



The Piedmont View

A MEMBERSHIP NEWSLETTER OF THE PIEDMONT ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL

AUTUMN 2015

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Thank you for helping to protect the Piedmont!



Look at all the Stars!

By Bri West

A few weeks ago, friends from D.C. were visiting for the weekend. As the evening wore on, we found ourselves outside discussing current events, the latest gossip, and our plans for the fall—when, inevitably, eyes turned toward the sky, and I heard something I often hear from friends visiting, “Wow! Look at all the stars.”

A week later, the Perseid meteor shower was at its peak. I walked out on my porch and, with no effort or pre-planning, I saw a “shooting star” streak across the sky. The cloud-free sky provided the perfect backdrop for a stellar show.

I tend to forget dark skies as one of the benefits of living in a rural area of the Piedmont. But it is certainly something special about where we live, and something that stands out to our friends and family who visit. A simple look at NASA's 2012 Earth Observatory data of night lighting in the United States shows that it's something much of our region enjoys (see map at right). A combination of geography,

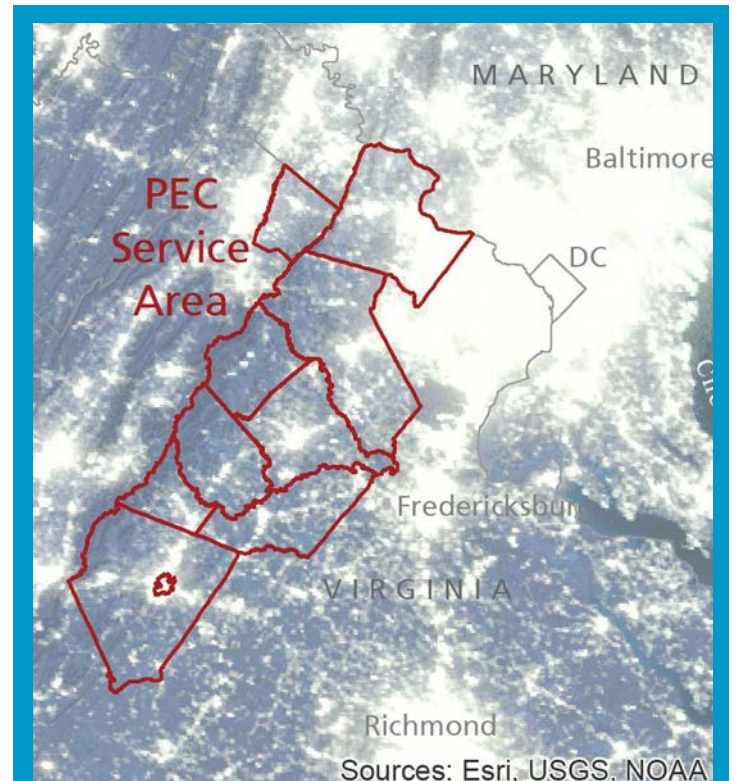
reasonably good planning, zoning geared toward reducing light pollution, and the conservation ethic held by residents of the Piedmont, all work together to provide those dark skies.

But those dark skies are not a given. Many other areas of the country that once enjoyed clear views of the stars, have lost them due to encroaching development or lax lighting standards.

Locations such as Albemarle, Culpeper and Greene Counties have adopted ordinances to discourage light pollution and encourage energy conservation. And if we want to keep our dark skies, we need to stay informed and participate in community discussions on the subject.

Bottom line, just like we can appreciate a beautiful view during the day, we are also lucky to enjoy beautiful views at night. Take a few minutes to look up at the stars the next time you are out, and feel good that your membership and participation with PEC helps play a part in keeping those dark skies dark.

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A night lighting map from NASA's 2012 Earth Observatory data with PEC's nine-county service region outlined. Compare the dark, more rural areas of the map in PEC's service region to the higher populated and urban areas like D.C.

Fauquier Hits a Conservation Milestone

A significant milestone happened this summer that took the collective effort of hundreds of landowners, farmers and families. Leading the charge, **Fauquier became the first county in Virginia to forever preserve more than 100,000 acres of land using conservation easements.**

This achievement is evidence of a strong public-private investment in the rural economy, clean streams and rivers, history and scenic beauty of Fauquier,” said Chris Miller, President of The Piedmont Environmental Council. “Every day, residents of the County, visitors

to the region, and the communities of the Commonwealth benefit from that investment.”

Which property put Fauquier over the 100,000-acre mark? Wainbur Farm—a working dairy farm located in the southern part of the County.

Four generations of the

Burton family have owned and operated the farm, which is an important anchor to the agricultural community in Fauquier. The Burtons entered into an agreement through the Purchase of Development Rights Program in 2010 to conserve 396 acres of their property. This year in July, they conserved an additional 167 acres, which tipped Fauquier over the unique milestone of 100,000 acres of privately conserved land.

