

Partners in Conservation

Thanks to your membership, the years of education, promotion and successful land conservation projects across our region have built tremendous momentum and VCC is as busy as ever.

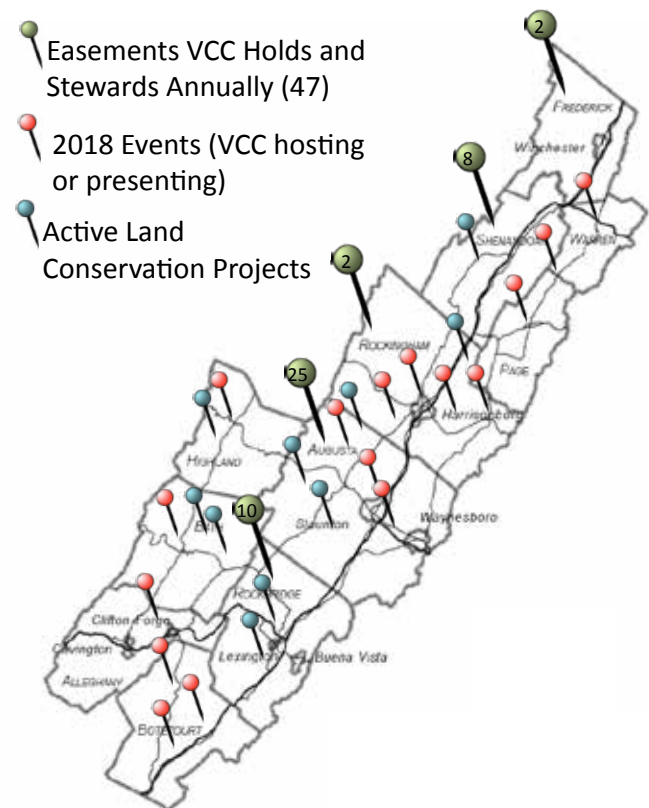
Take a look at this map of VCC activities just in 2018. The red dots represent outreach activities. Events VCC is either hosting or presenting at, getting out the message about the need for land conservation and providing education on exactly how a landowner can go from concept to reality.

The green dots represent the easements VCC already holds - 47 total. Pockets of protection that you're helping pass down to every future generation.

But the blue dots are the most exciting. These are the active conservation projects that you are a part of today. And a little blue dot does nothing to represent the truly special places we're working together to protect.

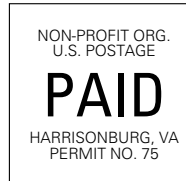
Among these blue dots you'll find frontage on the North River, the North Fork of the Shenandoah, and the Cowpasture. You'll find globally vulnerable natural communities and threatened species. You'll find families stewarding and making a living from the land. Special places and special people committed to protecting those places in perpetuity!

2018 Activities



17 BARRISTERS ROW ■ STAUNTON, VA 24401-4225

540.886.3541
 info@valleyconservation.org
 valleyconservation.org



2017 ANNUAL REPORT

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

In last year's Annual Report we identified three goals for 2018: to become accredited by the Land Trust Alliance, to develop and implement an easement template that provides more flexibility for working farming enterprises, and to expand VCC's reach and membership.

A brief comment on the first and third. Community outreach efforts both in events and communications have increased by a factor of three. New memberships have followed. The accreditation process is well underway with successful completion anticipated for early 2019. Successful accreditation, which means being branded as a first-class land trust, is in the best interest of members and the Valley community.

The second goal, to develop and implement a new easement template, has exceeded expectations. In November VCC accepted its first easement in almost ten years. That easement applied our new "Ag" template. It provides flexibility for the property to be used for future farming operations and it protects the stream that bisects the property with a permanent riparian buffer. Accepting this easement opened the door to a hidden backlog of demand for easements.

VCC's Board and staff set a goal of four to six easements in 2018. By April of this year, it became clear that VCC, if it had the capacity, could take a dozen easements or more. VCC's objectives are to protect

natural resources and help landowners protect their land from future development. We believe that conservation easements are the strongest tool available to achieve these goals.

When VCC works with a landowner who is considering donating an easement on their property, we work in partnership with the landowner and other land trusts that serve the Valley to determine the best easement holder to protect the identified conservation values. Despite this practice, VCC has more demand to hold easements than it can currently address. VCC's capacity is dependent on financial support from you, our members.

Our challenge and goal for the remainder of 2018 and into 2019 is to increase our capacity to address this demand, a great thing to have. We are committed to finding ways to help achieve this goal, but our future land saving accomplishments depend on you.

