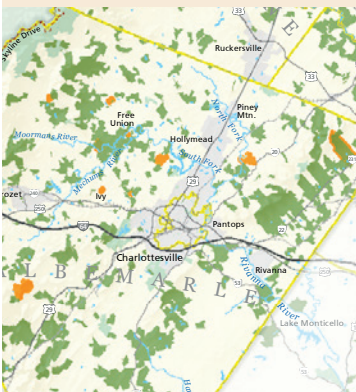


CONSERVATION  
EDITION

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Totals for 2018



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Survey Results



## Support PEC

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Warrenton, VA 20188  
540.347.2334  
pec@pecva.org

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Thank you for helping  
to protect the Piedmont!



# 2019 General Assembly: What Happened?

By Dan Holmes

The 2019 General Assembly Session has concluded. The budget and surviving legislation is now with the Governor awaiting action. It was a fast-paced short session — roughly 45 days in which thousands of bills were heard, including the budget bill.

The budget had a couple of bright points. But legislators were clearly focused on tax conformity and teacher salaries, leaving little for the programs we rely on for land conservation. On the legislative front, we listened to old hits including pitches for the Route 29 eastern bypass study and unrestricted events defined as agritourism. There was also an important discussion surrounding proffers. But unfortunately, the legislature was unwilling to address fundamental flaws resulting from the proffer bill from 2016, largely pushed by developer interests.

The next session will bring the Governor's first full budget, as well as every legislative seat will be up for re-election in November. This means we have an opportunity to make real progress on multiple fronts. But if we are to see improvements in policy and funding levels for the 2020 session, **we need each and every one of you to weigh in with your legislators and candidates** on behalf of conservation and restoration, local land use authority and environmental protection over the next year.

Below is a summary on the individual bills and budget matters we tracked and worked for this past session.

## Budget

Unfortunately, we did not get needed increases for important conservation funding.

There were no additions to the land conservation grant programs (Office of Farmland Preservation, Virginia Battlefield Fund and Virginia Land Conservation Foundation), which should be receiving a combined \$20 million per year. Important conservation easement staffing positions with the Department of Forestry were left unfunded in light of staff currently turning down projects as they cannot keep up with demand for the program. We did see increased funding for Agriculture Best Management Practices (Ag BMPs), bringing the total to \$89.7 million, and an additional \$10 million for the Stormwater Local Assistance Fund to reduce pollution associated with agriculture and stormwater runoff. A few other important measures included:

- Restoration of the statutory formula for transferring funds to the Open Space Land Preservation Trust Fund, providing greater assistance to landowners pursuing conservation easements.
- The addition of a 281-acre parcel (which would be added to the 600-acres already owned by the state) for Sweet Run State Park in Loudoun.
- Increased Wildlife Management and Habitat Improvement funding for the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries.



From left to right: PEC Farm Manager Dana Melby, PEC Director of State Policy Dan Holmes, Delegate Michael Weibert, PEC Field Representatives Claire Catlett and Tracy Lind, and PEC Communications Coordinator Marco Sanchez.

## Legislation

### Land Use and Transportation

In at least one way, this session was no different from last year with the inclusion of a study for the eastern bypass of Route 29. While the legislation (SJ259, Peake) failed in Senate Finance, the measure continued to be discussed in the budget and as an offered amendment to other legislation (I-81). The legislature listened to many of you that acted on the matter, as the measure failed to progress in any form.

Proffers and impact fee legislation was settled early leading to the the passage of "proffer reform" legislation, SB1373 (Favola) and HB2342 (Thomas), from their respective houses. We opposed the bills as they failed to

Continued on page 4

# Let There Be Fruits and Veggies

The Piedmont Environmental Council's Community Farm at Roundabout Meadows was founded with two ideas in mind: to connect residents to Loudoun's vital agricultural economy and to provide locally grown fruits and vegetables for its food-insecure families.

Now, it is time for those ideas to blossom, or rather...to be planted.

Starting this spring, the northwest corner of Roundabout Meadows will be the hub of activity. We have eight acres surrounded with deer fencing, and on approximately two of those acres, PEC's community farm manager, Dana Melby, will work with volunteers to begin planting broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, potatoes, radishes, beets, turnips and collards, from mid-March to the beginning of April. Then, after the last frost, crops such as tomatoes, peppers, tomatillos, green beans, summer squash, watermelon and cantaloupe will be added.

"We will also be implementing

cover crops to help improve our soil quality and increase the soil's nutrition," Dana explains. "Cover crops improve soil health, as well as attract pollinators and beneficial insects. They also help reclaim land that was previously fallow, allowing it to go back into production."

The fruit and vegetable crops at the

Community Farm were selected with the help of our partner, Loudoun Hunger Relief (LHR), who identified the needs of the local community.

Feeding America reports that approximately 13,390 Loudoun County residents live in food-insecure households, defined by a chronic lack of access to sufficient nutritious

food, in 2018. LHR serves many individuals and families in need, including over 1,000 families living without permanent shelter in the county. Nearly half of the people LHR helps are children who lack sufficient, nutritious food. To date, over one million meals have been distributed through the organization!

To address food insecurity and combat high rates of child obesity, diabetes and hypertension, local anti-hunger efforts are increasingly focusing on providing more produce. PEC plans to donate 100 percent of the

Continued on page 5



PEC's new Community Farm manager, Dana Melby, is preparing for Roundabout Meadow's first growing season. Photo by Marco Sanchez



# 2018's Land Conservation Totals

By Paula Combs

A total of 408,939 acres have been protected in Albemarle, Clarke, Culpeper, Fauquier, Greene, Loudoun, Madison, Orange and Rappahannock counties by landowners working together with land trusts and public agencies. The total includes 7,739 acres added in 2018.

“More and more people are interested in protecting the special qualities of their properties,” says Chris Miller, PEC President. “Working together, we have an opportunity to ensure that the Piedmont is a place that provides the land needed for good food, clean drinking water and great places to enjoy nature.”

An easement is a voluntary agreement between a landowner and a land trust (such as a public agency or a non-profit conservation group like PEC) to permanently protect natural, scenic and cultural resources on their land.

“Over 60 landowners and 12 different conservation organizations helped ensure the long-term preservation of our region’s landscape last year,” says Mike Kane, PEC’s director of conservation. “The 7,739 acres protected in 2018 represents an almost 25 percent increase over the acreage conserved in 2017.”

Conservation programs like Virginia’s Land Preservation Tax Credit and local initiatives like Loudoun County’s new Easement Assistance Program offer a set of strong financial incentives for landowners interested in conserving their land.

“One of PEC’s goal is to educate landowners in our region about their conservation options,” says Mike. “In addition to state and local financial incentives, we also have funding available to assist landowners with the cost of donating conservation easements.”