“The Fauquier County PDR Program focuses on the protection of working farms, and the County leads the Commonwealth in PDR participation,” said Ray Pickering, Director of Fauquier County Department of Agricultural Development. “Not only did the Burtons conserve their land, but they’ve

done a tremendous job of soil and water conservation on their farm.”

The Burtons have implemented a number of best management practices, including a nutrient management plan and stream buffering on over 1 mile of stream frontage.

The conserved acreage in Fauquier includes 395 miles of streams in the Rappahannock, Occoquan and Goose Creek watersheds, and 4,115 acres of wetland. This protected land benefits the plentiful wildlife, increases water quality and helps ensure clean drinking water.

“We must remember that Warrenton has a limited supply of water, and it’s so important to protect its small watershed. When there’s a drought, I see the

Continued on page 2



A view of the Bull Run Mountains in The Plains, Virginia. The grassy area in the foreground is protected by the Virginia Outdoors Foundation—part of the 100,000 acres under easement in Fauquier County. Photo by Ryan Wick

Look at all the Stars!

Continued from cover

Effects of Light Pollution on Wildlife

An often overlooked impact is how light pollution affects our natural environment. Various biological rhythms of wildlife and plants have evolved with the natural light cycles. And artificial night lighting can disrupt those patterns, impacting migration, feeding, breeding, and even seasonal foliage changes.

Birds

Many bird species, such as warblers, vireos, thrushes, and tanagers, migrate at night using guiding lights from the moon, stars, and the setting sun. Migrating at night helps them avoid predation under the cover of darkness, provides cooler temperatures, and allows them to avoid daytime wind gusts that make it more difficult to maintain a steady course. However, artificial lights can attract and disorient these birds causing them to use up precious energy, and in some extreme cases, die. There is a phenomenon known as “towerkill,” where tall lit antenna towers have been known to attract migratory birds that fly near them in cloudy weather conditions, causing them to circle until they collide with each other or the structure.

Amphibians and reptiles

Some amphibians and reptiles use light for navigation when migrating to breeding grounds and artificial lights can disorient them. These secretive creatures forage and communicate under the cover of night. Without darkness, their foraging and calling has been shown to decrease, impacting their health and reducing reproduction. Melatonin disruptions due to extended exposure to light have also been documented in salamanders. And longer exposure to light reduces production, leading to a wide variety of physiological and behavioral problems.

Moths and other nocturnal insects

We have all seen the effect of night lights on moths and other nocturnal insects that seem insanely drawn to them, circling and colliding to their death. This phenomenon, called flight-to-light, is not well understood, but it is suspected that nocturnal insects use light from the moon and stars to navigate, and artificial lights mislead and disorient them. However, this isn’t the only effect our lights have on these beautiful nocturnal pollinators. Predators have been observed to hunt prey insects at artificial lights. There is also evidence that artificial night lighting can affect reproduction by inhibiting release of sex pheromones by female moths, suppress oviposition, or encourage females to lay eggs at unusually high densities in unsuitable areas near lights.

Plants

Even plants can be impacted by artificial light at night. Moths and bats are pollinators that are sometimes overlooked because they often work under the cover of night. Plant species that bloom at night depend on these night pollinators though, and can be indirectly affected if their populations are reduced or deterred by nearby light pollution. Night lighting on trees, especially in the red to infrared range of the spectrum, can encourage growth



A luna moth. The phenomenon “flight-to-light” suggests that nocturnal insects use light from the moon and stars to navigate. And artificial lights mislead and disorient the insects, usually ending in death. Photo by Justin LaMountain

and photosynthesis beyond the time when it is safe to do so. Trees in our area lose their leaves in the autumn and go into a protective dormancy. When trees keep their leaves into winter they are susceptible to harsh weather conditions and may not survive.

So what can you do to help? You can reduce your night light footprint by:

- 1) Using motion sensors or only turning on outdoor lights when needed,
- 2) Pointing lights downward and using shields that direct it to the intended area, and
- 3) Using more subtle lighting with lower wattage.

**Research provided by Julie Bolthouse, PEC Fauquier Land Use Officer.*

Fauquier is a Leader in Conservation

Continued from cover

reservoir go way down,” said Hope Porter, owner of the Hopefield property, which has 185 acres under easement. “Hopefield protects the town’s drinking water supply and helps to provide a green ring around Warrenton.”

Fauquier also has 9,932 acres of protected Civil War Battlefield, an important resource for residents and tourists. “Fauquier County’s largest Civil War battle—the Battle of Rappahannock Station—occurred here in November 1863. Now that the land has been protected, Fauquier County has an opportunity to realize the creation of a battlefield park to honor the thousands of soldiers who fought and died on the Rappahannock Front,” said Clark ‘Bud’ Hall, a local historian.

Additionally, 39,256 acres of forest and 50,369 acres of prime farmland are under easement in the County. “Land conservation is so important. It’s about leaving a legacy for the next generation,” said Ken Smith, owner of Cool Lawn Farm and Moo Thru.

