white speckled dog is sitting on her lap, looking towards the left. The background is a rustic interior with wooden shelves and various items.

August/September 2021

MOUNTAIN LIFE IN HIGHLANDS-CASHIERS NORTH CAROLINA

## GOOD STEWARDS

Cashiers Designer Showhouse

## Feathered Friends

A Bird's Eye View

## Neighborhood Watch

Take a Tour Around Town

Architect  
Parker Platt

Dillard-Jones  
Idea Home

Artist Shannon  
Whitworth

from the editor



Give the gift  
that lasts  
all year long...  
a subscription to

**PLATEAU**  
MOUNTAIN LIFE IN HIGHLANDS-CASHIERS NORTH CAROLINA  
MAGAZINE

Subscribe Online  
Today at  
ThePlateauMag.com



## Blessed

High season is upon us. Exiting the secluded tunnel of 2020, we once again are surrounded by dinner parties, events and festivities. Many of our most favorite annual occurrences support treasured local nonprofits. Every year, volunteers from these organizations gather to plan, market and fundraise. It is a full-time job, requiring vast skill sets and many hands.

This year, I had the opportunity to be in a volunteer leadership position for the Cashiers Designer Showhouse, chairing with Kirk Moore of Oakleaf Flower & Garden. Many of the plateau's nonprofits found the need for pivot planning their events again this year; the Showhouse was no different. In our unique circumstance, the plateau's real estate boom left us without a house. We reexamined what home really meant, came up with a theme of "home is where the heart is," and decided to take our designers glamping.

Camping has always been near to my heart, likely because I am a textbook daddy's girl, and my daddy loved the outdoors. Illustrating a camping trip, Mercer Mayer's "Just Me and My Dad" was one of my favorite children's books. When it was part of my young library, it came with a cassette tape of songs. My favorite sang, "just me and my dad, what a good time we had." If you have read more than one of my editor's letters, you know that the last year and a half has been a journey of grief and healing for my family. There have been

many quiet, tear-filled moments where I sat singing the lyrics to that song, lost in the new meaning they encompassed. Throwing myself into months of planning a fundraising event celebrating glamping has been cathartic.

But the joy of camping is not the only piece of my father's legacy I have felt in this experience. One of my father's favorite sayings, which was usually humbly stated after a great deal of effort, was "we are blessed to be a blessing." It is this torch that I have carried through months of careful planning. It is this sentiment I have contemplated as I watch friends and peers navigate similar waters for each nonprofit event on the plateau.

In this issue of Plateau Magazine, we highlight several of our nonprofit events and festivals. We also discuss grief. Further, we learn from past conservation and preservation efforts, considering how we now enjoy the fruits of those labors. Any great work, from healing to helping, requires willing hands. May we all look forward to the yield of our toil with the hope that we may be "blessed to be a blessing."

Kat Ford  
Managing Editor  
editor@theplateaumag.com

**We welcome your comments.** Please send us your feedback or story ideas by emailing us at [editor@theplateaumag.com](mailto:editor@theplateaumag.com)

## Find Us Online!



Visit us on our website at  
[theplateaumag.com](http://theplateaumag.com)



[facebook.com/plateaumag](https://facebook.com/plateaumag)  
[instagram.com/plateaumag](https://instagram.com/plateaumag)

# Well **St**yled

design | garden | home | fashion

## Happy Days Are Here Again

Tracy Mendy has her heart set on spreading sunshine across the plateau.



See page 64





# Cultivating Good Vibes

Sunflowers grown with love + intention

By KAT FORD » Photos By TRACY MENDY

**E**XPERIENCE THROUGH THE eyes or lens of a loved one is empathy inducing. There are few more profound ways to understand what others are going through, short of navigating the moments yourself. It was such an instant that brought Tracy Mendy to the gates of her future sunflower garden. "Prior to my mom passing away in 2019, she was in a nursing home. When I would visit, I would always bring fresh flowers to add some positive vibes to her room. I noticed that the days I brought sunflowers, everyone would stop and comment on how beautiful

they were and how lucky my mom was to be receiving them. I remember wishing at that point that I had enough to give to all of the residents and staff, just to make them smile," says Mendy.

