

# VISION

A SEASONAL UPDATE FROM THE VALLEY CONSERVATION COUNCIL FALL 2015/WINTER 2016

## 171 Acres Saved in Augusta County

We are pleased to announce that another Valley family farm was recently placed under conservation easement in Augusta County. Owned by sisters Mary Alice Barfield and Annette F. Lewis, the farm has been in their family since 1928. The original owner of the property was none other than William Beverley, the 18th century legislator, civil servant, and farmer in the Colony of Virginia whose development in present-day Augusta County encouraged settlement west of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

"We have so many wonderful memories of the farm and we don't want to see it developed..." — Mary Alice Barfield

Did you know that VCC and its partners hold nearly 195,000 acres under conservation easement in the Shenandoah Valley region? If you're a landowner with an interest in protecting your property through a conservation easement, we can help simplify the process. Call us today.

*"We lose nearly 50 acres of farmland every hour, and once farms are bulldozed and paved over, that land is gone forever."*

— AMERICAN FARMLAND TRUST



## Thank You! VCC's Silver Anniversary Celebration A Grand Success

In mid-September, nearly 150 members and friends gathered at White House Farm outside Luray for VCC's Silver Anniversary Celebration. A lovely afternoon event, the program included farm tours, live music entertainment, educational exhibits, a silent auction, a picnic supper, a membership meeting, and time for folks to catch up.

Jennifer Flynn, the Deputy Superintendent of Shenandoah National Park, provided the keynote address. During the membership

meeting, VCC Board Chairman Mark Botkin presided over the re-election of two Board members: Bobby Whitescarver and Butch Snow. Mark also presented awards to the following individuals for their outstanding efforts over the past year: Conservator of the Year – Joe McCue; Volunteer of the Year – Brenda Mead; Director's Recognitions – Pat and Chuck Blackley, Bob Barron, Barbara Brothers, Bill Howard, and Kathy Moore; and Special Staff Recognition – Sheryl Van Gundy.

VCC is grateful to Scott Plein (owner of White House Farm) and Chris Anderson (Executive Director, White House Farm Foundation) for their exemplary hospitality. We also thank our many sponsors for their support.

We'd love to hear from our members about location ideas for next year's Annual Membership Meeting. If you have suggestions and contacts, please let us know right away. Our planning has already begun!



PHOTO BY CAROLLE LEWIS ANDERSON



**VALLEY  
CONSERVATION  
COUNCIL**

Protecting America's Legendary Shenandoah Valley

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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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PHOTO BY ALLEGHENY BLUE RIDGE ALLIANCE

# Atlantic Coast Pipeline: In The Public Interest

As mapped currently by Dominion Resources, the proposed Atlantic Coast Pipeline will slice through the greater Shenandoah Valley region, including farmlands, forests, and wetlands. Since this area represents some of the most significant natural landscapes and wildlife habitat and some of the most productive farmlands, VCC's Board of Directors adopted a position statement that has since been presented in meetings with our U.S. Congressional representatives, hearings with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, and public presentations.



**LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PIPELINE PROJECT & VCC's**  
four calls to action for concerned citizens. [bit.ly/VCC-pipeline](http://bit.ly/VCC-pipeline)

# Dark Sky Summit

**Did you know that millions of children will never see the Milky Way?**

At VCC, we believe that starry night skies and natural darkness are important elements of a rural place. We want to make sure the Valley will remain a natural landscape, even at night.

In May, we received a grant from The Allegheny Foundation to support a "Dark Sky Summit" in October that will focus on reducing light intrusion in the

Allegheny Highlands. The Allegheny Highlands harbor some of the few remaining dark sky sites east of the Mississippi River. That feature – the ability to see a sky full of stars – can easily translate into valuable tourism dollars and educational opportunities for Allegheny County and neighboring areas. Preserving and protecting our region's dark skies have proven health and ecological benefits, too.

For more information on this project and its outcomes, please visit [www.valleyconservation.org/event/dark-sky-summit](http://www.valleyconservation.org/event/dark-sky-summit).

**It's our hope that the Dark Sky Summit will lead to a fully funded Dark Sky Initiative here in the greater Shenandoah Valley region.**

# Land and Water Connections: Supporting Healthy Streams

Thanks to generous support from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, VCC works with farmers and other landowners in **Augusta County** (North, Middle, and South rivers) and in **Rockingham** and **Shenandoah counties** (Smith Creek Watershed) to overlay permanent conservation easements on farms and forestlands that have applied best-management practices (BMPs) such as livestock exclusion and riparian forested buffers.

**Do you own land in these counties that contains stream frontage?** Have you applied

best-management practices on your land, or are you interested in doing so? Does your property include a waterway that might provide habitat for native Brook Trout? If you answered "Yes" to any of these questions, you should learn more about VCC's "Land and Water Connections" program, which can provide incentive payments up to \$10,000 to eligible participants who place a conservation easement to protect their land. These incentive payments are in addition to the generous tax benefits associated with the donation of an easement.

Call us at 540.886.3541 to learn more.

## Why VCC Matters

As a leading advocate in the region for protecting our natural, cultural and agricultural resources, VCC is a long-established voice for conservation in the greater Shenandoah Valley region.

If you are concerned about the loss of farmland and forests, about decreasing water and soil quality, unchecked sprawl, or other threats to the Valley, know that VCC is working for you.

### What can you do as a member to support VCC in the months ahead?

- Help us grow our membership.
- Help us grow the number of conservation easements in our 11-county service area.
- Volunteer.
- Attend a workshop or program activity.
- Give generously.

**PLANNED  
GIVING**

*To make a legacy gift to VCC is a kind and thoughtful act.*

If you have questions about how to get started, please contact Sheryl Van Gundy at [sheryl@valleyconservation.org](mailto:sheryl@valleyconservation.org). If you already have included VCC in your will, please let us know so we can thank you today!

**You can donate your old car, truck,  
or farm machinery to VCC** and we'll  
sell it to generate revenue  
to support our programs!



## Look For VCC Near You

For details about these events and  
programs, and other upcoming VCC  
activities, please check our website:

[www.valleyconservation.org/events](http://www.valleyconservation.org/events)

### 1 November 2015

Virginia Conservation Legacy Fund,  
Natural Bridge

### 3 November 2015

UVA Osher Lifelong  
Learning Institute, Staunton

### 11 November 2015

VCC Planning Session,  
Agritourism in the Valley, Staunton

### 19 November 2015

Meet & Greet at  
Belle Grove Plantation, Middletown

### 4 December 2015

Front Royal Rotary Club Meeting,  
Front Royal

## We've Launched A New Website!

During our annual meeting in September, VCC Board Chairman Mark Botkin delighted the audience with the news that VCC had launched a new and improved website and concluded the first part of our rebranding effort. This achievement was made possible through the generous support of the Beirne-Carter Foundation in Richmond. Through the rebranding process, we've tightened our focus areas:



**Natural  
Resources**



**Cultural  
Heritage**



**Agricultural  
Vitality**

These revitalized mission components will help us organize and define our programs, outreach, fundraising, and other VCC activities. You'll notice the prominence of these topic areas as soon as you open the new website.

[www.valleyconservation.org](http://www.valleyconservation.org)

Connect with us online:

