

Eastern Conservation Science Team Member Profile:



John Prince

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John celebrates his 35th year at TNC!
(this puts John in the top 1% of
employees at TNC)

When you were little, what did you want to be?

When I was little, the space race was big. I was interested, but I don't think I considered being an astronaut. What I really remember wanting to be was an architect. My dad was a shop teacher and did a lot of mechanical drawings. He made detailed drawings of the projects he was going to tackle next. I was probably in fourth grade, and we had just moved into the house that my dad and brothers had largely finished. I remember sitting downstairs with his drawing board and graph paper, coming up with "house plans".

Why did you choose your profession?

Growing up, our family was outside a lot. We lived on the edge of a small town and I was always playing outside. When the town started growing, all the woodlots and fencerows I used to play in, were converted to new schools. I wanted to get into conservation from that experience, but I didn't have any idea how. When I started college at Millersville University (near Lancaster, PA), I was an Earth Science major, but then I took a Conservation Geography course. I loved both the content and the professor, and switched my major to Geography. I had always liked maps, but never considered being a geographer because I thought it involved memorizing place names, which I was never good at. During college, I took many cartography courses, all pen and ink, and a land surveying course. My senior year in college (1982), was the first time a GIS course was offered, but it conflicted with another course I wanted to take so I missed it.

What's one project that you're working on right now?

Setting up the new process to develop our regional secured areas dataset, a spatial database of all permanently protected lands in the Eastern US states. Specifically, I'm communicating the process and distributing the database schema to the state chapter folks who are our partners in updating this dataset. The new process involves creation of an annual interim dataset to which state chapters have the option of contributing. Then, every five years, we will develop a fully updated dataset for which chapters will provide their data. It will take a good part of the summer and fall to develop the interim dataset. Our secured areas dataset has always been a valuable resource for a variety of projects. It allows us to ask management/ownership questions across all (22) states, knowing the data is good and relatively consistent across the board. Other conservation practitioners can download and use the data in their own analyses from the Conservation Gateway.

What was an accomplishment from last year that you're proud of?

Helping to promote the release of the [South Atlantic Bight Marine Assessment \(SABMA\)](#). I worked with the project team to develop the project's web site, I did the web site work, I published the spatial data, and helped with the production of story maps.

Where is your 25th anniversary TNC chair?

It had been in our bedroom, but we finished remodeling one of our daughter's bedrooms into a guest room. The chair fits well there, and guests can take it for a spin.

How do you spend your free time?

My wife (Ann) and I spend a lot of time hiking, and doing various activities with our two daughters (Sarah and Julia) and granddaughter (Eliany). We like to hike in the northwestern part of North Carolina at Elk Knob, Grandfather Mountain, and Julian Price Memorial Park. Twice a year, we go to Ashe County (NC) to visit TNC's Bluff Mountain Preserve. We also do lots of local hikes and enjoy New Hope Creek, White Pines Nature Preserve, and the Eno River State Park.



If you could travel anywhere, where would you go and why?

Everyone in my family has been to Europe at least once, but I have never been. Some of my family is from northern France so we have talked about going there. Costa Rica is on the list. We also love visiting national parks and regularly go to Yellowstone. We are going to Colorado this July and will hit up Rocky Mountain National Park and Pawnee National Grasslands.



TNC's Bluff Mountain Preserve. © Harold E. Malde

Interview conducted by Analie Barnett, June 2018