



Piedmont
Environmental
Council

ANNUAL REPORT · 2020

Dear Friends,

If we've learned one thing this past year, it's that being able to participate is a blessing and a privilege. Each individual action, whether the planting of a native plant garden, the donation of a conservation easement, or the act of attending a local meeting, is necessary for good things to happen—for the Piedmont and for all of us.

With your support and participation, PEC has expanded the sphere of individuals and groups working to protect and promote the Piedmont's unique communities and resources. Despite the extraordinary circumstances we all experienced in 2020, Piedmont residents stepped up and achieved great things for our communities and for conservation.

In response to hunger needs arising from the pandemic, local donors and foundations gave more than \$200,000 for our Farm to Food Bank initiative, allowing us to provide milk and meat to 24 food pantries across the Piedmont. More than 460 people volunteered at our Community Farm at Roundabout Meadows, observing social distancing

while harvesting more than 25,000 pounds of fruits and vegetables for donation to Loudoun Hunger Relief.

The pandemic did not stop conservation either, as 47 landowners completed easements to protect 5,287 acres in 2020. Our nine-county service region now has more than 426,000 acres of permanently conserved private land, an area more than twice the size of Shenandoah National Park and accounting for nearly 20 percent of the region's entire land area.

Throughout the pandemic, more and more people have sought access to nature, emphasizing the vitality of our trails, parks and open spaces to everyone. PEC has been a leader in advocating that parks and trails be included in local and state plans and budgets. We've also expanded public access at our own properties at Roundabout Meadows and the Piedmont Memorial Overlook.

Looking forward, we will continue to build momentum toward the long-term goal of sustainable communities in a conserved large landscape. We will protect important farmland by expanding partnerships with the



GETTING OUTDOORS AND
ENJOYING NATURE ON A WALK IN ALBEMARLE COUNTY.
Photo by Chris Hawk

federal Agricultural Land Easements program and other new funding sources. We will assist efforts to update Piedmont historic districts to recognize the contributions of African-American and Virginia Indian communities that were overlooked in previous research. We will increase production at the Community Farm by 10,000 pounds and improve the local food system. We will collaborate to create several new public access areas along the Rappahannock River, expand trail connections and acquire new public access sites across our service region. With your continued support and participation, we can accomplish all this and more in 2021.

We have a long way to go, and so much great work to do together. Thank you for what you do for the Piedmont's communities and environment.

Sincerely,



Chris Miller
President



Jean Perin
Co-Chair, Board of Directors



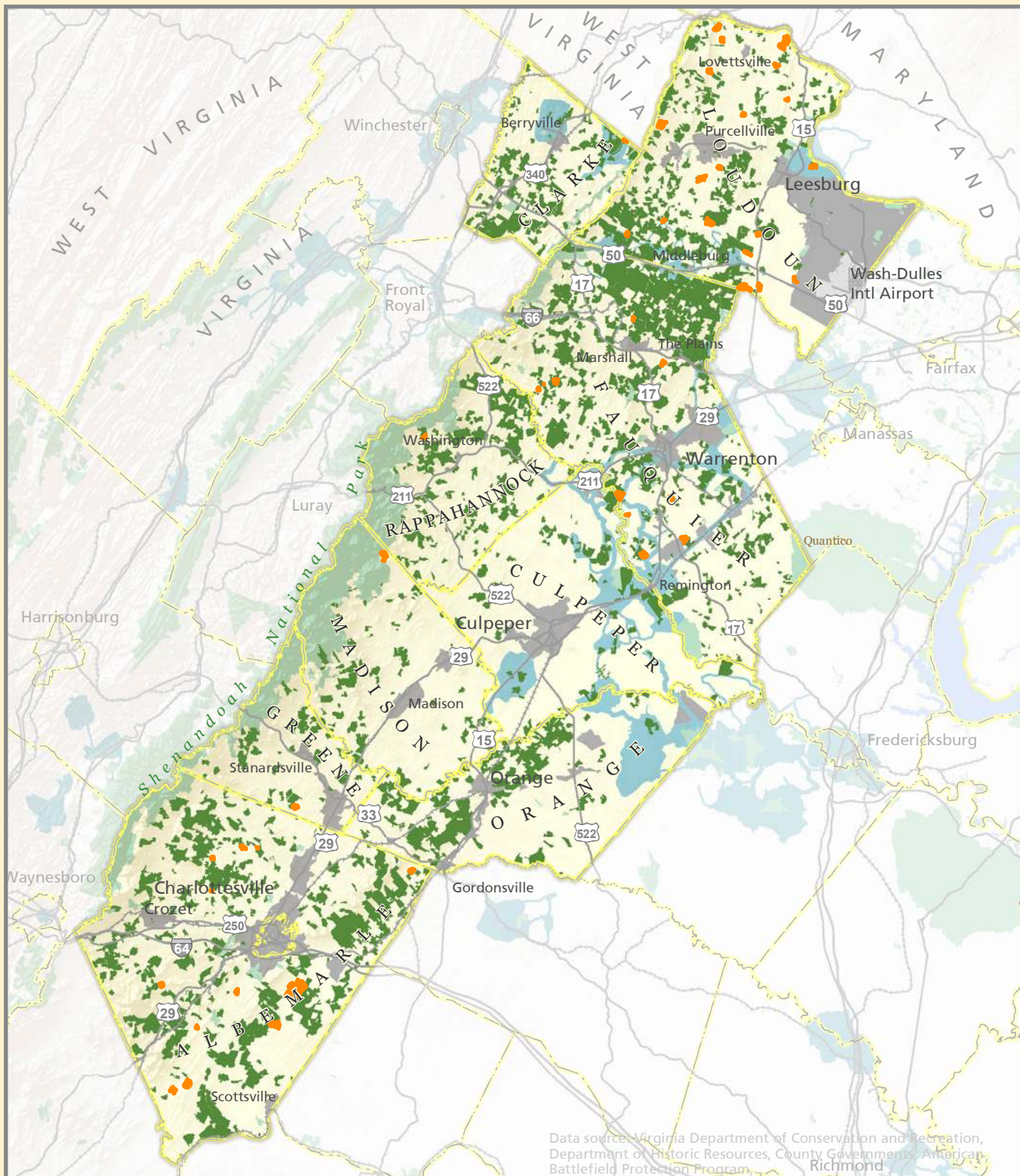
George L. Ohrstrom, II
Co-Chair, Board of Directors



BLACK BEAR TAKING A NAP. WINNER OF THE NATIVE PLANTS AND WILDLIFE CATEGORY IN PEC'S 2020 ANNUAL PHOTO CONTEST.
Photo by Matt Huntley

