



High-Quality Conservation Keeps Land Trusts Busy

Valley Conservation Council and its partner, the Virginia Outdoors Foundation (VOF), have been very busy lately. The five most recently approved conservation easements are particularly strong, both in number of acres protected and in the provisions tailored to protect the most noteworthy features of some key properties. VOF is the holder of these easements, with VCC as coholder on one.

In Rockbridge County, two separate large easements protect scenic views and riparian habitat at the top and the bottom of Goshen Pass. Larry and Bethany Fresh have protected 122 acres of outstanding bottomland wildlife habitat along a quarter mile of the Calfpasture River on the east side of Goshen. With frontage on Route 42, it protects scenic views. The easement designates a building envelope for the two dwellings and the primitive camp sites that can be built and specifies a 35-foot riparian buffer and 100-yard building setback from the river.

Downstream, at the mouth of Goshen Pass, Royster Lyle has protected the varied and interesting assets of 239 acres including historic Wilson Springs Hotel. Part open fields and part steep woodlands, the property lies along the Maury River, adjoins the Goshen Pass Wildlife Management Area, and fronts on a Virginia Scenic Byway. The easement sets an anti-demolition provision for the historic building, part of which now serves as a dwelling, and specifies design and siting considerations for new structures within view of Route 39.



On either side of Goshen Pass, two easements protect considerable frontage on the Maury River (shown here from the Lyle property) and its tributary, the Calfpasture River.

Another key property in Rockbridge County put under conservation easement is the Mason Family Trust's 568-acre tract near Rockbridge Baths at the base of Jump Mountain. It complements other nearby easements on and around the mountain. The terms allow five primary and five secondary dwellings on a maximum of five parcels.

See Easements, p. 2

VCC Members Celebrate Conservation at Wades Mill

Historic Wades Mill welcomed about 150 enthusiastic VCC members and guests September 10 for VCC's annual meeting. As always, attendees enjoyed delicious food and drink, made even more enjoyable by the beautiful setting and cooperative weather.

VCC Board of Directors Chairman Mark Botkin opened the business meeting, which included board elections and the honoring of retiring board member Gerald Williams. Kathy Holm, the VCC staffer who worked most closely with Williams, said "Jerry exemplified what it means to be a Board member and concerned citizen."

See Meeting, p. 3



Host Jim Young greets former VCC board members Ross Newell and Catharine Gilliam, along with Michael Godfrey and former board member Victoria Godfrey.

Easements, continued from p. 1

The Virginia Open Space Lands Preservation Trust Fund (PTF) helped cover legal costs and appraisal fees. VCC co-holds this easement (the fund requires a local co-holder).

East of Jump Mountain, near Brownsburg, Jerry and Glenda Jackson have placed an easement on 39 acres. This beautifully situated property is managed for wildlife and protects a riparian zone along Hayes Creek.

Boyd W. Stephenson has put an easement on 689 acres in Highland County near Vanderpool Gap. The tract contains productive hardwood forest that provides abundant wildlife habitat and has approximately 500 feet of frontage on Jackson River. According to the easement terms, new structures must be designed and sited to limit visual impact and there is a 35-foot buffer along the river.



Wilson Springs Hotel, a resort at the turn of the 20th century (part of the Lyle property)

Buyers Needed to Make Market for Tax Credit Sales

Are you interested in supporting local land conservation? One option may be to purchase state tax credits from easement donors. For donors of conservation easements, the state tax credit can be a good financial incentive. Owners who cannot use the credit themselves can still get the financial benefit by selling the credit. This incentive has raised quite a pool of potential sellers. In fact, now the need is for buyers.

The option to sell conservation tax credits is recent and the market is still developing. VCC highlighted a local example of these tax credit sale projects in the last newsletter. In this instance, the credit sale was handled by Conservation Partners, LLC.

That company is one of several operating in Virginia, as shown at right. The minimum required amount of purchase varies from broker to broker. If you are interested in buying tax credits, consider connecting with some of the people listed here who can facilitate your purchase. (VCC does not offer tax advice; please check with your financial planner to see if tax credits make sense for you.)



