

Natural Capital Investment Fund

2017 Impact Report

Since
2001

4.5K
Jobs

257
Companies

\$46.8M
Loans
Deployed

19.7K
Hours of
Assistance

ncifund.org

2017 HIGHLIGHTS:

GROWING RESILIENT ECONOMIES

76% of 2017 borrowers were located in rural communities



SUPPORTING COMMUNITY SERVICES AND DIVERSE BORROWERS

For over 17 years, Natural Capital Investment Fund has been a leader in funding and supporting green and natural resource-based businesses in central Appalachia and the Southeast. And, since healthy, equitable economies are also key to resilient communities, NCIFund also supports diverse entrepreneurs and businesses delivering essential human services to families.

Pamela Powell opened **Christian Prep Academy** in Durham, North Carolina, in 1998, and her 5-star rated facility is one of the only private sites offering pre-K slots for at-risk youth. When the Academy was at risk of losing its site due to Durham's "hot" real estate market, a loan from NCIFund helped Pamela purchase her building, continue quality daycare for children of all backgrounds, and hire three additional staff to manage growing enrollment.

51% of our borrowers in 2017 were women

Tyrone Williams' timber and crop farm, **Fourtee Acres**, in Halifax, North Carolina, has been in his family for generations, and he wants to keep it that way. Through our **Accounting Assistance Program for Disadvantaged Farmers** funded by the **NC Tobacco Trust Fund Commission**, we've helped Tyrone obtain accounting help and advice on structuring his operation to ensure the land is conserved as a multifaceted source of wealth for his family's future.



2,631 hours of assistance to 641 businesses and farms in 2017

PRIMING BUSINESSES FOR SUCCESS

Let's face it: small business owners can't be experts at everything. That's why we offer hands-on support so they can make the most of our loans. In 2017 alone, our staff and consultants delivered more than 2,600 hours of advisory services to nearly 650 businesses and farms. We helped companies apply for energy efficiency grants, implement QuickBooks, create new websites, and fine tune their operations. Our **Cold Storage Program** finances cold storage units for small farmers, while our partner **NC Growing Together** provides grants to "buy down" the cost and delivers training and consultation so farmers can effectively serve wholesale markets.

THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIP

Partners—from community banks and federal, state and local governments to non-profits and local businesses—amplify NCIFund's impact. In 2017, **Weaver Street Market**, a community-owned natural foods grocery store with multiple locations in North Carolina's Triangle area, committed \$250,000 to our loan fund to support emerging food-related businesses. Just as importantly, Weaver Street's deep knowledge of how to successfully position and market new products helps entrepreneurs avoid mistakes as they use NCIFund loans to expand.

FORGING A PATH TO SUSTAINABILITY IN COAL COUNTRY



75% of 2017 borrowers were located in economically distressed communities

Coal's decline has hit Appalachian communities hard. In response, NCIFund is helping entrepreneurs use the region's abundant natural beauty to create new economic growth. Former coal miner Jeff Davis has watched thousands of off-road vehicle enthusiasts pass through his southern West Virginia hometown of Williamson to ride the Hatfield-McCoy Trails. So, Jeff turned to NCIFund for capital to launch **Sport Outfitters**, which offers lodging and trail-related services. Now visitors can spend extra nights (and dollars!) in town. With our partner, the **Hatfield-McCoy Regional Recreation Authority**, we deliver business coaching to Jeff and other entrepreneurs as they learn the entrepreneurial ropes and build a more resilient regional economy.



WHY INVEST IN CRAFT BREWERIES?

"NCIFund was willing to take a chance and loan us the money we needed to take our idea to the next level."

—Art O'Neill, co-owner, BearWaters Brewing Company

Local economic development may not be your first thought as you enjoy a flight of craft beer, but breweries and cideries serve as important economic linchpins in their communities. They contribute to robust local food systems by sourcing local grain and ingredients (from apples to paw paws), catalyze downtown revitalization, create well-paying jobs, and provide gathering space for local residents. And, because they rely on quality water, the breweries we fund are committed to environmental sustainability. That's why NCIFund has supported more than 15 breweries, cideries, distilleries and wineries, most located in small, rural communities.

Our loan helped **BearWaters Brewing** relocate to a historic building along the Pigeon River in downtown Canton, North Carolina. BearWaters installed a public river access point and has introduced new 8-pack can packaging using recycled material for local retail distribution, while creating five new jobs.

Bridge Brew Works was the first brewery to open in Fayetteville, West Virginia, a river rafting and outdoor tourism hotspot. After eight successful years, the brewery financed construction of their new Tap House with a loan from NCIFund, creating the additional space they need to accommodate locals and visitors taking advantage of nearby biking trails and white water rafting.

ADDITIONAL 2017 HIGHLIGHTS...



800 homes powered with biogas harvested from North Carolina hog farms by **Optima BioEnergy**



14,000 trips on the New and Gauley Rivers in West Virginia by **River Expeditions**



323K lbs of pastured beef, pork and lamb delivered to North Carolina markets by **Firsthand Foods**

Invest With Us

2017 was another record year for the Natural Capital Investment Fund. We closed \$12.58 million in triple-bottom-line loans and helped create or retain 614 jobs, bringing total jobs created or retained since 2001 to 4,500. As banks close their rural branches and “move upstream” to serve more established borrowers, NCIFund’s flexible capital and advisory services for disadvantaged and non-traditional entrepreneurs are more crucial than ever in underserved Appalachian and Southeastern communities.

Since 2001, NCIFund has deployed \$46.8 M in loans to 257 businesses and nonprofit enterprises while maintaining low loss rates, thanks in part to our extensive advisory services (nearly 20,000 hours since 2001). We’re rated ★★★ A + by AERIS, a third-party auditor of community development financial institutions. We welcome investments from individuals and institutions, so even more deserving entrepreneurs can achieve economic and environmental success and foster resilient communities.

—Marten Jenkins, President and CEO,
Natural Capital Investment Fund

To inquire about investments in Natural Capital Investment Fund, contact Marten Jenkins, CEO, at 304-870-2207 or mjenkins@conservationfund.org.



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Natural Capital Investment Fund

Founded in 2001, NCIFund (ncifund.org) is a business loan fund certified by the U.S. Treasury as a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI). NCIFund is an affiliate of The Conservation Fund, which makes 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.

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