Thanks for your support,



Butch Snow
 Chairman
 Valley Conservation Council
 Board of Directors

Newest Team Members



Eric Fitzgerald, VCC's newest board member, is a life-long resident of Augusta County. Growing up on a small farm near Quick's Mill, Eric gained a love for the

outdoors and agriculture. After earning an Associate's Degree from Blue Ridge Community College, Eric enrolled in Virginia Tech and earned a Bachelor's degree in Agriculture Education. While teaching agriculture in Rockingham County, he earned the distinction of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's Environmental Educator of the Year and Rockingham County Public School's Teacher of the Year. Eric currently serves as Career and Technical Education Director for Rockingham County Public Schools. He and his wife, Nancy, have a son Clinton who is a junior at George Mason University. They live on a small beef farm near Mount Solon.



Emily Bender is a recent (May 2018) Bridgewater College graduate with a B.S in Environmental Science. She is excited to be joining the VCC team as the Stewardship and

Outreach Coordinator after serving for several months as an intern. Emily grew up attending summer camp at Camp Bethel (in Fincastle, VA) and worked as a part of their staff for several summers. This experience was one that shaped her love of the outdoors and determined her educational path in Environmental Science. She hopes to spend her weekends hiking and working on a garden once she is settled into her new house.



SHENANDOAH RIVER FARM

These are just a few of the views that you're helping to protect forever:

SHENANDOAH RIVER FARM

An exquisite example of the best Shenandoah County has to offer: Farmland, river protection, vulnerable natural communities and stunning views!

CENTURY FARM

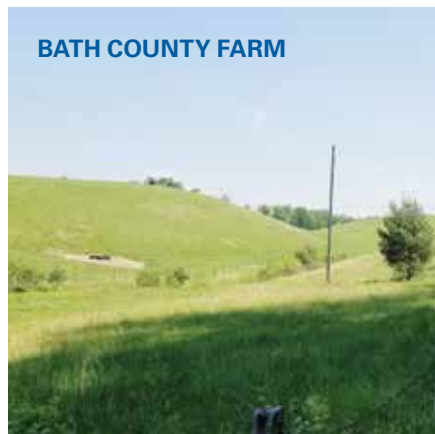
VCC staff were honored to sit down with three generations at this Century Farm to talk about how we can help a family that's farmed this land for six generations put protections in place to ensure that the next six generations can continue providing our community with locally grown food.

BATH COUNTY FARM

This is a perfect example of the amount of land stewardship that our farmers contribute to our open spaces. Nothing says hard working farmer better than well-kept pastures, new and improved fencing, protected streams, new watering systems and big dreams for more down the road.



CENTURY FARM



BATH COUNTY FARM

2018 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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 CHAIR

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 Abbie Cutter
 Eric Fitzgerald
 Anna Lawson
 Wick Vellines

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 Cheri Moran
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 ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR FOR LAND PROTECTION
 Emily Bender
 OUTREACH & STEWARDSHIP COORDINATOR
 Genevieve Goss
 UPPER JAMES PROGRAM MANAGER

2018 SESSION BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Across Virginia we followed along as our legislators grappled to finalize the bi-annual budget. A process that generally wraps in mid-March with the end of the General Session was prolonged through May.

Virginia has a history of supportive land conservation policies and practices. But support for these tools comes from our legislators hearing from you, their constituents, so they understand these remain an important priority for the citizens of Virginia. Thank you to those that already make calls, write letters, and visit legislators in support of land conservation!

As you engage with your local officials throughout the year, make sure they know you value what land conservation brings to your community and the tools that enable them.

The Land Preservation Tax Credit

The Land Preservation Tax Credit is the most important tool available for land conservation. Virginia is one of only 16 states across the nation that offers a tax credit to landowners

for donating conservation easements, and we must not waver in our support for this tool.

Additionally, Virginia has several grant programs that provide funding for land conservation projects across the region. These grant programs have recently been underfunded leaving conservation projects in our region incomplete.

Virginia should work to fund these programs at the levels called for in the legislation that created them.

Grant Programs

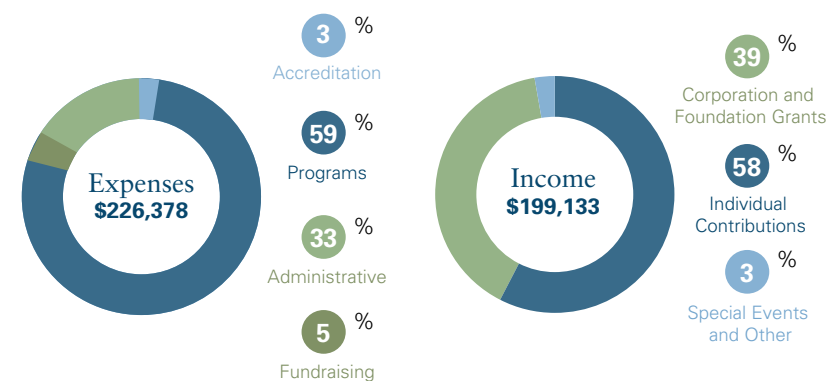
- **Virginia Land Conservation Fund target funding \$16 million annually.**
 - Currently has \$0 funding in first year of this budget, \$4.25 million in second year
- **Farmland Preservation target funding \$2 million annually.**
 - Currently funded at \$250,000 annually
- **Battlefields Preservation Fund target funding \$2 million annually**
 - Currently funded at \$1 million annually