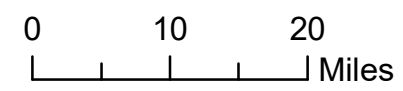
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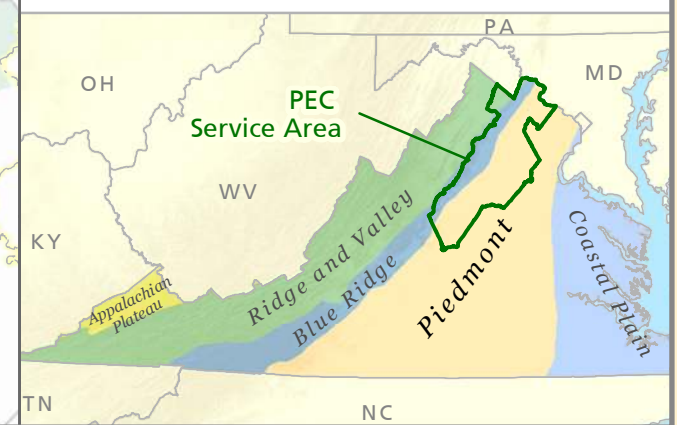
Piedmont Region

-  Easements Recorded in 2020
-  Conservation Easements
-  Publicly Owned Lands
-  Civil War Battlefields
-  Historic Districts
-  Areas Designated for Development



PEC's nine-county service area has more than 426,000 acres of Virginia's privately conserved land, protecting natural, cultural, historic and scenic resources including 201,000 acres of prime farm soils, 163,000 acres of historic districts and battlefields, and 111,900 acres along Scenic Byways.

Physiographic Regions of Virginia



Data source: Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Department of Historic Resources, County Governments, American Battlefield Protection Program, Richmond

Food Donations Facilitated by PEC



Food Pantries Receiving
Donations



Farms Supplying Milk



Farms Supplying Meat



PEC's Roundabout Meadows
Community Farm - Produce
Donations

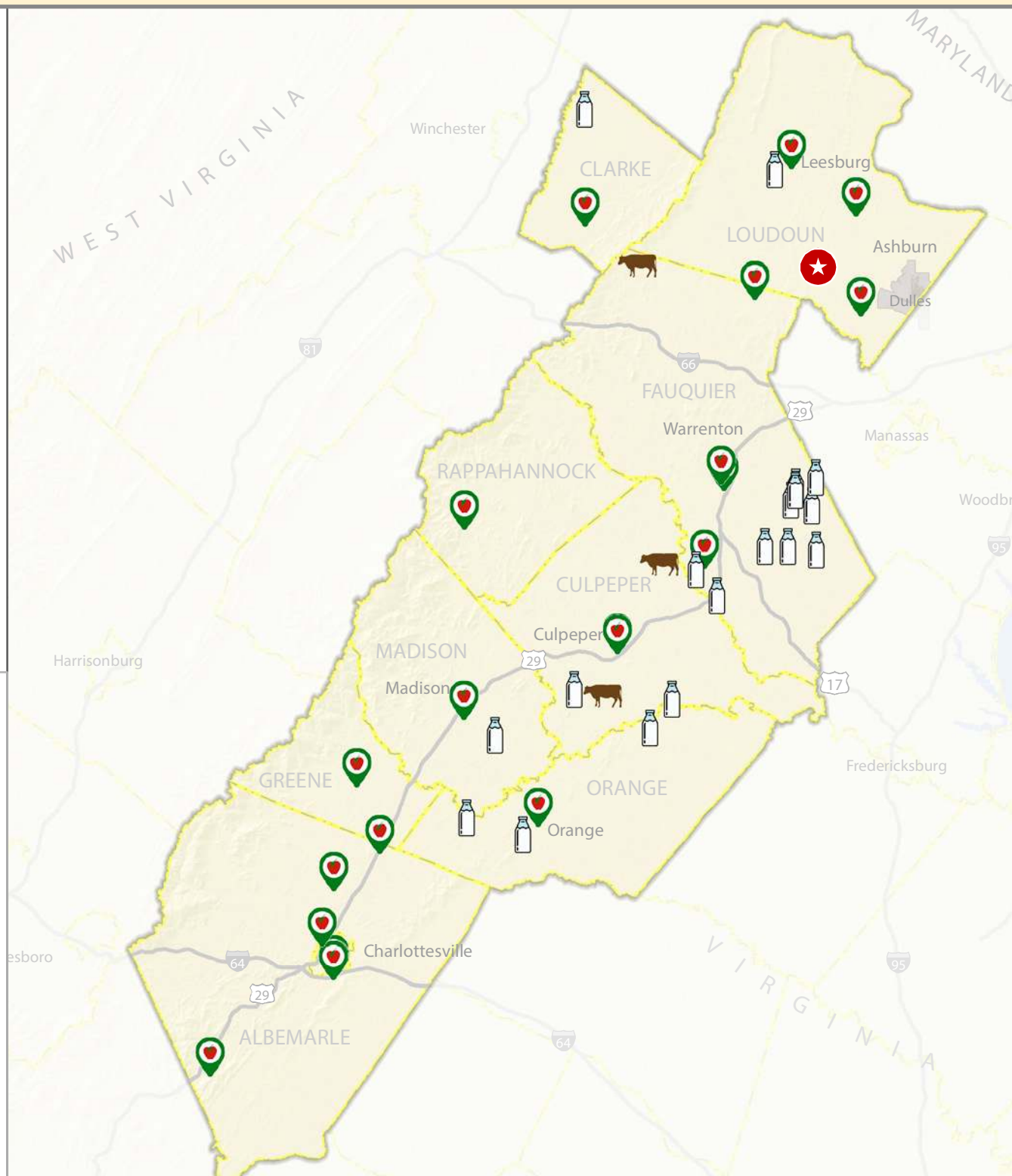
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Miles



Since March 2020, with the help of partners and supporters, PEC has provided:

- 25,000 pounds of vegetables
- 30,000 gallons of milk
- 11,000+ pounds of local beef and pork

to food-insecure individuals and families in our nine-county region of Virginia's northern Piedmont.



land conservation

VOLUNTARY ACTION • OUTSTANDING SUCCESS • SAVING PLACES PEOPLE LOVE



ENJOYING THE VIEW OF PROTECTED LAND AFTER A
HIKE TO PEC'S PIEDMONT MEMORIAL OVERLOOK IN PARIS, VA
Photo by Marco Sánchez

Conservation by way of preservation

Mountain Grove in southern Albemarle County stands as one of the country's earliest examples of classic Palladian architecture. Similar to Jefferson's first designs for Monticello, the 1804 house is virtually unaltered from its original construction, with no indoor plumbing, its interior woodwork still intact and original painted marbleizing still visible. Thanks to Peter Stoudt and Alice Handy, this historic home and its surrounding 200-acre landscape will be protected into the future and may one day open to the public.

"I bought it because the place intrigued

me, and I thought it should be preserved from the moment I saw it. We quickly realized what a valuable, historic artifact this home is, and that made us think about putting it under easement," said Peter, an avid history buff and passionate historian.

Peter and Alice acquired Mountain Grove at auction in 2015, the same year that Peter joined the PEC Board of Directors. "Being on the board of PEC for six years was a real learning experience for me. [PEC President] Chris Miller showed us a satellite image of Virginia at night showing PEC's nine-county corridor from western Loudoun all the

way down to Albemarle distinctly darker than the rest of the area and to our east. That's when I became very interested in land conservation," Peter said.

Last year, Peter and Alice worked with PEC to develop the easement on Mountain Grove, which they then donated to the Albemarle Conservation Easement Authority. "Ultimately, we'd like to restore the house so people can enjoy it. It needs substantial work, but structurally it's sound and in amazing condition for its age," Alice said. "It would be a gem to the community."

