When Mickey Came to Town

Virginia’s northern Piedmont is a beautiful and vibrant place—boasting of forests, rivers, mountains, farmland, thriving towns, and numerous historic and cultural resources. But all of this came under threat in November 1993, when the Walt Disney Company made a surprise announcement that they planned to build an American history theme park near what was then the small town of Haymarket, VA—only four miles from Manassas Battlefield.

And Disney wasn’t going to stop at a theme park. Prior to their public announcement in November, the corporation had used triple-blind negotiations to quietly take land options on 3,000 acres of rolling farmland. Their plan was to build an urban complex in Prince William County, complete with a theme park, golf course, up to 4,500 housing units, and over two million square feet of commercial space—a massive real estate development in one of America’s most scenic and historic landscapes. And this sprawl wouldn’t be limited to the original 3,000 acres. Analysts were showing that after a Disney park came to town, the surrounding region could expect at least a 20-mile radius of collateral development—as seen in Orlando, FL and Anaheim, CA.

The sprawl of motels, strip malls and restaurants from “Disney’s America” would not only have put serious strain on the Piedmont’s natural resources from increased pollution, but this history-themed park would have put real historic sites at risk. Disney’s chosen location was surrounded by numerous historic towns, dozens of battlefields, and even more historic districts. They wanted to build Civil War rides only four miles from the real Manassas battlefield—where approximately 300,000 men went missing, were injured, or died in battle.

As one of the world’s wealthiest corporations and most influential PR machines, Disney was sure they were prepared for the fight they knew would be ahead of them. They were in for a surprise.

Rallying the Troops

Due to the promise of new jobs and significant economic development, many local businesses and politicians initially welcomed Disney’s plan. A regional poll taken the week after Disney’s announcement in November ‘93 showed a 98% recognition of the Disney corporation, 75% of which were rally to support its development. When the public announcement in November 1993 showed a 98%

Disnny’s plans included more than a theme park. They wanted to build a massive real estate development, which would have caused at least a 20-mile radius of additional collateral development—in one of America’s most scenic and historic landscapes.

Earth Day Twice a Year

Last April, I wrote a newspaper column celebrating Earth Day 2013. I pointed out that, in the words of a wise friend, there are in fact two Earth Days each year. In April we celebrate our planet’s physical and biological assets—the ecosystems that support all life and add beauty and wonder to the human experience. Earth Day #2 is Election Day, when we choose officials who will determine the rules by which we protect—or don’t protect—our little section of planet Earth.

Virginia’s Northern Piedmont is blessed with countless natural and historical resources, but it has faced enormous challenges over the decades as the population has grown. In PEC’s nine-county region, the population has quadrupled over the last four decades to over 600,000 people—growing at a faster rate than the Commonwealth as a whole. As the region continues to grow, Earth Day #2 becomes more and more crucial to our quality of life. It is our responsibility as citizens to insist that our state and local officials enact and enforce policies that will balance the pressures of growth with the need to protect the Commonwealth’s valuable natural and cultural assets. Constraints on continued unplanned growth are sure to arouse well-financed political pressure on government officials from developers and real estate speculators. In order to preserve the natural assets of the Piedmont, these officials must be committed to a balanced approach to further development.

On Earth Day #2, November 5, 2013, we Virginians will elect a new slate of state officials—from the Governor to each member of the House of Delegates. These officials will decide whether, and how, to keep the Virginia Piedmont the beautiful, healthy region that we treasure.
When Mickey Came to Town

The Piedmont View

When Mickey Came to Town

The grassroots opposition quickly gained momentum, and citizens were joined by a number of local, regional and national organizations who wanted to stop Disney—including the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Northern Virginia Environmental Network. A third influential organization called Protect Historic America was formed specifically for this fight. This group of luminaries and preservationists—organized by Nick Kotz, Mary Lynn Kotz and Julian Scher—include James MacPherson, David McCullough and Shelby Foote. Protect Historic America focused on the potential impact on the nearby historic sites, as well as the perception of American history.

