



New Easements Conserve Diverse Assets

Five recently completed easements conserve a wide range of historic and conservation values that beautifully represent the unique features of our region. All are held in trust by our partner, the Virginia Outdoors Foundation (VOF).

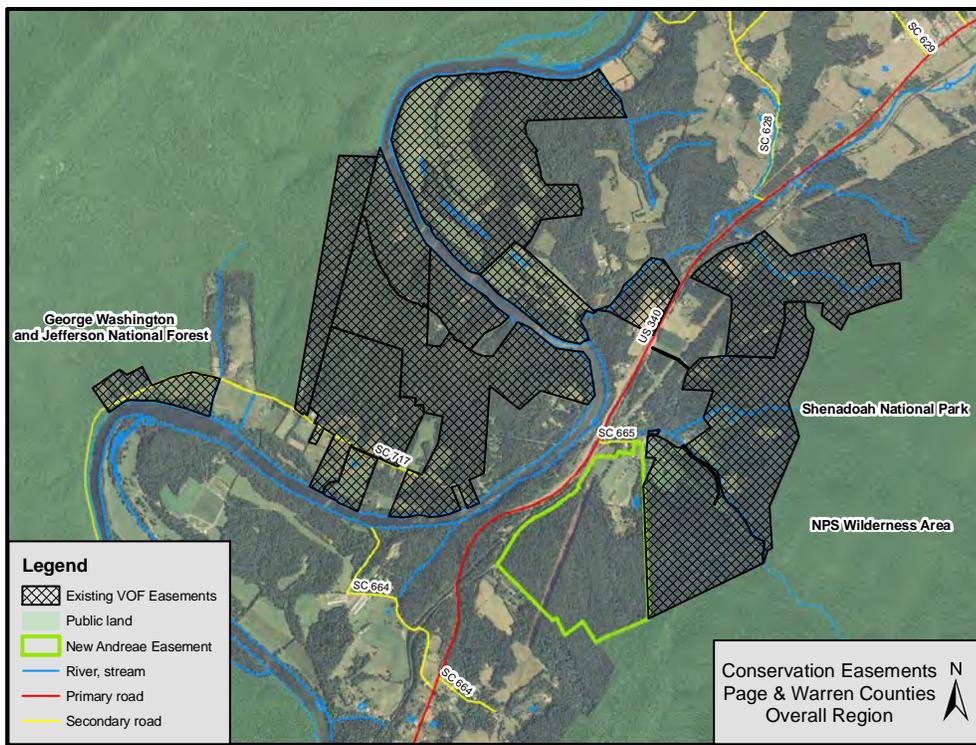
An exceptional example of conservation partnerships and the benefits of a strategic conservation approach can be found at Overall on the Page-Warren county line. Thanks to dedicated VCC and Scenic 340 members Fred and Christine Andreae, John Rice, Thomas Lockhart, and Paul Otto along with other neighbors, more than 1,700 acres of forest and grass lands are permanently conserved through multiple easements donated over the last 13 years. Of great ecological importance is that these conserved lands provide a contiguous, unfragmented forested corridor providing safe passage for wildlife between the

Shenandoah National Park and the George Washington National Forest on Massanutten Mountain. Also protected are several miles of stream buffer along the South Fork of the Shenandoah River, a scenic stretch along US 340, and the majority of the Milford Civil War Battlefield. The most recent addition of 200 eased acres “completes the puzzle.” Christine and Fred Andreae donated this and multiple other easements within the corridor.

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Jan Gray, Bart Pakull and Fred and Christine Andreae (l to r)



This map is for general reference and display purposes only. Aerial Imagery copyright 2012 Commonwealth of Virginia; USGS Quadrangle

Message from the Director

Holiday greetings to our members and friends!

During this season of reflection, we convey our gratitude to all who make VCC's conservation work possible. Our successes, which are well represented on these pages, are made possible because of you, our members and friends, who care deeply about the special places that make our Valley an extraordinary place to live and visit.

I think back to VCC's fledging days. We were led by a handful of volunteers, some youthful and some wise, who had a vision for protecting what makes our Shenandoah Valley region so very special – our natural and working landscapes and small town character. We set out to save those features from the onslaught of sprawl. Though we have not yet fully accomplished our mission – how far we have come!