## In total, conservation easements in PEC’s nine-county region have protected approximately:

- 1,689 miles of streams;
- 10,012 acres of wetlands;
- 26,229 acres adjacent to scenic rivers;
- 193,936 acres of prime farming soils;
- 192,907 acres of forests;
- 108,540 acres along scenic byways;
- 123,680 acres in the viewshed of the Appalachian Trail;
- 128,985 acres in historic districts; and
- 29,848 acres of Civil War battlefields.



## Approximate county-by-county conservation totals in the Piedmont region:

County	Acres protected in 2018 by Conservation Easements	Total Acres protected by Conservation Easements
Albemarle	1,055	100,629
Clarke	832	26,079
Culpeper	796	19,713
Fauquier	2,197	107,070
Greene	0	10,448
Loudoun	1,313	58,862
Madison	27	15,914
Orange	1,419	37,380
Rappahannock	100	32,844
PEC Region	7,739	408,939

Map created by PEC for presentation purposes only. Data source: American Battlefield Protection Program, County Governments, USGS, VA Department of Historic Resources, VA Department of Conservation and Recreation. Although efforts have been made to verify data, accuracy is not guaranteed. For more information, please visit [www.pecva.org](http://www.pecva.org). Warrenton | JWR



# Albemarle County Reaches Conservation Milestone

By Paula Combs

Only the second locality in the state to reach such a milestone, Albemarle County surpassed 100,000 acres of land permanently protected by conservation easements! In 2018, an additional 1,055 acres were protected in the county, bringing the grand total to 100,629 acres.

"This conservation success is the effort of many different individuals, land trusts and public agencies, over the span of 40 years," says Chris Miller, PEC President. "Thank you to all of the families that make conservation in Virginia such a great community effort!"

Albemarle County Board of Supervisor member, Ann Mallek, is a part of one such family who made land conservation a priority.

"Local non-profit partner organizations have contributed significantly to the 100,000 acres under conservation easement in Albemarle. Our family, my parents, siblings and now my grandchildren, benefited from the assistance of two partners, The Piedmont Environmental Council and Virginia Outdoors Foundation, who brought our family farm easement into being in 1998," says Ann. "Conserving our farm was a natural progression from establishing the Jacob's Run

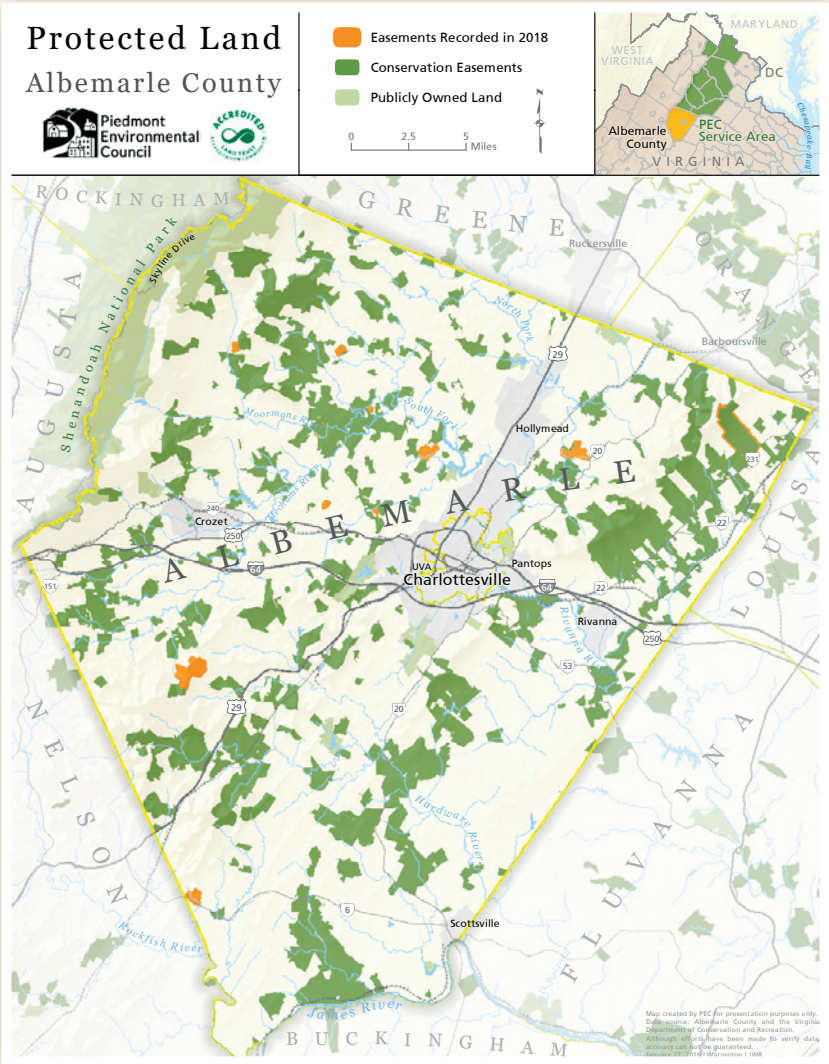
Agricultural Forestal district, ten years earlier. Albemarle landowners are so lucky to have PEC and VOF representatives living and working in our community to guide these processes along."

Over the years, Ann and other members of the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors have been instrumental to the county's land conservation success through their support of the Acquisition of Conservation Easement Program. The program began in 2000, and it has protected approximately 10,000 acres by providing a financially attractive way for lower income landowners to protect family farms. Additionally, the county created the Albemarle Conservation Easement Authority, which holds a significant number of both donated and purchased conservation easements in the area.

"One of the key factors behind the conservation in Albemarle is the strong desire of rural landowners to protect the countryside and the collaborative effort of various organizations working in the region," says Rex Linville, field representative for PEC.

In 2015, Fauquier County was the first county in the Commonwealth to reach 100,000 conserved acres. The success in Albemarle and Fauquier, and throughout Virginia, is driven by exceptional tax benefits for conservation easement donors, along with available local, state and federal funding for landowners who are not in a financial position to protect their land with a donation.

"If a landowner is interested in conservation, it is likely that there is a program to help them preserve their land," says Rex.



In total, conservation easements in Albemarle have protected approximately:

- **437 miles** of streams;
- **1,347 acres** of wetlands;
- **5,094 acres** adjacent to scenic rivers;
- **37,195 acres** of prime farmland soils;
- **68,004 acres** of forests;
- **26,912 acres** along scenic byways;
- **20,486 acres** in the viewshed of the Appalachian Trail; and
- **41,188 acres** in historic districts.