Financial Overview

YEAR ENDED 12-31-2017 (UNAUDITED)



Cool Waters Forever Protected in Augusta County

Thanks to the generosity of a local family who donated a conservation easement to VCC in February of this year, this beautiful curve in the South River will forever be protected by a 100 foot riparian buffer. Children will play under the trees and learn to value all that is beautiful about our Mother Earth. VCC staff might even lie down in the river on hot days as they monitor the protections that will forever serve these enchanting waters!

A Conservation Victory Near House Mountain

A drive out to Rockbridge County's House Mountain region serves as a reminder of what so many of us cherish about Virginia's Shenandoah Valley. Winding roads lead us past small family farms interspersed with mature forests, and every now and again, we catch a glimpse of the mountains rising over the landscape below. As Lexington continues to grow just to the east, the area surrounding House Mountain becomes an increasingly tempting place to build new homes, threatening both the rural character and agricultural foundation of this region.

Virginia's conservation community has worked hard over the past few decades to safeguard the farms and forests that support the local economy, provide habitat for wildlife, protect the headwaters of the James River, and sustain the scenic views that many of us have come to know and love. Valley Conservation Council is proud to have facilitated one of the most recent conservation victories in this area. In November, VCC accepted a generous gift of conservation easement from long-time resident Naomi Smith, who wished to ensure that her property remains a working farm into the next generation and beyond.

As part of this arrangement, VCC worked with farm manager Cody Manspile to develop a plan that is consistent with both conservation objectives and the need to ensure that the property remains economically viable as a working farm. VCC is also working with Mrs. Smith to plan for the installation of new livestock fencing along a section of creek that runs through her property. Protection of Mrs. Smith's farm helps add another piece to the jigsaw puzzle of preserved land surrounding House Mountain, and helps to ensure that the region will remain a great place to farm and a wonderful place to visit for years to come.



We extend our sincere gratitude to the individuals, corporations, foundations, and government agencies listed below for their generous support in 2017.

EASEMENT DONORS

Naomi Smith - VCC Held
Asher and Laura Jean Brand - VOF Held
Mark and Stephanie Hudy - VOF Held
Brian and Jennifer Ball - VOF Held

VALLEY GUARDIANS \$5,000 AND ABOVE

Fred and Christine Andreae
Bowman and Abbie Cutter
George and Manci Ohrstrom
Anonymous

VALLEY STEWARDS \$1,000 TO \$4,999

Stephen and Kathleen Clinton
Larry Duncan
David and Lucinda Fuller
Lisa Hamilton
Ryan and Mary Hodges
Tom and Anna Lawson
Laurie Landeau Foundation
Linda and Martin Lightsey
Renaissance Stone Masonry
Robert and Elizabeth Schreiber
Melody Tennant and Butch Snow
John Sweet
The William F. and Karin M. Banks Foundation

VALLEY SETTLERS \$500 TO \$999

Cochran Family Foundation at the Community Foundation
Peter and Faye Crawford Cooper
Bruce and Olimpia Dorries
Kent and Ellen Ford
Scott Kelly
Thomas Lockhart
Gary and Ellen Lohr
Pres and Jane Manning
The Honorable and Mrs. Everett Martin
Brenda and Robert Mead
Lewis and Gayle Moore
Matthew Morgan
Dorothy Duval Nelson
Susan Wilson and Bernard Odasz
Mike Pelton and Tamra Willis
Steve and Julie Plumbley
Virginia Conservation Credit Exchange

Greg and Valerie Weaver
Denman and Ann Zirkle

VALLEY PIONEERS \$100 TO \$499

Hal Aaslestad and Peggy Aaslestad Tees
Bob and Kathy Arrowsmith
Suzanne Auckerman
Augusta Garden Club
Margie Maust and Sandy Bahr
Mark and Sugie Battin
Tom Beam
Kathy Belcher and Joe Thompson, Jr.
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Buffalo Springs Farm
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Jimmy and Debbie Callison
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Camp Mont Shenandoah
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Carolyn Ford
Fosnocht Family Fund

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Megan Gallagher
GE Foundation
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Glenmore Foundation
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John and Genevieve Goss
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Sandy Greene
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Harry and Sis Warner
Hugh and Connie Westfall
Pamela Wiegandt
Bruce and Jane Wiggins
Bill and Lang Wilson
David L. Worthington
Rich and Beth Young