In 1990, the year of VCC's founding, few acres had been conserved. Now, close to 150,000 acres are under conservation easement and nearly that many acres are enrolled in ag/forestal districts! Back then, resource protection and growth management policies

rarely appeared in comprehensive plans and ordinances. Today good growth management strategies and "better development" are apparent in all 11 of the counties we serve.

For certain, VCC has remained at the forefront of these efforts. We work with many partners – landowners, local officials, conservation groups, and donors. It takes a team!

Please consider making a year-end gift to help ensure our way forward in 2014. More than ever individuals are the backbone of local conservation, as grants and outside funding are increasingly scarce and unreliable. Each and every contribution counts. We pledge that every dollar donated is used wisely as we work to protect the lands and resources we all cherish.

Sending you our heartfelt appreciation for your sustained commitment to the Valley Conservation Council and wishing you a safe and happy holiday season!



Executive Director

McCarthy Named Conservator of the Year

Each year, VCC honors an individual who has contributed to VCC's work and to the betterment of our Valley community. Jerry McCarthy, VCC's 2013 Conservator of the Year, "leaves a legacy of over four decades of commitment to our environment and to the conservation of our natural resources," said VCC Executive Director Faye Cooper. "His support of VCC in our infancy gave us confidence to establish a land trust for this extraordinary valley."

McCarthy served as executive director of the Virginia Environmental Endowment from its founding in 1977 until his retirement earlier this year. Before that he directed the Virginia Council on the Environment, created in 1971 to coordinate the efforts of state agencies.



Gerald McCarthy (center) accepts VCC Conservator of the Year award from Faye Cooper and Tom Lockhart.



Support Conservation with Bay Plates. When you choose a Chesapeake Bay License plate for your vehicle, you're helping fund local restoration and education projects.

Annual Gathering Celebrates Conservation

Relishing a spectacular setting and delicious local food, more than 150 VCC members and supporters thoroughly enjoyed VCC's annual celebration September 8 at Bells Lane Farm in Staunton. Half of the crowd came early and built up a healthy appetite on a fascinating walking tour. All inside the city limits, the farm offered agricultural, conservation, and historical sites. On the first stop, produce farmer Daniel Malcolm described his successful Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) operation. Next, Bobby Whitescarver pointed out the extensive water protection effects of the farm's riparian buffers. Historian Nancy Sorrells took the group to the gravesite of Staunton founder John Lewis and regaled the group with stories of the swashbuckling pioneer amid 360 degree views of the surrounding agricultural district.

VCC is grateful for the wonderful hospitality of hosts Bob and Liz Schreiber for sharing this stunning venue. Many thanks to annual meeting sponsors BotkinRose PLC, J.F. Brown Real Estate Services, Lenhart Obenshain, Myers & Woods Appraisal Group, Shenandoah Valley Regional Airport, StellarOne Bank, Timberlake, Smith, Thomas & Moses, PC, Vellines Glick & Whitesell PLC, and Whitescarver Natural Resources Management, LLC. Appreciation goes also to the donors of auction items and to our volunteers who helped make the meeting such a success.



Bobby Whitescarver discusses the benefits of warm season grasses.

New VCC Directors Elected



Cheri Moran and John Gibson were elected to VCC's Board of Directors during the Conservation Celebration and Annual Meeting on September 8th.

Cheri is a native of Front Royal and has lived in Staunton for many years where she's been an extremely active member of the community through her service with many local groups, including: Augusta Health, Director; Historic Staunton Foundation, past President; Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library Foundation Trustee; Blue Ridge Community College Foundation Board, past Chairman; Virginia State Bar 8th District Disciplinary Committee, past lay member; The Community Foundation of the Central Blue Ridge, past President; City of Staunton: Economic Development Authority, member; Chamber of Com-

merce, past Chair; Staunton/Augusta Art Center, past President; Radford University Alumni Council, member; Kiwanis Club/Shenandoah Valley president. Her career has been in the financial services for over 25 years with US Trust and StellarOne Bank.

John is a life-long Valley resident raised in Winchester and now residing on a conserved farm near Luray. Following military service with the Army, John earned a BA in business administration from Ohio Northern University. After a four year trip around the world with working stints in Alaska, Austria, Greece, and Australia, John returned to the Valley and opened Downriver Canoe Company. John is a founding member and past president of Friends of the Shenandoah River and currently sits on the board of Potomac Riverkeeper. He also serves on the Page County Water Quality Advisory Committee.