Miller left his job at a top law firm in DC for a contract position at PEC, where he was tasked with forming a formal coalition from the group of concerned environmentalists, noted historians, citizens, and organizations. This coalition—known as “Disney, Take a Second Look!”—launched a multifaceted campaign that involved multiple studies looking Disney’s economic claims and potential alternative sites; numerous press events to garner national attention; lobbying in Richmond; and a number of public rallies and protests. Who could forget the foam-head caricatures of Disney characters that showed up at multiple events, including the opening of “The Lion King” movie at D.C.’s Uptown Theater?

The heart of the campaign, however, came from the thousands of hours spent researching profilers and the fiscal, environmental, and traffic impacts—research which was shared with local and state government officials to help them make better-informed decisions. The coalition cited over 40 alternative locations in the D.C. area that were better suited for such development—due to existing transportation and mass transit infrastructure, as well as needed distance from priceless historical resources. They also revealed a number of holes in Disney’s claims of economic gain for the region.

The corporation said that “Disney’s America” would be open 365 days of the year—generating $38 million in state taxes and over 12,000 jobs a year—generating $38 million in state taxes and over 12,000 jobs a year. Yet, PEC and its partners showed that, due Northern Virginia’s climate, the park could not possibly stay open year-round. On September 17, 1994 thousands of people came together for a march on Washington—protesting “Disney’s America.” This just may have been the straw that broke the camel’s back, because soon after Disney announced that it was abandoning its proposed park in Haymarket—only nine months after making their plan public.

The fight with Disney had a profound effect on people’s perception of what the average person could do when faced with a huge challenge. Up to that point, many thought that the urban sprawl spilling out of D.C. was unstoppable, but PEC and all of our partners proved that wasn’t the case.”

T

ten years have passed since the grassroots opposition successfully kept Disney out of the Piedmont. Because of this fight, land conservation and land use planning have become important issues in the public consciousness, and this region remains a beautiful, healthy place to live. In fact, since 1994, Virginians have protected an amount of privately-owned land that is bigger than the entire Shenandoah National Park. Yet, some people look at Haymarket today—which has given way to some major development—and ask, “Are we really better off without Disney?”

We hope you’ll join us for our meeting on October 12th to look into this question. This event will take place at Galemont—the historic home of Nick and Mary Lynn Kotz near Thoroughfare Gap—and it will include workshops, lunch, and speakers such as PEC’s Chris Miller and Pulitzer-prize winning journalist and Emmy award-winning producer, Hedrick Smith. Immediately following the keynote, there will be an optional hike up the Bull Run Mountains with Michael Kieffer, the Bull Run Mountains Conservancy’s director.

The price for PEC members is $30; non-members $40. To register, visit www.pecva.org/events, or call Karen Hunsberger Adam at (540) 316-9978.

Nick and Mary Lynn Kotz played an important role in the campaign against Disney. This October, 20 years after Disney abandoned its plans in VA, they will host a PEC meeting at their historic home near The Plains, VA. We will discuss what’s happening in the Piedmont today, and what we all learned from the fight with Disney. We hope to see you there!
**TRANSPORTATION UPDATES**

**The Western Bypass**

Things are looking iffy for the proposed Western Bypass. The Federal Highway Administration is still waiting for VDOT to complete the Environmental Assessment for the project, a process they thought would be finished about a year ago. The causes for this delay include unresolved design issues at the Northern and Southern termini. Meanwhile, the Bypass isn’t removing any popularity contests. At the public meetings concerning the Bypass held by VDOT, Albemarle’s Board of Supervisors, and the Metropolitan Planning Organization, over 90% of the spoken and submitted comments have opposed the Bypass.

Another Bump in the Road?

In late August, federal officials declared that a cemetery and house in the path of the Bypass are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, which could mean additional protections for the site. Important African-American leaders from the 19th century are buried in that cemetery—including Jesse Scott Sammons, an influential educator in Albemarle County, and George Ruth-erford Ferguson, Charlottesville’s first African-American physician. It’s too soon to know how this will affect the Bypass’s approval process, but it’s certainly another bump in this nonsensical road’s path. VDOT will have to show that there are no viable alternatives to the Bypass that wouldn’t impact the historic site. “VDOT has not provided us the schedule for releasing the environmental assessment to the public,” FHWA spokesman Doug Hecox told Charlottesville Tomorrow, “and the [Sammon’s property] determination might change any that they were considering.”

