Valley Conservation Council just celebrated its 25th anniversary. We have you, our partners, members, volunteers, and funders to thank for our successes: securing protection for thousands of acres of land that provide food, habitat, water quality, history and sense of place for Valley residents and our visitors.

However, the pressures on our beloved rural communities remain. The loss of farm and forest to development is forecast to accelerate over the next 10 years. The economic recession put the brakes on development pressure in our region. That slowdown is ending and it is the next economic cycle that will determine the fate of our Valley region. Will it succumb to urban sprawl or will it stay magnificent rural landscapes dotted with vibrant and historic cities, towns, and villages?

VCC’s mission is to promote land use that sustains the farms, forests, open space, and cultural heritage of the Shenandoah Valley Region. From the headwaters of the Shenandoah to the Alleghany Highlands and the Upper James this is one of the most beautiful and economically viable places in the nation. Our region’s natural assets – our mountains, our forests, our rivers and streams, our skies (especially at night), our wildlife and our historical landmarks - share a common denominator: open space. When farms are broken up or subdivided, not only are viewsheds changed forever but opportunity is lost for clean water, clean air, intact ecosystems, food security, and rural livelihood. The long-term costs of ever expanding the footprint of development far exceed short-term profits. VCC measures its success by the amount of land kept open and undeveloped.

We know our focus: protecting the Natural Resources, Cultural Heritage, and Agricultural Vitality of our region.

To step up to the challenges, VCC is reinvesting in its core competencies:

- being the region’s premier land trust
- helping landowners, the stewards of private lands, keep their landholdings intact
- partnering with community leaders, both county and city, to make the best-informed choices for guiding development

During the coming year VCC will introduce a new easement template designed for use by working farmers. Our goal is to make easements a more attractive option to the agricultural community and help protect working farm and forest land from development.

Further we will identify focus areas in our region and then design comprehensive strategies that enhance and protect each of those areas. We will strive to bring existing and new programs together, partner with local organizations and deliver workshops that help landowners in those areas understand and choose conservation options for themselves.

Finally, we will continue to partner with local communities, helping policy makers find ways for our communities to grow without sacrificing their inherent natural and historic assets.

VCC must grow its programs and capacity. Your ongoing support is vital. We welcome hearing your concerns and ideas. If you can recruit friends and colleagues to support VCC, please do. The Board is asking the VCC staff to do a lot this year. They will need all of us to help. Thank you for believing in VCC and joining us in this mission to conserve the natural and cultural assets of our Valley.

Butch Snow
Chairman
Valley Conservation Council
Board of Directors
Intensive farms like these near Dayton make the Shenandoah Valley one of the nation’s most important agricultural regions.

Improving Land Conservation Tools for Productive Farm Areas

Current land conservation tools do not always match well with the needs of the full-time farmers that are the backbone of the region’s agricultural heartland. VCC’s Agricultural Tools Summit in December brought expertise and energy toward finding solutions.

As part of our initiative to partner with the agricultural community on the shared goals of land conservation and agricultural vitality, it capped a busy season of farmer meetings and programs. VCC also reached out to Century Farms, young farmers, “ag district” participants, and families wanting to transition the farm to the next generation.

“Having diverse, interested stakeholders at the table enabled us to brainstorm the importance of protecting working farms.”
— Buff Showalter, Farmer and Conservation Easement Donor

Below. Intensive farms like these near Dayton make the Shenandoah Valley one of the nation’s most important agricultural regions.
We extend our sincere gratitude to the corporations, foundations, government agencies, and individuals listed below for their generous support in 2015.
The following local artists contributed the many beautiful works that made our 2015 Annual Meeting Silent Auction a tremendous success:

Danny Mulvena
Kim and Shay Clanton
Debra Sheffer
Scott Jost
Chris Anderson
Christine Andreae
Josef Beery
Debbie Caldwell
Richard Crozier

VCC is extremely grateful for the partnership and support of the following organizations:

Agua Foundation
The Alleghany Foundation
Augusta Bird Club
Catawba Sustainability Center
Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Chesapeake Conservancy
Cowpasture River Preservation Association
Friends of the Middle River
Headwaters Master Naturalists
Jackson River Preservation Association
James River Association
Keith Campbell Foundation
Lewis Creek Watershed Advisory Committee
National Geographic
Oak Hill Foundation

IN-KIND DONORS
Pat and Chuck Blackley
Fred Blanton and Bob Barron
Faye and Peter Cooper
Didawick & Company PC
The Downstream Project
George Washington Hotel
Genevieve Goss
Sara Hollberg
Middlebrook General Store
Moore Public Relations LLC
Morgan-Miles Picture Frames
Natural Bridge Hotel
Omini Homestead Resort
Skyland Resort
Stonewall Jackson Hotel
H. Bruce Rinker, Ph.D.