In early March of 2020, attempting to escape the city and socially distance, Tracy and her husband John Grove-Scelzo, owner of boutique branding and advertising company Zing!, re-routed and eventually re-rooted in Highlands. "The longer we stayed, the thought of going back to the city, with an abundance of people, heat, traffic and high-rises was no longer appealing. Not only did we fall in love

with Highlands itself, and the wonderful people we've met, but how we feel living here! What started as an extended vacation turned into a new lifestyle change," Mendy beams.

The idea planted during her experience with her mother's nursing home suddenly had room to grow. "I knew I wanted to utilize my gifted time in the mountains and do something new, especially outdoors, breathing fresh air and enjoying the scenery. I wanted to plant sunflowers! From their big, bright, sunny faces to their vibrant tall stems, you pretty much can't look at this happy flower without smiling!

They are hands down my favorite, and now I have the opportunity of growing them, sharing them and making others smile."

Creating and sharing are something she does well. With 20 years of experience as a fashion photographer and entrepreneur in south Florida, Tracy Mendy is known for her keen eye in discovering and developing fresh new faces who, with her guidance and direction, have perfected their presence in front of the camera and can now be seen throughout the industry doing print, runway, catalog and commercial work. "I got my start on the other side of the camera as a model and eventually found my passion working with aspiring talent. As owner of The Mendy House boutique modeling agency, I have a knack for connecting with my models and helping them bring out their inner beauty and confidence." Anyone lucky enough to sit in front of Tracy's camera will agree. Her ability to coach even the camera-shy has led her headshots to become a coveted asset for plateau professionals.

"My love for cultivating beautiful things transpired into growing sunflowers, the process of preparing and planting the seed, nurturing them and encouraging them with kind words," says Mendy. Her entrepreneurial spirit has no doubt assisted in this new venture as well, especially when her plan hatched last August, late in the growing season. "Everything I was reading and everyone who I was meeting suggested that I research, organize and



prepare for next year. Since 'next year' was so far away, I figured I did not have anything to lose, I ordered 500 seeds and planted. I really did not have any expectations and was over the moon when my first little patch overflowed abundantly. I was able to share with new neighbors and friends! Word got out about my flowers, and I already have so many people contacting me asking when and where my sunnies will be available!"

Armed with a dream and a field of flowers, Mendy started pruning her abstract concept, and Sunny Daze Flower Co. began to take shape. "I hope that Sunny Daze Flower Co. continues to grow as a feel-good, inspirational brand, where I can inspire and encourage other women out there to discover their talents and passions so that they too can enjoy a life doing what they love! I will always keep my distribution local; a flower truck is for sure in the near future. I love the thought of attending farmers markets and collaborating with local venues to provide the plateau with easy access to fresh-cut, locally grown sunflowers," says Mendy.

Those very first seeds of a desire to spread happiness are also part of the Sunny Daze Flower Co. business model through the Sharing Sunshine Project. "We will distribute our locally grown sunflowers with the help of volunteers to those in need of sunshine," says Mendy. Tracy Mendy is also hoping to partner with businesses and nonprofits, local parks and public areas to create pop-up sunflower experiences to help beautify surroundings, connect local communities and bring joy and love to the plateau. These pop-up patches will be a place for residents and visitors to stop and soak in the emotional warmth and pose for a memorable creative selfie, of course.

Those interested in volunteering with the Sharing Sunshine Project or with space for a future community pop-up patch can contact Mendy through the Sunny Daze Flower Co. website. The first pop-up Sharing Sunshine Project experience will be on the Cashiers Historical Society's grounds during the Cashiers Designer Showhouse.

For Tracy Mendy, the Sunny Daze Flower Co. experience has been spiritual in many ways, "I've really enjoyed spending time in the field by myself, it is extremely grounding, and it is during that time that I am constantly reminded how grateful I am that I manifested a life where I am growing a field full of happiness. I am grateful to be a resident contributing to my new community, and I look forward to making the plateau a brighter place one flower at a time!" Her encouraging nature continues to inspire others through her Sunny Daze Flower Co. Instagram account. "If you have a wish to try something new, don't overthink it. You can figure it all out along the way; all you have to do is plant the first seed! There is an amazing community of resources out there to learn everything your heart desires. I have made some wonderful connections with other aspiring flower farmers on Instagram, and we are all 'rooting' for each other and watching each other 'grow.' Surround yourself with people who feel like sunshine and go after what you want, or you will never have it." **P**

Instagram: @sunnydazeflowerco  
Web: Sunnydazeflowerco.com

(opposite) Freshly cut sunflowers prepared to spread happiness; A mock-up proposal for a future Sharing Sunshine Project pop-up patch; Tracy Mendy.





# Camp Luxury

These designers put the glam in glamping

By KAT FORD

**U**SING THEIR ANNUAL CASHIERS DESIGNER SHOWHOUSE AS A PLATFORM, THE CASHIERS Historical Society has created a compelling design narrative since 1998. The recent real estate boom on the plateau left the organization in a unique situation this year; no homes were available for a fall Designer Showhouse event. This required a fresh look at what "home" is and how design can redefine even rugged space. From August 21 through September 4, six renowned designers will transform a collection of 10 x 12 Atlas wall tents from Diamond Brand Gear. Whether 2020 has your Pinterest board full of tiny homes, homesteading, off-grid living, camping, glamping or just plain exploring the outdoors, the 2021 Showhouse is bound to take your escape fantasy to a whole new level of luxury.



## Tori Alexander

Alexander Interiors  
Highlands, NC and Nashville, TN  
(615) 438-6388  
alexanderinteriors.net

1. Rustic elegance and timeless traditions
2. Designing a small space requires taking advantage of every surface available - flooring, walls and even ceiling - that may be overlooked in a larger space.
3. We designed our glamping experience to invoke a sense of timelessness and the bond between generations that families experience in this beautiful area of the country.



## Holly Laughridge

Old Edwards Inn & Acorns Boutique  
Highlands, NC  
(828) 301-8961  
hmmorris@oldedwardsinn.com

1. Relaxation, calm, peace, natural beauty, comfort
2. Small spaces are more challenging because you have to ensure furniture placement suits the space as well as the clients' needs. The intimate nature of small spaces makes every decision a little more impactful.
3. A sense of calm and peace that we can all use as a reminder to take a break from our busy lives and appreciate each moment.



## Parker Platt & Katie P. Jackson

PLATT  
Brevard, NC  
(828) 884-2393  
platt.us

1. Comfortable, enjoyable, purposeful, approachable, durable
2. With only a 10x12 space, we're focused on making the necessities beautiful and comfortable.
3. We're creating a highly functional, beautiful and comfortable total living experience (bedroom, lounge, kitchen, etc.) that ultimately connects you with the greater environment.

We asked this year's designers three questions for a sneak peek at what to expect:

**1.** Describe your glamping tent inspiration in five words.

**2.** How does designing a small space for a client, like a glamping tent, compare to designing a large space or home?

**3.** What are you trying to evoke aesthetically with your glamping experience?



### Melanie Couch & Nancy Dyleski

Spruce Interiors  
Highlands, NC  
(828) 528-1556

**1.** Dark, moody, boozy, entertaining, Grand-millennial

**2.** When designing a small space, every piece that we place in a room has to serve dual functions; it has to be both attractive AND functional. For example, an ottoman may have to act both as a coffee table and a foot prop, or a buffet table may have drop leaves to extend into a dining table for entertaining. Furniture that serves multiple functions is always needed.

**3.** Our inspiration was to bring the Highlands of Scotland to our Appalachian Mountains in a way that evokes lively conversation, laughter and warmth. After a year of social distancing, our space invites people to gather and connect again and celebrate all the beauty that the plateau offers!