This fall will be an important time in the fight against this wasteful bypass, and PEC will keep citizens updated. For more information, check out our webpage: www.pecva.org/westernbypass

**Outter Beltway**

VDOT has given the infamous ‘Outter Beltway’ project yet another name. Now calling it “Bi-County Parkway,” they’re saying it’s really just a 16-mile segment of road between I-66 and Rt. 50. In August, there were quite a few memorable lines about this project from our elected officials—some highlights:

- “This road has had many names, maybe we’ll have a contest to see what we’ll call it next.” —VA Sec of Transportation, Sean Connaughton
- Brushing aside claims that truck traffic will increase along the route, Secretary Connaughton said that freight going to the airport is “very low volume, but very high value.”
- “Does this happen often? Continuation forward on a project when the majority of elected officials in the area oppose it?” —Supervisor Candland, Gainesville District

This summer PEC teamed up with folks at the Coalition for Smarter Growth, Southern Environmental Law Center, National Trust for Historic Preservation, and National Parks Conservation Association to complete a transportation study of the Bi-County Parkway, as well as an alternatives analysis. Our study compared the controversial new highway to a set of alternative projects that would improve transportation in the area. Our analysis shows that there are many, more effective projects than the Bi-County Parkway.

Take a look at our alternatives analysis, and keep sending those letters to your elected officials! www.pecva.org/outterbeltway

**FIELD TO PLATE**

PEC’s 2013 ‘Meet the Farmer’ Dinner Series

Over the past five years, the Piedmont has experienced an unprecedented demand for local foods. In order to support that growing interest, PEC hosted a series of Field to Plate—Meet the Farmer dinners over the summer. These dinners celebrated and supported local farms; provided education and outreach on the importance of local food in our region; and increased awareness about where and how local foods are produced. The dinners were a great success, and the proceeds benefit PEC’s continued efforts to promote local agriculture.

The series kicked off in June with a dinner at Long Branch Farm (Clark), followed by a sold-out dinner at East Lynn Farm (Loudoun) in July; a family-friendly BBQ at Moriah Farm (Fauquier) in August; and ended in early September with a beautiful dinner at the historic Annadale Farm (Orange). A big “thank you” to all of you who came out to these great events!

**GETTING OUR HANDS DIRTY**

PEC celebrates and supports community gardens

PEC believes that community and school gardens bring invaluable, positive effects to communities. Not only do they help participants learn more about how our food is produced—they can also provide math and science educational opportunities; improve individuals’ health; and help people relate to their natural environment.

For all of these great reasons, PEC continues to support and celebrate community gardens through our 2013 Community and School Garden Awards contest. This friendly competition recognizes gardens in PEC’s nine-county region that celebrate the relationship between nature, food and community. PEC will award six currently active school and/or community gardens with cash awards—up to three $300 awards and three $500 awards. The 2013 contest opened in early April, and nominations will be accepted through October 11, 2013.

Last year PEC’s first year to hold the contest, and it was a great success. We can’t wait to see this year’s nominations! Learn more about this year’s contest and eligibility requirements at www.pecva.org/gardens

**Pop Quiz**

Name this tree

The American Chestnut

The American Chestnut was once the most common tree in the eastern U.S. and served as a food source for many native animal species. Yet, introduced tree of a slight from Asia in the early 20th century eliminated it from our forests. Though some plants still persist as continual root sprouts, they tend to die once they reach sapling size. Thanks in part to the ongoing efforts of The American Chestnut Foundation, this tree may one day return to our forests!

**ANSWER**

Photo courtesy of Janis Richter

The American Chestnut Foundation

An American Chestnut sapling. Thanks in part to the ongoing efforts of The American Chestnut Foundation, this tree may one day return to our forests!
Expanding the Warrenton Branch Greenway

The Warrenton Branch Greenway is a treasured community resource in Old Town Warrenton. The 1.5 mile-long trail not only provides a great outdoor recreational space, but it is also an important historic resource—as it follows the old Orange and Alexandria Railroad line that was built in the 1850s. Today, thousands of people use this trail annually to enjoy running, walking and biking.

For years there’s been discussion of extending the Greenway, and these words have recently turned to action. After over a decade of negotiations, Fauquier County officials have obtained the right-of-way to add about a mile to the Greenway, and this extension is expected to be completed within the next 18 months.

