



**Land Legacies**  
 BLUE RIDGE FOOTHILLS CONSERVANCY *A Local Resource for Madison and Greene*

Volume 7 Number 2

Winter 2009

**BRFC—A DECADE OF CONSERVATION OF THE LAND AND ITS ATTRIBUTES**

*BRFC's decade anniversary annual meeting was held at Victor and Janice Rosenberg's Rose Mountain Farm in the glorious hillsides of Greene County. Under a large tent and sparkling lights to protect attendees from rain—large and small — BRFC celebrated its accomplishments and charted its future.*



**CONSERVATION LAND AWARDS**

President Trish Crowe thanked this year's recipients of the Conservation Land Awards, those who have put their land under conservation easements:

<b>MADISON</b>	<b>Vincent &amp; Karen Hoellerich</b>	405.68 acres
	<b>Keith Wagner</b>	142.27 acres
	<b>Joyce Gentry</b>	157 acres

<b>GREENE</b>	<b>William Grymes &amp; Laurie Miller</b>	87 acres
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**Total: 791.95 acres**

**CONSERVATION AWARDS**

**Susan Cable**, under whose leadership 17,000 acres have been conserved in Madison and Greene Counties and who has added immeasurably to conservation initiatives through VaULT and other statewide organizations

**Robbi Savage**, Executive Director of the Rivanna Conservation Society, Member of the Rivanna River Basin Commission, Advisory Board member to BRFC

**George Ohrstrom**, founder and president of The Downstream Project, active in natural resource protection in the Shenandoah Valley, board member of Piedmont Environmental Council, VA League of Conservation Voters, President of the Friends of the Shenandoah River

**ELECTION OF DIRECTORS**

The slate of directors for the coming year was presented to the membership:

**Gail Unterman (renewal)**  
**Rob Gardner (for full term)**

**Chip Morris (new)**  
**Doug Parsons (new)**  
 (see Transitions)

There being no additional nominations from the floor, the slate was approved by acclamation.

**Farm2Table**

Trish shared with our members the successful (over-subscribed) Farm2Table dinner held at The Madison Inn on August 12th. Purchasing locally-grown foods is one of the more important ways to keep land in farming—and hence conserve farms' open spaces. A five-course dinner was prepared on a volunteer basis by The Madison Inn and shows that sumptuous fare that is all IN SEASON can delight the palate and support the economic base of our counties!

Brad Jarvis of Virginia's Cooperative Extension Service was the coordinator of this event, and BRFC extends our thanks for all he did (and continues to do) for local producers and local diners!

## THE DOWNSTREAM PROJECT

Keynote speaker at the Conservancy's annual meeting was George Ohrstrom, founder and president of The Downstream Project, a non-profit organization that focuses on water conservation.

Ohrstrom informed attendees that the Shenandoah "is considered one of the most endangered rivers in the country" and that within its waters "fish kills have become regular spring occurrences."

The Downstream Project's documentary, "Shenandoah, Voices of the River," has been selected for screening at the American Conservation Film Festival, scheduled for November 5-8 in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. The film is part of an effort to educate and engage the public in promoting ... a sustainable future.

Ohrstrom also spoke about stormwater runoff, and his belief that new regulations may push development away from urban areas and toward rural areas.

Stormwater runoff is natural precipitation that does not completely infiltrate the ground but rather flows off the land, usually after coming into contact with impervious surfaces such as roofs, roads, sidewalks and parking lots," he said. "As the water flows over these surfaces it picks up whatever contaminants have collected on them, like oil, heavy metals and other hazardous materials."

Ohrstrom went on to say that the development community has heavily criticized the strengthening of such regulations because it would place an unfair burden on it in terms of cost.

"The (proposed) rules will make it more expensive to develop new commercial properties," he explained. "The increase in cost to develop may push development farther out into the rural areas, but one can only hope that local government already has, or soon will have, the underlying zoning in place to make sure that doesn't happen."