Also recognized are outgoing Board members. Thomas J. Lockhart (Warren County), who has served VCC with dedication for six years including the last two as Board Chairman. During his tenure, he missed only one Board meeting.

Roger Houser (Page County) has been a strong advocate of land conservation as demonstrated by his donation of conservation easements.

Denman Zirkle (Shenandoah County) brought a historic perspective to VCC as Executive Director of the Shenandoah Valley Battlefield Foundation.

Many thanks to our retiring Board members.

New Easements (Con't. from page 1)

Christine stated, “This project has been a long-term love affair and it’s still not over! We had no idea at the outset whether or not our neighbors would buy in, but it seems the stars were aligned and we discovered a common passion for preserving this special place.”

Just south of the Overall cluster in Page County, Barton Parkull eased 265 acres along the eastern slope of the Massanutten Mountain that protects forestland, habitat, springs, and scenic views from Rt. 211.

Another fine example of strategic land conservation is located north of Verona in Augusta county where 10 properties and 720 acres have been conserved by a combination of VOF easements and riparian easements co-held by VCC and the Headwaters Soil and Water Conservation District. Together, as shown on the map, these easements conserve nearly seven miles of riparian forested buffers along Middle River, providing significant improvements to water quality and aquatic habitat. The newest addition to this conservation cluster is a 100-acre easement donated by Wayne and Carrie Norris.

Owen and Mary Long eased their historic 178-acre working farm in Rockingham that includes a recently planted forest buffer along Dry Run, a tributary of



JMU students and other Chesapeake Bay Foundation volunteers plant over 650 trees along Dry Run on recently-eased Long Farm.

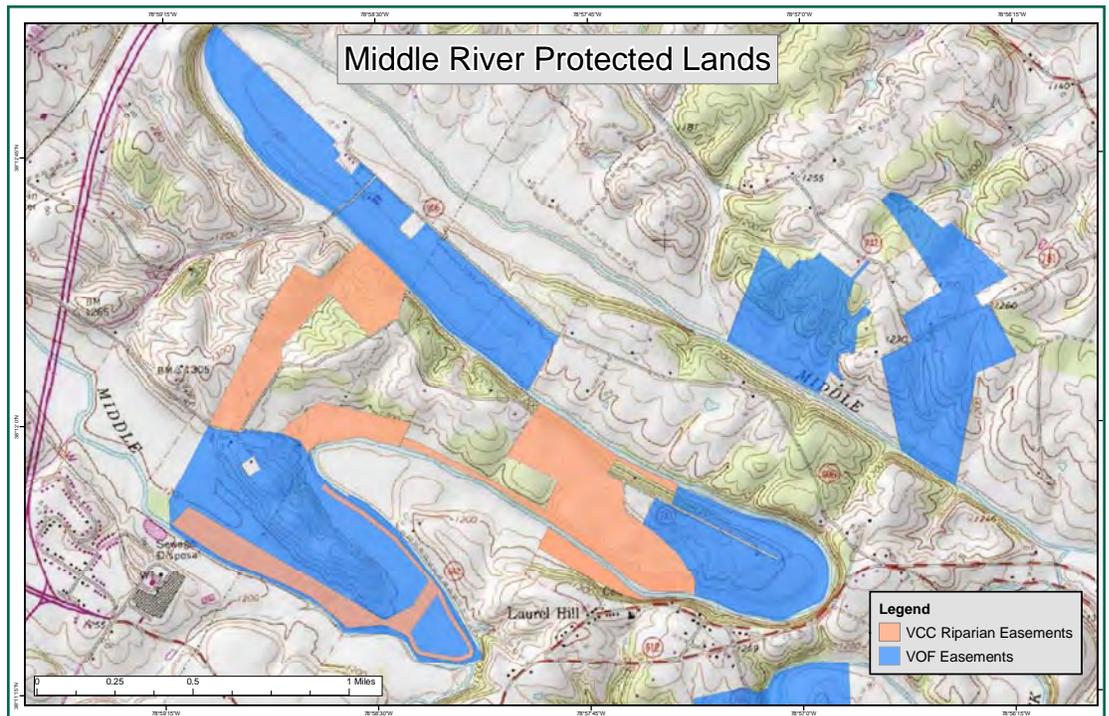
Smith Creek, a designated “showcase watershed.” The farm is a “Century Farm” since it has been in the Long family for more than 100 years. It also is the early home place of Nathaniel and Mary Harrison, grandparents of Thomas Harrison, founder of the City of Harrisonburg.