PEC is excited to be a part of this development by committing to raise the remaining $30,000 needed to extend the trail. This money, along with donations from the Fauquier Trails Coalition and a VDOT grant, will be used to double the Greenway in size while connecting to another trail—creating a linear park that will be even more accessible to the community. The extension will connect downtown Warrenton to Lord Fairfax Community College and the Fauquier Education Farm, another important community resource that promotes agriculture and social responsibility.

Maggi MacQuilliam, PEC’s Land Conservation Officer for Southern Fauquier and Culpeper Counties, is looking forward to the benefits this project will bring to the surrounding community. “This expansion will promote outdoor recreation; bridge the connection between urban and rural environments; and create another way to access learning and volunteering opportunities at the Education Farm,” Maggi says. “We’re excited help raise funds for this great cause!”

To learn more about this project, please contact PEC’s Maggi MacQuilliam at (540) 454.9599 or mmacquilliam@pecva.org

From the Field: PEC’s Piedmont Memorial Overlook

The first two steps in land management are to assess what condition the land is in and then decide what your goals are. PEC is going through both of these steps at the Piedmont Memorial Overlook—our 50-acre tract that straddles Clarke and Fauquier counties.

The Piedmont Memorial Overlook has about 20 acres of cool season fescue fields and 30 acres of forest and shrublands, and we’ve been working to assess the biodiversity of these ecosystems. For the fescue fields, we’ve partnered with the Virginia Working Landscapes to analyze the diversity of birds, pollinators and plants. This data will be a baseline to compare to as we convert the less-wildlife friendly fescue into native grasses and wildflowers. This fall, we will also begin a detailed inventory of the forest and shrublands—examining the tree diversity and structure, the soils, and more.

All of this information feeds into our goals for the site, which include: maintaining the property as a memorial site; increasing the biodiversity of the property by managing for native plant species and eradicating non-native invaders; using it as a land management demonstration site for private landowners; and allowing the public to enjoy the property’s views for reflection and passive recreation. Stay tuned for updates and upcoming events.

Smile! You’re on Candid Camera!

As a part of our research at the Piedmont Memorial Overlook, we’re also collecting data on wildlife camera traps. At this point it’s strictly qualitative data, but overtime we hope to get a better sense of how animals, particularly mammals, are using the property and the larger Blue Ridge Mountain corridor. Here are some of our favorite shots from this summer:
Looking Ahead

PEC’s Fellowship Program prepares students considering careers in conservation

Our planet and children depend on you to celebrate Earth Day—by voting to keep Virginia’s ecosystems intact.

Below is a list of just a few touchstone environmental issues each candidate must address if elected. To make a difference on Earth Day, be sure to study the positions of each candidate on these and similar issues. Then vote for the Piedmont, guided by your conscience and not by traditional party-loyalty. Our planet and children depend on you to celebrate Earth Day a second time this November—by voting to keep Virginia’s ecosystems and beauty intact for future generations to enjoy.

Transportation. The present administration and General Assembly enacted tax increases this year to finance transportation improvements. However, having more money for transportation accomplishes nothing if it isn’t spent wisely. Will these new dollars be used to fix our failing roads and alleviate congestion? Or will they be diverted to unnecessary mega projects—like the D.C. Outer Beltway or Charlottesville Western Bypass? We should prioritize investments in transportation projects that help existing residents live and work, not push unnecessary projects that would ultimately lead to more speculative housing development.

Land Conservation. Open land imposes few costs on the taxpayer, a budgetary plus even when taxed at “land use” rates. Current state and federal programs allow for tax deductions and tax credits for landowners who conserve their properties, allowing for tax deductions and tax credits for landowners who conserve their properties, and these programs have been important in protecting vital natural spaces. To date it has been supported by administrations of both parties. Ask this year’s candidates if they will continue this valuable conservation program.

Uranium Mining. Virginia has held a ban on mining uranium for decades due to the radioactive waste left on site, which must be contained for thousands of years to prevent hazardous materials leaching into streams or groundwater. Currently a small, inexperienced mining company is requesting that this ban be lifted so it can open a uranium mine. Virginia’s current administration seems to be passing the decision on to its successor, and this issue may come up again in this year’s General Assembly session. So, take the time to ask your candidates where they stand on uranium mining and milling in Virginia.