The lessons shared by Mr. Ohrstrom were not lost on BRFC members who live within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. Our actions—or more accurately—our inactions, have a direct impact on the lives and livelihoods of all who live along the meandering streams and rivers that ultimately converge in the Chesapeake Bay—changing, we hope not irrevocably, the history of each region along the waters' paths.

Mr. Ohrstrom shared copies of "Shenandoah, Voices of the River" with those in attendance in the hope that we, in turn, will share this thought-provoking documentary with others.

He also closed with this reminder to all: "Do not burn yourself out. Be as I am – a reluctant enthusiast ... a part-time crusader, a half-hearted fanatic. Save the other half of yourselves and your lives for pleasure and adventure. It is not enough to fight for the land; it is even more important to enjoy it."

Following Mr. Ohrstrom's talk, and moderated by Carl Schmitt, a panel of experts took questions about water. That panel included Greg Wilhelms of the Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District and Stanardsville's Robbi Savage, executive director of the Rivanna Conservation Society and a member of the Conservancy's advisory board, and Mr. Ohrstrom.

## TRANSITIONS

### SUSAN CABLE—BRFC FOUNDER — RESIGNS AFTER A DECADE OF SERVICE



*Susan Cable, Conservationist extraordinaire, is moving into a new dynamic in the conservation field, having been appointed by the Governor to the Virginia Historic Resources Board. Susan has served in many capacities throughout her years of dedicated service to the conservation movement, not only for Greene and Madison counties but also throughout the Commonwealth.*

*Susan presented the original charter of BRFC as she accepted a copy of **Remarkable Trees of Virginia** and shared her final remarks.*

#### Upon Her Retirement from the BRFC Board

Thank you all for this wonderful gift. I shall treasure it. I also have some other thanks to offer at this time; and if you will permit me, a few parting thoughts.

First: I want to add my thanks to those of Trish to that tireless trio who contributed in great measure to the success of our first Farm2Table dinner last month. - BRFC Board members Jacqueline Mow and Kim Smith and Madison Inn owner Sue Riley undertook a three day cooking marathon to prepare that locally grown feast. Thank you ladies, and thanks, too, to Tina Weaver of Papa Weaver's Pork who first suggested the dinner idea to us.

Second: I am profoundly grateful to my husband, Louis Cable, who first encouraged and supported me in pursuing my dream of starting a land trust when we moved to Madison County; and then, for the last eleven years has endured my preoccupation with countless meetings, phone calls, conferences and occasional traumas. Thank you, Louis!

Third: a heartfelt thank you to all the Directors of the Blue Ridge Foothills Conservancy – past, present and future – for your leadership and your commitment to conserving the natural, agricultural, scenic, historic and recreational resources of Madison and Greene counties.

A couple of parting thoughts – one from a classic book, one from a classic movie.....

As some of you know, I'm very fond of quoting Aldo Leopold, who wrote in "A Sand County Almanac": **That**

**land is a Community is a basic concept of ecology, but that land is to be loved and respected is an extension of ethics. That land yields a cultural harvest is a fact long known but latterly forgotten.**

Important words – **Community – Land Ethic – Cultural Harvest** --which I believe can serve as guideposts for achieving BRFC's mission:

Our challenge then is:

To make land conservation a primary goal for our **human community** – linked to health, education, food security, economic development, business, land use.

To make a **Land Stewardship Ethic** fundamental to our public and private decision making; and

To preserve in nurturing that **cultural harvest** in the hearts and minds of our neighbors.

My other favorite line is from a movie I was watching again a couple of weeks ago: "Gone With the Wind". No, I don't mean Clark Gable's famous exit line – "*Frankly my dear, I don't give a damn*" (although there may have been a few occasions over the years when that thought crossed my mind.)