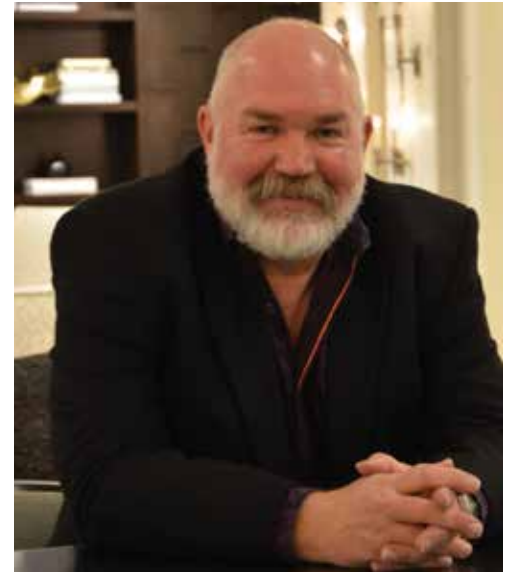
### Susan Vernon

Tribus  
Cashiers, NC and Greenville, SC  
(864) 729-4148  
tribusinteriordesign.com

**1.** Relaxed, colorful, shabby, chic and curated

**2.** No matter the size, we still space plan and brainstorm about the overall aesthetic of the space. Inspirations are always important; the rug in the tent provided our vision for the space. The same would apply when doing a large home or space.

**3.** Our goal is to keep this interesting and spark inspiration. We hope viewers will see that small spaces can be fun to create and might actually see themselves having a stay over in this tent!



### Douglas Hilton

DWH Interiors  
Atlanta, GA  
(404) 550-5484  
dwhinteriors.com

**1.** 18th century meets 21st century

**2.** In a small space, obviously scale becomes critical, and each piece needs to serve a purpose and earn its place in the room. That being said, you have to balance that with the level of luxury/glamour that your clients are used to living with.

**3.** I wanted to recreate the luxury of the 18th/19th-century idea of safari - carved wood, velvet and tapestries mixed with exotic items from their travels. I envisioned my tent as the camp's desk for reports and the living room for when it rains.

---

Six Diamond Brand Gear wall tents will be transformed into glamping havens during the 24th annual Cashiers Designer Showhouse.



# Home Is Where the Heart Is

Sharing the legacy of character

By KAT FORD

**W**HILE LISTENING TO ANN MCKEE AUSTIN DESCRIBE THE IMPORTANCE OF PROTECTING the history of Cashiers, she paraphrased a sentiment voiced by Dwight Young of the National Trust for Historic Preservation on a visit to Cashiers. Many small towns, especially rural populations, tend to assume that because they lack the historical architecture of places like Charleston and Savannah, their preservation efforts are not as profound. In truth, every area has its own character, which defines its heart. How that community grows and continues to be defined relies on the preservation of its character.

Various groups and individuals had long collected historical information relevant to Cashiers, but prior to 1996, there had never been an organized effort to preserve this history. That year an organizational event at the Hanks House led by local historian Jane Nardy, Ann Austin, Vanna Montgomery Cameron and other community leaders formed the Cashiers Historical Society (CHS). To this day, CHS encourages the reuse of buildings through its Village Heritage Award, which recognizes structures in Cashiers that have been adapted for use as an active business and contribute to the community's vitality. Further, CHS has done three historic site surveys, documenting buildings over 150 years old in the area.

In late 1997, the first major project of CHS was born: the preservation of today's Zachary-Tolbert House, an iconic 19th-century home built by Mordecai Zachary. The house was advantageous for preservation for four reasons. First, it was a rare example of rural Greek Revival architecture. Second, it was built by a pioneer of the Cashiers Valley. Third, it had never been "remuddled," a preservation term for when original character and integrity are lost in the renovation process. Fourth, it was in an area where two other Cashiers landmarks were on the National Register of Historic Properties, the Church of The Good Shepherd (1986) and

High Hampton Inn Historic District (1991). In 1998, a fundraiser was created to restore the Zachary-Tolbert House, donated to the historical society that same year by Tom and Wendy Dowden. This early fundraiser, the Cashiers Designer Showhouse, was hosted at the Hooper House (built circa 1936 and located in Cashiers), which 13 designers from the Southeast dressed. Restoring the Zachary-Tolbert House took several years and consisted of two phases funded by proceeds from the first and second Showhouses. The Zachary-Tolbert House is now on the National Register of Historic Properties

(1998). It serves as a free public museum on the beautiful CHS grounds, which include seven additional historical landmarks and trails that honor the history of Cashiers.