Easement holders in Fauquier County include, the Virginia Outdoors Foundation, The Piedmont Environmental Council, The Land Trust of Virginia, Northern Virginia Conservation Trust and other land trusts.

“When VOF recorded its first easement in Fauquier in 1973, private land conservation was still in its infancy,” says Leslie Grayson, deputy director of VOF, and whose family farm near Upperville was placed under easement in 1988. “Few could have imagined the breadth of conservation programs and initiatives that are available to Fauquier landowners today. Thanks to the hard work and vision of many landowners and community leaders, Fauquier continues to be a model for community-based conservation.”



Located beside the Warrenton Reservoir and owned by Hope Porter, the 185-acre Hopefield property is under a conservation easement with the Virginia Outdoors Foundation, which ensures the protection of clean water and open space. Photo by Maggi MacQuilliam



2014 PEC Photo Contest Winner in the Landscapes Category.
Photo by Patricia Temples

PEC Photo Contest

Submit by September 30

Our photo contest is in need of your beautiful and interesting photos from the Piedmont region.

Each of the finalists 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 will receive a \$75 gift card to iTunes!

Categories include: Beautiful Landscapes (or streetscapes!), Native Plants and Wildlife, Local Farms and Food, and the Youth Category (for ages 17 and under).

Be sure to enter your photos by **September 30** for a chance to win! Go to www.pecva.org/photocontest for submission details. If you have questions, please contact Paula Combs, Senior Editor and PR Manager, at pcombs@pecva.org or (540) 347-2334 ext. 7021

A Trail of History

Walking downhill through the open meadow, one gets a sense of liberty that comes when exploring this tranquil, rural place. At the bottom of the hill, there's an historic log structure, which provides a glimpse into the property's past. Once the pathway leads into the forest, you begin ascending the mountain to find spectacular views of the Blue Ridge.

You may be asking, "Where is this?" It's the new trail at James Madison's Montpelier that connects the 2,540-acre historic estate with the Market at Grelen, which is on a 590-acre working farm near Somerset, Virginia.

The trail has been several years in the making. PEC partnered with Montpelier and Grelen to help make the trail come to fruition. Montpelier and Grelen worked together to link old road beds and logging roads to create freshly cleared stretches of trail. During the first week of April, the trail opened to the public.

"The trail has quickly become a popular destination among locals and visitors alike," says Dan Gregg, owner and founder of Grelen Nursery.

"My hope is that trail provides one more reason for visitors to extend their stay from a day to a weekend, so that local inns, hotels, restaurants and other businesses benefit as well," says Kat Imhoff, President and CEO of the Montpelier Foundation.

The four miles of new trails more than

double the Montpelier's previous trail network. Over seven miles of trails are now available to the public between the two sites. The trail network, along with Montpelier, provides some of the only public access to the largely conserved Madison-Barbour Rural Historic District, along with scenic vistas of the Blue Ridge Mountains. It's free and open to the public during the business hours of Montpelier and Grelen, and food, beverages and restrooms are available at either end of the trail.

"Tourism is part of the Orange County rural economic development strategy," Peter Hujik, Land Conservation Officer noted, "The Montpelier-Grelen Trail provides direct access to great views, fresh air, solitude and the landscape that inspired James Madison!"