A view of Enniscorthy, one of the conserved properties in Albemarle County. Photo by Rex Linville

## MEET PEC

### Christopher Hawk

Field Representative,  
Culpeper and  
Orange Counties



Photo by Marco Sanchez

Christopher Hawk joined the Piedmont Environmental Council staff this past February. As a field representative for Culpeper and Orange counties, he is responsible for the protection and promotion of natural, historical, agricultural and scenic resources.

Raised in Goochland County, Virginia, Christopher was surrounded by an abundance of natural resources that impacted his decision to work in the environmental sector. Prior to joining PEC, he worked as an environmental scientist with GHD Services Inc. performing groundwater and soil remediation, compliance and due diligence activities.

Christopher obtained his bachelor's in Biology from Hampden-Sydney College. He currently resides in Charlottesville with his wife and dog. He enjoys mountain biking, hiking, camping, fishing and hunting.



## Your Sustaining Gift

Are you looking for an easy way to contribute to PEC on a monthly basis? Consider becoming a sustaining member. An automatic, monthly gift helps your support go directly to the on-the-ground efforts you are reading about in this Piedmont View issue. Every day, more of our members are making the commitment to give on a monthly basis to protect and promote the natural resources, rural economy, history and beauty of the Virginia Piedmont.

Sustaining members help ensure we are always ready to take action to defend this beautiful place we love, when and where it is needed most. No gift is too small, and friend and family participation is always appreciated and encouraged. Please help us start off this spring and our annual *March Membership Month* strong by making an on-going and lasting commitment to PEC!

Please visit [pecva.org/give](http://pecva.org/give) or contact Danielle Castellano at (540) 347-2334 ext. 7001 to set up your recurring monthly donations.



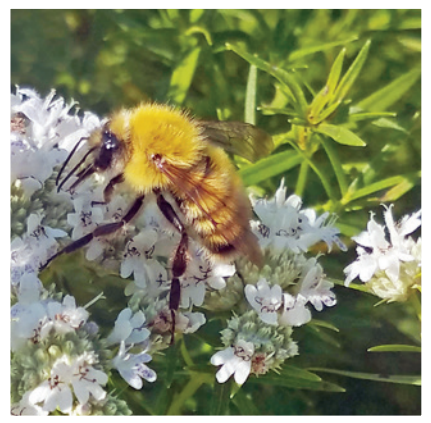
# What's That Pollinator?

By Celia Vuocolo

It's the time of year when butterflies and bees are starting to flutter around the Larson Native Plant Garden at PEC's Warrenton office. Last spring, we began studying those fluttering insect pollinators, and have some initial data to share with you.

Aside from learning what kind of pollinators our garden was attracting and helping, we wanted to create a project that invited folks to experience the landscape and learn something new in the process. By studying how native plants benefit insects, we are hoping to learn the specific types of plants pollinators forage on, so we can make planting recommendations to homeowners.

As PEC's habitat and stewardship specialist, I worked with volunteer Kelsey Schoenneman, a University of Virginia PhD student with Dave Carr at Blandy Experimental Farm and Virginia Working Landscapes, to develop a survey



A *Bombus perplexus* on mountain mint.  
Photo by Celia Vuocolo

methodology that could be easily used by volunteer citizen scientists. The survey has two parts; the garden survey, which counts and identifies all blooming plants; and the insect survey, which counts and identifies all insects on those blooming plants.

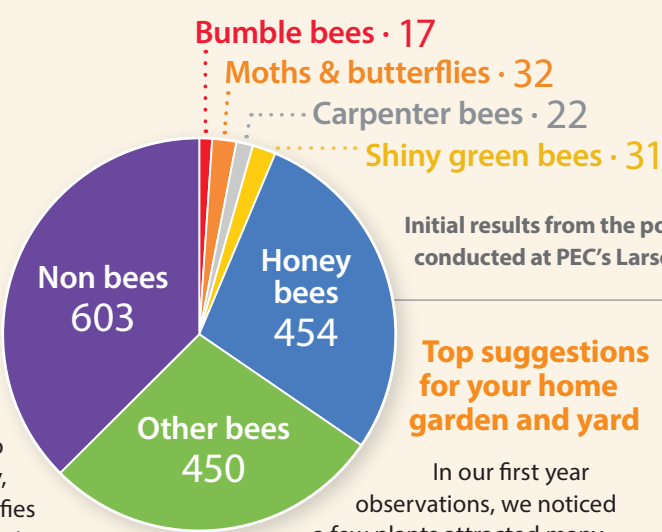
In order to more easily identify the pollinators, the insects were split into groups: bumble bees, honey bees, non bees (beetles, flies, ants, wasps), other bees (native bees not easily identified), moths and butterflies, shiny green sweat bees and carpenter bees. We then recruited 15 citizen scientists; trained them; and ran the survey from May to September, 2018.

### Initial Survey Takeaways

We were excited to learn that our citizen scientists counted 1,609 insects over four months! The unusual rainy season had a serious impact on our insect counts and survey days (several were cancelled). For the 2019 season, the survey period will increase from three to six months, in order to allow for more opportunities to observe pollinators and a more complete snapshot of the insect community.

#### A couple of quick takeaways:

- > Largest number of one species counted: honey bees (213)
- > Largest number of species group counted: non bees (603)
- > Lowest number of species group that was counted: bumble bees (17)



Initial results from the pollinator study conducted at PEC's Larson Native Plant Garden.

### Top suggestions for your home garden and yard

In our first year observations, we noticed a few plants attracted many different types of pollinators, while other plants only attracted certain groups of species. This is a typical strategy for flowering plants; some only want to attract the most efficient pollinator, while others want to invite everybody to the party.

- > Party plants: If you are short on space and want the most bang for your buck, consider one of these plants. They attracted the highest diversity of insects and the most amount of honey bees.
  - *Pycnanthemum tenuifolium*, narrow-leaved mountain mint (perennial)
  - *Ilex verticillata*, winterberry (shrub)
- > Butterfly plants: These two species attracted the highest amount of moths and butterflies.
  - *Liatris microcephala*, dwarf liatris
  - *Symphotrichum novae-angliae*, New England aster

### Interested in Volunteering?

PEC is seeking motivated volunteers to assist with pollinator and flower surveys at the Larson Native Plant Garden at our headquarters in Warrenton from April - October, 2019. These surveys are an annual effort to track local pollinator populations over time. No prior experience is necessary!

All you need is the desire to learn about native plants and pollinator species, and sufficient time to dedicate to the project (including a mandatory training session, at-home practice activities and the execution of assigned surveys). We will provide all necessary training, supplies and equipment. If you are a Master Naturalist or Master Gardener, we strongly encourage you to join this project to share your expertise with the other volunteers.