With a real estate boom that brought preservation and adaptive reuse concepts to the forefront for many full and part-time residents, this year's Cashiers Designer Showhouse will consist of many panel discussions with local businesses, design and nonprofit leaders concerning style and stewardship. One such panel, titled "Share the Legacy-Preservation and Design," will consist of four members discussing how the two-year



Guests of HHHC will enjoy researching their families through guest registers dating back to High Hampton Inn's opening day in 1924.



High Hampton historical items will be rotated for future exhibits at the HHHC.



renovation of High Hampton combined history, design and preservation, including Ann McKee Austin who will discuss the preserving of High Hampton's rich history to create the High Hampton History Center.

There is a reason High Hampton Inn was one of the first three Cashiers landmarks placed on the National Register of Historic Properties. The former Confederate general, senator and governor of South Carolina, Wade Hampton III, owned the original family mountain get-a-way property. His niece, Caroline, was a nurse and married a founder and chief surgeon at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore. She and her husband, Dr. William S. Halsted, would visit the property, calling it "High Hampton." The name wasn't the only contribution the Halsteds brought to the estate; it was here where they cultivated their prized dahlia roots. After the death of Dr. Halsted, Ernest Lyndon McKee Sr. acquired the property in 1922. Realizing that western North Carolina would continue to flourish as a popular tourist destination, he opened High Hampton Inn, building a golf course and cottages. When the original Inn burnt in 1930, it was immediately rebuilt as the structure that stands at High Hampton today. McKee married Gertrude Dills from Dillsboro, NC. Gertrude Dills McKee became the first female senator in North Carolina in 1930. She was a champion for establishing the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and extending required children's education from sixth to eighth grade, an advocate in creating the Social Security program and led efforts to reform child labor laws. The High Hampton Inn became a vital part of the Cashiers Valley, offering critical jobs during the Great Depression and a place for families to make lasting generational memories. Leadership passed down through the McKee family until 2017, when Will McKee decided to retire and sell the property. New ownership would require renovations. Luckily, the new owners also valued stewardship and preservation.

The revitalization of High Hampton was a group effort between several partners: the team behind Blackberry Farm in Tennessee, with guidance from the Beall Family and founder Sandy Beall, oversaw renovations to the Inn, cottages, and restaurants within the Inn, while Arlington Family Offices and Daniel Communities, Blackberry's partners in the overall property project, focused on the redevelopment of the golf course and development of new club amenities and private residential offerings. The renovations,

undertaken with guidance from the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, honored High Hampton's nearly one-hundred-year-old architecture while restoring the property's oldest and most historic accommodations. In addition to preservation, the new owners of High Hampton asked Ann McKee Austin to become a custodian of High Hampton's history and help in founding the High Hampton History Center (HHHC). This required two years of going through storage and the deep recesses of High Hampton's attic and basement. "They say a pack rat is a preservationist's best friend, and my uncle kept everything," jokes Austin. A collection of items was donated to Western Carolina University's Hunter Library, especially the articles relating to Austin's grandmother, Gertrude Dills McKee. High Hampton historical items will be rotated for future exhibits at the HHHC, which is open to High Hampton residents and guests of the Inn.

Guests will be delighted to look through thoughtfully curated exhibits, a collaboration between Austin, the HHHC director, Robert Gleason, and award-winning designer and past national president of the American Society of Interior Designers, Charles Gandy. Gandy's impressive design resume lent for a dramatic and creative presentation, including custom features by local craftsman Ken Fisher. Guests will enjoy researching their families through guest registers dating back to High Hampton Inn's opening day in 1924. An original notebook of photographs by George Masa commissioned by Ernest Lyndon McKee Sr. gives a glimpse at the original property and areas around Cashiers.

In contrast to the stewardship efforts given to High Hampton Inn, preservationists point to the very first Cashiers property placed on the National Register of Historic Properties, the Fairfield Inn (1982). Never renovated, a fire in 1986 revealed it was unsafe. A historic wooden Queen Anne hotel, it was torn down at just under 100 years in age. A few remnants of the great Fairfield Inn still live on. The final of the current five National Register of Historic Properties in Cashiers, Camp Merrie-Woode (1995), originally established as Lake Fairfield Camp in 1919, still operates today.

CHS is bringing the annual Designer Showhouse fundraising event to their historical grounds this year. With a mission of preserving the heritage of the entire Cashiers Valley through stewardship, advocacy and education, six glamping tents serve

as the 2021 Designer Showhouse, themed "Home is where the heart is." If it is true that every area has its own character, defining its heart, the 24th annual Cashiers Designer Showhouse may very well succeed in making a "house" a home. ■

## For a more in-depth look at topics in this story,

read these Plateau Magazine articles from past issues or online at [www.theplateaumag.com](http://www.theplateaumag.com)

**APRIL/MAY 2020**

### **Western North Carolina's First Lady, Gertrude Dills McKee**

By Carol M. Bryson,  
Author and Historian

**JUNE/JULY 2020**

### **Historical Hotels, Tourist accommodations of long ago**

By Carol M. Bryson,  
Author and Historian

**AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2020**

### **Best in Show, The dazzling dahlias of Cashiers Valley**

By Carol M. Bryson,  
Author and Historian

### **The Camp Merrie-Woode Spirit, Empowering girls and young women for over a hundred years**

By Allison Bolt

**OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2020**

### **A New Chapter, High Hampton slated to reopen**

By Dawn Liles

**FEBRUARY/MARCH 2021**

### **Allowing the Soul to Bloom, Preserving what counts in Highlands**

By Ran Shaffner, Archivist Emeritus,  
Highlands Historical Society

### **Preserving the Village, Cashiers Historical Society**

By Melissa Warren Hudson

**AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2021**

### **A Picture and a Thousand Words, George Masa and Horace Kephart**

By Ran Shaffner, Archivist Emeritus,  
Highlands Historical Society



# Natural Luxury

Stewardship partners of the Cashiers Designer Showhouse

By KAT FORD

**F**OR CENTURIES, NATURALISTS HAVE EXPLORED THE SOUTHERN APPALACHIAN MOUNTAINS, one of the most biologically diverse regions in the temperate world. In his 1791 writings, “Travels of William Bartram,” the Philadelphia-born naturalist wrote of the plants and animals he saw. Biodiversity is extremely high in terms of both the variety of different species and the abundance of each species. Nearly 10,000 species are already known to exist here, with more discovered each year—some of which are new to science. Additionally, the Highlands-Cashiers Plateau sits at the headwaters of six different watersheds. What we do on the plateau is felt throughout the Southeast. The beauty of this area has a long history of inspiring stewardship. The writings of Horace Kephart and the photography of George Masa were used to support the effort in creating the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. John D. Rockefeller Jr. donated \$5 million to purchase the lands that later became part of the park after seeing Masa’s photographs.

When deciding to go glamping for their 24th annual Cashiers Designer Showhouse, the Cashiers Historical Society (CHS) knew they wanted to share all elements of Cashiers’ luxury. That includes both the design of and inside a home and the surrounding natural beauty. CHS is partnering with the following stewardship partners during the two-week event; you can hear representatives from these organizations speak in panel discussions regarding the stewardship of our lush natural resources and adventure down their Naturalists’ Trail to learn more!

## The Blue Ridge Bartram Trail Conservancy

The mission of the Blue Ridge Bartram Trail Conservancy is to maintain the 110-mile-long Georgia-North Carolina Bartram Trail and to promote the legacy of 18th-century naturalist William Bartram, who explored the cultural and natural world of the Blue Ridge mountains in 1775.  
[www.ncbartramtrail.org](http://www.ncbartramtrail.org)



## Duke Energy

Duke Energy serves 7.9 million customers in North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, Indiana, Ohio and Kentucky and collectively owns 51,000 megawatts of energy capacity. The company began



BUILDING A SMARTER ENERGY FUTURE™

its operations in the Carolinas as a hydroelectric company. The 11 reservoirs for the company’s seven Nantahala hydro stations form most of the region’s lakes. Water released when power is generated creates predictable whitewater flows for fishermen, boaters and paddlers. Duke Energy is executing an aggressive clean energy strategy to create a smarter energy future for its customers and communities – with goals of at least a 50 percent carbon reduction by 2030 and net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. Hydropower, solar and other renewables will continue to play a significant role in achieving these goals.  
[www.duke-energy.com](http://www.duke-energy.com)

