



The Piedmont View

A MEMBERSHIP NEWSLETTER OF THE PIEDMONT ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL AUTUMN 2018

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Award-Winning Farmer Protects Farmland for Future Generations

By Paula Combs

Nestled at the bottom of Clark Mountain and along the Rapidan River in Orange County, Glenmary Farm sits on some of the best agricultural soils in Virginia. Its rich farming history dates back to the eighteenth century.

The Nixon family purchased the property in 1980, and the farm has since become an award-winning cattle, turkey and grain operation.

This past summer, in an effort to preserve the prime farmland and help ensure continued operations, the Nixons chose to permanently protect 382 acres of their land through a conservation easement with the Piedmont Environmental Council, Culpeper

Soil and Water Conservation District and USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service.

"We want our kids to be able to farm and provide for future generations. And that's kind of the whole goal of this," said Tom Nixon, who owns and operates Glenmary Farm with his wife Kim. "Both of our children have developed a strong passion for working on our farm and for today's agricultural industry."

With complementary interests, their daughter Elizabeth, a 2016 Oklahoma State graduate, helps manage the cowherd and handles communications, and their son Robert, a 2017 University of Northwestern Ohio graduate, focuses on crop work and



Glenmary Farm owners, Tom and Kim Nixon, with their daughter Elizabeth and son Robert.

mechanics.

"We look at all the different farms in the area and in other places — families we know — and many are struggling to survive in agriculture," said Tom.

"The older I get the more I hate to see farmland being lost," added Kim.

The Nixons were unable to rely solely on the Virginia Conservation Tax Credits

associated with donated conservation easements, so they pursued a different option.

In a unique approach to private lands protection, PEC partnered with NRCS and the Culpeper SWCD to help the Nixon family leverage funding from the federal Agricultural Conservation Easement Program and the state Virginia Land Conservation

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Keynote Speaker to Discuss Benefits of Strong Towns at PEC's Annual Meeting

By Sean Tubbs

The leader of an organization that educates American communities on the benefits of smart planning believes that desirable urban communities can play a role in promoting rural land conservation.

"When we develop great places people want to live in that

are financially productive, they use less land and they use it in a more intense way," said Charles Marohn, president and founder of Strong Towns. "There are a whole lot of people who support the organization because of the conservation aspect of it."

Marohn founded Strong

Towns in 2009 as a way to help shape conversations about the link between economic development and the vitality of cities and towns. The urban planner travels around the country offering advice and support on how smart planning can become financially strong by making the right choices.

"A 'strong town' is one that is able to take care of and manage its own needs without needing outside assistance," Marohn said. "It is one that is able to maintain its own roads and its own services without being dependent on new growth or some type of outside revenue stream."

This fall, Marohn will share these ideas and more when he is the keynote speaker at PEC's Annual Meeting in Keswick, Va.

"We are excited to have such

a thought-provoking leader in urban growth be a part of our annual event," said PEC President Chris Miller. "He will be an asset and wealth of information for local government officials and residents in attendance."

In addition to a website that is updated with new planning-related stories, Marohn hosts a weekly podcast that covers the same ground.

"What we're trying to do is help communities of people ask a different set of questions so they can start to wrestle with these issues," he said.

The economies of Albemarle and Charlottesville are fueled in part by the presence of the University of Virginia, but Marohn said the two localities would do well to look to a future where that is no longer the case.

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Thank you for helping to protect the Piedmont!



Founder of Strong Towns, Chuck Marohn, will be the keynote speaker at PEC's Annual Meeting on October 20, 2018. Courtesy of Strong Towns

Forging Better Bike and Pedestrian Connections

By Peter Krebs

Get your bicycle helmets and walking shoes ready because PEC has some exciting updates on our greenways initiative in the City of Charlottesville and Albemarle County!

In last fall's Piedmont View, we announced our collaboration with the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission (TJPDC) and the Charlottesville Area Community Foundation (ACF) to envision and implement bicycle and pedestrian connections that are practical and also allow people to enjoy the outdoors within the urban core. Since that time, and through many community conversations, we have gained a ton of insight and seen tremendous enthusiasm for a better-connected region.

Over the last year, PEC staff have engaged and collected feedback from residents through a variety of events, such as a hip-hop Cypherways charrette, a webinar series and social bike rides, one of which Charlottesville Mayor Nikuyah Walker and the city's Police Department joined.

We also set out to meet people in their environment. By attending community events, visiting shopping centers and taking part in celebrations, we had the opportunity to hear locals' ideas and share information about our initiative with them.

Building from the excitement of the community, we created a coalition that includes regular trail users such as hikers, naturalists and mountain bikers, as well as other passionate, but less obvious, allies such as physicians, caregivers and business owners.

To make sure the coalition encompassed a diverse selection of voices, we also sought and engaged traditionally-excluded residents, such as tenants of affordable housing, youth and other people who are not able to or typically do not attend planning meetings.

The coalition is now helping to steer a Greenways Plan and mobilize support for both long-term and immediate bicycle-and-pedestrian improvements.

Another way PEC and TJPDC collected valuable input was through a survey, which was distributed online and at events and health clinics. Receiving over 860 responses, it was a true success. We are currently interpreting the treasury of data, which will be used to guide future initiatives. In

addition to the survey, a petition of support for trails and greenways was created, and, as of this past August, it had well over 900 signatures!

Work has begun on the Greenways Plan and it should be completed around the new year.

Many projects are already underway in both the city and county. There is also the possibility to implement some ideas from our coalition, such as closing the quarter-mile gap between Schenck's Greenway and downtown, sooner than later.