Peter and Alice have now conserved



PETER STOUTD AND ALICE HANDY AT THEIR FOXINGTON FARM. Photo by Peter Krebs

more than 1,000 acres in Albemarle County. In 2019, they purchased and placed under easement over 800 acres they call Foxington, in Free Union. The outcome for both these properties could have been very different. We are grateful to Peter and Alice, and others like them, who are willing to preserve and restore these precious lands and buildings in Virginia and the Piedmont.

2020 Highlights

- ▶ PEC received the 2020 **Governor's Environmental Excellence Gold Medal Award** for our conservation, stewardship, restoration and public engagement work at Gilberts Corner. At one time marketed as development parcels with vast commercial and residential potential, the 340-acre conservation area owned by PEC and NOVA Parks at Gilberts Corner now provides opportunity for residents to enjoy trails and open space and help grow fruits and vegetables for Loudoun Hunger Relief.
- ▶ Thanks to a grant from The Volgenau Foundation, PEC is facilitating **easements on several major working farms in the upper Rappahannock watershed**. The grant provided matching funds for more than \$2.2 million in federal and state grants to conserve farmland in Madison and Orange counties.
- ▶ As part of PEC's **Town to Trail Initiative**, we completed the purchase of a 0.85-acre residential lot in the Town of Gordonsville. This was the final property needed to create a 10-acre open space park network anchored by Firemen's Fairgrounds and Verling Park. A grant from the Manning Family Foundation made this key land acquisition possible.



PROPERTIES THAT ARE PART OF THE TOWN TO TRAIL INITIATIVE IN GORDONSVILLE.

5,287 Acres Protected in 2020

County	Acres protected in 2020* by Conservation Easements	Total Acres* protected by Conservation Easements
Albemarle	2,028	108,869
Clarke	23	26,481
Culpeper	0	20,406
Fauquier	800	109,487
Greene	75	10,648
Loudoun	2,159	62,684
Madison	140	16,115
Orange	0	38,554
Rappahannock	62	33,413
PEC Region	5,287	426,657

* Totals do not sum due to rounding



strong rural economies

THRIVING FARMS • LOCAL FOOD • INNOVATION • HEALTHY, WORKING LAND

PEC COMMUNITY FARM AT ROUNDABOUT MEADOWS
VOLUNTEER JAIDEN HELPS HARVEST PEPPERS.
Photo by Marco Sánchez

Farm to Food Pantry initiative

Economic impacts of the pandemic led to a tripling of demand on Piedmont food pantries. Local farmers also felt the impacts. The shutdown of schools and school nutrition programs, for example, severely disrupted dairy farmers' operations and sales.

PEC saw an opportunity to help make new connections. Long-time conservation partner, Ken Smith, a fourth-generation dairy farmer at Cool Lawn Farm in Remington, asked the Maryland & Virginia Milk Producers Cooperative Association (MDVA Milk) to adjust some of its processing, delivery and staffing operations to make the shift from schools to food pantries. Meanwhile, we reached out to food pantries from Loudoun down to Charlottesville to identify their needs for fresh milk.

With generous donations from the PATH Foundation and individuals, we were able to start up a milk initiative. On May 21, MDVA Milk delivered the first 140 gallons of milk to Fauquier Community Food Bank and 60 gallons to Rappahannock Food Pantry. Media coverage generated waves of additional philanthropic support that opened the doors to get milk to even more

Since March 2020, with the help of partners and supporters, PEC has provided 25,000 pounds of vegetables, 30,000 gallons of milk, and more than 11,000 pounds of local beef and pork to food-insecure residents in our nine-county region of Virginia's northern Piedmont.

food pantries throughout the Piedmont. In total, we've purchased more than 30,000 gallons of fresh milk and donated it to approximately 20,000 families in need, with 24 food pantry partners. The initiative has also supported 17 local dairy farms that are members of MDVA Milk.

In the summer, we launched a similar beef initiative, donating more than 1,000 pounds of ground beef from Lakota Ranch and Locust Dale Cattle Company in Culpeper to four food pantries. Then during the fall, Karen Way, owner of Ovoka Farm in Paris, joined the effort with a commitment to donate 10,000 pounds of ground beef and pork. By the end of the year, our Farm to Food Bank initiative had donated more than 11,000 pounds of ground meat to pantries in Culpeper,



FIRST MILK DELIVERY FROM MAOLA DAIRY TO LOCAL FOOD BANKS.
Photo by Marco Sánchez

Loudoun, Fauquier and Rappahannock counties.

Meanwhile, at PEC's Community Farm at Roundabout Meadows in Loudoun County, we accelerated our plans to expand food production in response to community needs. **We tripled the farm's production area**, and thanks to the new Phyllis Mills Wyeth Greenhouse, we were able to start our growing season earlier and do more successive plantings. All told, we produced more than 25,000 pounds of fruits and vegetables, all of which were donated to Loudoun Hunger Relief.

2020 Highlights



- In the spring, PEC took ownership of the **Gilberts Corner Farmers Market** and surrounding property. We launched a partnership with the Loudoun Valley HomeGrown Markets Cooperative, which began managing the market on a weekly basis. The cooperative is also working to add a selection of local producers to enhance what was already a popular destination.

PEC AND LOUDOUN VALLEY HOMEGROWN MARKETS COOPERATIVE STAFF AT THE GILBERTS CORNER FARMERS MARKET.
Photo by Marco Sánchez

- In 2020, PEC collaborated with Virginia Cooperative Extension to **revamp our Buy Fresh Buy Local online presence**. We worked with software partners at MarketMaker™ to provide a searchable interactive map that consumers can use to find local farms and food near them, as an enhancement to our BuyLocalVirginia.org and BuyLocalPiedmont.org websites.

An aerial photograph of downtown Culpeper, Virginia, taken at sunset. The image shows a dense urban area with a mix of historic brick buildings and modern structures. A large train with several passenger cars is visible on tracks in the lower-left foreground. The sky is a vibrant orange and yellow, with the sun low on the horizon. In the background, rolling hills and mountains are visible under the twilight sky. The foreground is dominated by a large green building with a white roof, which is partially obscured by a semi-transparent green banner containing text.

better communities

CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT • GREAT PLACES TO LIVE • MANAGING TRAFFIC AND TAXES

DOWNTOWN CULPEPER AT SUNSET.
Photo by Hugh Kenny

Turning a page on involuntary land loss

In the years between 1920 and 2017, the number of Black-owned farms in the U.S. dropped from more than 900,000 to 45,508. Their acreage shrank from almost 19 million to just 2.5 million. Much of this land loss has been involuntary, stemming from our country's broken way of dealing with land that's informally passed down without a will, common among

populations that historically lack access to estate planning resources.

Heirs' property—land that has been passed down informally from generation to generation, usually from landowners who died without a will—is often rural land first acquired by African Americans after the Civil War. Given the number of years that have since passed, heirs can number into the hundreds. A disastrous legal construct called a “partition action” allows any one of these co-tenants to force the sale of the entire property, against the wishes, and sometimes even without the knowledge, of the others. Such partition actions are often initiated by

developers who take advantage of the financial and legal hardships that often fall upon heirs' property owners.