Climate Disruption. Science and observed physical changes around the globe support the conclusion that our planet is warming—expanding the oceans and altering our weather patterns. Steps need to be taken to mitigate the impact of rising sea levels and changing temperatures—such as increased environmental education, renewable energy commitments, and smart growth principles. Ask your candidates how they plan to help preserve Virginia for the impact of future climate disruptions.

Chesapeake Bay. The Bay is an ecological, scenic and recreational treasure, but it continues to be threatened by contaminated surface runoff. Some hold that federally-proposed corrective measures are an infringement on individual property rights. What are your candidates’ positions on the balance between considering individual property rights and community resources?

Bruce Smart is a retired international businessman and served as the U.S. Undersecretary of Commerce for International Trade under President Reagan. He is currently a member of PEC’s Board and has served as Vice Chair of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and as a Senior Fellow and Director of the World Resources Institute. He was also a member of Governor Kaine’s Commission on Climate Change. He and his wife operate a horse farm near Upperpille, VA. The views expressed in this article are his own and are not made on behalf of PEC. PEC is a nonpartisan, nonprofit corporation and does not support, promote, or endorse any political candidates.

PEC’s Fellowship Program, which just finished its 7th year, gives college and graduate students a comprehensive look at the work PEC does in this region. Through classroom discussions, field trips, hands-on activities, and a final project—participants gain practical knowledge and skills to transition into careers in conservation, urban planning, historic preservation, public policy, and other related fields. PEC’s staff obviously thinks the Fellowship is a great program, but don’t take our word for it! Check out what some fellows said after completing the program this summer:

“I was surprised by how interesting I found the section on agriculture—something I didn’t know a lot about. I learned about organic, local, and conventional farming and how they all tie into our food system—and it really interested me.”

Henry Bell
Oak Grove, MN
Studying geography & environmental studies at Middlebury College

“I had a tremendous experience and learned a lot. I didn’t understand the connection between law and conservation until I got here, and I learned that law is ingrained in what a group like PEC does. I wasn’t really interested in law before, but now, who knows? I may just go into environmental law.”

Bruce Smart
A retired international businessman and served as the U.S. Undersecretary of Commerce for International Trade under President Reagan. A lifetime conservationist, he is currently a member of PEC’s Board and has served as Vice Chair of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and as a Senior Fellow and Director of the World Resources Institute. He was also a member of Governor Kaine’s Commission on Climate Change. He and his wife operate a horse farm near Upperpille, VA. The views expressed in this article are his own and are not made on behalf of PEC. PEC is a nonpartisan, nonprofit corporation and does not support, promote, or endorse any political candidates.

“I had a tremendous experience and learned a lot. I didn’t understand the connection between law and conservation until I got here, and I learned that law is ingrained in what a group like PEC does. I wasn’t really interested in law before, but now, who knows? I may just go into environmental law.”

Bruce Smart
A retired international businessman and served as the U.S. Undersecretary of Commerce for International Trade under President Reagan. He is currently a member of PEC’s Board and has served as Vice Chair of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and as a Senior Fellow and Director of the World Resources Institute. He was also a member of Governor Kaine’s Commission on Climate Change. He and his wife operate a horse farm near Upperpille, VA. The views expressed in this article are his own and are not made on behalf of PEC. PEC is a nonpartisan, nonprofit corporation and does not support, promote, or endorse any political candidates.

“I had a tremendous experience and learned a lot. I didn’t understand the connection between law and conservation until I got here, and I learned that law is ingrained in what a group like PEC does. I wasn’t really interested in law before, but now, who knows? I may just go into environmental law.”

Bruce Smart
A retired international businessman and served as the U.S. Undersecretary of Commerce for International Trade under President Reagan. He is currently a member of PEC’s Board and has served as Vice Chair of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and as a Senior Fellow and Director of the World Resources Institute. He was also a member of Governor Kaine’s Commission on Climate Change. He and his wife operate a horse farm near Upperpille, VA. The views expressed in this article are his own and are not made on behalf of PEC. PEC is a nonpartisan, nonprofit corporation and does not support, promote, or endorse any political candidates.

“I had a tremendous experience and learned a lot. I didn’t understand the connection between law and conservation until I got here, and I learned that law is ingrained in what a group like PEC does. I wasn’t really interested in law before, but now, who knows? I may just go into environmental law.”