As the Greenways Plan is developed, we will continue to advocate for better bicycle and pedestrian connectivity across the board. In the meantime, there are several ways you can also help! Go to our website at www.pecva.org/cvillegreenways and sign our petition, volunteer with us or donate. If you would like regular updates or to become more involved, please contact me directly at pkrebs@pecva.org.



Charlottesville Mayor Nikuyah Walker (left) joined the May 29 Hip Hop Vibe Ride in Charlottesville. These fun gatherings provide an informal setting in which to learn more about the community, share ideas and to grow an advocacy network. Photo by Peter Krebs



From left to right: Volunteer Bob Brickhouse, PEC community outreach coordinator Peter Krebs, Charlottesville Safe Routes to School coordinator Kyle Rodland and Charlottesville Bike/Pedestrian intern Niko Test at the Westhaven Community Day on Saturday, August 4, 2018. Photo by Peter Krebs

MEET PEC

Sean Tubbs Field Representative

We welcomed award-winning journalist Sean Tubbs to PEC in late June to be the new field representative for our southern region. Sean is building off of years of experience covering local government in Albemarle and Charlottesville to help lead our work related to urban and rural planning in those localities, as well as Greene County.

"I'm so fortunate and blessed to have the chance to use my real-world knowledge about how my community works to help shape and guide policy," Sean said. "I'm so excited to work alongside my many talented colleagues as we work to improve the quality of life in our towns while protecting wildlife habitat and water quality for generations to come."

Sean's professional writing career dates back to his undergraduate days at Virginia Tech, where he honed his journalism skills at a student newspaper and as an intern at WVTF Public Radio. After graduating with a degree in history and political science, he began a career satisfying his curiosity by asking as many questions as possible. He feels that's a good way to help make things better.

Immediately before joining PEC, Sean spent eleven years at the nonprofit news organization Charlottesville Tomorrow. There he wrote hundreds of stories about transportation, land use, water supply and other crucial issues. Sean now looks forward to learning even more about the Piedmont region and is thrilled to explore new rural and urban landscapes. You can reach Sean at (434) 977-2033 ext. 7046 or at stubbs@pecva.org.



MEET PEC

Evan McCarthy Field Representative

This past July, we welcomed Evan McCarthy to PEC. Evan is a field representative in Loudoun County and works on various land use issues including Loudoun's new Comprehensive Plan. Teaming up with Gem Bingol, PEC's primary land use representative in Loudoun, Evan focuses on reviewing development applications and zoning ordinances to communicate and promote a sustainable and environmentally-conscious growth pattern across the county.

As a western Loudoun County native, specifically Round Hill, Evan spent his formative years exploring the natural areas of the Blue Ridge Mountains and the Shenandoah River near the Appalachian Trail. This fascination and appreciation of Loudoun's rural characteristics steered Evan toward two summer internships with the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation and the Land Trust of Virginia where he worked on the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation grant round and conservation easement monitoring.

Prior to PEC, Evan worked for Draper Aden Associates as a Right of Way Manager securing utility easements in accordance with the Dominion Energy Underground Project throughout the greater Washington D.C. area. Evan received his Bachelor of Arts degree (Geography and Anthropology) from the University of Richmond in 2016. Extremely interested in the intersection between land use and community engagement, Evan looks forward to working with various stakeholders across the conservation community in his home county. Evan can be reached at emccarthy@pecva.org or (540)-347-2334 ext. 2334.



Seeing Clear Results

By Paula Combs

On a sunny August day with frogs chirping and a great blue heron catching fish, PEC field representative Julie Bolthouse collected samples from the stream.

Every month for nearly 4 years, Julie, along with coworkers and fellows, have checked water quality levels along a part of Howsers Branch that runs through Roundabout Meadows, a property gifted to PEC in 2013.

Before we took ownership, the farm was leased as pasture for cattle. And with free range of the property, the cows waded in and drank directly from Howser's Branch. The impact this had on the water quality, stream bed and stream banks was devastating. The poor water quality, along with the muck and lack of alternative water sources during dry seasons, also negatively impacted the cattle's health and the farm's bottom line.

With a desire to keep the property as a working farm but in an environmentally healthy capacity, we started assessing our next steps.

Staff and volunteers monitored the E.coli bacteria for two years while cattle had access to the stream. Data showed levels up to 100 times the amount considered to be safe for recreational use, which means the stream was absolutely inadequate for providing drinking water to livestock.

"We worked with the Department of Environmental Quality to develop a monitoring protocol that included

measures of temperature, turbidity and bacteria," says Julie.

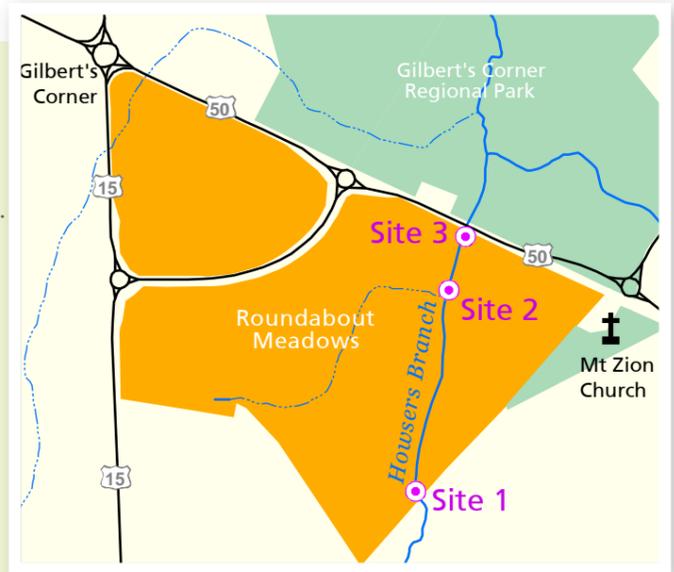
Three locations on the property were measured each month (see map for testing sites), which included: Site 1) Where Howsers Branch entered the property; Site 2) a small tributary fed by a spring on the property; and Site 3) just before Howsers Branch leaves the property.