Dana and Marion McCarron placed an easement on their 38-acre property bordering the George Washington National Forest near Fulks Run in Rockingham County. This easement forever protects a large spring and diverse wildlife habitat.

Many more Valley easement projects are in the pipeline. Many thanks to these conservation-minded landowners and to VOF for their superb professional support.



Wayne and Carrie Norris



Natural Bridge Off the Auction Block!

A tentative purchase agreement has been reached between the owner of Natural Bridge and an unnamed non-profit organization which will prevent the property from going to auction on December 18. Woltz and Associates, Inc., the listing agent for Natural Bridge and its surrounding 1600 acres, made the announcement on November 22. The proposed agreement includes eventual donation of the Bridge and much of the undeveloped lands to a national or state park entity. Months ago when it was announced that the Bridge property would be sold at auction, VCC responded immediately. We are playing a significant collaborative and advisory role along with many partners

including Rockbridge Area Conservation Council, Preservation Virginia, Rockbridge County, state agencies, and many other organizations and individuals to find a conservation solution. All partners agree that though the property has been well-managed in recent years by its current owners and has remained open to the public since Thomas Jefferson purchased the property in 1774, it is now time to ensure protection and public access for this iconic and historic landmark.

Many complex steps lie ahead, particularly to ensure conservation outcomes, and there may yet be a need for public support. We will keep you apprised through eblasts and the VCC website.



VCC Wraps Up Flexible Fencing Project

VCC, through its Resource Conservation & Development Program, and our partners with the Shenandoah Valley, Headwaters, and Lord Fairfax Soil and Water Conservation Districts and USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), wrapped-up a highly successful Flexible Fencing project this fall. This program, funded by the Chesapeake Bay Funders Network (CBFN), provides farmers with a more flexible, privately funded cost-share program to increase adoption and sustained use of grazing systems, livestock exclusion, and other conservation practices.

The program fills in challenging gaps where landowners and farmers require technical and financial assistance for resource concerns that do not fit easily with government cost-share programs. Over the three-year project period, 23 contracts were signed excluding approximately 1,300 head of cattle from 9.5 miles of stream in 16 watersheds across five Valley

counties. Water quality monitoring was conducted before and after project installation to quantify reductions in bacteria and sediment. Not only were the stream data helpful for water quality improvement efforts, they also served to promote pasture management and herd health benefits to potential farmer participants.

Flexible Fencing has been an invaluable tool to attract farmers who ordinarily would not be covered under existing government programs. The pilot program encouraged changes in related programs, including a stream bank fencing campaign in Lancaster County, PA, and more flexible cost-share options offered by Virginia NRCS, Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, and Maryland NRCS. VCC is planning to release a similar program for landowners in the Upper Middle River watershed this winter.



Rockingham County farm before (left) and after installation of "flexible fencing" to keep livestock out of the stream.



VALLEY CONSERVATION COUNCIL

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www.valleyconservation.org

Photo Contest Reminder

Share your favorite views!

VCC's "For the Love of the Valley" Photo Contest gives you the chance to show us in pictures the features that make our valley so special.

The extended deadline is **December 31, 2013**, and there is a five-entry maximum. It's **FREE to enter** up to five photos.

Prizes include a \$150 Grand Prize plus VCC membership for 2014! Please visit our website for more information and to enter the contest.

We can't wait to see
your photos!

New Members (as of 11-22-13)

Augusta County/ Staunton/ Waynesboro

Dave & Patty Arnold
Dennis & Ingrid Blanton
Jim & Jean Anne Boland
Chris Brubaker & Katy English
Paul Kazarov & Barbara Whipple
Les and Carol Kipp
Mark and Ann Rogan
Darlene Schneck
Shenandoah Valley Kiwanis Club
Vellines Glick & Whitesell PLC

Page County

John and Marjie Gibson

Rockingham County

Rob Alexander & Chip Brown
Fred & Melissa Mayhew

From Afar

Boeing Company
Janet Bowen
W.H. Moxley & Deborah Moxley
Don Rissmeyer
Jamie Von Roenn

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