In 2020, Virginia proudly became the 16th state to pass the Uniform Partition of Heirs' Property Act. The law preserves the right of a co-tenant to sell his or her interest in inherited real estate, while ensuring that the other co-tenants will have the necessary due process. Co-owning family members now have the first option to buy out those who want to sell, and judges must consider cultural, sentimental and historical significance of a property, as well as livelihood and consequences of eviction, before ruling to sell it. If the property is to be sold, it must be sold on the open market to ensure families receive a fair sale price.

The unanimous passage of the Heirs' Property Act is the culmination of more than a year's work by the Black Family Land Trust, which led a broad coalition of Virginia's United Land Trusts, including PEC, and others. PEC assisted in discussions with the Virginia Bar Association and Uniform Law Commission and played a key role in advocating for the bill prior to and during the 2020 General Assembly.

Now we are supporting efforts to ensure that families, Realtors, attorneys, conservation groups and other practitioners are aware of the law and how they can apply it. In November, we co-sponsored a webinar on the Heirs' Property Act. More than 120 people attended the webinar, “Keeping Land in the Family.” Learn more at pecva.org/heirs.



BASKETBALL LEGEND RALPH SAMPSON SHARES HIS FAMILY'S STORY DURING THE CEREMONIAL SIGNING OF THE HEIRS' PROPERTY ACT. Photo by Marco Sánchez

2020 Highlights

- In 2020, PEC staff worked day in and day out to respond to local land use concerns and to pursue **planning for smarter growth and stronger communities**. We attended planning commission meetings, board of supervisors meetings, regional planning exercises, and the General Assembly, both in person and via Zoom, to participate and help residents weigh in effectively.
- PEC is helping local governments and communities throughout the Piedmont develop clear and consistent policies and regulations for **utility-scale solar facilities** that provide clean renewable energy while preserving the Piedmont's natural, agricultural, historic and scenic resources.
- PEC supported Fauquier Habitat for Humanity by designing a **green landscape for a new home on Haiti Street in Warrenton**. In September, PEC's Dan Holmes led a volunteer event that put 217 native plants into the ground, creating a low-maintenance landscape that meets EarthCraft standards.



HAITI STREET PLANTING IN WARRENTON. Photo by Matt Coyle



history and beauty

SENSE OF PLACE • SCENIC VIEWS • BATTLEFIELDS • HISTORIC DISTRICTS

LEFT TO RIGHT: MEMBERS OF THE TINGER FAMILY, HOWARD LAMBERT - PRESIDENT OF THE FREEDOM FOUNDATION, REV EUGENE FRENCH TRIPLETT JR - VICE PRESIDENT OF THE FREEDOM FOUNDATION, REVEREND DOUGLAS T. GREENE OF EBENEZER BAPTIST CHURCH, ADAM GILLENWATER - PEC, KAT IMHOFF - PEC. *Photo by Bri West*

Creating a digital record

Historians and family members have long sought to set the record straight about the mountain communities and cultures that once thrived in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia. The establishment of Shenandoah National Park in the 1930s created an extraordinary natural setting for Americans and visitors from around the world, but it was not without costs. Thousands of residents were displaced and their communities destroyed to make way for the park.

For years, PEC has been working to recognize and honor these families and their history. This year, we took another important step toward telling a full history. In partnership with James Madison University (JMU), PEC digitized thousands of legal documents

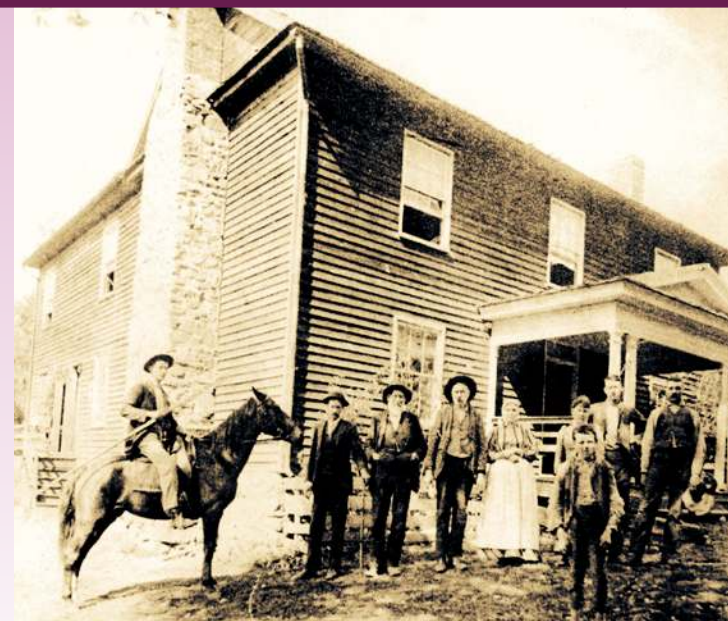
related to Virginia's condemnation of private lands in Rappahannock County for the creation of Shenandoah National Park.

Previously, only limited records of these properties were publicly available, while the basement of the clerk's office in Rappahannock County held boxes of uncategorized condemnation cases, appraisals, surveys and other detailed information about individual properties. Following similar work by JMU in Rockingham County and with the support of Rappahannock County Clerk of the Circuit Court Margaret Ralph, in 2019 PEC hired former Rappahannock County Administrator Debbie Keyser to digitize more than 6,000 documents related to land condemnation in Rappahannock County.

The new database now makes the digitized records available to all, even in a time of pandemic-based social distancing, and enables families to uncover the legacy and sacrifices made by their ancestors. The online database is hosted by JMU and accessible from the PEC webpage on the project: pecva.org/snp-digital-records.

The now-completed Rappahannock County project advances an overall goal of making accessible all related records within all eight counties—Albemarle, Augusta, Greene, Madison,

Page, Rappahannock, Rockingham and Warren—from which lands were taken to create the park. PEC is now continuing the digitization project in Madison County.



J. BERNARD AND RUBY BOLEN AND FAMILY IN FRONT OF THEIR RAPPAHANNOCK COUNTY HOME IN THE 1890S. Photo courtesy Rappahannock Historical Society

2020 Highlights



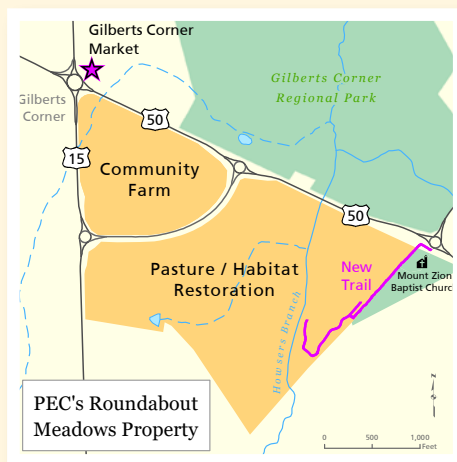
CONTRACTORS FLY THE RESTORED METAL TRUSS WATERLOO BRIDGE BACK ONTO ITS STONE ABUTMENTS.
Photo by Hugh Kenny