Gray Dodson
Stephen Doherty
Joanne Happ
Janly Jaggard
Sharon Kincheloe
Eugene Smith
Alison Thomas
Audrey Watson

Valleym Explorers
Up to $99
A. K. Smiley Public Library
Hal Aslestad
John and Barbara Adamson
Peter and Betsy Agelasto
Dave and Patty Arnold
Louis Dolive and Ruth Arnold
Tom and Claudette Artwick
Sherry Arzt
Augusta Bird Club
Bob and Amanda Avery
Pete Barlow
Phil and Karis Barry
Charles and Patricia Blackley
William E. Bobbitt, Jr.
William Bowman
Marguerite Bradford
Brae & Beck Garden Club
Emily Branscome
Barbara Brothers
Chris Harman and Joi Brown
Madison and Katharine Brown
Robbie Brown
Mark and Dottie Brun
Ted and Ellen Butchart
Debbie Caldwell
Malcolm and Lynn Cameron
Bill and Rhonda Campbell
Everett B. and Dana Porter Carson
Matt and Linda Cauley
Marsden and Bobbie Champaign
Charles and Pat Churchman
Sarah Clayton
Mary Hill Cole
Joan Comanor
Community Foundation - Richmond and Central VA
Robert and Dorothy Connelly
Philip Coulling and
Sandra Hayslette
George A. Coyer, II
Harry and Beverley Crosby
Polly Cushman
Al and Avis Dahler
Margaret C. Davis
Bill and Shirley Day
Carl Dehne
Jim and Elaine Echols
Don and Mary Faulkner
Don Feliciano
Denis Finnegan
Bill and Gloria Flournoy
Rich Harris and Karen Ford
Anne Fraser
Veronica Freeman
Kay D. Frye
Marney Gibbs
Mary Stuart Gilliam
Thomas Gilmore

Warren D. Golightly
Bud and Pattie Good
Evelyn Grau
Carter Green
Joanne Happ
Joe and Evy Harman
David and Katherine Henderson
Paul Bornzelleca and
Maria Hobson
Richard and Linda Holman
Nelson Hoy and Lizzie Biggs
Curtis and Carolyn Humphris
Charles and Mary Huuppuch
John and Nancy Irvine
Sally James
Roger and Sylvia applying
Genevieve Johnson
Julie and Jay Jones
Gary and Dreama Kattenbraker
Timothy Keefer
George and Louise Kegley
Maureen K. Kelly
Abbe Kennedy
Diane Kent
Jane Kerewich
H. E. and Kathleen King
Larry and Diane Korte
Joachim and Gisela Krueger
Rick and Laurie Landes
John and Bizzy Lane
Eric and Susan Laser
Joe and Kaye Lehnen
Carole Lewis Anderson
Linda R. Livick
Carolyn and Larry Long
Rod and Karen Lorence
Joyce Loving and Lloyd Pollitt
Cyane B. Lowden
Michael Anne Lynn
Maddie MacNeil
Douglas Marechal
Michael and Jane Marsh
Saundra Vigilante Martins
Jerry McCarthy
Becky McGovern
Ann D. McMillan
Laura McMillan
Lee Merril
Richard and Jean Miller
Louise P. Moore
Carol Morency
Katherine Morgan
Brandon Collins and
Judy Mosedale
David Rissmeyer and
Mary Murray
Jim and Bess Murray
Angel and Beth Negron
Anne W. Nielsen
Ross and Muffie Newell
Mike and Diana Norris
Bonnie J. Painter
Reese Bull and
Pamela Patrick
Matthew and Mary Rainae Paxton
John and Mollie Payne
Dave and Sandra Peters
Kary and Ron Phillips
Bob Pingry
Fred and Kim Powell
David Pride
Anna L. Pullin
Howard and June Ratcliffe
Betty Redmond
Robin Cage Pottery
Rockbridge Area Conservation Council
Richard W. Roller
Kevin Sullivan & Jeanne Roslanowick
Shed and Jane Rouse
Bob and Missy Ruth
Al and Phyllis Sauffley
Chris and Michele Saxman
Peter Sellare and Laurie Gunderson
Eric and Elise Sheffield
David and Barbara Shue
Henry Simpson
Alexa Smith
Randy and Nancy Sorrells
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Rosemary Stevens
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Betty Teague
Laura Thurman
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Mary Vermeulen
Ben and Carol Weddle
Ann Weiland
Karen Willis
Betsy Witt
Marjorie Woody
Laura Yordy and Eric Thies
Tim Youmans
Natalie Zuckerman