Hikers walk along the Montpelier-Grelen Trail. Photo by Peter Hujik

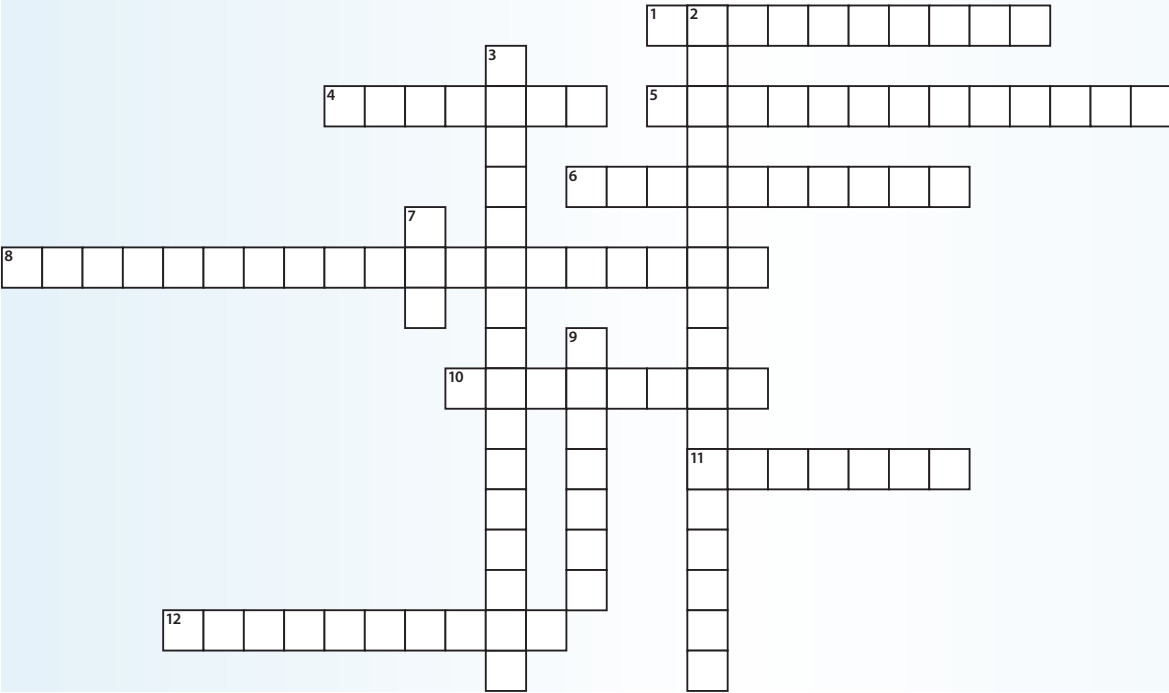


Map of the Montpelier-Grelen Trail

"My hope is that trail provides one more reason for visitors to extend their stay from a day to a weekend, so that local inns, hotels, restaurants and other businesses benefit as well"

—Kat Imhoff, President and CEO of the Montpelier Foundation

Piedmont Crossword



ACROSS

- 1. Virginia: Mother of _____
- 4. Home to James Monroe
- 5. County Seat of Greene County
- 6. Home to James Madison
- 8. Site of Fauquier County's largest Civil War battle
- 10. A native bell of Virginia
- 11. Largest tributary of the Rappahannock River
- 12. PEC summer program

DOWN

- 2. Practice of moving livestock to fresh paddocks to allow vegetation time to regenerate
- 3. Virginia State Butterfly
- 7. State agency that makes transmission line decisions
- 9. Buy Fresh Buy Local Sponsor

Answers on page 5

What a Summer

PEC FELLOWSHIP

The Fellowship group of 2015, selected from a competitive national pool of applicants, took advantage of the incredible opportunities made available by PEC and its partners. From visiting the Jones Nature Preserve to participating in a mock Board of Supervisors meeting to harvesting organic garlic at Sunnyside Farm, the fellows immersed themselves in learning about the Piedmont region's land conservation, watershed health, sustainable agriculture, historic preservation, land use issues and more.

At the end of the seven-week program, the fellows presented practicums to PEC staff

and guests. Some of the presentations this year involved creating a preservation plan for historic ruins on a property in the Blue Ridge Mountains, restoring brook trout in the Piedmont, and an assessment of factors that influence where people prefer to live in the Piedmont.

When 2015 fellow Claudia Elzey was asked why she applied to the fellowship, she said, "I am deeply interested in how we could reshape our lifestyles and settlement patterns to allow everyone—including future generations—to enjoy the world we all inhabit. PEC is unique because it comes at this question from so many different angles,

working to save habitat and natural resources, but also educating us about our right to tight-knit, walkable, and culturally vibrant places, and how to defend that right."

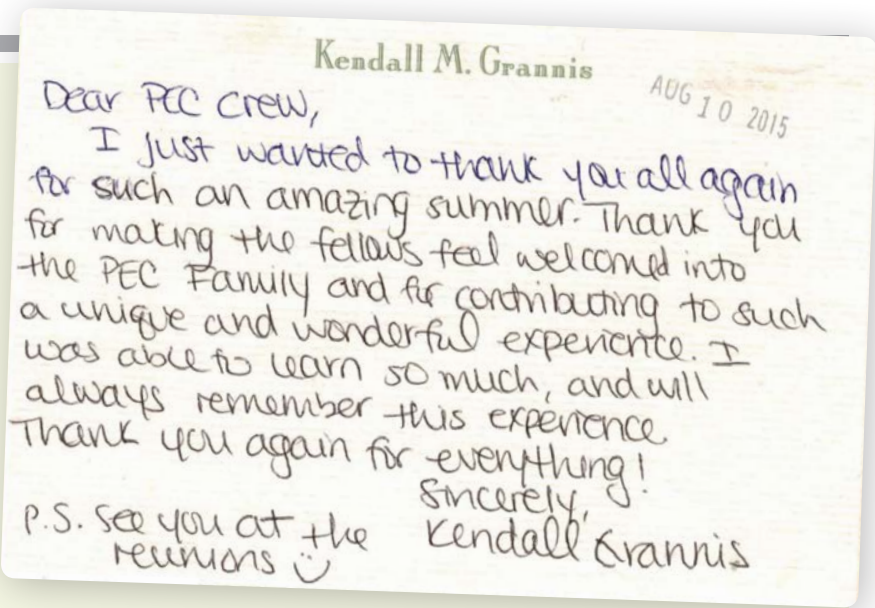
We wish the 2015 PEC Fellows the best of luck with all their endeavors; and we look forward to keeping in touch!