- ▶ In November, VDOT contractors placed the rehabilitated **Waterloo Bridge** back onto its stone abutments. This rehabilitation culminates a seven-year campaign led by PEC to convince VDOT to rehabilitate this historic metal truss bridge rather than replace it with a concrete bridge. The rehabilitation was completed in February 2021, when the bridge reopened to traffic for the first time since 2014.
- ▶ The Fairfield Foundation, PEC's consultant for the Rapidan River—Clark Mountain Rural Historic District, continued its survey work through 2020. In December, we held an **outdoor community meeting in Little Petersburg**, a historic African American community founded in 1867 along the Rapidan River. We expect survey work to continue through 2021, as we get closer to completing the National Register nomination.
- ▶ In December, PEC was proud to join with The Freedom Foundation, Reverend Douglas T. Greene of Ebenezer Baptist Church, and members of the Tingler family, at the **groundbreaking for a new memorial site in Culpeper County**. Once complete, the site will honor the contribution of United States Colored Troops (USCTs) during the Civil War, as well as the history of nearby Maddens Tavern and Ebenezer Baptist Church.
- ▶ PEC supported community leaders in St. Louis, a historic African American community in Loudoun, in **opposing a proposed development that would cover wetlands** and place added stresses on their water supply. We successfully petitioned the state Department of Historic Resources to add the affected area to the St. Louis Historic District and requested a National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 review of the development proposal.

Connectivity and Access to Nature

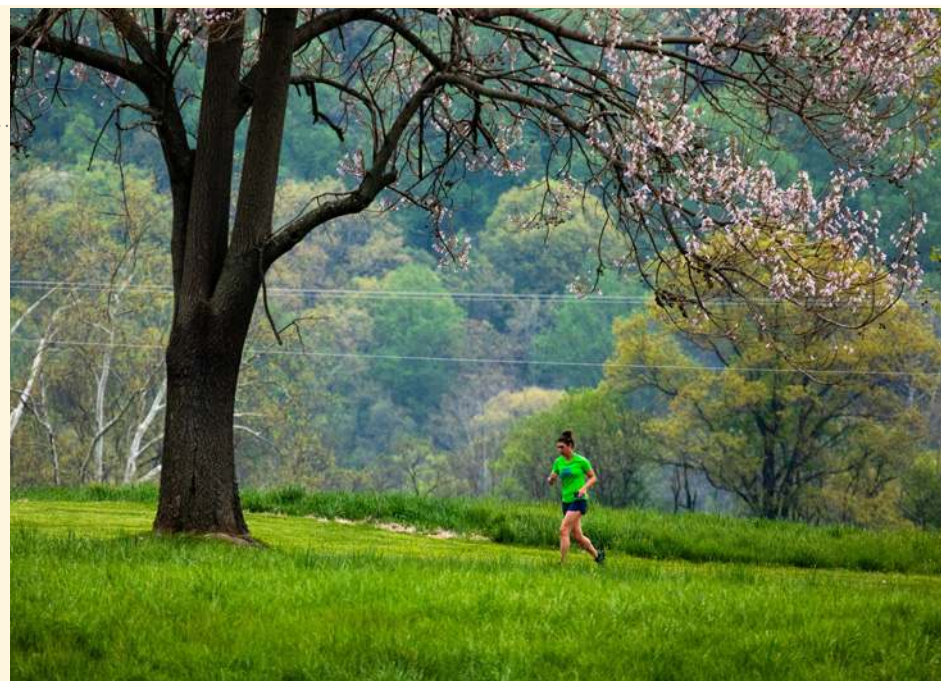
As the onset of Covid-19 social-distancing coincided with beautiful spring weather, many Piedmont residents turned to natural areas, parks, trails and even rural roads, enjoying what we all know to be certain: these places sustain us, provide respite and serve as our oasis.

PEC was at the forefront in advocating for expanded investments in parks, trails, and pedestrian and bicycle connections. In May, PEC President Chris Miller published a widely cited call to action in the Virginia Mercury for local and state governments to increase funding for park and trail connections and to incorporate public access to open space in their land use plans. Meanwhile, PEC worked locally to help provide residents with new public access opportunities, including the following efforts.



- Also in Loudoun, PEC is a member of the county-appointed Linear Parks and Trails committee working to develop a **county-wide trail system**. PEC also leads the Emerald Ribbons Committee, which is tracking development applications and potential land acquisition projects to ensure that opportunities are not missed to build key segments of the trail network.

- PEC opened the **Old Carolina Road Trail** near our Roundabout Meadows property in the spring. Once a Native American trail and later also used by early colonists as a north-south route through Loudoun County and beyond, the Old Carolina roadbed serves as the backbone for the half-mile trail, which creates public access to the scenic, historic, agricultural and natural resources of Gilberts Corner. PEC partnered to create the trail with NOVA Parks, Fauquier and Loudoun Garden Club and the Mount Zion Cemetery of Aldie.



WOMAN RUNNING ON A TRAIL IN LOUDOUN COUNTY. Photo by Will Parson, Chesapeake Bay Program

- PEC donated \$3,000 for right-of-way acquisition to help make possible an extension of the **Warrenton Branch Greenway Trail** connecting downtown Warrenton with the Piedmont countryside.
- PEC and partners successfully championed the City of Charlottesville to start a pilot program to partially close streets to make social distancing easier for cyclists and pedestrians. Charlottesville launched the program in October, **expanding pedestrian access on Belmont Bridge**. We hope this successful pilot program will be expanded in 2021.



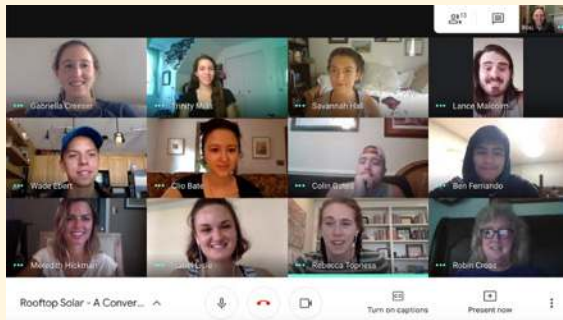
CHARLOTTESVILLE PILOTS SAFE STREETS PROGRAM. Photo by Peter Krebs

A Necessary Pivot to Digital

This year was certainly unlike any other and required us to shift almost all of our education and outreach to online programs. While a few PEC events this spring and summer were canceled due to Covid-19, we worked hard to create digital alternatives and enhance engagement opportunities.

PEC Summer Fellowship

We reshaped our seven-week Summer Fellowship curriculum for online learning, finding new ways to connect the 2020 Fellows with the Piedmont and provide an immersion course in conservation. PEC used online story maps, videos, and role-playing exercises to expose 11 college-age students to the work of a conservation organization. The result was a successful 2020 Fellowship, culminating in some of the highest-quality student projects in the program's 14-year history and creating new tools to teach students about conservation in their own communities.



Virtual House Party

A huge thank you to all the community members who made PEC's Virtual House Party & Auction an unqualified success. More than 250 people registered to bid on our 30 auction items and participate in the paddle raise. The online event raised critical funds to support work that conserves land, strengthens rural economies, and increases accessibility to local food.