Bruce Smart
A retired international businessman and served as the U.S. Undersecretary of Commerce for International Trade under President Reagan. He is currently a member of PEC’s Board and has served as Vice Chair of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and as a Senior Fellow and Director of the World Resources Institute. He was also a member of Governor Kaine’s Commission on Climate Change. He and his wife operate a horse farm near Upperpille, VA. The views expressed in this article are his own and are not made on behalf of PEC. PEC is a nonpartisan, nonprofit corporation and does not support, promote, or endorse any political candidates.

“I had a tremendous experience and learned a lot. I didn’t understand the connection between law and conservation until I got here, and I learned that law is ingrained in what a group like PEC does. I wasn’t really interested in law before, but now, who knows? I may just go into environmental law.”

Bruce Smart
A retired international businessman and served as the U.S. Undersecretary of Commerce for International Trade under President Reagan. He is currently a member of PEC’s Board and has served as Vice Chair of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and as a Senior Fellow and Director of the World Resources Institute. He was also a member of Governor Kaine’s Commission on Climate Change. He and his wife operate a horse farm near Upperpille, VA. The views expressed in this article are his own and are not made on behalf of PEC. PEC is a nonpartisan, nonprofit corporation and does not support, promote, or endorse any political candidates.

“I had a tremendous experience and learned a lot. I didn’t understand the connection between law and conservation until I got here, and I learned that law is ingrained in what a group like PEC does. I wasn’t really interested in law before, but now, who knows? I may just go into environmental law.”

Bruce Smart
A retired international businessman and served as the U.S. Undersecretary of Commerce for International Trade under President Reagan. He is currently a member of PEC’s Board and has served as Vice Chair of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and as a Senior Fellow and Director of the World Resources Institute. He was also a member of Governor Kaine’s Commission on Climate Change. He and his wife operate a horse farm near Upperpille, VA. The views expressed in this article are his own and are not made on behalf of PEC. PEC is a nonpartisan, nonprofit corporation and does not support, promote, or endorse any political candidates.

“I had a tremendous experience and learned a lot. I didn’t understand the connection between law and conservation until I got here, and I learned that law is ingrained in what a group like PEC does. I wasn’t really interested in law before, but now, who knows? I may just go into environmental law.”

Bruce Smart
A retired international businessman and served as the U.S. Undersecretary of Commerce for International Trade under President Reagan. He is currently a member of PEC’s Board and has served as Vice Chair of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and as a Senior Fellow and Director of the World Resources Institute. He was also a member of Governor Kaine’s Commission on Climate Change. He and his wife operate a horse farm near Upperpille, VA. The views expressed in this article are his own and are not made on behalf of PEC. PEC is a nonpartisan, nonprofit corporation and does not support, promote, or endorse any political candidates.
**On the Ground**

**ALBEMARLE**

**Trump Tees Up New Plan for Albemarle’s Countryside**

On August 19th, Trump Virginia Acquisitions LLC submitted a plan to develop a rural property in Albemarle into a commercial golf course called the Trump National Golf Club. Constructing a golf course in the County’s Rural Area is allowed only if the Board of Supervisors approves a Special Use Permit—a process by which the county weighs the impacts of the proposed use on surrounding properties.

Two hundred and sixteen acres of this property are currently protected with a conservation easement held by the Virginia Outdoors Foundation (VOF). VOF is reviewing whether or not a golf course is consistent with the terms of the easement, and they are expected to issue a letter shortly regarding their position. PEC will be closely monitoring this situation and will keep citizens informed.

For more information, contact Rex Linville—PEC’s Conservation officer for Albemarle County: rlinville@pecva.org or (434) 977-2033

---

**CULPEPER**

**Nixing Mixed-Use Plan in Clevengers Corner?**

A developer is stirring things up in Clevengers Corner—the growth area in northern Culpeper County. Centex Homes was one of the companies that succeeded in rezoning the property in 2005—with a mixed-use development plan for 774 residential units and a good deal of commercial space. Yet, Centex revealed in June that they want to nix the mixed-use plan and just build houses; whether or not the commercial ever happens would be left up to someone else. The company also wants to scale back what it will offer the County to help pay for the infrastructure needed to support all of the homes and resulting traffic, meaning County taxpayers would have to foot more of the bill.