ABOVE: 2015 fellows **Andrea Levy** (FRONT LEFT), **Chantal Madray** (BACK LEFT), **Nicholas Wells** (BACK RIGHT), and **Caitlin McCarthy** (FRONT RIGHT) canoe down the Shenandoah River.

Photo by Marco Sanchez

RIGHT: Fellows harvest garlic at Sunnyside Farm in Rappahannock County. Photo by Caitlin McCarthy



A thank you note from 2015 fellow Kendall Grannis.

PEC FELLOWSHIP: Shaping Tomorrow's Leaders in Environmental Conservation



ABOVE, FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: 2015 fellow **Joseph Mutter**, superintendent of Shenandoah National Park **Jim Northup**, PEC staff **Kristie Kendall**, PEC President **Chris Miller**, landowners **Jan and Ed McKenney**, Fellowship Coordinator **Mary Liles**, and 2015 fellow **Rachel Earnhardt**. Photo by Bri West

Thank You!

A special thanks to **Wegmans Food Markets and Local Harvest, Inc.** for their Epicurean level sponsorships of PEC's 2015 *Buy Fresh Buy Local* program! Their support helps our *Buy Fresh Buy Local* guides reach 270,000 households in our service region and encourages families to connect with their local farmers.



A Day To Graze

At a recent pasture management field day, over 25 farmers, landowners and service providers toured Over Jordan Farm in Rappahannock County with Bean Hollow Grassfed owner Michael Sands.

Sands gave advice on everything from fencing layouts and watering systems to the number of animals he grazes. He runs roughly 20,000 pounds of livestock per acre per day in a pasture for two days before rotating and letting the field rest for 90 days.

During the tour, the participants visited mixed grass pastures, discussed stockpiling winter fescue and waded through a native warm season grass planting. The native warm season grasses offer the livestock a highly nutritional mixture of partridge pea, tick clover, bundleflower, and a suite of grasses like little bluestem, big bluestem and gammagrass during the hot summer months when the cool season orchard, fescue, and timothy grasses don't do as well.

"My goal is to have an ecosystem here that is productive, profitable, and full of wildlife," says Sands.

Through biannual soil sampling, plant surveys, and continual time lapse photography of different pasture management practices, the project aims to offer insight on how mob and rotational grazing of sheep and cows can positively affect livestock health and farm profitability.



Michael Sands, owner of Bean Hollow Grassfed, talks about pasture management at Over Jordan Farm. Photo by Jessica Palmer

The field day was part of a USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Conservation Innovation Grant PEC was awarded in 2013.

PEC and Virginia Working Landscapes will be holding a Habitat Walk field day at Over Jordan Farm on October 15. Register at www.pecva.org/events.



UPCOMING Events

Rappahannock County Farm Tour and Festival

When > Saturday, September 26 • 10 AM – 5 PM
& Sunday, September 27 • 11 AM – 5 PM

Where > Rappahannock County Visitors Center and farms in Rappahannock County

Learn about agriculture and local products while visiting approximately 30 farm and ag-related venues in Rappahannock. Be sure to stop by the Artisans’ Market (at the Visitors Center in Washington, VA) during your trip around the county. And come visit with PEC on Saturday at Bean Hollow Grassfed.

Free event. For more information, visit www.rappahannockcountyfarmtourfestival.com



Culpeper Harvest Days Farm Tour

When > Saturday, October 3 • 10 AM – 4 PM
& Sunday, October 4 • 10 AM – 4 PM

Where > Culpeper Agricultural Enterprises (Welcome Center) and farms in Culpeper County

Learn about agriculture and local products while visiting 16 farm and ag-related venues in Culpeper.

Free; for more information, visit www.culpeperfarmtour.com

Pop Quiz

What is this edible native plant that ripens in September-October?



Photo by Julie Bolthouse

ANSWER

Corylus americana, also known as the American Hazelnut.

American Hazelnuts are edible and enjoyed by people, but they are primarily eaten by a variety of birds and mammals such as wild turkeys, bobwhite quail, Eastern chipmunks and squirrels. It’s also a host plant for a variety of insects including many moths and the beautiful Eastern tiger swallowtail.

Crossword Answers from page 3

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| ACROSS | 11. Rapidan |
| 1. Presidents | 12. Fellowship |
| 4. Oakhill | DOWN |
| 5. Stanardsville | 2. Rotational grazing |
| 6. Montpelier | 3. Tiger Swallowtail |
| 8. Rappahannock Station | 7. SCC |
| 10. Bluebell | 9. Wegmans |

Sugarland Run HOA Native Tree & Shrub Planting

When > Saturday, October 10 • 9 AM – 12 PM
(rain date: Saturday, October 17)

Where > Sugarland Run HOA, Sterling, Va

Native tree and shrub plantings will help reduce polluted runoff and help improve the health of local stream and air quality, while providing needed habitat.