Webinars and online events

More than 700 individuals attended our 22 webinars on topics ranging from pedestrian-friendly streets to green infrastructure to land conservation options.

Videos, story maps and web-based projects

Our communications team and field staff produced several educational videos and interactive story maps about ongoing projects. One neat outcome was the public art bike ride in Charlottesville.



MOBILE-FRIENDLY SELF-GUIDED OPTION FOR OUR PUBLIC ART BIKE RIDE IN CHARLOTTESVILLE. Photo by Peter Krebs



clean water

SAFE DRINKING SOURCES · GOOD HEALTH · PLACES TO SWIM AND FISH

HUGHES RIVER
Photo by Hugh Kenny

Fronting the costs for agricultural water quality

Eight generations of cattle farming had taken its toll on the streams at Dean and Carina Elgin's Mountain Hollow Farm in northern Fauquier County. Historically, "all the cattle had access to the creek. That was our watering system. And that was the norm in that day," Dean Elgin says. By 2015, the Elgins wanted to repair the streambank erosion and reduce the water pollution at their property. But while they qualified for state and federal cost-share funding for fencing, gates, hardened stream crossings, water pumps and water troughs for livestock, those cost-share programs only reimburse landowners after a project is completed. Like many landowners, the Elgins couldn't afford

the more than \$120,000 upfront cost, and the projects were put on hold.

PEC was able to offer the Elgins a short-term, zero-interest loan through our James M. Rowley Goose Creek Conservation Fund. This fund is one of 11 similar conservation funds that PEC manages and that support on-the-ground conservation and habitat restoration projects in specific geographic areas within PEC's nine-county region. A grant from the Chesapeake Bay Land and Water Initiative, a project of the Chesapeake Bay Funders Network and Land Trust Alliance, helped PEC create the revolving loan program.



DEAN AND CARINA ELGIN. Photo by Hugh Kenny

With the loan, the Elgins fenced out more than 4,100 feet of streams in the Hungry Run watershed and installed a new well and livestock watering system. They repaid the loan when they received their cost-share reimbursement. PEC is now using the revolving loan funds to help other landowners expedite water quality improvements in

the Goose Creek watershed.

If it weren't for PEC's short-term loan program, Carina says, "everything would have deteriorated. We couldn't have afforded it, otherwise, when all the fences eventually fell down. Dean would've had to give up the cows and farming. This lets us start anew."

2020 Highlights

- ▶ After successfully piloting our **revolving loan program** with the Elgins, PEC has expanded the program to southern Fauquier in collaboration with the Julian Scheer Fauquier Land Conservation Fund. In 2020 we completed a loan project with a farmer to install livestock exclusion fencing along Sumerduck Run.
- ▶ Through the **Headwater Stream Initiative**, PEC and Friends of the Rappahannock deployed staff and volunteers to reforest 44.5 acres with 11,920 trees along 2,615 linear feet of Rappahannock River headwater streams. These reforested riparian buffers help protect our clean streams and the quality of our drinking water and restore the Chesapeake Bay.



800 TREES PLANTED! PEC JOINED FRIENDS OF THE RAPPAHANNOCK, VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND VOLUNTEERS TO PLANT TREES THAT WILL PROTECT WATER QUALITY AND IMPROVE HABITAT ALONG MOUNTAIN RUN AT OLD HOUSE VINEYARDS IN CULPEPER.

Photo by Bri West

- ▶ PEC's Krebsner Fund for Rappahannock County Conservation is collaborating with the Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District to **help agricultural landowners expedite livestock exclusion fencing and other water quality improvements**. A \$50,000 Krebsner Fund grant helps reimburse landowners for remaining costs of approved Agricultural Best Management Practices. The grant has funded more than 20 new projects, including 17+ miles of stream fencing.
- ▶ More than **23 miles of streams were protected by conservation easements in 2020**, bringing the total number of stream-miles protected by easements to 1,766. In addition, 123 acres of wetlands were protected, bringing the total to 10,431 acres. All of these protected resources contribute to the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay, since water flowing through the Piedmont eventually enters the Bay.

A close-up photograph of a bee flying over a field of yellow flowers. The bee is in the center-right of the frame, facing left. It has a black and yellow body with orange markings on its abdomen. The flowers are bright yellow and in sharp focus, while the background is a soft, out-of-focus green and yellow. A semi-transparent green banner is at the bottom of the image, containing text.

habitat restoration

.....
WILDLIFE CORRIDORS • BIODIVERSITY • POLLINATORS • NATIVE PLANTS

BEE AT PEC'S LARSON NATIVE PLANT GARDEN IN WARRENTON, VA.
Photo by Hugh Kenny

Brook trout restoration and successful outcomes



BROOK TROUT. Photo by Chris Hawk

Dams and other barriers like culverts can disrupt natural stream flow and disconnect fish and wildlife habitat. That's why we've been working hard, along with partners, to remove and replace several road-stream crossings with fish-friendly crossings that reconnect habitat for brook trout and other native fish in Rappahannock River headwater streams.

In partnership with private landowners and public agencies and nonprofits, PEC has completed four trout stream restoration projects reconnecting more than 10 miles of native brook trout habitat. We are currently collaborating with the Virginia Department of Transportation to complete two pilot projects in Rappahannock County that replace publicly owned culverts on

state roads with fish-friendly structures.

In fall 2020, as part of a monitoring effort with Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources fish biologists, we were thrilled to discover these efforts to restore fish habitat are working. At Whiteoak Canyon over Cedar Run, we found a trout paradise, with 22 brook trout counted downstream of the new bridge and 15 trout counted upstream. Several weighed in at 150+ grams and measured over nine inches in length, a sign of a diverse age population, which is good for genetics and an indication of sustained habitat. At Bolton Branch in Rappahannock County, brook trout counts have grown by 32-38 percent throughout the stream's restoration area.

2020 Highlights

- ▶ As a member of the Virginia Safe Wildlife Corridors Collaborative, PEC helped support passage of a groundbreaking law to create a **statewide Wildlife Corridor Action Plan**. The plan will identify wildlife corridors and threats to wildlife movement, and will recommend priority areas for wildlife corridor projects and human safety.
- ▶ PEC's Krebsler Fund provided a grant for the creation of a **master plan and on-the-ground improvements for Rappahannock County Park**. In the spring, the park's advisory council partnered with Friends of the Rappahannock and PEC to plant 145 new native trees. A section of the park's right-of-way that borders Highway 211 has been planted with flowering redbuds for the spring and sugar maples that will boast bright red foliage this fall.
- ▶ PEC collaborated with Dr. Andrea Weeks and plant ecology students at George Mason University to conduct a **formal survey of vegetation at our Roundabout Meadows property**. In October, eight students collected and identified plant species from the seven-acre wetlands preserve area. The group's work follows that of recent GMU graduate Cameron Pierce, who received funding through the Garden Club of America's Joan K. and Rachel M. Hunt Summer Scholarship in Field Botany to begin the survey last summer. This effort was supported by the Fauquier and Loudoun Garden Club.
- ▶ More than 160 individuals attended **"Capturing the Rain,"** PEC's June webinar on habitat restoration and green infrastructure options.