These changes conflict with the County's Comprehensive Plan, and they would bring a poorly-planned development into our community with the corresponding long-term problems. What was presented in June was just an initial discussion, and PEC will keep citizens posted as this issue progresses.

For more information, please contact David Holtzman—PEC’s Land Use Officer in Culpeper County: dholtzman@pecva.org or (540) 967-7557

---

**MADISON**

**Commemorating the Battle of Jack’s Shop**

On September 22, 1863, the largest Civil War battle in Madison County took place. Known today as the Battle of Jack’s Shop, it was one of the largest cavalry engagements of the entire war. Madison County historian Harold Woodward, Jr. often quips that “it was the biggest cavalry battle you’ve never heard of.” But, a number of local organizations hope that’s about to change. PEC, the Madison County Historical Society, PEC’s Madison Conservation Fund, and the Madison Chamber of Commerce & Tourism have joined forces to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the battle this fall.

This commemoration event will include narrated bus tours of the battle sites; living history reenactors; cavalry and artillery demonstrations; local craftsmen and musicians; and ‘The Civil War 150 History Mobile’—a museum on wheels that uses state-of-the-art technology and interactive exhibit spaces to immerse visitors in individual stories of the Civil War. The Virginia National Bank (Orange) will also be awarding a $2,000 scholarship to the Madison County High School senior who writes the winning essay on Madison County’s role in the Civil War!

The Jack’s Shop Commemoration will take place from 8:45am-5:00pm on Saturday, September 21st at Madison County High School. This event is free and open to the public, but please leave your pets at home.

For more information about this event, email Peter Hujik—PEC’s Conservation Officer for Madison County at phujik@pecva.org
Update on Dominion’s Powerline Proposal

Last spring, Dominion Power approached Fauquier County with a new transmission line proposal, and the company formed a Community Advisory Group to help a routing consultant locate sensitive areas. There were a total of three meetings over the summer. As Dominion explains it, the need for the line is driven by load growth in the region and the potential for a new, large electricity user in the Warrenton area. To address this issue, Dominion wanted to connect the Warrenton substation to one in Gainesville, or to beef-up lines going into Warrenton and upgrade those going into the Wheeler substation (Prince William County). At first, Dominion was proposing two potential solutions—one of which concerned PEC due to its proximity to historic districts, battlefields, schools, neighborhoods and rural lands in the New Baltimore area. The last Advisory Group meeting, however, Dominion presented a third alternative that would route electricity to the Wheeler substation through a new substation to be sited in western Prince William County.

Dominion says that all three alternatives remain “on the table,” but they’ve said that—at the present time—they would not recommend the overhead or underground routes that directly connect the Warrenton and Wheeler substation. Public open houses will be held in Gainesville and Warrenton the week of September 16th. PEC will continue to monitor the progress of these lines as well as keep citizens informed.

For more information about this issue, contact Rob Marmet—PEC’s Senior Energy Policy Analyst—at rmarmet@pecva.org or (540) 347-2334.

Taking the Green Out of Orange?

Orange County’s draft Comprehensive Plan is now before the Board of Supervisors. At a public hearing in August, a majority of people present voiced concerns about the draft and asked the Planning Commission to take more time. The citizens wanted stronger language protecting agricultural lands from residential and commercial uses, and they called for a reduction of areas planned for unnecessary growth. Yet, the Planning Commission didn’t heed their concerns and approved the draft 4-1. The Board will take this draft, with minimal changes, to public hearing on October 22nd.

The Comprehensive Plan is not at all the Board is working on right now. They are also laying out large development plans for the Rt. 3 Corridor and surrounding land through the “Route 3 Strategic Visioning Initiative.” This initiative will likely be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan and would act as a guide for future development. Unfortunately, this plan currently includes an excessive development area, unnecessary ‘upzoning’ of agricultural land to commercial and residential uses; and the corresponding premature extension of services and infrastructure. If acted upon, these plans would have major consequences for the county as well as place the cost of development on the taxpayers. The next scheduled public comment session on the initiative is Tuesday, September 24, at 7:00pm, and we hope to see you there.

For more information about this issue, please contact PEC’s Dan Holmes at dholmes@pecva.org or (571) 213-4250.