No advance registration needed. Contact Gem Bingol at gbingol@pecva.org for questions.

Bean Hollow Grassfed Habitat Walk

When > Thursday, October 15 • 1 – 4 PM

Where > Over Jordan Farm, Flint Hill, Va.

Join Virginia Working Landscapes and Landowner Michael Sands for an informative walk and discussion on grassland habitat. And learn about grassland biodiversity research and pollinator conservation.

Free but registration is required at pecva.org/events. Contact Jessica Palmer at jpalmer@pecva.org with questions.

Potomac Yard: Metroway Walking Tour

When > Saturday, October 17
9 AM • networking & coffee
9:30 AM • kickoff presentation
10 AM • walking tours depart

Where > Pulte Homes sales office, 2400 Main Line Blvd., Alexandria, Va

The event is free, but registration is required. For more information, visit pecva.org/events



Family Stream Day

When > Sunday, October 18

Where > Claude Moore Park, Sterling, Va.

Loudoun non-profits and agencies collaborate to help educate families about local streams and watersheds.

No registration needed. Contact Gem Bingol at gbingol@pecva.org with questions.

Broadlands HOA Native Tree & Shrub Planting

When > Saturday, October 24 • 9 AM – 12 PM

Where > Broadlands HOA

Native tree and shrub planting will help to reduce run-off in a local stormwater pond thereby improving the health of streams that receive the pond waters.

No advance registration needed. Contact Gem Bingol at gbingol@pecva.org for questions.



Fall for the Trail and Painting Purcellville Green

When > Sunday, October 25 • 12 – 3 PM

Where > Chapman DeMary Trail, Purcellville, Va.

Fun outdoor activities on the trail and informational booths.

No registration required.

Farmland Leasing Workshop and Networking Event

When > Wednesday, November 4 • 1 – 7 PM

Where > CitySpace in Charlottesville, Va.

PEC is excited to offer a workshop focused on farmland leasing with keynote speaker Kathy Ruhf from Land For Good. The event will end with a social hour where attendees will have an opportunity to network.

Free, but registration is required. Contact Jess Palmer at jpalmer@pecva.org with questions.

Farmland Leasing Workshop and Networking Event

When > Thursday, November 5 • 1 – 7 PM

Where > Middleburg Community Center, Middleburg, Va.

PEC is excited to offer a workshop focused on farmland leasing with keynote speaker Kathy Ruhf from Land For Good. The event will end with a social hour where attendees will have an opportunity to network.

Free, but registration is required. Contact Jess Palmer at jpalmer@pecva.org with questions.

On the Ground

CLARKE

Land Conserved in Long Marsh Run Rural Historic District

Building on our long-standing program to encourage the conservation of working farmland, PEC has partnered with the Clarke County Easement Authority, along with federal and state partners, on a Purchase-of-Development Rights project east of Berryville. This 58-acre conservation easement furthers conservation efforts in the Long Marsh Run Rural Historic District, and it protects farmland with state-significant soils. The farm is also adjacent to another property that was recently protected with a conservation easement. The Clarke County Easement Authority was created in 2003 and has protected approximately 5,800 acres with conservation easements in Clarke County over the last 12 years.

CULPEPER

Board Adds Language on Transmission Lines in Comprehensive Plan

After hearing from citizens who are unhappy with Dominion Power’s proposed new transmission line in southern Culpeper, the Board of Supervisors added a paragraph to the Comprehensive Plan stating that “Expansion within existing transmission line corridors must be the first option pursued.” We applaud the Board’s willingness to address this matter. However, while this language will be considered during the process, the SCC is not bound by it in its determination or permitting of a route. Nor does Dominion have to respect the County’s desires in their proposal of routes.

FAUQUIER

Remington-Warrenton-Wheeler 230kV Transmission Line

The deadline for submitting public comments on the Remington-Warrenton-Wheeler 230kV Transmission Line was on August 14. The State Corporation Commission (SCC) held evidentiary hearings in Richmond in early August. The examiner also held a local public hearing, which attracted a standing room only crowd to the theater at the Warrenton Community Center. Judge Christie, one of the SCC Commissioners, was also in attendance. Around 70 people gave testimony during the nearly five-hour hearing. Of that number, only two spoke out in favor of the proposed Option A Route through eastern Fauquier County. The hearing examiner will now summarize the public comments received and make his recommendation in October. We can likely expect a decision from the SCC Commission around January. PEC is a respondent in the case, and we will be commenting on the evidence throughout this process.