## Highlands Plateau Audubon Society

The mission of the Highlands Plateau Audubon Society is to provide opportunities to enjoy and learn about birds and other wildlife and to promote conservation and restoration of the habitats that support them.  
[www.highlandsaudubonsociety.org](http://www.highlandsaudubonsociety.org)



## Highlands Biological Foundation

Highlands Biological Foundation’s mission is to foster research and education focused on the rich natural heritage of the Highlands Plateau while preserving and celebrating the integrity of the “biological

crown of the southern Appalachian Mountains.” Its vision is to inspire present and future generations to preserve and protect the unique environment of the Highlands Plateau. They recently installed a pollinator garden on the north campus of the Highlands Biological Station containing over 75 different species of native plants; over 10,000 plants were installed in the garden, designed to be both an aesthetically pleasing and attractive habitat for pollinator species. Native plants supply not only food for hungry caterpillars but also nectar and pollen for mature pollinators such as native bees, butterflies, moths and hummingbirds.



HIGHLANDS

BIOLOGICAL FOUNDATION

[www.highlandsbiological.org](http://www.highlandsbiological.org)

## Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust

Since 1909, Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust (HCLT) has been conserving some of the world’s oldest mountains. Our lush forests and cool waterways are home to a plethora of plants and animals, some of which occur nowhere else. HCLT helps protect these places by working with private landowners to safeguard their land in perpetuity. They have conserved over 3,500 acres of ecologically rich lands in over 100 places. HCLT is a nationally accredited 501(c)3 charity that depends on the support of in-



## CHS Showhouse

dividual donors. To learn how they accomplish their mission to conserve valuable natural resources for all generations, visit their website today. [www.hicashlt.org](http://www.hicashlt.org)

### The Ruffed Grouse Society

The Ruffed Grouse Society & American Woodcock Society (RGS & AWS) unite conservationists to improve wildlife habitat and forest health. Since 1961, RGS has promoted stewardship for our forests, our wildlife and our future. Their vision is to create landscapes of diverse, functioning forest ecosystems that provide homes for wildlife and opportunities for people to experience them.

They collaborate with federal, state and local partners to increase quality habitat for grouse, woodcock and hosts of other wildlife species dependent on diverse forest landscapes. They are actively engaged with the Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests, North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission and private forest landowners across western North Carolina to support healthy forests and abundant wildlife across the landscape. They are building a future where humans and wildlife can live and thrive together in the forests we call home. [www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org)



### Trout Unlimited

Trout Unlimited exists to bring together diverse interests to care for and recover rivers and streams so that our children can experience the joy of wild and native trout and salmon. One of the major projects for TU in the Southeast is the Sky Island initiative, a plan to improve river and stream health in the Cullasaja, Tuckasegee, Pigeon, French Broad, Davidson and Mills River watersheds. Work for this project includes engaging community members to collect vital data on stream health issues, working to solve warmwater issues caused by dams, removing barriers to fish passage, reducing the amount of sediment getting into waterways and working with agencies to reintroduce



native brook trout. While a majority of the work has taken place on public lands, private landowners can connect with TU to play a key role in bettering their home waters as well. [www.tu.org](http://www.tu.org)

### Witherspoon Platt + Associates

Witherspoon Platt + Associates, out of Brevard, NC, is a realty company focusing on real estate sales, conservation and partnerships between private landowners, land trusts and government land agencies. John Witherspoon, their broker-in-charge, has over 20 years of experience in conservation and



WITHERSPOON  
PLATT + ASSOCIATES

and real estate and has used his deep understanding of conservation and the landscape of the Blue Ridge to help connect buyers and sellers with their dream properties: private mountaintop estates, large family compounds, family farms, equestrian properties, riverfront properties and secluded forests. For nearly 25 years, they have worked with private landowners to permanently protect our vulnerable Appalachian landscapes through conservation easements and have, to date, helped their clients protect over 8,700 acres on over 50 projects across western North Carolina. Along the way, the company has also brokered deals to add land to national and state forests by using their extensive contacts and relationships in the land trust and government land communities. [www.wpanc.com](http://www.wpanc.com) ■

## Spreading Joy One Story at a Time

**T**HE CASHIERS HISTORICAL Society has teamed with Ms. KK of Sunshine StoryTime to bring children's educational content to the Designer Showhouse. Everyone has a story to tell, and there is no better story than one told while camping, or, in this case, glamping!