Trained volunteers will need to commit to a minimum of two or more survey periods for the season. Volunteers will be able to select survey periods (morning and/or evening) that best fit their personal schedule. Citizen scientists will then be expected to complete surveys as assigned and ensure the delivery of data to the survey coordinator.

### How to Volunteer

1. Sign up or login to the online volunteer portal [www.letsvolunteer.org](http://www.letsvolunteer.org)
2. Attend the mandatory training session on Friday, March 15, 10 AM - 2:30 PM at PEC's office in Warrenton.
3. After attending the training session, sign up for at least two survey sessions between April and October.

Questions? Contact Celia Vuocolo, PEC's habitat and stewardship specialist by email at [cvuocolo@pecva.org](mailto:cvuocolo@pecva.org) or phone at 540-347-2334 ext. 7086.

## 2019 General Assembly: What Happened?

Continued from cover

address fundamental flaws with the changes enacted in 2016. While we were unable to convince the legislators of our concerns, we were able to secure a future conversation (through SB 944) on impact fees and alternative tools to cover the costs of growth by the Virginia Housing Commission. While not ideal, it may offer an opportunity to point out the failings of the proffer discussion this year.

Lastly, there was HB 2364 (Knight), which after an amendment, would have added weddings to the list of agritourism activities that local governments are prohibited from regulating. I am please to report the bill failed to pass the House floor on a vote of 60-37.

### Land Conservation

While the budget news on land conservation was disappointing, we had some good news on the legislative front. Earlier in session, we let you know about SB 1340, a bill to reduce the threshold for which a conservation easement would be subject to an additional review by the Department of Conservation and Recreation. This change would have created an unnecessary barrier to conserving land, making the process more time consuming and costly. This

legislation was defeated once it crossed over from the Senate.

Another bill we supported from Delegate Fariss is on the way to the Governor's desk — HB 1816 (extends the time in which one can claim land preservation tax credits). But another of his bills, HB 2755 (bringing consistency to the Conservation Easement Act and Open Space Lands Act as it relates to conformance with Comprehensive Plans) hit a snag late in the game and was left in the House, failing to progress.

### Energy

Most of the good energy bills met their demise in the Committees on Commerce and Labor of the House and Senate. But unlike in past years, some of the votes were closer and some of the bills went farther, potentially signalling a change in the way legislators are viewing these issues.

The Solar Freedom bills, SB1456 (McClellan) and HB 2329 (Keam), would have removed a series of barriers to small scale solar generation. Unfortunately, the legislation was defeated, though HB 2329 got a close 7-8 vote.

HB1718 (Ware), a bill related to cost recovery for natural gas pipelines

successfully passed House Commerce and Labor Committee and then went on to pass the full House. Senate Commerce and Labor chose to pass the bill by indefinitely, ending the conversation for this year. While we are upset that the Senate chose Dominion over the ratepayers of Virginia, we have to acknowledge the bill passing the House is a major accomplishment.

### Water

Besides the successful inclusion of additional funding for Ag BMPs, we also wanted to alert you of some more good news on Coal Ash clean up. As many may have read in late January, there is growing bipartisan support for the issue, and an agreement was reached. SB 1355 and HB 2786, the two main legislative vehicles, have passed both chambers and are on their way to the Governor's desk for his signature. Many thanks to everyone who got involved and became a part of the solution!

### Conclusion

The Governor has until March 26, 2019 to act (sign, veto or amend), so we have some time before any final accounting. But we anticipate most of the identified funding and legislation will remain unchanged.



From left to right: PEC's Marco Sanchez, Dan Holmes and Claire Catlett prepare to meet with their delegates in the General Assembly building in Richmond, Va. on VCN Lobby Day.

Looking toward the future, I am cautiously optimistic. Over the next year, it is important to stay engaged and rally the troops to speak with legislators and incoming candidates. So when the next session comes, we will be able to make progress on the topics discussed in this article.

As always, thank you for any action you took this session to improve the Commonwealth. Please feel free to follow up with me directly at [dholmes@pecva.org](mailto:dholmes@pecva.org) or 540-347-2334 ext. 7040, if you have questions on any of the bills or the final budget numbers.



# Working Toward a More Connected Community

*By Peter Krebs*

Greenways are safe and durable routes where people can walk, bike and run in nature-rich settings. For more than a year now, PEC has been working with the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission (TJPD) to link communities in the Charlottesville/Albemarle urban core with greenways and other infrastructure for walking and biking, both for transportation and recreation.

High-quality greenways benefit residents and communities in a myriad of ways. Additionally, they improve the environment and make the community more appealing, prosperous and attractive to investment.

Not only do greenways make life better for urban commuters and others, they also provide urban residents with the kind of outdoor access to nature that so many people crave. Making better urban areas encourages development in designated growth areas. And that helps reduce the pressure to develop in the rural countryside.

TJPCD's Jefferson Area Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, which is expected to be approved by this March, is an important milestone in our partnership. This Plan covers Charlottesville and Albemarle, Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa and Nelson counties, with a heavy focus on the combined Charlottesville/Albemarle urban core. It lays out a comprehensive network of on-and-off-street infrastructure, including sidewalks, urban bike lanes and routes, shared-use paths (aka greenways) and rural bike routes. The Plan also designates priority corridors and recommends ways for the city and county to work together to connect residents to jobs, shopping, healthcare, education and other resources. Once adopted, it will guide future transportation and land use decisions.

We conducted intensive community engagement to gather data and input for the Plan and to mobilize and coordinate public support for its implementation. Hosting and attending more than 300 meetings and gatherings collectively, we met with a diverse group of