GREENE

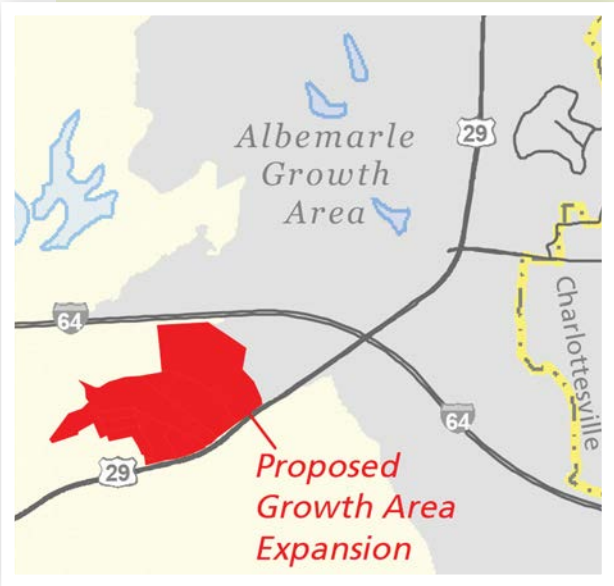
Shooting Range Proposed in Ruckersville

The Planning Commission has held a public hearing on an application for a semi-enclosed shooting range in Ruckersville. The proposal has “drawn fire” from the community as hundreds of houses are within a half-mile of the location. At the hearing, neighbors rightfully asked questions about associated noise levels, expected number of customers, safety, and hours of operation. The applicant contends that the facility will not violate the noise ordinance. But there are still questions on the accuracy of the test results he provided. As of August 19, the Commission deferred a decision on the shooting range until their September meeting.

ALBEMARLE

Successful Conservation Workshop

At the end of June, PEC hosted a professional education workshop in Charlottesville for attorneys. The workshop was focused on the lessons learned from recent conservation easement case law at the federal level. This workshop was attended by approximately 100 attorneys from Virginia and the Mid-Atlantic. Speakers included a nationally recognized legal scholar, senior IRS attorneys, a federal tax court judge, and representatives from the Virginia Department of Taxation. The goal of the workshop was to ensure that landowners and land conservation organizations in Virginia are structuring land conservation transactions to meet the highest legal standards and are taking advantage of the best available information and expertise. **Materials from the workshop can be requested by emailing Rex Linville at rlinville@pecva.org.**



The proposed 223-acre addition to the growth area is near the southwest corner of the Rt. 29/I-64 interchange.

Growth Area Expansion

In other news, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on the proposed 225-acre Growth Area expansion—initiated in response to a west coast brewery expressing interest in constructing a large-scale facility in Albemarle. The majority of the residents who spoke either raised significant concerns on the matter or outright opposed it. In addition, almost 70 similar comments were submitted in response to PEC’s August 17 action alert. PEC urged the county to question the data presented by staff and, noting that Albemarle is but one of several localities “in the running” for this brewery, insisted the community be told how much the county was willing to “ante up” in order to land it. Citing too many unanswered questions and concerns, the Commission voted unanimously on recommending that the Board of Supervisors deny the proposal at the board’s September 9 public hearing, and return it to staff and the Commission for further review and evaluation.

LOUDOUN

Poland Transmission Line; and Potential Ordinance Changes

After a joint motion filed by Loudoun County and all of the other respondents to the Poland Road Transmission Line project, the State Corporation Commission (SCC) Hearing Examiner ruled for a delay to the two public hearings that were scheduled to be heard in mid-August. The new date is to be determined and the procedural schedule has been suspended until the Hearing Examiner rules at a future date. The respondent’s motion asks the SCC to have Dominion study the alternative alignments that Loudoun County has proposed for the transmission lines.

Loudoun County is also considering changes being proposed to ordinances that protect the County’s steep slopes and floodplains that would allow more development and uses in these environmentally sensitive areas. The changes have been proposed by the Zoning Ordinance Action Group (developers hold most seats on this advisory group) in an effort to be more business friendly. The Board of Supervisors will be holding a public hearing and taking action in mid-October.

MADISON

Blue Ridge Heritage Monument; and Reconnecting Streams

The Madison County Board of Supervisors allotted a site at the Criglersville Elementary School earlier this year to the Blue Ridge Heritage Project for installing a unique county monument that honors the local families who were displaced by the creation of Shenandoah National Park. The Board approved a permanent monument, and construction has begun on a stone chimney and granite plaque.

In other news, PEC received a grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for a brook trout restoration that will reconnect over five miles of stream. PEC’s Madison Conservation Fund and the landowners are partnering together to provide the additional funds needed for this project. The effort will begin this fall.

ORANGE

Farmland Conservation along the Rapidan River

A large working farm on the Rapidan River has been conserved with a conservation easement with the Virginia Outdoors Foundation. The farm protects one mile of frontage along the Rapidan River, along with two miles of tributaries, to the growing corridor of protected land on this major tributary to the Rappahannock River. The recent easement brings the total conserved land along the Rapidan River up to 11,536 acres. PEC has also received preliminary approval for a grant to purchase a conservation easement on another 368 acres on the Rapidan, but needs to raise an additional \$235,000 to match \$551,550 in Federal support.