### What is Sunshine StoryTime?

Sunshine StoryTime is a program full of enthusiasm and joy where all are welcome. It's



a safe space for busy caregivers to introduce their young children to early literacy skills through storytelling, songs, puppets and more. If they can't find a library storytime program to attend in person, I



wanted to give all kids the opportunity to watch storytime anytime, from the comfort of their home on YouTube.

I'm always trying new and creative ways to entertain children and if I can make even one child smile, it makes my whole heart shine! My goal is to always make every show full of fun and joy and



I do that by using my former acting, improv and voice-over skills, as well as years as a storyteller on YouTube and in public

libraries. And if that doesn't work, I just ask my 8-year-old for help! No matter

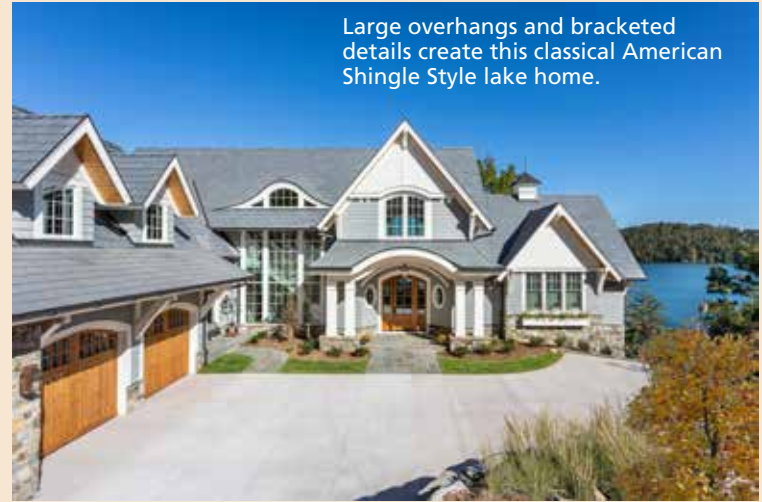
what is happening in your world, you can open a book and experience something completely different. StoryTime is a place where your imagination can run wild. With everything going on in our world today, I feel that this is more important now than ever.

### What can guests expect from Sunshine StoryTime's "Stories From the Showhouse"?

I thought it would be a fun perspective to uncover the story behind the glamping tent designs and the designers. I bet we have a lot of future designers out there that would love to know what goes into the process. And of course, we will need to find out each designer's favorite children's book. There might even be a giveaway! I've always believed that there is a story inside each and every one of us; I hope that we will uncover some new and interesting stories this year! [sunshinestorytime.com](http://sunshinestorytime.com) ■



The outdoor living area focuses on the main views and is located right of the kitchen for family gatherings.



Large overhangs and bracketed details create this classical American Shingle Style lake home.

# Style and Stewardship

Embracing natural resources and design

By KAT FORD

**M**ITCH LEHDE, REGIONAL DIRECTOR OF MHK ARCHITECTURE & PLANNING, WILL BE ONE OF three panelists during the 24th annual Cashiers Designer Showhouse's Design Day panel titled "Style and Stewardship" on August 27, 2021. To give us a glimpse at how an architect's unique perspective can utilize a private property owner's natural resources, Mitch offered us a glimpse at this MHK Architecture & Planning lakefront residence. Panoramic waterfront views are captured throughout many rooms of this elegant home. Features include barrel vault ceilings, arched and recessed windows with brackets and traditional wood accents. The veranda exudes lakefront living, capturing elevated, panoramic lake views. This lakefront masterpiece is a fusion of the classical American Shingle Style blended with lake home living with cedar shake exteriors and stylish stone accents.

For more information: [www.mhkcarolinas.com](http://www.mhkcarolinas.com)



Accentuating the windows, a true barrel ceiling carries the arched motif through the home.



Topped with an eyebrow window, the stairwell is flooded with natural light with 20' of glass.



Just off the kitchen, the grilling area tucks neatly on the classical wrap around porch of this home.