VALLEY EXPLORERS UP TO \$99

John and Barbara Adamson
Peter and Betsy Agelasto, III
Gregg and Sue Amonette
Sharon Angle
Louis Dolive and Ruth Arnold
Augusta Bird Club
Judd and Dabney Bankert
Lee Ann Beam
Nancy Bourne
William Bowman

Pete and Nell Boyle
Jenifer Bradford
Bill and Emily Branscome
Mark and Dottie Bruns
Sherry and Forbes Buttrick
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Darice Jones
Kenneth Kelly
Diane Kent
John and Bizzy Lane
Matthew and Elizabeth Lawler
Joe and Kaye Lehnen
Carole Lewis Anderson
A. K. Smiley Public Library
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Cyane B. Lowden
Michael Anne Lynn
Saundra Vigilante Martis
Becky McGovern
Ann D. McMillan

Gee and Mary Ellen McVey
David Mims
John and Kathryn Mirabella
Margo Moskowitz and Ben Tilley
Jim and Bess Murray
Ross and Muffie Newell
Mike and Diana Norris
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Cecelia Parks
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Dwight and Jewell Phelps
David and Jordan Phemister
Bob and Barbara Priddy
David Rapp
Phil Hyre and Daphne Raz
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Rodger and Susan Rinehart
Richard W. Roller
Bob and Missy Ruth
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Darlene Schneck
R. Tucker Shields
David and Barbara Shue
Tara Sieber
Alexia Smith
Bob Biersack and Jan Smith
Randy and Nancy Sorrells
Col. Hugh B. Sproul, III
Starview Farms
R. Noland Suter
Ross and Jane Testerman
Colin Thomas
Laura Thurman
Derek A. and Pauline H. Tidman
Doris True
Jeff and Sally Waldon
Jamie Wallace
David and Mim Wenger
Chris Wise and Laura Neale
Ronald and Annette Wisniewski
Kate and Jeb Wofford
Tim Youmans

We were proud to have been sponsored by these fine organizations in 2017:

BotkinRose PLC
Downriver Canoe Company
Farm Credit of the Virginias
Ecosystem Services, Inc.
Mid Valley Press
RES
Staunton Steam Laundry
Stonewall Jackson Hotel
Union Bank & Trust

We couldn't have succeeded without these volunteers who gave so generously of their time in 2017:

Tom Benzing
Peter Barlow
Andrew Bollinger
Mark Botkin
Jennifer Callison
Lynn Cameron
Abby Carinder
Olivia Carson
Isabelle Chewning
Faye Cooper
Peter Cooper
Jacob Davidson
Jacqueline DiFulvio
Renee D. Goddard
John Goss
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Carolyn Moore Ford
Sara Hollberg
Mark Hollberg
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Marina Mead
Alex Moore
Sally Parsons
Mike Pelton
Mike Phillips
Dave Pugh
Ashley Roth
Kinzie Stanley
Mac Sterrett
Steve Talley
Maggie Tanner
Pat Tompkins
Jim Tompkins
Chris Thomsen
Peter Van Acker
Ann Williams

Our partnerships with these organizations leveraged your contributions in 2017 for more conservation in the Valley:

Augusta Bird Club
Botetourt Community Partnership
Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Eagle Rock Ruritan Club
Friends of the Middle River
Friends of the North Fork of the Shenandoah River
Gloria's Pupuseria
Headwaters Soil and Water Conservation District
Lewis Creek Watershed Advisory Committee

Save the Date!

Our Annual Meeting is set for **September 16, 2018** and it just won't be the same if you can't attend! Put a note on your calendar and we'll get more details to you soon.

Lord Fairfax Soil and Water Conservation District
Mountain Castles Soil and Water Conservation District
Mountain Soil and Water Conservation District
Natural Bridge Soil and Water Conservation District
Natural Bridge Ruritan Club
Potomac Conservancy
Rockbridge Area Conservation Council
Rockingham CAP
Save Lucy the Bat
Shenandoah County Easement Authority
Shenandoah Forum
Shenandoah Valley Battlefield Foundation
Shenandoah Valley Network
Trout Unlimited
Upper James RC&D
Virginia Master Naturalists Headwaters Chapter
Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation
Virginia Department of Forestry
Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries
Virginia Outdoors Foundation
Virginia United Land Trusts

Grant funding for our Programs in 2017 was generously provided by the following:

Agua Fund
The CERES Foundation
Chesapeake Bay Funders Network
Community Foundation of the Central Blue Ridge
Keith Campbell Foundation
Land Trust Alliance
New Venture Fund
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
Oak Hill Fund
Shenandoah Valley Kiwanis
Shenandoah Valley Pure Water Forum
Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
Virginia Environmental Endowment