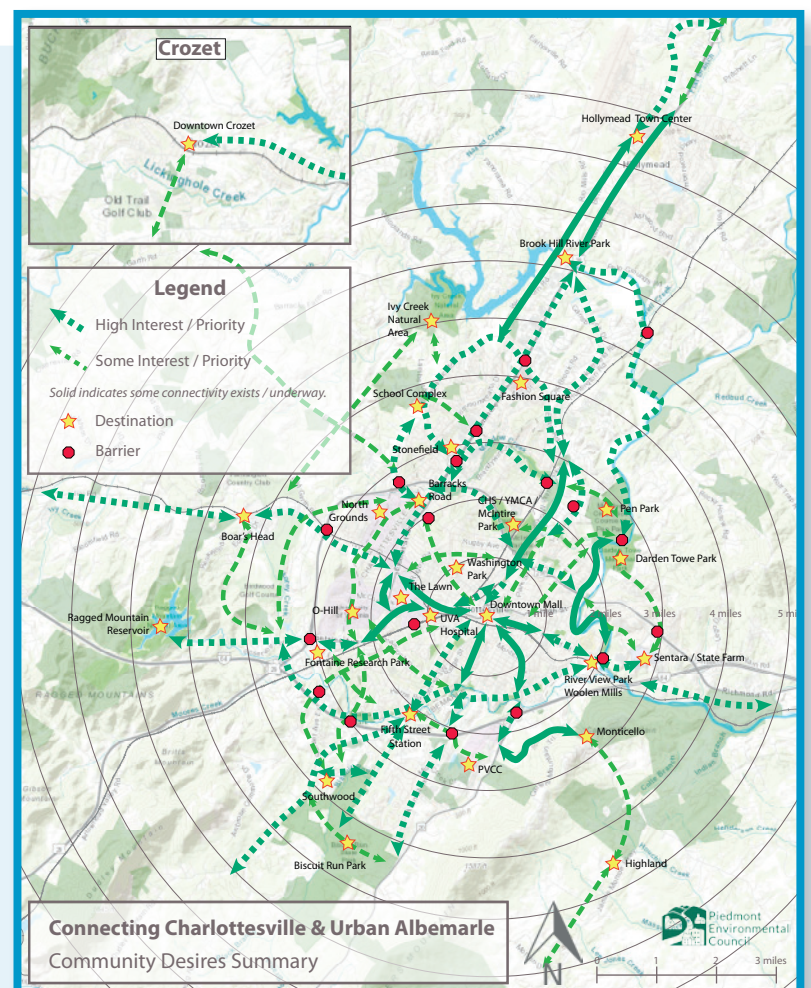
residents in community centers, parks, businesses, classrooms, art spaces, restaurants and even on the sidewalks!

In addition to our focus groups, discussions, map exercises and many other ways of hearing from residents, we created a survey that asked about walking, biking and running in the area. Respondents were invited to identify barriers and limitations, envision ideal conditions and make concrete suggestions for a better-connected community. Of 857 responses, the majority indicated concerns about automobile-related injury limit their ability to walk and bike for both transportation and exercise.

Among other findings, both men and women prefer to walk, bike and run in nature-rich environments, but many women have additional concerns about personal safety and prefer to be in spaces with other people around. Participants desired easier access to practical destinations like jobs and shopping, but also expressed strong affinity for parks and natural areas.

These results suggest that bike and pedestrian corridors must be protected from automobiles, and designed for personal safety, sociability and easy access to nature, while linking places where people live, work and play.

Of course, a plan is only the first step. Implementation requires several additional ingredients, funding not the least among them. We have been calling for local governments to make connectivity a priority and Albemarle is responding with \$6 million in proposed new bike/pedestrian spending and a new position to oversee greenways planning. This is great news! Meanwhile, we



**Conceptual diagram summarizing community connectivity desires and barriers. Full sized and interactive maps can be found on Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission's website at [tjpd.org](http://tjpd.org).**

are working with the City of Charlottesville to increase their ongoing commitment. Private and foundation donors will need to step up to the plate as well. All of this comes down to the will of the public, which is why organized mobilization is so essential.

We will continue to act as a catalyst and keep you updated as we move forward. In the meantime, you can learn more about the survey, the Jefferson Area Bike and Pedestrian Plan and how you can be a part of our growing coalition for a safe and connected community by visiting [www.pecva.org/cvillegreenways](http://www.pecva.org/cvillegreenways) or by contacting Peter Krebs at [pkrebs@pecva.org](mailto:pkrebs@pecva.org) or calling (434) 977-2033 ext. 7065.

# Let There Be Fruits and Veggies

Continued from cover

Community Farm's fruits and vegetables to LHR and other food pantries in the county.

"Loudoun Hunger Relief is thrilled to be partnering with the Community Farm at Roundabout Meadows. Produce is so important to good health and farm fresh produce is even better. We're excited to provide locally grown, fresh produce to our neighbors in need," says Jennifer Montgomery, Executive Director of Loudoun Hunger Relief.

The Community Farm will engage volunteers to help produce local food, which will have a meaningful impact on healthy food access in Loudoun. The long-term goal is to scale up production and volunteer programming over the next 5 years.

"I'm so excited for all that is to come this growing season," says Dana. "With the tremendous help of our volunteers, we will be able to deliver fresh food to those who need it most."



**PEC's Community Farm at Roundabout Meadows is located near the intersection of Route 15 and 50, by Gilbert's Corner, in Loudoun County.** *Photo by Marco Sanchez*

## Are You Interested in Volunteering at PEC's Community Farm at Roundabout Meadows?

Help us with planting and harvesting healthy food for Loudoun residents in need! Previous experience is welcomed but not required, as on-site training will be provided. Be prepared to work outside in variable weather conditions, get your hands dirty while doing a good deed, and learn about your local agriculture community. All ages are welcome, but children must be accompanied by an adult at all times. Check the calendar on our website for upcoming volunteer opportunities and events. If you are interested in volunteering, contact PEC's Community Farm manager, Dana Melby, at [dmelby@pecva.org](mailto:dmelby@pecva.org) or (540) 347-2334 ext. 7068, or visit [pecva.org/farm](http://pecva.org/farm).

**MARCH – AUGUST:** We need volunteers to plant vegetable transplants and seeds. Bring gardening gloves and a trowel (if you have them), snacks, water, sun protection, bug repellent and weather-appropriate clothing.

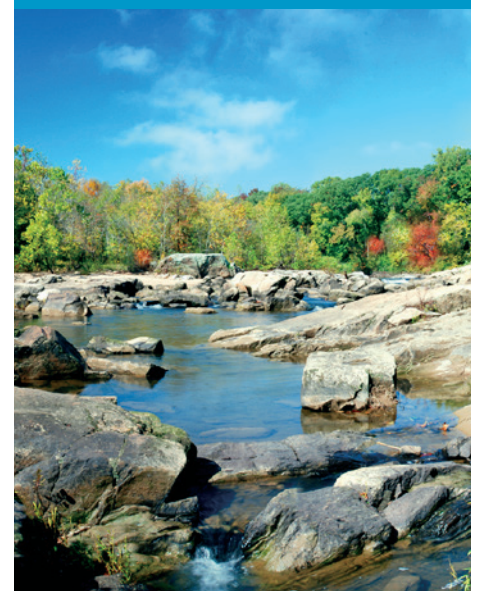
**MAY – OCTOBER:** Help us harvest fresh vegetables. Job stations include harvesting, weighing and packaging. Bring gloves and snips (if you have them), snacks, water, sun protection, bug repellent and weather-appropriate clothing.

Roundabout Meadows Community Farm is located at 39990 Howsers Branch Drive, Aldie, Virginia.

## Pop Quiz

## QUESTION

## What does Rappahannock mean in the Native American Algonquian language?



ANSWER

## b) Quick rising waters

Source: Encyclopaedia Britannica  
Photo courtesy of Friends of the Rappahannock



# On the Ground

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## Albemarle

### > Housing and Connectivity

PEC is urging elected officials in both Albemarle and Charlottesville to keep environmental factors in mind as it considers housing projects in sensitive areas. Recently, we helped persuade the city’s Planning Commission to deny support for a request to increase housing density on property within a floodplain. We support urban density where appropriate, but both Albemarle and Charlottesville must protect sensitive areas from over-development that hinders the land’s ability to provide ecological services. Data indicates that Albemarle’s growth management policy is working, but we will continue to be vigilant at a time when housing development has been identified as a key policy goal.

We continue to lead efforts to increase funding for bike and pedestrian connectivity in Albemarle and Charlottesville. We have helped coordinate an update of the Jefferson Area Bike Plan, a regional vision that will become part of the comprehensive plans in both localities (see story on page 5 to learn more details).

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## Clarke

### > Water Quality and Conservation Luncheon

PEC is partnering with Clarke County and Friends of the Shenandoah River to monitor local stream quality by looking for macroinvertebrates. These bugs tolerate different stream conditions and levels of pollution, so they are great indicators of stream health. Findings will be shared among partners to help efforts in protecting water quality. The program starts this spring. If you would like to volunteer, contact PEC field representative Tracy Lind at [tlind@pecva.org](mailto:tlind@pecva.org).

This past January, as Clarke County community members enjoyed lunch at the Locke Store, we led a discussion about land use, land conservation and advocacy-related topics for the county and the Commonwealth. We host luncheons on a regular basis throughout the region. To learn more, please contact Karissa Epley at [kepley@pecva.org](mailto:kepley@pecva.org).

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## Culpeper

### > White Farm Conserved and PDR Program

This past December, Adam White donated a conservation easement to PEC, ensuring the protection of his family’s 67-acre farm in Culpeper County. The farm has prime agricultural soils and resides at the headwaters of Mountain Run, a drinking water supply for the county. The property is enrolled in Culpeper Soil and Water District’s agricultural best management practice cost-share program for stream exclusion fencing.

In other news, Culpeper County looks to fund its Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program for the first time since it was drafted as part of the county’s Code for Agricultural Lands Preservation in 2007. The county has included \$100,000 in their draft Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to start the PDR program, which will allow them to secure matching funds from the Commonwealth. Thanks to a grant from The Volgenau Foundation, we are committed to matching the county dollar for dollar if their final CIP

includes this funding. This program recognizes the important agricultural heritage of Culpeper, creating viable economic solutions for farmers who seek to protect their land with a conservation easement.

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## Fauquier

### > Transportation Fixes and New Cell Tower Regulations

Broadview Avenue may become a little less chaotic due to a plan to incorporate improvements such as medians, bike lanes and pedestrian crossings with flashing lights at the Rt. 211/Broadview Avenue intersection. It is a first step in the longer-term goal to make the stretch more walkable, incorporate interparcel connections and re-envision the area.

Also in Fauquier transportation news, the Rt. 29/215 intersection safety enhancement project will grade and fill the hills on northbound Rt. 29. Many severe accidents have occurred here due to poor visibility of stopped traffic below the crest of the hill. During PEC’s correspondence with VDOT, we have tried to balance citizens concerns about safety and the preservation of the Buckland Battlefield. We have encouraged VDOT to keep the project within the existing right-of-way and document any remnants of the original road alignment found during construction.

In an effort to improve broadband coverage, the Board of Supervisors plan to vote in March on a new zoning ordinance that expedites cell tower proposals in “target areas.” While the ordinance does include facility standards and a requirement for additional review of sites located in sensitive areas, towers in “target areas” will still be expedited to the Board of Supervisors, who will be able to waive facility standards and suggested mitigation. We are concerned about these changes because “target areas” have not yet been identified.

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## Greene

### > Putting Stanardsville on the Map

Efforts to designate a new scenic corridor between Crozet and Front Royal took a big step forward this past January. The Greene County Board of Supervisors is in support of designating Rt. 230 and 810 as Virginia Scenic Byways, a major coup for PEC’s efforts to help promote the rural economy. If approved by VDOT, travelers looking for rural places to explore will have a new guide. This also fits in with part of Greene’s emphasis on linking tourism with economic development, and will connect Blue Ridge Heritage Project monuments related to the construction of the Shenandoah National Park and the displacement of many who were forced to leave their homes.

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## Loudoun

### > Trails, Comprehensive Plan, Roundabout Meadows and Easement Program

Emerald Ribbons, the county-wide trails system envisioned by PEC and others in the Loudoun County Preservation and Conservation Coalition, was unanimously approved by the Board of Supervisors. The Parks, Recreation and Open Space Board, will now work with partners to develop an implementation plan and make recommendations in June.

We will lead a series of community meetings in February and March to inform and encourage participation for the draft Loudoun 2040 Plan. Check our Loudoun web page for a session in your area, and help ensure that the Plan reflects residents’ interests. Visit [pecva.org/loudoun2040](http://pecva.org/loudoun2040) to learn more.

Dana Melby, PEC’s new farm manager for our Community Farm at Roundabout Meadows, continues to prepare for the growing season and recruiting volunteers (see cover article to learn more).

In December, the Board of Supervisors unanimously approved the creation of a Conservation Easement Assistance Program. The board’s action set aside \$150,000 to assist landowners with the cost of donating conservation easements. The program will provide grants of up to \$15,000 to qualifying landowners. Additional information about the program can be found at [www.loudoun.gov](http://www.loudoun.gov).

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## Madison

### > Planning Commission Tackles Utility-Scale Solar

Like many counties in the Piedmont, the Madison County Planning Commission has been studying siting guidelines for utility-scale solar projects with an eye toward adopting their own. Residents can contact the Planning Commission to learn about their findings and recommendations, which were released at a work session this past February.

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## Orange

### > Healthy Watershed Pilot Program

PEC has been working with the Department of Forestry on their Healthy Watershed project, which aims to improve water quality through forest conservation and market-based incentives. Orange and Essex counties are the only two Virginia localities selected to develop pilot programs. A workshop was held in Orange County on January 17 with the Department of Forestry and the Berkeley Group to provide an overview of the program to community members and garner their input.

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## Rappahannock

### > Rappahannock County Park: Attacking Invasives and Planting Natives

PEC’s Krebsler Fund for Rappahannock Land Conservation is supporting the the Rappahannock County Recreational Facilities Authority in their development of a master plan that protects the park’s natural resources and enhances visitor’s recreational experience. The master plan includes a prioritized list of environmental projects and outreach activities, including volunteer work days to help build native pollinator gardens, enhance riparian buffers and plant native trees. Stay tuned for volunteer opportunities and conservation events!