"The results were clear. The water was being significantly impacted by sediment, bacteria and physical degradation of the stream banks and bed by the cattle on the property," Julie explains.

To address the impacts, we worked with the Loudoun County Soil and Water Conservation District to utilize state cost-share programs to implement agricultural best management practices. This included fencing the cattle back 50 feet from Howser's Branch and establishing alternative watering areas fed by clean groundwater.

When cows were in present in the stream, the data showed that water passing through Roundabout Meadows would often become polluted by unhealthy levels of E. coli and sediment. But after the fencing was installed to keep cattle out, E. coli levels and stream turbidity remained fairly stable and occasionally improved as it passed through the property.

"Installation of the fencing on the property was critical," says Mike Kane, director of conservation at PEC. "Keeping the cattle away from the streams has provided relief from the daily sediment deposition and fecal contamination caused by the livestock."



We conducted water sampling at three locations at PEC's Roundabout Meadows property: Site 1) Where Howsers Branch entered the property; Site 2) a small tributary fed by a spring on the property; and Site 3) just before Howsers Branch leaves the property.

Field staff also observed the physical condition of the stream bed improving and the bank beginning to stabilize.

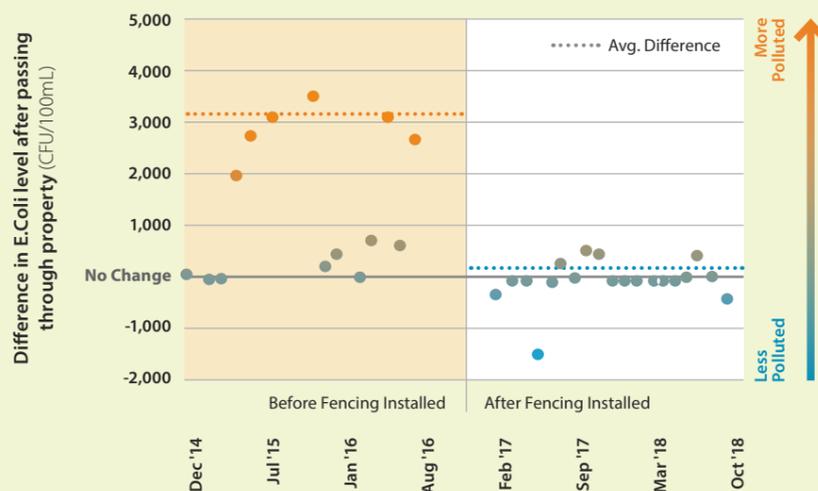
"Where the stream bank had been denuded and muddy, there is now vegetation growing and the ground is solid. And where the stream bed was mucky with few riffles, there is now more rocky substrate and new riffles forming between pools," says Julie.

We will continue monitoring the property, specifically after rainfall events, to see how effective the riparian buffer is at capturing runoff from the grazing areas. However, the biggest impact, the cattle being in the stream, is eliminated, which has resulted in a major improvement to water quality, wildlife and likely the health of the cattle.



Water sampling taken from Site 3 on Howser's Branch at Roundabout Meadows in 2014 before any best management practices were implemented.

Water sampling taken from Site 3 on Howser's Branch at Roundabout Meadows approximately 2 years after fencing was installed to keep cattle out of the water.



This graph shows the difference in measured E. coli levels between Site 1 (where the stream enters the property) and site 3 (just before the stream exits the property). Note that two extremes are off the graph (June 2015 with 21,983 and August 2015 with 10,650 CFU/100mL).

ALERT: Proposed IRS Rule Change Could Impact Land Conservation In Virginia

Virginia has long been a national leader in land conservation. A significant reason for this success is the Land Preservation Tax Credit (LPTC) program adopted in 2000. Landowners who donate a conservation easement can take a federal income tax deduction equal to the value of the easement and receive a Virginia LPTC equal to 40 percent of the value of their gift.

The IRS has proposed regulations that would characterize state tax credits like the LPTC as quid quo pro, which is essentially a payment for the donation. As a result, donors would have to reduce their federal income tax deduction by the value of the state tax credits received.

If enacted, this change could significantly reduce the tax benefits received by conservation easement donors in Virginia, and it will likely have a negative impact on the rate of land conservation in the state and across the nation. **There is a very short 45-day comment period that ends on October 11, 2018.** A public hearing is scheduled for November 5, 2018.

Your comments on this proposal can help! **For more information, background and instructions on how to comment, please go to** www.pecva.org/IRS

Pop Quiz

QUESTION

As of 2017, how many acres of land in Virginia are dedicated to farm operations?



Photo by Paula Combs

ANSWER

d) 8,100,000*

* Data collected from the United States Department of Agriculture

Award-Winning Farmer Protects Farmland for Future Generations

Continued from cover

Foundation program to make long-term preservation and stewardship of the farm possible.

"This model is one that farmers and other landowners can use to access federal and state funding opportunities in an effective way," said Chris Miller, PEC President.

With the Agricultural Land Easement component of the Agricultural

Conservation Easement Program, NRCS works through conservation groups like PEC to protect prime and important farmlands.