Developers Push for More Houses

The Greens South at Willowsford

The developers of Willowsford (just north of the Prince William County line) are requesting a zoning amendment to build an additional 802 residential units. This rezoning would increase the density beyond that allowed by Loudoun’s Revised General Plan, and it could set a precedent of allowing primarily suburban-type development in the Transition Policy Area. The Transition Policy Area is meant to incorporate both suburban and rural features to provide a sense of transition between Loudoun’s suburban east and the rural west.

Tuscarora Crossing

Different players, similar issue: another company is requesting a zoning amendment in order to develop almost 800 single-family dwellings just south of the “Village at Leesburg” development. This proposal doesn’t line up with the with the land use policies of Loudoun’s Revised General Plan—which allows for 25% of this property to be used for residential use. However, this proposal contemplates using 100% of the property for residential use.

The Planning Commission will be holding public hearings for both of these applications in October, and PEC will keep residents posted as things progress.

For more information about these issues and other current proposals, please contact Ed Gorski—PEC’s Loudoun Land Use Officer at (703) 727-9632 or egorski@pecva.org.

Photo Contest

Remember to vote for this year’s winners!

PEC announced the opening of our 4th Annual Photo Contest this summer, and the deadline to enter was September 15th. PEC staff and guest judges will pick the finalists, but we’ll need your help to pick the winners! Stay tuned for the online vote this October. For more information about this year’s photo contest, visit www.pecva.org/photocontest.

Bill Would Provide Permanent Tax Incentive to Conserve Land

A bipartisan group of U.S. Congressmen introduced a bill over the summer that would help landowners protect millions of acres of land that are critical for water, forests, wildlife and working farms. PEC was a part of groups that worked with lawmakers on this bill, and we hope that it is passed by the end of the year.

“By extending the current, enhanced federal tax incentive for land conservation, this bill would make conservation more affordable for more land owners—enabling them to protect lands that are vitally important to our communities,” said Chris Miller, PEC’s President. “In our region, the combination of the federal tax benefit with the Virginia Land Preservation Tax Credit has exponentially increased the pace of conservation since 2006. We look forward to working with the Virginia Congressional delegation to ensure that these critical incentives remain available for landowners.”
Dear Friends,

I can't believe that 20 years have passed since Disney made plans to build a history-themed amusement park in Virginia's Piedmont, which they called "Disney's America." Inevitably, I get calls every year from people researching the debate over the potential impacts of the proposed theme park and real estate development. I expect that in the coming year the debate will be renewed and discussed in many forums—perhaps in conversations that you are part of. So, I thought it would be useful to offer my perspective on why the campaign against "Disney's America" was so important to the future of the Piedmont region and Virginia, but also to the future of PEC and conservation organizations.

It was a big fight and a good fight—a fight made possible by a long list of wonderful and talented people. Our coalition included some of the best organizations and thinkers in conservation, historic preservation, and sound land use planning—and we showed the entire nation that a grassroots movement is capable of challenging—even stopping—a major development that would attract even more development in the surrounding region—as has occurred with their parks in Florida and California. If Disney had come to town, we wouldn't just be dealing with the development in Haymarket today, but a 20-50 mile radius of sprawl that would have swallowed up much of the Northern Piedmont. We would have lost countless historic and natural resources to motels, shopping malls, and the vast transportation infrastructure needed to cater to Disney's thousands of visitors. So, while the parts of the nearly 3,000 acres that Disney aggregated for the project have since been developed, it has certainly been less than Mickey would have brought to the area.

The potential negative impacts of "Disney's America" was a wake up call. It showed us what we could lose if we didn't take necessary steps to protect this region. We learned that we could organize effectively to shape how the Piedmont's citizens, organizations, and officials think about land use planning and its effects on transportation, the environment, and economic development policy.

The fight with Disney also helped PEC become the organization we are today. Since 1995, PEC has built an organizational structure of professional staff, board and active members that focuses on sustaining local conservation in the Piedmont after Disney. We will be discussing the successes and lessons learned since the Disney fight in greater detail at our Meeting at Galemont this October—and I hope to see you there (more information about the meeting can be found on page 2 of this issue). Until then, if you know anyone who fought Disney, I ask that you thank them. Thank them for their tireless work and vision of hope for the future of the Piedmont.

Sincerely,

Chris Miller, President