Our Headwaters Stream Initiative will continue in 2019, providing free technical service, native trees and planting materials to help landowners establish forested riparian buffers. Along with Friends of the Rappahannock and Virginia Department of Forestry, we are working with local schools to complete three projects this spring, which will result in 4 acres of new riparian forest canopy.



# UPCOMING Events

Event details subject to change. Please check [pecva.org/events](http://pecva.org/events) for the latest information.

## Turning the Map Green

**When** > Sunday, March 24 • 4:30 PM - 7 PM  
**Where** > Waterford Old School, 40222 Fairfax St, #142-b, Waterford, VA

PEC will be discussing land use and conservation issues in Loudoun County and the Catoctin Creek watershed. Learn how conservation and agriculture work together and about a fund that helps rural landowners with conservation easement costs.

Free. Registration required. Contact Tracy Lind at [tlind@pecva.org](mailto:tlind@pecva.org) or 540-347-2334 ext.7066

## Annual Bluebell Walk at Cedar Run

**When** > Saturday, April 13 • 2 PM - 3 PM  
**Where** > Bonny Brook Farm, 8446 Old Dumfries Road, Catlett, VA

Celebrate spring and walk through a conserved farm to see native bluebells along Cedar Run. Outdoor clothing with waterproof boots is recommended. Donations can be made at the event for PEC's Julian W. Scheer Fauquier Land Conservation Fund. No dogs allowed on property.

Free. Registration required. Contact Karissa Epley at [kepley@pecva.org](mailto:kepley@pecva.org) or 540-347-2334 ext. 7002

## Loudoun Nature Days

**When** > Saturday, April 6 • 10 AM  
**Where** > PEC's Community Farm at Roundabout Meadows

Join PEC in celebrating the second annual Loudoun Nature Days. Come learn about Roundabout Meadows Community Farm and get your hands dirty!

Free. Registration not required. Contact Dana Melby at [dmelby@pecva.org](mailto:dmelby@pecva.org) or 540-347-2334 ext. 7068

## From the Rappahannock, For the Rappahannock

**When** > Sunday, April 7  
**Where** > Marriott Ranch, Hume

Join Friends of the Rappahannock, PEC and the John Marshall Soil and Water Conservation District for a day at the iconic Marriott Ranch to celebrate the Rappahannock River watershed. There will be Rappahannock River oysters from the Oyster Company of Virginia, catered barbeque from Marriott Ranch, local wine and beer, live music, hayride tours, fish shocking demonstrations and more!

Tickets are \$35, which includes two drinks, bbq and local oysters. To register, visit [www.riverfriends.org/events](http://www.riverfriends.org/events). For questions, contact Bryan Hoffman at [Bryan.Hofmann@riverfriends.org](mailto:Bryan.Hofmann@riverfriends.org) or 540-373-3448 ext 112

## Solarize Piedmont

**When** > April 16 - June 14  
**Where** > Albemarle/ Charlottesville, Clarke, Culpeper, Fauquier, Greene, Loudoun, Madison, Orange and Rappahannock counties

Residents and businesses within PEC's service territory can take advantage of competitive rates and financing mechanisms designed specifically for solar energy systems. If you've been thinking about installing solar panels on your home, farm or business, this is your opportunity to find out if it will work for you. *This campaign is a cooperative program with PEC, Local Energy Alliance Program, the Northern Virginia Regional Commission and the Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission.*

To get started or learn more, visit [pecva.org/solarize](http://pecva.org/solarize).

## Earth Day Ice Cream Social with Moo-Thru

**When** > Monday, April 22 • 3 PM - 5 PM  
**Where** > PEC Office, 45 Horner St., Warrenton, VA

Come celebrate Earth Day with free dessert from Fauquier's beloved Moo-Thru, who will bring their ice cream truck to PEC's Warrenton office parking lot. Join us for good conversation, delicious local ice cream and celebrations!

Free. Registration not required. For questions, contact Karissa Epley at [kepley@pecva.org](mailto:kepley@pecva.org)

## Raptors on the Farm

**When** > Saturday, May 4  
**Where** > PEC's Community Farm at Roundabout Meadows

Join PEC and wildlife rehabilitators Dr. Burwell and Nikki Stamps for an informative talk on birds of prey. Learn about their important role as predators of agricultural pests, and how PEC is improving habitat for raptors and other birds on our Community Farm. A few raptor ambassadors will be attending.

Free. Registration required. See [pecva.org/events](http://pecva.org/events) to register. Contact Dana Melby at [dmelby@pecva.org](mailto:dmelby@pecva.org) or 540-347-2334

## Rivanna Riverfest

**When** > Saturday, May 11 • 10 AM - 5 PM  
**Where** > Darden Towe Park and Rivanna River Company

Join Albemarle County, the City of Charlottesville and many community partners to celebrate one of our greatest shared treasures. Activities include canoe, kayak and foot races, arts and crafts and a fun party. Family-friendly event.

More info at [www.rivannariver.org/rivanna-riverfest](http://www.rivannariver.org/rivanna-riverfest). For questions, contact Peter Krebs at [pkrebs@pecva.org](mailto:pkrebs@pecva.org)

## Tour de Solar

**When** > To Be Announced  
**Where** > Community Bikes, 405 Avon St to Sun Tribe Solar, 1801 Broadway, Charlottesville, VA

Join a neighborhood bike tour to see homes that have participated in LEAP's Solarize campaign. Installers and experts will talk about the process and benefits of solar. The ride will conclude with a free lunch and tour of Sun Tribe's warehouse facility.

Free. RSVP encouraged. Contact Peter Krebs at [pkrebs@pecva.org](mailto:pkrebs@pecva.org) or 434-977-2033 ext.7065

## Goose Creek Watershed: Conservation Funding Workshop

**When** > Thursday, May 14 • 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM  
**Where** > Hill School, 130 S Madison St, Middleburg, VA

The Goose Creek watershed represents a national model for land conservation. Join PEC and our partners for a free dinner and review of conservation successes and challenges in the watershed, including an overview of conservation programs that are available to assist landowners.

Free. Registration required. Contact Tracy Lind at [tlind@pecva.org](mailto:tlind@pecva.org) or 540-347-2334 ext.7066

## Farm Leasing Panel and Meet & Greet

**When** > To Be Announced  
**Where** > Springhouse Farm, 16848 Hamilton Station Rd, Hamilton, VA

Access to affordable farmland is one of the primary barriers for next-generation farmers. Hear from Andrew Crush, owner of Springhouse Farm, and others about the challenges and steps they took to establish their operations and land leasing relationships. Meet other landowners and farmers interested in leasing land during a speed meet and greet session.