"Virginia NRCS has been a leader in protecting the state's productive farmland and wetlands for the past 25 years," said Jack Bricker, State Conservationist. "Working with land trust groups and private landowners, our experienced team

of easement specialists has helped protect more than 14,300 acres in 139 easements. The Glenmary Farm easement has special significance due to its high percentage of productive farmland, riparian protection, and wildlife habitat."

Approximately 45 percent of the Glenmary Farm property in Rapidan has prime statewide significant soils, 260 acres of which are open fields used for hay production, row crops and pasture. Another 90 acres are working forest for sustainable timber production. The property also has over a mile of land that borders the Rapidan River, a tributary to the Rappahannock River.

Recognized as good stewards of the land, the Nixons have implemented best management practices such as installing riparian buffers and efficiently managing agricultural inputs. Using the latest GPS technology, they tailor applications of herbicides and fertilizers to minimize over application and run-off, which is also cost-effective for their operation.

As a result, Glenmary Farm has received numerous awards, including "Virginia Farmer of the Year," "Family Farm

Environmental Excellence" and "Virginia Commercial Producer of the Year."

"With the House and Senate currently revising the 2018 Farm Bill, the funding that is allocated toward the protection of land is vital for family farmers like the Nixons throughout the rural region," said Miller. "PEC is working to increase funding available for the NRCS Agricultural Conservation Easement Program.

"In an area with increasing pressure to convert farmland into development, protecting valuable resources like Glenmary is a constructive investment by society to ensure we have soils to grow food on while making progress toward more sustainable practices. PEC's Peter Hujik and our partners have worked diligently with the Nixons to conserve Glenmary Farm, and we hope that this can be a model for similar projects throughout the region in Virginia."

** Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.*



Glenmary Farm in Rapidan, Va.
Photo by Paula Combs

Keynote Speaker to Discuss Benefits of Strong Towns at PEC's Annual Meeting

Continued from cover

"When you look at boom industries across the country, the only ones not impacted by globalization and market restrictions and the general drive to efficiencies have been the medical industry, the military and defense sector and universities," Marohn said. "Places that have those tend to fare better because they are community cash cows."

Virginia requires every city, county and town to craft a Comprehensive Plan to guide growth. Marohn said the average person should not have to stay on top of all of the details. Instead, city and county leaders should be attuned to the needs of the people who live there.

"I think our local governments should be constructed to be as responsive to the day-to-day struggles of people as they possibly can," Marohn said. "I don't think local governments are wired that way. They are wired to be responsive to state and federal programs as well as items that will allow them to grow quickly. For that reason citizens have to be involved as a bulwark against the usual development patterns."

A key component of Strong Towns' approach is the embrace of incremental steps toward community solutions, as opposed to big investments that carry

more risk. Marohn said many people are conditioned to think the bigger solution is the better choice.

"I think there's two ways to think about it," he said. "The first one has to do with a certain level of humility. If we look back in the past, some of the most egregious things we're dealing with today came from our own hubris."

At least one local planner is an avid reader of the site.

"I use Strong Towns as a source of policy ideas to consider as we tackle many of the issue that most urban areas are facing today," said Brian Haluska, a Charlottesville city planner. "While many sites dedicated to urbanism and planning can gravitate towards fantastic ideas, Strong Towns is almost radical in its constraint and practicality."

Marohn's primary interest is in making great urban places, but he sees the value in preserving rural areas as well.

"If your passion is to preserve open spaces and to lower the impact of human development, the reciprocal is that we have to make better use of the stuff we've built and better use of the places we've created rather than build new places that are financially insolvent. How do we take what we have and make it better? That's a



In addition to keynote speaker Chuck Marohn, Founder of Strong Towns, workshops will be held on solar and linear infrastructure, historical architecture, and better bike and pedestrian connectivity initiatives at PEC's Annual Meeting in October.

Strong Towns fundamental."

Many of the proposed solutions to make better urban places are often controversial, such as removing parking requirements and adopting form-based zoning codes. Both have been opposed in Charlottesville, but Marohn urges communities to start small with that which may be unfamiliar.

"This is where the whole concept of working incrementally comes in," Marohn said. "We get stuck in a paradigm where professionals and politicians say they have the answer and sell the idea to skeptics. I think that's completely backward. I think we should start with the struggles that people have and then we iterate from there."

Marohn said the Strong Towns mission is to empower municipalities to

think about the long-term impact of its investments.

"We're going to do things that the market is incapable of doing in a competitive, profitable way," Marohn said. "To me, governments need to use business principles to make decisions. They need to use real accounting to understand the financial implications of their decisions."

To hear more about Chuck Marohn's vision for urban growth and planning, register for our Annual Meeting by visiting our website at www.pecva.org/events or contacting Nan Moring at (540) 347-2334 ext. 7005. The event will be held on October 20, 2018 and will include three workshops covering topics such as solar and linear infrastructure, historical architecture, and better bike and pedestrian connectivity initiatives.

On the Ground

Albemarle

> New Biodiversity Plan

This summer, PEC weighed in with support of Albemarle’s new biodiversity action plan, a document to help preserve the county’s flora and fauna. We have also asked that a new strategic plan for economic development reflect the county’s long-standing tradition of growth management. This fall we will help strengthen stream buffer rules to improve water quality in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

> Creating Great Urban Places

We are dedicated to helping create great places in the urban ring by participating in initiatives such as the Rio Road Small Area Plan and the update of the Pantops Master Plan. Albemarle has such promise to serve as a model for how land conservation and placemaking can go hand in hand. We are also working to help supervisors identify funding for new infrastructure to ensure residents have access to trails.

Clarke

> Endangered Bumble Bee

On June 29, PEC worked with the Department of Conservation and Recreation, Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, Appalachian Trail Conservancy and researchers from the University of Virginia’s Blandy Experimental Farm to survey PEC’s Piedmont Memorial Overlook and neighboring National Park Service lands for the rusty patched bumble bee, which was listed as federally endangered in 2016. The visual survey did not turn up any rusty patched bumble bees, but five other species of bumble bees were observed, totalling 353 individuals.

> 196 Acres Protected

In July, PEC accepted a conservation easement that permanently protects 196 acres in Clarke County. Located in the Chapel Rural Historic District, the easement will conserve the scenic and historic rural landscape and preserve the property’s prime agricultural soils for forestry and agricultural purposes. The conservation easement will serve multiple public benefits like limiting disturbance of fragile karst geology, protecting drinking water sources and preserving forests and farmland needed for a rural economy.

> Water Resources Plan

Clarke County updated its Water Resources Plan to be included in the Comprehensive Plan, which addresses water quality and water quantity in the county. Information about the plan can be found at www.clarkecounty.gov. There is a **public input session** with the Board of Supervisors on **September 18** at the Berryville-Clarke County Government Center.

Culpeper

> Utility-Scale Solar

The Culpeper County Board of Supervisors recently denied the Culpeper North Solar project, the first utility-scale solar to come before them. Concerns related to history, soils and impacts to neighboring

properties weighed heavily into the 6-1 decision to deny. The county is also seeking an independent analysis on potential impacts to property values. We are hopeful the county will fund this effort and have a conclusion from the analysis before decisions need to be made on other projects.

Fauquier

> Rural Lands Plan

The rural lands section of the Comprehensive Plan is currently being updated. This chapter is important to all residents given that over 90 percent of the county is designated rural land. Overall, the draft improves the detail and coverage of the plan, but PEC does have concerns about proposed changes to county policies and zoning that would allow additional industrial type uses in the rural areas. To learn more, visit www.pecva.org/fauquier.

> Disposal of Excavated Fill Material

The county is drafting a zoning text amendment on the disposal of nonagricultural excavation material on an agricultural parcel. PEC’s concern has been enforcement and mitigating impact on adjacent property owners from erosion, contamination of groundwater and decrease in quality of life. We are advocating for a strong county ordinance that protects the waterways and adjacent property owners, as well as supports bonafide agricultural operations.

Greene

> Strategic Plan for Tourism

In July, the Greene County Board of Supervisors approved a new strategic plan for tourism that has great potential to help protect the rural character and landscape. The new strategy calls for “preserving our natural beauty, rural scenery, mountain views, view sheds and night skies.” Next steps include a comprehensive marketing strategy to promote Greene as a gateway to the Shenandoah National Park along the county’s western boundary. At the same time, we continue to cautiously monitor efforts to develop a new reservoir to support future growth. We are working to promote efforts to build a parallel road network to serve as a local alternative to U.S. 29.

Loudoun

> Comprehensive Plan Advances

Comprehensive Plan updates are now being discussed by the Planning Commission. The target date for a public hearing is on November 1. So far, PEC’s concerns with the Commission’s discussion are: 1) the continued interest in conversion of rural lands to transition areas; 2) changes to the transition area’s density and addition of light industrial uses; and 3) a lack of support for Purchase of Development Rights.

> Rt. 15 North Public Hearing

A Board vote is due on September 20. This will greatly influence the approach for preserving rural roads in Loudoun. Suburbanizing roads instead of using context-sensitive traffic calming solutions can easily lead to the acceptance of other non-rural influences.

> New Initiative to Help Conservation

Supervisor Buffington has proposed a Board member initiative that would accelerate the pace of conservation by helping landowners defray some of the up-front costs associated with donating conservation easements. Staff is to analyze and report back to the Board’s Finance/Government Operations and Economic Development Committee in October.

Madison

> Improving Fish Passage

The road crossing over Cedar Run to the White Oak Canyon trailhead in Shenandoah National Park, which PEC identified as a significant barrier for fish passage, is slated for replacement this fall or next spring. Trout Unlimited was recently awarded U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service funding to replace the crossing, and PEC has helped secure matching funds. This project is timely as record-setting flows on Cedar Run from the intense rains this summer eroded the crossing and prompted park staff to close it to vehicles. The new crossing is designed to accommodate significantly higher flows and open the constricted streambed for better fish passage.

Orange

> Neighborhood Park in Gordonsville Enlarged

Over the summer, the Town of Gordonsville moved to begin incorporating a parcel it recently acquired, with the financial support of PEC members, into the existing neighborhood park. Town Council approved the removal of dilapidated buildings and grading of the parcel, which will enlarge the park to an entire town block, in July. Incorporating this parcel into the existing park will create more open space and better connect adjacent neighborhoods. This work represents a major step forward in citizen-led efforts to expand and refurbish this beloved neighborhood park.

Rappahannock

> Community Conservation

The Board of Rappahannock County Recreational Facilities Authority (RCFA) is initiating several multi-year projects to make the Rappahannock County Park, off Highway 211, more ecologically stable. PEC is partnering with RCFA to enhance the park’s natural resources with conservation plans for native plant gardens, pollinator meadows, invasive species management, trail improvements and educational signage.

> Fencing for Clean Water

PEC’s Krebsler Fund has recently recommended funding for a Rappahannock Best Management Practice Cost-Share Program with Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District (CSWCD). The Fund will make up to \$50,000 available for CSWCD’s work to enhance landowner incentives to install agricultural BMPs, including cost-share programs for cattle-exclusion fencing and rotational grazing practices. Interested landowners should contact the CSWCD to learn more.