No, my favorite line comes at the beginning of the movie, when Gerald O'Hara says to his daughter: *It's the Land, Katie Scarlett; it will come to you, this love of the land. Land is the only thing that matters; because it's the only thing that lasts.*

Love of the land does indeed come to us. Land conservation has been my work and passion for more than 35 years. It has been a privilege and joy to share that work with you.

So now, Friends, here is the original Charter of the Blue Ridge Foothills Conservancy, dated December 14, 1998. I give it into the safe keeping of you all.

## TRANSITIONS

*As we bid farewell to Susan, we also welcomed new members to our ranks.*

### To the Board of Directors:

**Chip Morris** (whose description is courtesy of the Greene County Record as reported by Susan Gibbs):

"A Ruckersville man whose Greene County farming family goes back at least four generations has been named to the Blue Ridge Foothills Conservancy Board of Directors.

"We are thrilled to welcome Chip Morris of Fox Hill Farm to our Board," said Conservancy President Trish Crowe Saturday, September 26 at the organization's annual meeting, held at Rose Mountain Farm on Haneytown Road in Stanardsville.

Stewart "Chip" Morris Jr. comes from a long line of Greene County farmers, as does his wife, the former Jaime Henshaw. Morris's grandfather, Will Morris, farmed across from the Ruckersville Volunteer Fire Department, when farming was a family business with chickens and milk cows, along with beef cows and crops.

His wife's father is James Henshaw, a former Greene County supervisor, who is currently serving as district representative to the Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District.

"Agriculture and conservation go hand in hand," says Morris, who raises beef cattle. "It's the only way we can afford to farm around here because land has gotten so expensive. Once land is conserved, we can rent a fair amount of land that's under easement to farm on."

Commenting on the Farm2Table dinner, Chip observed: "The local food programs are great," says Morris. He explains that the United States imports more food than it exports, and that "it's good to know where food is coming from."

**Doug Parsons:** Doug Parsons, from Madison County, lives part-time in Etlan with his wife, Kim. His home sits at the base of Old Rag.

As part of his commitment to conservation, this spring he planted 600 small trees and shrubs to enhance the wildlife habitat around a natural meadow on the property.

Doug works at the Environmental Protection Agency where he manages communications and Congressional affairs regarding pesticide and toxic chemical regulation. In 1996, he helped write and seek passage of the Food Quality Protection Act, which raised the bar on the pesticide residues in food.

He grew up on a fruit and vegetable farm in Oregon, which his two brothers still manage. His father was a county Extension Agent.

Doug attended Oregon State University and has a degree in Botany.

He considers himself a groupee of the Madison Farmers' Market.

### To the Advisory Board:

**Beth Pastore** is well-known to all in Madison for her conservation work as a staff member for the Piedmont Environmental Council. She is also actively involved in a Madison group raising funds to assist those who wish to put their land under easement and to help in the procedural steps necessary to achieving that goal.

**Rex Linville** has also joined our advisory board, representing the area from Greene County southward. Rex joined PEC in March 2004 as the Land Conservation Officer for Albemarle and Greene counties. Prior to joining PEC, Rex worked at the Eastern Shore Land Conservancy in Maryland as the Land Protection specialist. He also worked at The Mountain Institute where he focused his efforts on conservation and education projects in the Appalachian and Andean mountain ranges. He holds a B.S. in Finance from Virginia Tech and a M.S. in Forest Sciences from Colorado State University.

### NOTE OUR SPECIAL POST MARK!!

At a dedication ceremony on October 24th, a US Postal Service Official presented a commemorative pictorial postmark for the Graves Mill Historical Park—Graves Mill, Virginia 22721. The park was created as part of the Virginia 2007 Community Program celebrating the 400th anniversary of Virginia.

The postmark is comprised of a Civil War memorial, a flagpole with an American flag, the Virginia 2007 Community Program flag, a replica of the circa 1900 Graves Mill Post Office and an historical sign pertaining to the village of Graves Mill.

Our own Doug Graves was instrumental in all this!