Free. Registration required. Contact Tracy Lind at [tlind@pecva.org](mailto:tlind@pecva.org) or 540-347-2334 ext.7066

## Family Fishing Day at Rappahannock Park

**When** > Saturday, June 8 • 9 AM - 12 PM  
**Where** > Rappahannock Park, 10 Park Lane, Washington, VA

Join Rappahannock County Parks Facilities Authority (RCRFA), PEC, RappFLOW, VA Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, Friends of the Rappahannock, and Trout Unlimited Rapidan Chapter for a family fishing day at the Rush River.

Free. Open to public. Contact Claire Catlett, [ccatlett@pecva.org](mailto:ccatlett@pecva.org) or 540-347-2334 ext. 7060

## Sunset Safari: The Final Year!

**When** > Saturday, June 8 • 4 PM - 9 PM  
**Where** > Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute, Front Royal, VA

A collaborative benefit for PEC, Shenandoah National Park Trust and Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute. Enjoy wildlife tours, followed by cocktails and dinner on Racetrack Hill overlooking the beautiful landscape and Shenandoah National Park.

Tickets: \$300 per person. For more information and sponsorship opportunities, contact Karissa Epley, [kepley@pecva.org](mailto:kepley@pecva.org) or 540-347-2334

## Good Bug, Bad Bug

**When** > Saturday, June 15 • 10:30 AM  
**Where** > PEC's Community Farm at Roundabout Meadows

Join Piedmont Environmental Council and the Loudoun County Master Gardeners for a on-farm lecture about which bugs are our friends and which are our foes.

Free. Registration required. Contact Dana Melby at [dmelby@pecva.org](mailto:dmelby@pecva.org) or 540-347-2334 ext. 7068





# Dear Friends,

As I sit in my office, I can see the maple trees budding and about to burst open with the excitement that comes with every springtime in the Piedmont region. And that is how I feel about all of the upcoming activities we have planned this spring to help create better, more sustainable communities throughout our region.

I am encouraged by the positive efforts PEC is sponsoring across so many issues and places. In every case, we are trying to address the challenges our region faces with constructive, proactive solutions. The future faces many threats that have complex origins. We are working hard to provide you with the best information available to understand the challenges of land use, transportation, energy, food systems and pollution control.

Sometimes, the solutions are straight forward. For example, we know planting native trees helps produce habitat and food for wildlife, create riparian buffers to filter pollution before it enters streams and rivers, and provide shade to keep native fish cool in the summer. Planting many native trees can even reduce flooding and the effects of stormwater runoff. PEC's Headwaters Stream Initiative, our collaborative effort with Friends of the Rappahannock, works to get more trees planted in the Rappahannock River watershed; and so does our work with suburban Homeowner Associations in Loudoun

County in the Goose Creek and Potomac watersheds. If you are looking for something positive to do, plant some native trees from a local nursery!

Every day, I get updates on the progress at PEC's Community Farm at Roundabout Meadows — and I can't wait until the next bulletin! Skilled volunteers from the Fauquier and Loudoun Garden Club have already helped with planting seed trays, which are now sprouting and growing in the greenhouse at Blandy, the Virginia State Arboretum. The deer fencing is in, the tractor and plow are ready, and we are just waiting for the sun and wind to dry the soil enough so we can prepare the crop beds! This entire effort is to provide delicious, healthy food for families in need, while providing residents an opportunity to volunteer.

Every day, I get updates on advocacy efforts happening in each of our nine counties, in the General Assembly, and in Congress, where we are working hard to build support for funding the conservation and restoration of land and water. Despite turmoil in the headlines, we are making progress and building on the momentum of the bipartisan agreement on the Farm Bill that authorizes \$450 million for the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program, which funds projects like the Glenmary Farm easement we reported on last fall. Elected officials know programs that address quality of



**Bluebells from PEC's Annual Bluebell Walk at Cedar Run. See page 7 for a list of upcoming events. Photo by Cynthia Benitz**

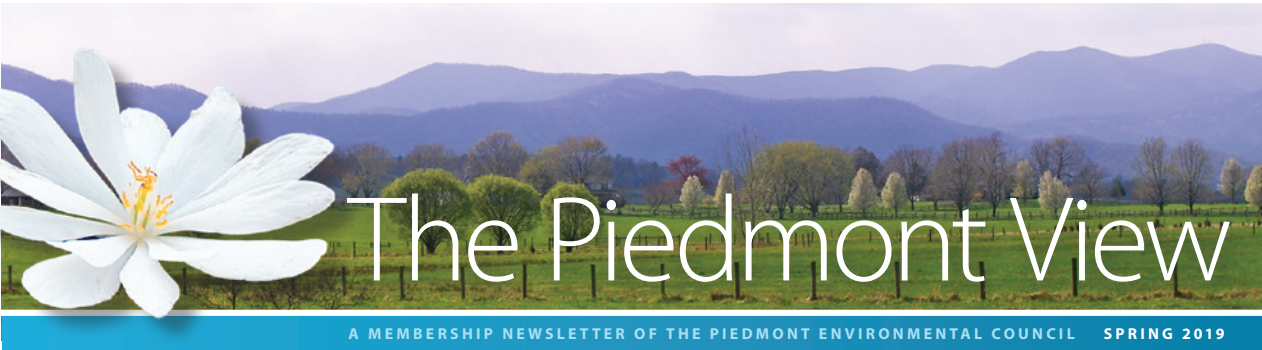
life issues are central to most people's priorities for government.

Every day, I get updates on the long list of events PEC is sponsoring for people to see and learn about the history, natural resources and beauty of the Piedmont. The more I learn, the more I am motivated to provide for long-term conservation. This spring and summer, come participate in the pollinator survey at the Larson Native Plant Garden at our offices in Warrenton, and learn which plants provide the most attractive food for bees and butterflies. You can also

join our staff experts to learn about the current programs for funding conservation and restoration. And do not miss out on the special opportunity to see bluebells and other native plants as they come into bloom on a conserved property along Cedar Run. We look forward to seeing you this season!

Sincerely,

**Chris Miller, President**



A MEMBERSHIP NEWSLETTER OF THE PIEDMONT ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL    SPRING 2019



### INSIDE

**2018's Land Conservation Totals, Pollinator Survey, Sustaining Gift, Greenway Study and more!**

Photo by Gardiner Hallock

## Pop Quiz

### QUESTION

**What does Rappahannock mean in the Native American Algonquian language?**

- a) Bottom of the mountain
- b) Quick rising waters
- c) Winding river
- d) River of plenty

ANSWER ON PAGE 5



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