Out & About

Summer Safari

SMITHSONIAN CONSERVATION BIOLOGY INSTITUTE, FRONT ROYAL, VIRGINIA JUNE 9, 2018

At this year's Summer Safari, an evening of celebration to benefit the collaborative work of The Piedmont Environmental Council, Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute and Shenandoah National Park Trust, Frederick H. Prince was remembered. His wife Diana accepted an award in his honor. Mr. Prince's visionary leadership and support of many organizations, including PEC and the Coalition for Smarter Growth, transformed the future of our region. Mr. Prince was instrumental in PEC's successful fight against the proposed Disney's America theme park in 1993. He also enabled PEC to promote voluntary conservation of over 400,000 acres within the Piedmont region. Our region, the Washington metropolitan area, and the Commonwealth of Virginia are far better places because of the profound commitment Mr. Prince made to all of us.



▲ Guests socialize around the tent after dinner and music.
Photo by Gregorio Photography



▲ Mrs. Diana Prince accepts an award in honor of Frederick H. Prince from PEC President Chris Miller at Summer Safari. From left to right: Susan Sherman, Executive Director for The Shenandoah National Park Trust, Steve Monfort, John and Adrienne Mars Director for the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute, Mrs. Diana Prince and PEC President Chris Miller. *Photo by Gregorio Photography*

2018 Fellowship

Here is a snapshot from this year's successful seven-week Fellowship program, where our fellows learned necessary skills to go onto careers in land conservation, urban planning, agriculture, historic preservation, public policy and other related fields.



▲ PEC hosts a land use charrette for the fellows where they learned about policy and discussed solutions to proposed issues.
Photo by Libby Truitt



▲ Friend of the Rappahannock's Bryan Hofmann reviews water sampling data from the Rapidan River with the PEC fellows.
Photo by Robin Cross



▲ The fellows visited Powers Farm in Fauquier County. *Photo by Danielle Castellano*



UPCOMING Events

Event details subject to change. Please check pecva.org/events for the latest information.

Community Clean Water Workshop

When > Wednesday, September 26 • 6-8 PM

Where > The Piedmont Environmental Council, 45 Horner St., Warrenton, VA

Info session with PEC and the Virginia Conservation Network to learn how to protect the water in your backyard! Enjoy light refreshments and meet other clean water advocates. Learn about best management practices, citizen water quality monitoring and other ways to get engaged in water issues in your community.

Free and open to the public, but pre-registration is required due to limited space, at pecva.org/events. Contact Claire Catlett at ccatlett@pecva.org.

Albemarle's Mountain Heritage: An Open House at Mount Fair

When > Saturday, September 29 • 10 AM-4 PM

Where > Mount Fair (a private residence) near White Hall in Albemarle County

Celebration of western Albemarle mountain culture at Mount Fair.

Free and open to the public, but pre-registration is required due to its location on private property, at pecva.org/events. Contact Kristie Kendall at kkendall@pecva.org with questions.

Sustainable Landscaping Workshop

When > Sunday, October 7 • 1-3 PM

Where > The Piedmont Environmental Council, 45 Horner St., Warrenton, VA

A workshop on sustainable landscaping practices to implement at home. Take a tour of PEC's native gardens and learn from local experts at Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Department of Forestry and Hill House Nursery.

Free and open to the public, but pre-registration is required due to limited space, at pecva.org/events. Contact Julie Bolthouse at jbolthouse@pecva.org with questions.

Farmland Leasing: Stories and Networking

When > Wednesday, October 10 • 5:30-7:30 PM

Where > Loudoun (exact location TBA)

Chip Planck, long-time Loudoun farmer, will facilitate a farmer-landowner panel made up of individuals familiar with leasing arrangements to divulge their tips, advice and experiences. Following the panel, there will be time for attendees to meet and mingle. This event is for landowners looking to lease their property to farmers and for farmers searching for property to lease for a farm business.

Free but registration required, visit www.pecva.org/events. Contact Jess Palmer at jpalmer@pecva.org with questions.

HOA Forum: Common Space for the Greater Good

When > Thursday, October 11 • 5 PM

Where > Algonkian Park, The Woodlands 47001 Fairway Dr, Sterling, VA

This second HOA forum on sustainable landscape management provides the why and why not of native and invasive plants, and feature local HOA representatives to discuss their efforts and lessons learned. Designed to provide practical help and useful information to move your community toward a healthier landscape.

Registration coming soon to pecva.org/events. Contact Gem Bingol at gbingol@pecva.org with questions.

Annual Meeting: Building Strong Rural and Urban Communities

When > October 20, 2018 • 9:30 AM-1:30 PM

Where > Castle Hill Farm, 6132 Gordonsville Road, Keswick, VA

Good ruralism and good urbanism go hand in hand. Come visit Castle Hill Farm, a beautiful, historic property in Keswick for our Annual Meeting. Sit in on a short workshop and then enjoy lunch while hearing from nationally renowned influential urbanist Chuck Marohn of Strong Towns.

Tickets are \$25 for PEC members and \$35 for non-members. Lunch is included. Kids under 12 are free. Visit pecva.org/events to register. Contact Nan Moring at nmoring@pecva.org with questions.

Sporting Clays For Conservation

When > Sunday, October 21 • 11:30 AM-3 PM

Where > Prospect Hall, 187 Brucetown Rd, Kearneysville, WV

If you enjoy practicing your shooting skills while supporting a worthy cause, please join PEC for lunch and a shooting event at beautiful Prospect Hall Shooting Club. The top three scoring male and female shooters will receive prizes!

Registration at pecva.org/events. Contact Nan Moring at nmoring@pecva.org with questions.