RAPPAHANNOCK

Reconnecting Streams; and Comprehensive Plan Review

This summer, PEC received a grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to assist with a brook trout restoration project in Rappahannock. PEC's Krebsner Fund for Rappahannock County Conservation and the landowners are partnering together to provide the additional funds needed for this project, which will reconnect over two miles of stream. The launch of this effort will occur this fall. Funded by the same grant program, a similar project is happening in Madison.

In other news, Rappahannock will be reviewing its Comprehensive Plan this fall, as is done every five years. Citizens will have the opportunity to provide comments on the strengths and weaknesses of the existing plan at public meetings.

Out & About

Summer Safari at Smithsonian Biology Conservation Institute

FRONT ROYAL, VA • EVENT WAS HELD ON JUNE 6, 2015



▲ PEC staff and guests listen to Steven Montfort, Director and Chief Scientist of the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute, at the Summer Safari event. Photo by Jason Dixon Photography



▲ Dr. Belinda Burwell talks to patrons about a screech owl at the the Summer Safari event at the Smithsonian Biology Conservation Institute. Photo by Jason Dixon Photography



Marie Ridder was the guest of honor at the Summer Safari event where she was given an award for her outstanding and tireless work in conservation. Photo by Jason Dixon Photography

PEC partners with Indonesia–US Youth Leadership Program Partners

PURCELLVILLE, VA • EVENT WAS HELD ON JULY 29, 2015

Youth from I-US YLP monitored the stream along the Chapman Demary trail. Then they looked at what they collected through microscopes. Afterward, they gave back by helping with three tasks on the trail—picking up trash, repairing a bridge and restoring the trail by adding mulch. Photo by Amie Ware

Gem Bingol, Land Use Officer for PEC, and David Ward, with Loudoun Watershed Watch, teach a group from I-US YLP about stream monitoring at the Chapman Demary trail. Photo by Amie Ware



Feast From the Field

WARRENTON, VA • EVENT WAS HELD ON JULY 25, 2015



▲ Rob Marmet, PEC's Senior Energy Policy Analyst, speaks at the Feast From the Field event. Funds from the event went to support the Fauquier Education Farm. Photo by Lou Emerson, Courtesy of Fauquier Now

Jim Hankins, Fauquier Education Farm Coordinator, speaks to guests at the Feast From the Field event. Photo by Lou Emerson, Courtesy of Fauquier Now



Dear Friends,

We all love the Piedmont region. For many of us, that emotional connection stems from specific places. Our home. Our land. Our yard. Our familiar routes along byways and trails. A particular view, or a special stretch of stream. That strong, direct connection has motivated thousands of families to volunteer to conserve their land.

This summer, Fauquier County crossed a threshold of 100,000 acres under conservation easement—a testament of the connection people have with their land. The region as a whole is a shining example of the willingness of families to sacrifice potential riches to preserve the place they love.

All of us benefit directly and indirectly from this investment in conservation. The sense of rural countryside is still present and for many, the most important quality. Without open space, we don't have many things that make life worth living—clean air and dark night skies, streams that we can fish and swim in, fields to grow food, and forests to hike and hunt.

Increasingly, we are also seeing the renovation and investment in our towns and villages. Reinvestment in main street communities, which began in the 1970's, has continued throughout the Piedmont, from Charlottesville to Lovettsville. These are great places to live, work, raise families, and enjoy an incredible diversity of education, entertainment, and recreational amenities.

Hopefully, you share my belief that the quality of life in the region has generally improved over the past few decades—the air is cleaner, the streams are healthier, the economy is better, there is more to do. Yes, we have lost places we care about, and have legitimate concerns related to traffic, cost of



Photo by Paula Combs

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living, and the future of the region. But we can also agree that we are fortunate to live in an incredibly beautiful, bountiful, and authentic place.

More and more visitors, as well as new residents, are learning about the special qualities of the region. PEC works to increase awareness through programs like *Buy Fresh Buy Local* that help direct people to pick-your-own farms and stores that sell local produce. We also helped form the Journey Through Hallowed Ground Partnership, which has focused on a larger national, and even international, audience on the region.

The increased interest in our region has created market opportunities for existing and new businesses, new hotels and inns, and an incredible diversity of restaurants in places like Purcellville and Culpeper. And the nationally famous Red Truck Bakery has just opened in Marshall. There's also the

growing number of festivals, races and other events and hundreds of wineries, breweries, cideries and distilleries.

Of course these opportunities mean more people on the roads and byways, some in cars, some on bikes, and some hiking. With people come a greater demand on our natural resources.

Finding the balance between conservation of the values we share, encouraging others to appreciate those benefits, and enabling our local economies to capture that value is the daily work of PEC and its members.

Sincerely,

Chris Miller, President



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INSIDE

A trail through history at Montpelier, another great PEC Fellowship, and the deadline for the PEC Photo Contest is approaching.

Photo by Mary Judkins

Pop Quiz

What is this edible native plant that ripens in September-October?

ANSWER ON PAGE 5



Photo by Julie Bolthouse



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