## ON THE LEGISLATIVE FRONT

### Blue Ridge Foothills Conservancy Legislative Committee Report to the Annual Meeting – September 26, 2009

#### Background and Purpose of the Committee

The committee was brought into being in early 2008 by President Trish Crowe to provide a systematic means to both vet and support various legislative activities that are brought to the Conservancy's attention. For example, BRFC is often asked to sign-on to letters written to elected officials by other land trusts and similar conservation organizations. Some of these are appropriate for our mission; others move further afield.

In addition, the Conservancy on its own has urged specific elected representatives to support pending legislation at both the state and Federal level. In such cases, the committee drafts and collects approval for letters of support.

#### Membership

The Committee has consisted of Carol Merrill as chair, with Trish Crowe, Carl Schmitt, Kim Johnson-Smith, and Susan Cable. Thanks go to all hands, but particularly Susan Cable, who is resigning from the Board at this meeting, for helping us navigate through the thicket of Virginia's alphabet soup of conservation organizations!

#### Actions

**Federal** – Both the Senate and the House are considering legislation to make tax credits for land conservation easements permanent. S812 and HR 1831 are the relevant bills and you can track them on the Senate and House web sites.

Thanks in large part to the good offices of President Trish Crowe, Madison County Congressman and Republican Whip Eric Cantor is the principal sponsor of HR1831.

Personalized letters of thank-you were sent to Congressman Cantor and to Congressman Tom Per-

riello representing Greene County who has signed on as a co-sponsor.

The Land Trust Alliance reports that more than half of the House has signed on as co-sponsors, a major achievement for the land conservation movement. Included in that group is Congressman Charles Rangel of Harlem, chair of the Ways and Means Committee, which would have to pass on the legislation. Very significant, given that Harlem does not have much open land to protect!

On the Senate side, we sent letters urging co-sponsorship to both Senators Webb and Warner. Within two weeks of our letter, Senator Webb signed up!

**State** – On the state level, most of the activity surrounded the passage of Governor Kaine's unfortunately reduced budget.

We sent individual letters to Delegates Scott and Houck, and Senators Bell and Hangar urging them to support the Governor and hold the line on his budget cuts. They did.

We also lent our name to another letter sent by a group of fellow land trusts and the PEC on the budget.

#### Outreach List

A preliminary list of influential friends of the Conservancy was circulated this summer for input. It currently consists of elected officials, county administrators, and media. Other categories and specific names are welcome. (The list has been cross-checked with the master BRFC mailing list to indicate duplicates.)

Carol Merrill, Chair

### Very Special Thanks

Land conservation *is* legacy—insuring that some of our most spectacular assets remain for new generations to enjoy and appreciate. So many people contribute to the successes we enjoy that they all cannot possibly be listed.

Those who have an immediate effect on BRFC, however, do deserve special thanks:

Our Board of Directors  
Our Advisory Board  
Our General Counsel

#### and the individuals

Scott Elliff, duCard Vineyard  
Rob Gardner, Country Vintner  
Su Webb

Walter Nicklin and the Piedmont VA Magazine  
Larry Behunek, photographer for Legacy of the Land  
Bob Llewellyn, photographer for *Remarkable Trees* and Urban Spaces/Rural Places

Roger Schreiner, our webmaster  
Ethel Guiseppe, dessert baker par excellence  
All our members who support us year in and year out!

#### and our partners

The Madison Inn  
Virginia Cooperative Extension  
VaULT, VOF, LTV, ATC, TNC, PEC and all the other local land trusts  
Possum Ridge String Band

**and all our State Agencies, especially the Department of Forestry!**

and members of the local media who cover us so well  
***Greene County Record, The Madison Eagle***

**We truly couldn't do it without you!**

### Land Legacies

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

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Blue Ridge Foothills Conservancy is a non-profit 501(c)3 and 170(h) organization. Contributions are tax-deductible and deeply appreciated.

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# Land Legacies

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