



Tellico Plains Community Foundation

“Building a Future for a Vintage Mountain Community”

March 4, 2010

Mr. Steven Robinson, S.E.D.
189 S Orange Ave
Orlando, FL 32801

Dear Steven,

Tellico Plains Community Foundation is a group of people who believe that the needs of training, education, and relaxation for everyone in the mountain region of Monroe County Tennessee must be met.

Our 501C3 organization is comprised of people and organizations that include officials from the Town of Tellico Plains, Tellico Plains, Chamber of Commerce, Wilkes Foundation, Congressman John Duncan, Boys and Girls Club of Monroe County, Monroe County Blueway and Greenway Association, Cherokee Study Group, and the area Tellico Plains School personnel.

Through the cooperative efforts of these organizations, the Tellico Plains Foundation has been developing a seven year plan to provide for the activities and programs noted below. Recently we have been offered land in a location that will be ideal for the uses noted. There are two parcels available that will be ideal for this land use. There is a 42 acre parcel on Riverside Drive (Hwy 165) that adjoins to Highway 360 and the Tellico River. The foundation has been approved to purchase both parcels at less than \$25,600 per acre for a total of \$1,200,000. This negotiated price is less than one third of the original asking price.

The mountain region of Monroe County has the highest population of unemployed (currently greater than 18%) and is classified as an economically depressed area by the State and Federal agencies. The Tellico Plains area has an unemployment estimated at 21% with another 23% who have given up looking for work. The foundation is working with the Tennessee Economic and Community Development Department and Barge, Wagner, Sumner Engineering to assure that a comprehensive approach is developed that meets the current and future Physical, social, educational and spiritual needs of the children and people in the Tellico Plains, Coker Creek, Rafter, Rural Vale, and Ballplay area as well as other areas of Monroe County.

The Wilkes Foundation of Leesburg, Florida has agreed to incorporate more than \$2,000,000 into a Life Center/Kid's Corner that is ideal for helping the youth of our region to grow in a positive way and become a valuable asset to our community and nation. They realize that:

- 82% of prisoners are high school dropouts.
- It costs over \$30,000 per year to incarcerate a prisoner in Tennessee and ranked 10th in growth of total incarcerated felons between 1990 and 2000.
- Projected 10-year growth rate is 32.4%.
- In 1998, 75% of Tennessee 4th graders were reading below the proficient level.
- In 2000, Tennessee ranked 49th in per child education funding.
- Every 28 minutes a baby was born into poverty. Tennessee ranked 41st in median income in the nation.
- Every 43 minutes a baby was born to a teenage mother. Tennessee ranked 40th in the nation on teen birth rates.

(Bank of America study)

In a casual visit to Tellico Plains last year members of this organization saw firsthand the needs of the youth in after school programs, activities, daycare for young working mothers, esteem issues with the youth and teenage mothers, so this have asked to become involved through the construction and operation of a facility as noted below.

The Tellico Plains Chamber of Commerce is in ownership of four batting cages at a value of \$200,000 and will use them as part of this project. We are working with the Boys and Girls club to build a facility in Tellico Plains that provides for the children of Tellico Plains. The Foundation is working with personnel from the Tellico Plains Police Department and the Tennessee Police Athletic Association would like to build competition High School soccer fields, a youth football field, and tennis courts. The Monroe County Greenway and Blueway Association will submit for grants to have a boat dock for kayaks and canoes to enter the Tellico River. From this entrance point a person could navigate the waterways all the way to the Gulf of Mexico. A similar grant would be obtained to have a pivot point for six of the ten bicycle trails that are proposed for Monroe, Polk, and McMinn Counties. A group of dog enthusiasts want to fund and build a dog park and training center that is ideal for the people in the area. The city and Chamber of Commerce recognize the need for an event venue and parking for downtown activities and will locate grants to accomplish. Funds generated from various programs and concessions will maintain and enhance the property for many years to come. Yet the funds to grow the facility require more monthly revenue than just events. Therefore the foundation would own and operate a 54 hole miniature golf course whereby the profits are used for employees and improvements to the park once it is complete. These are all groups or organizations that want to be a part of the future of the area.

In order to realize any part of this dream we need your help. We have funds promised for physical structures but we will never see these dreams to fruition without the land being secured.

Our request is for a gift for funds necessary to secure the land. This \$1,200,000 investment in Monroe County will yield contributions in like funds of over \$23,300,000 for the seven year plan noted below.

This land procurement will assure no changes in the flood plain that will impact adjacent properties and become a focal point for community education, training, growth, and relaxation, and give opportunities for employment along with physical, mental and spiritual training for everyone.

Please advise us of what we need to do to assure your help for the mountain area of Monroe County develops in a way that benefits us all. We are open to naming the park after any donor who would give us the hope in our future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary Balser". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "G".

Gary Balser
Tellico Plains Community Foundation - President