DR. WEEKS AND A GROUP OF STUDENTS CONDUCT A FORMAL SURVEY OF VEGETATION ON PEC'S SEVEN-ACRE WETLANDS PRESERVE AT GILBERTS CORNER. Photo by Hugh Kenny

energy, transportation & climate

REDUCING VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED • INCREASING RESILIENCY • STORING CARBON



SOLAR PANEL GROUND MOUNT SYSTEM AT OAKHAM FARM IN LOUDOUN COUNTY.
Photo by Hugh Kenny

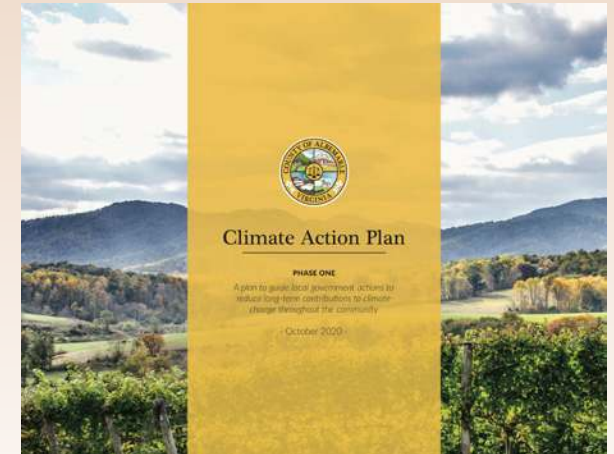
Albemarle moves forward with climate action plan

In October, the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to adopt its Climate Action Plan Phase 1. The adoption of this plan marks an important first step toward creating a broad “to do” list that aims to address climate change. The climate plan is the result of significant input from local individuals and organizations including PEC.

PEC provided comments and suggestions throughout the development of Albemarle’s Climate Action Plan Phase 1. We encouraged the County to immediately begin CAP Phase 2, in order to “move swiftly and set clear timelines, specific targets, and interim benchmarks.” Now PEC is focused on assisting Albemarle in developing the concrete actions and commitments needed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 45% from 2008 levels, and to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

For the past 50 years, PEC’s work at the local level has in many ways led the way in climate resilience, including:

- working with private landowners to protect forest and farm lands, preserving their carbon sequestration benefit/potential;
- advocating for policies and working with landowners to protect stream corridors and local drinking water supply areas;
- encouraging planning to direct growth and development into compact urban centers and reducing associated emissions from sprawling development patterns; and
- focusing on building a strong local food network.



PEC is deeply invested in the work of local land use and climate planning. With other localities in our region currently conducting, or about to initiate, comprehensive plan reviews, many opportunities abound to ensure all of our localities are incorporating climate mitigation and adaptation strategies in their plans.

2020 Highlights

- ▶ The Coalition for Smarter Growth, a division of PEC founded by PEC and partners, led a successful campaign to convince metropolitan Washington’s regional planning agency to **prioritize transit and other transportation investments that address climate change**. This provides a critical boost for transit, bicycling and pedestrian improvements that both create better communities and reduce pollution.
- ▶ As the commonwealth faces growing interest in **large-scale renewable energy production**, PEC championed regulations, incentives and criteria to guide its development. We campaigned for incentives that encourage solar facility placement on old industrial and coal-mined lands, and for battery storage to maximize the electric demand that will be met by utility-scale solar energy projects. And we have helped local governments craft policies that preserve high climate-value forests and soils while guiding development of solar facilities.



- ▶ PEC and the Local Energy Alliance Program organized the 2020 Solarize Piedmont campaign to **bring rooftop solar to more Piedmont households**. Solarize Piedmont enables homeowners to get solar installed at discounted rates from qualified installers, who in turn are able to build their businesses through marketing to a larger customer base.
- ▶ PEC supported successful efforts to **preserve Virginia’s Smart Scale program**, a system for prioritizing transportation projects. Smart Scale provides important criteria for ranking transportation projects, including land use, safety and environmental quality. Several bills that were introduced in the 2020 General Assembly sought to reduce the importance of land use and environmental quality criteria in Smart Scale, but thanks to advocacy by PEC and other partners, all were defeated.

The Piedmont Foundation

Photo by Hugh Kenny

Established to hold and manage special funds in support of PEC, the Piedmont Foundation assures PEC's capacity to respond to key opportunities and challenges as they arise and to fulfill our core mission over the long term. A separate 501(c)(3) charitable organization governed by an eight-member Board, the Foundation accepts gifts of cash, securities, property and appreciated assets. The Foundation also offers opportunities for tax-advantaged planned gifts, including trusts, bequests and life income plans.

Currently, the Piedmont Foundation manages funds in the following categories:

- ▶ **Conservation Stewardship Fund — Evergreen Fund (Board Directed)**
- ▶ **Easement Defense Fund**
- ▶ **General Endowment Fund**
- ▶ **Piedmont Memorial Overlook Fund**
- ▶ **Albemarle County Land Conservation Program Endowment Fund**
- ▶ **Albemarle General Endowment Fund**
- ▶ **Backer Fund**
- ▶ **Land Conservation Officer Endowment (Albemarle) Fund**
- ▶ **CRUT Fund**
- ▶ **Smart Growth Fund**
- ▶ **Unrestricted Fund**

▶ Land Conservation Fund

Within this fund, the following Regional Land Conservation Funds have been established:

- Bull Run Mountains Land Conservation Fund*
- Clarke County Land Conservation Fund*
- Culpeper County Land Conservation Fund*
- Greene County Land Conservation Fund*
- Krebsner Fund for Rappahannock County Conservation*
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With much gratitude, PEC presents the names of individuals, families, foundations, businesses and organizations that supported The Piedmont Environmental Council during 2020. Although we do not have the space to honor everyone, we are extremely grateful for the generosity of each of our members. We offer sincere thanks for your ongoing commitment to promoting and protecting the Piedmont region.

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MATT COYLE AT A BEEF DELIVERY TO FAUQUIER FISH WITH KAREN WAY OF OVOKA FARM, ANDY PLATT OF RAPPAHANNOCK FOOD PANTRY AND WAKEFIELD SCHOOL STUDENT VOLUNTEERS. Photo by Marco Sánchez



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STAFF "PHOTO" DURING A VIRTUAL STAFF MEETING.





PEC MEMBER MARGRETE STEVENS PARTICIPATES IN A FAUQUIER COUNTY NATIVE TREE GIVEAWAY PUT ON BY FRIENDS OF THE RAPPAHANNOCK AND PEC IN CELEBRATION OF EARTH DAY 2020. Photo by Mike Stevens

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PEC'S ADAM GILLENWATER AND FREEDOM FOUNDATION PRESIDENT HOWARD LAMBERT DISCUSS PLANS FOR THE NEW HISTORIC MARKER IN CULPEPER AT THE GROUNDBREAKING. MORE ON PAGE 11. *Photo by Bri West*

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HIKERS STOP TO READ MORE ABOUT PEC'S PIEDMONT MEMORIAL OVERLOOK AND SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE IN PARIS, VA.