Rappahannock Community Conservation Day

When > Sunday, October 21 • 1-4 PM

Where > Rappahannock Recreation Center, 10 Park Lane, Washington, VA

An outdoor event that showcases educational games and programs for local land conservation, wildlife habitat, native and invasive plants and water quality. Meet up with PEC, Rappahannock County Recreational Facilities Authority, Friends of the Rappahannock, RappFLOW, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, Virginia Department of Forestry, Old Rag Master Naturalists, PRISM, Rappahannock Master Gardeners, Hill House Nursery, Rappahannock Landscaping and more of the local community at the park.

Free and open to the public. Contact Claire Catlett at ccatlett@pecva.org with questions.

Exploring the Small Farm Dream

When > October 23, 30 & November 6, 13

Where > CitySpace in Charlottesville, VA

This course is for people considering launching a small farm enterprise but are not sure where to start. Designed to guide students through an initial exploratory decision-making process, it bridges the gap between ideas and action. The course will be taught by Ellen Polishuk, formerly of Potomac Vegetable Farm and author of "Start Your Farm."

\$100 per person/\$150 per pair (spouse, business partner). Register at pecva.org/events. Contact Jess Palmer at jpalmer@pecva.org with questions.

Vernal Pool How-To Workshop

When > November 9 & 10
(Rain date: November 16 & 17)

Where > Roundabout Meadows, Loudoun County

Learn about vernal pools and how to construct them! Mike Hayslett of Virginia Vernal Pools LLC will lead a two and a half day workshop, in which participants will gain hands-on experience by participating in the construction of two vernal pools on PEC's farm property.

Spots are limited; registration fee of \$30. Register at pecva.org/events. Contact Celia Vuocolo at cvuocolo@pecva.org with questions.

PEC Photo Contest

..... Get your photos in by **September 30!**

Submit your shots of bucolic views, downtown streetscapes, outdoor recreation and wildlife. Each finalist will receive a free PEC membership and have her/his work featured in upcoming PEC print and online publications. The winners of each category will receive a \$75 gift certificate to a nearby *Buy Fresh Buy Local* restaurant! And the youth category winner will receive a \$75 gift card to iTunes! Categories include: Beautiful Landscapes and Streetscapes, Native Plants and Wildlife, Recreation and the Youth Category (for ages 17 and under).

Go to www.pecva.org/photocontest for contest details. If you have questions, contact Paula Combs, senior editor & public relations manager, at pcombs@pecva.org or (540) 347-2334 ext. 7021

Dear Friends,

As the level of economic activity in Virginia steadily increases, our region is facing a wide variety of commercial, industrial and residential development proposals that have significant land use implications for conservation of rural areas and the protection of environmental quality. There are greater numbers of residential development proposals, and there have also been proposals for large industrial data centers, utility-scale solar generations facilities and rural entertainment venues. Not to mention almost weekly headline stories speculating on whether Amazon will build a second headquarters in the Washington metropolitan region, with one of the possible sites on the Loudoun/Fairfax border near Herndon.

As an underlying philosophy, PEC has always worked to guide growth to areas planned for those uses. The Piedmont region has continued to grow in population, at a rate greater than Virginia as a whole. Universities, governmental agencies and businesses are all investing in our region, in large part because of the well-planned communities and the incredible rural landscapes that we have all worked to have in place.

In most respects, our cities, towns and villages have grown gracefully, and offer more to both existing residents and visitors. As ever, there are challenges to providing public infrastructure, water and sewer, schools, broadband, parks, trails, libraries and other public services. And PEC is working with local communities to find creative and effective ways to meet those needs.

Our rural areas are well known and increasingly the destination of visitors and tourists. Many new rural enterprises are opening to meet the demand for food, lodging, recreation and entertainment.

All the while, the commitment to conservation, historic preservation and environmental protection continues. We are particularly appreciative of the investment by farmers like the Nixon family in conservation and restoration at Glenmary Farm (see cover page for story), and proud of the marked improvements in water quality that resulted from PEC's investments in fencing and alternative water systems at our own property, Roundabout Meadows.

But increasingly, we are faced with arguments to convert rural conservation and agricultural land to more intensive uses. The pitches run the gamut: we need more large lot residential development for executives; building in the rural area will free up existing homes for affordable housing; rural land can provide cheap lots to build new affordable housing; industrial and commercial development in rural areas is "higher and better use;" we need more jobs even though unemployment in our region is at an all time low; and so on.

PEC has always believed that local governments and state agencies can make better decisions on development if they are well informed and have input from the public, especially residents of the impacted community. PEC staff track development proposals and provide research and access to experts, as well as make sure the public is engaged and informed. They are helping draft policies to guide and improve the siting criteria used for utility-scale solar, data centers and other industrial uses that require access to transmission lines and fiber optic cable.



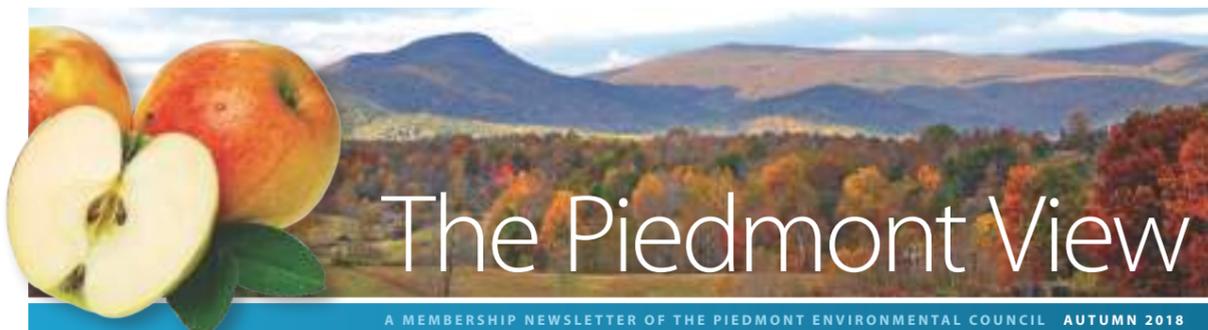
Photo by Patricia Temples

Over the summer, PEC brought on two additional staff to focus on local issues, Sean Tubbs and Evan McCarthy, both of whom are featured in this issue of the Piedmont View on page 2, to help in Albemarle/Charlottesville, Greene and Loudoun counties, all of which are dealing with a sharp uptick in development activity.