Contributions in Honor or Memory of
Faye Crawford Cooper Legacy Fund
The Boeing Company
Mac Crawford
Fetzer Institute
Joe and Evy Harman
Sara Nair James
The Family of Jane S. Shields
John and Julie Walker
Ben and Carol Weddle

In Honor of Catharine Gilliam and Wood Burns on their marriage
Candace Carter Crosby
In Honor of Judi Race
John and Linda Thornton
In Memory of Chuck Ackerman
Marjorie Woods
In Memory of John L. Morgan
Matt Morgan
In Memory of Hallie Seibel
John and Genevieve Goss
In Memory of Vic Thomas, Sr.
Genevieve Thomas Johnson
In Memory of Rex M. Wightman
Oscar Beasley

ANNUAL REPORT
In 2015 VCC raised over $300,000 to support our operations. While individual philanthropy remained flat compared to 2014, we continued to receive the strong support of private foundations, and saw growth in corporate support. Our General and Administrative expenses trended up in 2015 due to the one-time expenses associated with rebranding and web site enhancements. The financial results depicted are based on VCC’s unaudited internal statements as of 12/31/2015.

**Financing Overview 2015**

- **Programs**: 56%
- **G&A**: 5%
- **Fundraising**: 39%
- **Foundations**: 39%
- **Bequests**: 2%
- **Corporations**: 3%
- **Individuals**: 56%

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**Making Water Protection Permanent**

Ken and Diane Brasfield’s conservation easement commits to permanent forest buffers around six springs and three spring creeks at the headwaters of the Middle River in Augusta County. VCC’s “Land and Water Connections” project seeks conservation easements that also protect water quality.

**Bringing Families to Nature**

Kites and Critters, April 26, in Staunton: a rainy day, 150 attendees, 10 partner organizations, countless close encounters with little critters, and three conservation tours, all at one amazing farm in an agricultural and forestal district in the city.
Welcoming VCC’s New Director

In February, VCC welcomed Brenda Mead as Interim Executive Director. Brenda knows VCC well. Our 2015 Volunteer of the Year, she has been active in VCC for years. Brenda brings the skills and accomplishments of a 40-year career in finance, business, leadership, and fundraising. She and her family moved to Staunton in 2009 after she retired from her role as Virginia statewide Executive for Bank of America’s wealth management group. A lifelong gardener, Brenda became a Master Gardener in 2010 and has spent six years creating a landscape at her

Staunton home based on Virginia native and edible plants. One of 50 grandchildren of a Minnesota farmer, she counts agriculture an important part of her heritage.

Brenda will have experienced staff alongside. Sara Hollberg, as Programs Manager, coordinates all of VCC’s programs. Upper James Program Manager Genevieve Goss has long represented VCC in Rockbridge, Botetourt, Alleghany, and Bath counties. Faye Cooper is serving as a consultant for conservation easement outreach. Ben Craig likewise continues as a coordinator with the Upper Middle River project. Come by and see us!

Goodbyes and Best Wishes

Bruce Rinker resigned in January. VCC is grateful to Bruce for his contributions as Executive Director over the past 18 months. His enthusiasm was contagious and without his leadership we would not have recognized the necessity to reinvest in our core mission.

Sheryl Van Gundy, VCC’s dedicated Office Manager, retired at the end of February to pursue other adventures. Please join us in wishing her the best.

Thank you to our hard-working VCC staff

As we look back on 2015 and forward to 2016, we want to recognize the contributions by VCC staff. This year end brought comings and goings within the VCC office, but also a continuity with the long tradition of extraordinary commitment to the VCC mission. We take this time at the end of VCC’s first quarter century to salute all VCC employees, past and present.

Special Thanks to VCC’s 2015 Volunteers!

Many thanks to the over 100 people who gave their time and talent to VCC to make Kites and Critters, the Dark Sky Summit, our Silver Anniversary Annual Meeting and other events a huge success.