The Bill Backer Legacy Society

Named for the avid conservationist and former Piedmont Foundation President Bill Backer, Bill rallied concerned citizens to participate in early efforts to plan for future growth and conservation in Virginia.

If we want strong, resilient communities for generations to come—then it's essential and urgent for us to invest in conservation. We invite you to make a commitment to preserve the Piedmont by leaving a gift in your will and becoming a member of the Bill Backer Legacy Society. Help ensure the Piedmont remains a beautiful and productive place to live, work and visit for generations to come.

Join the Bill Backer Legacy Society by including a planned gift to PEC in your estate plan. Planned gift options include making a bequest through your will, codicil, or trust, or recognizing The Piedmont Environmental Council as a beneficiary of your IRA or retirement plan. Gifts of property and other assets are also possible.

Your gift to PEC can be applied to the general endowment fund (held by the Piedmont Foundation), which helps provide an income stream to PEC, or can be directed toward a specific program or county conservation fund.

If you have already included PEC in your estate plans, please let us know so we can include you in the Legacy Society. For more information please contact: Doug Larson, at (540) 347-2334 or dlarson@pecva.org.



PIEDMONT MEMORIAL OVERLOOK IN AUGUST.
Photo by Hugh Kenny

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PEC COMMUNITY FARM MANAGER DANA MELBY HELPED US DONATE MORE THAN 25,000 POUNDS TO LOUDOUN HUNGER RELIEF IN 2020. *Photo by Marco Sánchez*





PEC'S BIKECVILLE PROGRAM WENT VIRTUAL OR SELF-GUIDED FOR MOST OF 2020, BUT NOT BEFORE THIS FUN MARDIS GRAS-THEMED RIDE IN FEBRUARY! *Photo by Naomi Johndaugher*

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PEC FIELD REPRESENTATIVE CLAIRE CATLETT AND ALBERT SPELLS FROM THE U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE TALK TO BOLTON BRANCH FARM OWNER GARY YOUNKIN AFTER THE SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THE TROUT STREAM RESTORATION PROJECT ON HIS PROPERTY. *Photo by Hugh Kenny*



In Memory

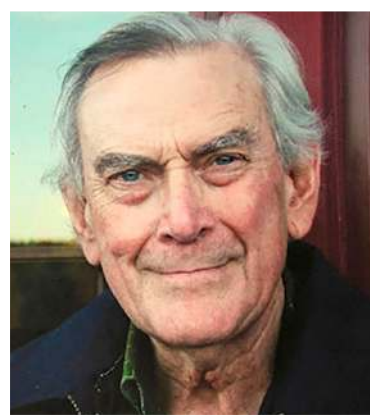
This winter, we were sad to learn of the passing of three former PEC board members. All three were passionate advocates for the natural resources, rural economy, history and beauty of this region, and all three will be sorely missed.



Phil Irwin

PEC BOARD TERM: 1972 - 1987

At recent PEC events, Phil Irwin would always take a moment to share how proud he was to be the last founding member of The Piedmont Environmental Council, having served on our original Board of Directors. Phil was a fierce advocate for conservation, a proponent of thoughtful land use planning and a dear friend of many. His dedication to the Piedmont was well known in his adopted home of Rappahannock, where he occupied a reserved seat at Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors meetings for decades.



Lynn Coleman

PEC BOARD TERM: 2004 - 2014

Born and raised in west Texas, Lynn Coleman loved the farms and forests of Fauquier and Rappahannock. At PEC, he was best known for his leadership role fighting Dominion's TrAIL transmission line project, as well as our successful campaign to overturn the National Interest Electric Transmission Corridor designation covering much of the east coast. A former General Counsel to the Department of Energy and a renowned energy lawyer in Texas, Washington, and internationally, Lynn had a deep interest in the environment, historic preservation and practical solutions to combat climate change.



Jean Brown

PEC BOARD TERM: 1995 - 2000

Jean Brown was a passionate advocate for rural Loudoun County and force of nature in support of public participation, serving on numerous advisory groups and boards in addition to PEC. Other organizations that benefited from Jean's leadership included Scenic Virginia, the Virginia League of Conservation Voters, and the Loudoun County Preservation and Conservation Coalition. Also an advocate for small business, Jean helped launch the Loudoun County B&B Guild, and served on the County Historic District Review Committee and the Rural Economic Development Committee.

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Dawn Wilmot, EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

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This list includes Board members who served at any time between January 2020 and January 2021.

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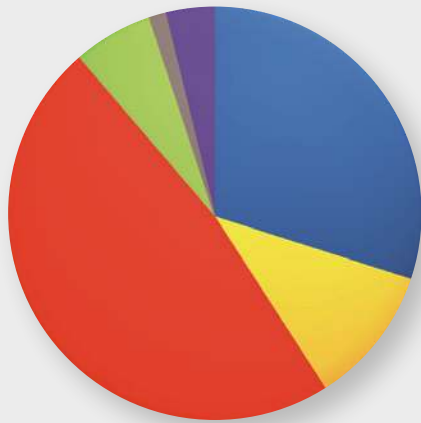
Leslie Cockburn

Helen DuBois

** Denotes 2020 Executive
Committee member*

2020 Financial Report

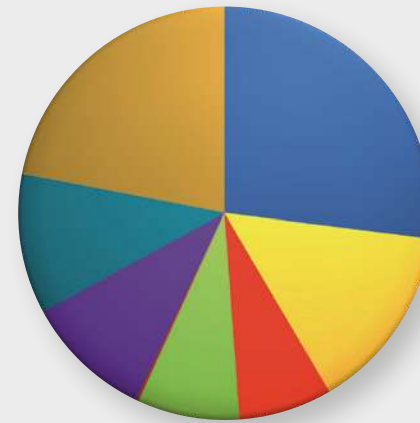
Sources of Organizational Support



Individuals	\$ 1,537,801	29.7%
Government	552,934	10.7%
Foundations	2,503,575	48.3%
Special Events, Net	322,170	6.2%
Investments, Other	68,644	1.3%
Real Estate Transactions	198,152	3.8%
Total	\$ 5,183,276	100%

The above figures do not include the activities of the Coalition for Smarter Growth, a division of PEC. Copies of PEC's audited financial statements and IRS forms 990 are available upon request. Copies of our most recent statements may also be found at PEC's website at www.pecva.org/donate. For more information, please contact PEC's accounting office at (540) 347-2334.

Program and Operating Expenditures



Conservation, Stewardship and Habitat	\$ 1,349,578	27.0%
County Issues and Planning	729,831	14.6%
Policy*	366,294	7.3%
Farms and Food	403,446	8.0%
Transportation and Growth Management	11,901	0.2%
Outreach and Education	506,594	10.1%
Development	555,653	11.1%
Administration	1,084,859	21.7%
Total	\$ 5,008,156	100%

* Policy reflects regional and state-level work on policy related to energy, air quality, water quality, telecommunications, land conservation and land use.



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434.977.2033

Orange Office

11395 Constitution Hwy
Montpelier Station, VA 22957
540.347.2334

Find contact information for
PEC staff throughout our region
at www.pecva.org

PEC'S MAGGI BLOMSTROM PARTICIPATES
IN A FALL TREE PLANTING IN CULPEPER
Photo by Bri West

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