Our keynote speaker for the October 20, 2018 PEC Annual Meeting will be Charles Marohn, founder of Strong Towns, who will speak about the link between economic development, the vitality of cities and towns, and the preservation of open space. I hope you will be able to join us for what I'm sure will be an inspiring talk. Bring friends, family and any local elected officials you think might be interested as well.

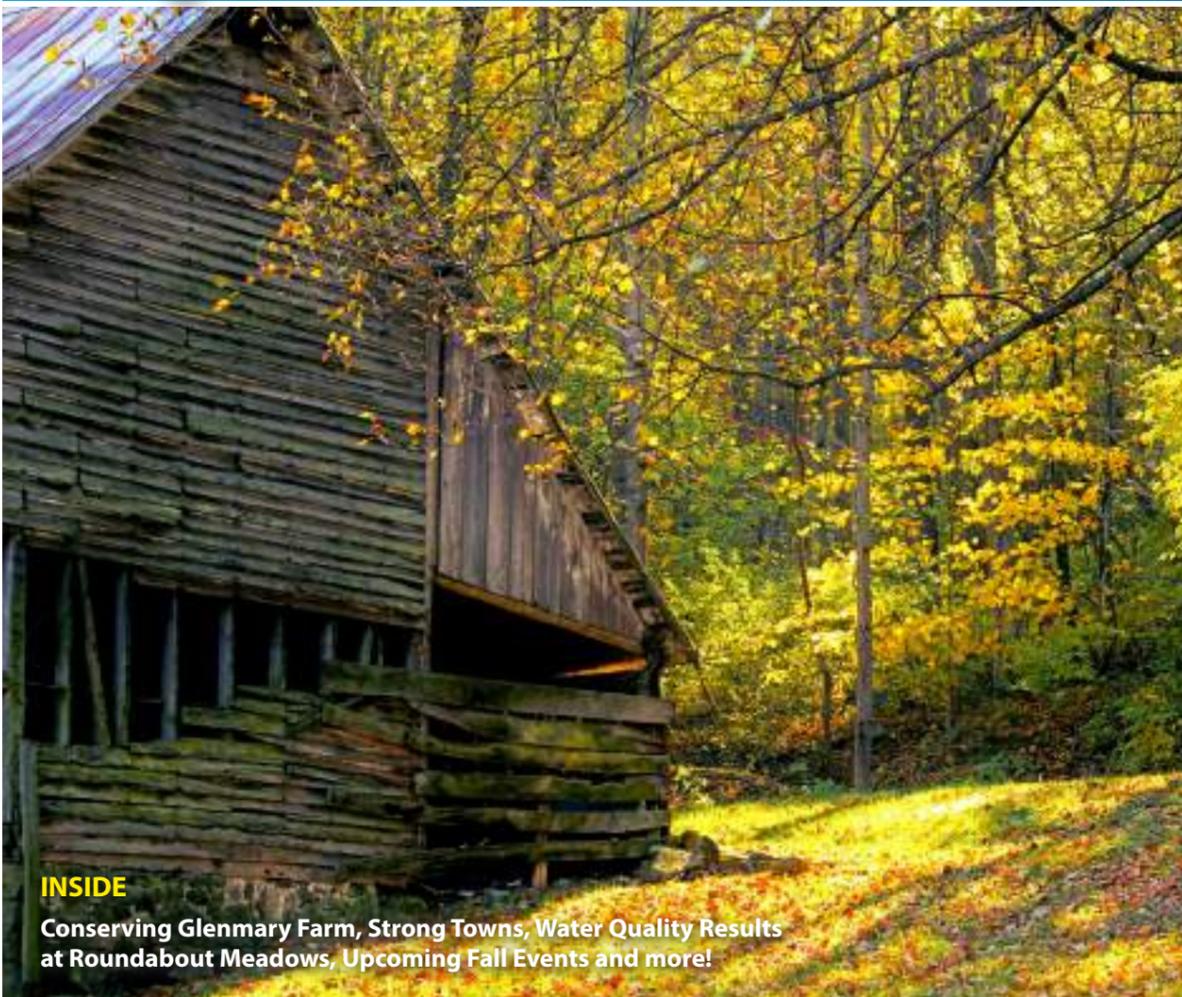
Sincerely,


Chris Miller, President



The Piedmont View

A MEMBERSHIP NEWSLETTER OF THE PIEDMONT ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL AUTUMN 2018



INSIDE

Conserving Glenmary Farm, Strong Towns, Water Quality Results at Roundabout Meadows, Upcoming Fall Events and more!

Photo by Denise Machado

Pop Quiz

As of 2017, how many acres of land in Virginia are dedicated to farm operations?

- a) 2,500,000
- b) 6,300,000
- c) 5,500,000
- d) 8,100,000

Wainbur Farm in Fauquier County, Va.

ANSWER ON PAGE 3



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