View of ridge portion of the Mason Trust property near Jump Mountain



Stephenson property, nearly 700 acres in Highland County

Brokerage Firms for Virginia Tax Credit Exchange Option

Taylor Cole, President
Conservation Partners, LLC
P.O. Box 152
13 Courthouse Sq.
Lexington, VA 24450
540-464-1899
tc@conservationpartnersllc.com

Philip M. Hocker
ConServCo / Conservation
Service Company, LLC
Alexandria, VA 22301
703-683-4990
phil@hockers.com

Steve Blaine or Tara Boyd
LeClair Ryan Corporation
123 E. Main Street, 8th Floor
Charlottesville, VA 22902
434-245-3423
sblaine@leclairryan.com

Mike Strugar, Director
Virginia Conservation Credit
Exchange
929 Pearl St., Suite 300
Boulder, CO 80302
877-752-9283
info@taxcreditexchange.com
www.conservationcreditexchange.com
mstrugar@thewest.net

Brook Middleton, CPA, or
Keith Chase Troxell, Esq.
Virginia Easement Exchange,
LLC
121 North Hatcher Ave.
Purcellville, VA 20132
540-751-0828
www.virginiataxcredit.com
dbmcpa@aol.com



Guests spill around the beautiful grounds of Wades Mill.



Enjoying the evening are VCC Board members Rick Shiflet (left) and Mark Hollberg (center), and Rick's wife Sue.

Meeting, continued from p. 1

Mark Hollberg, Chairman of VCC's Land Protection Committee, then recognized easement donors from the past year who were present. "Development is in perpetuity," he noted, "as perpetual as your easement. Thank you for making the right choice." Easement donor Royster Lyle of Rockbridge County, acknowledging that his own easement had been sparked by a old friend doing an easement, urged VCC members and easement donors to "spread the word. We all sometimes have the most confidence in friends and neighbors."

Executive Director John Eckman spoke of VCC. "Sitting in the office, VCC can seem like a very small organization. But when you are out in the field, you realize just how large VCC really is. And it's not just the members, but the entire network of people, professionals, citizens, landowners, and elected officials, who over the years have leveraged VCC's information and programs to make a huge impact on the region."

Special thanks to hosts Jim and Georgie Young of Wades Mill, DiFlorio Catering, Taylor Rental, The News

New Members - Nov. 15

Augusta County/Staunton/ Waynesboro

C. P. Barger
Kim and Shay Clanton
Mr. and Mrs. Alfred R. Cline
Alice DeWitt
Michael and Ami Keatts
Mrs. Phyllis W. Merritt
Mr. and Mrs. Rodger Rinehart
Wood and Associates

Bath County

Kent and Ellen Ford

Botetourt County

Mr. John E. Alderson
S. Dale and Gloria Carter
Woodpecker Ridge Nature
Center

Rockbridge County/Buena Vista/Lexington

Ollie Cherniahivksy and
Maryfrances Davis
John and Kathryn Mirabella
Lucy M. Turner

Rockingham County/ Harrisonburg

Ms. Jean Hornberg

Shenandoah County

M. Lauck and Jeanette
Walton

From Afar

Joseph Borzelleca, Jr., and
Ellen Brock
Dr. Leon Geyer

Gazette Print Shop, Susan Compton Design, Buffalo Springs Herb Farm, Rockbridge Vineyard, Veritas Vineyard, The Emporium, and musicians Bert Carlson and the Combobulators. Sponsors were Burke and Carole Baker, Buffalo Springs Herb Farm, Conservation Partners, LLC, Conservation Services, Inc., Victoria and Michael Godfrey, JF Brown Real Estate Services, Inc., and Myers & Woods Appraisal Group, Inc., and Bill Noack (Noack and Associates).

VCC Board Elections

Three new members were elected to the VCC Board of Directors:

Henley Gabeau (Augusta County), a native of Norfolk, retired in 2001 from her job as president and executive director of a national nonprofit organization based in Alexandria, Virginia. She lives in an antebellum home near Middlebrook, where she is active in the Ruritan Club and the rescue squad.

Michael Pelton (Augusta/Rockbridge) is Professor Emeritus in Wildlife Science, University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Before retiring, Mike conducted research on a variety of wild mammals, particularly black bears. He has served on the boards of the Foothills Land Conservancy and the Great Smoky Mountains Conservation Association in eastern Tennessee. He and his wife Tamra Willis live on Little North Mountain on the Augusta-Rockbridge County line. They have been VCC members since 1999 and placed their mountain farm in a conservation easement in 2003.

Rosemary Wallinger (Shenandoah County) has lived in Shenandoah County all but 11 years of her life. She and her husband Bruce and their three daughters moved to Springmeadow, her family home on Mill Creek, in 1982. They have begun the process of restoring their 26 acres of pasture and meadow to native wildlife habitat. She is a co-founder and member of Shenandoah Forum, a group of concerned citizens in Shenandoah County.

In addition, four board members were re-elected to additional terms: **Mark Botkin** (Augusta County), **Allen Mead Ferguson** (Rockbridge County), **Mark Hollberg** (Staunton), and **John D. Hutchinson** (Staunton).



**VALLEY
CONSERVATION
COUNCIL**
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Staunton, VA 24401

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Meet the Challenge: New and Increased Gifts to VCC Will Be Matched

A challenge grant to VCC from the Agua Fund, Inc. will make gifts made in 2005 more valuable than ever. From January to November 2005, Agua will match the membership contribution of every NEW member to VCC and will match the increased giving of any existing members.

New memberships will be matched dollar for dollar at the level of membership. For example, a new membership contribution of \$30 will be matched with \$30. A new member contribution of \$100 will be matched with \$100! Please invite and encourage your friends, neighbors, and colleagues to join VCC.

If your family usually joins VCC at the \$30 level and you choose to increase your contribution to \$50, Agua will match the new \$20. Your generosity will actually generate \$40 more for VCC.

The Agua Fund has been a vital supporter of VCC in recent years, providing financial support to help us build our organizational capacity. We invite all of our members to participate in this exciting opportunity for VCC. Your increased gift will have added impact with this generous challenge grant.

Valley Conservation Council
17 Barristers Row
Staunton, Virginia 24401
(540) 886-3541; fax (540) 886-1380
email: vcc@valleyconservation.org
www.valleyconservation.org

Executive Director, John Eckman • Development Director,
Melanie Griffis Tillison • Office Manager, Nan Fiebig •
Botetourt County Steward, Genevieve Goss • *Vision*
Editor and Planning Consultant, Sara Hollberg

Nominate the Best in Development, Conservation

The deadline is December 31st for nominating a development project for VCC's Better Models awards or an individual or organization for the Valley Conservator award. Call for information, (540) 886-3541, or download the form from our website (valleyconservation.org).

Shenandoah Legacy Society for Future Conservation

Mark Botkin, chairman of the VCC Board of Directors, has announced the founding of the Shenandoah Legacy Society. This membership society recognizes individuals who wish to sustain the work of VCC into the future through gifts of appreciated securities, life insurance, bequests, and other planned and estate gifts.

Joe and Alice Davis of Luray serve as honorary chairs of the Shenandoah Legacy Society. The Davises have generously made VCC the beneficiary of their estate. Joe explains why: "We want to guarantee that the work of protecting the special places in the Valley continues after we can no longer lend our time and energy. By leaving our estate to VCC, we are investing in the future of the Valley and the organization we believe has the vision to preserve the heritage and resources of this precious land." For more information on the Shenandoah Legacy Society, contact the VCC Development office at vcc@valleyconservation.org or (540) 886-3541.

Tackling Rural Zoning

VCC is sponsoring a Rural Zoning Seminar on December 9 at the Rockingham County office building. Interactions with local governments as part of VCC's State of the Valley Report presentations made it clear that many counties are simultaneously struggling with how best to zone in an era of heightened development pressure.