



The Piedmont View

A MEMBERSHIP NEWSLETTER OF THE PIEDMONT ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL

WINTER 2015

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Thank you for helping to protect the Piedmont!



Together Again

This fall, PEC was excited to announce the opening of our newly renovated and expanded office in Old Town Warrenton. It's been almost ten years since our staff has worked under the same roof, and we're all enjoying being back together.

By Paula Combs

When I first started working for PEC two years ago, my desk was stationed in a "living room," along with the rest of the communications staff. Our office was technically a "house." And from what we've gathered from dusty, yellowed documents, it's one of the oldest houses in Warrenton, built around 1784 and once owned by Civil War Cavalry Commander John Mosby.

As part of the renovation, great care was taken to maintain the integrity and appearance of the historic section of the building. The existing pine floors were refinished and the original exterior siding re-painted. The new construction, which is below the roof line and behind the original building, is not visible when standing on the sidewalk directly in front of the office. This type of design was planned so the building would complement the historic appearance of Old Town Warrenton.

The renovations and new addition have already helped to increase communication, making us a stronger team. We now have sufficient space to conduct meetings; we have a great conference room with modern technology; and we have outdoor space to use for breaks, meetings and workshops.

With that said, I wanted to ask some other PEC staffers about their thoughts on our new(er) office.

KAREN HUNSBERGER-ADAM,
Director of Membership

Time at PEC: 31 years

"PEC's office has always been in Warrenton, but we moved to Horner Street in 1994. And as our staff grew, we moved bookkeeping and development to Main Street about 10 ten years ago. I think all of us being back together again is going to be a huge benefit."



A view of PEC's renovated headquarters office, with the new addition in the back, in Warrenton, Va. Photo by Marco Sanchez

Karen's favorite part about the headquarters office?

"I really like the new conference room. And I had the option to choose a private office or a more open cubicle, and I chose the cubicle. I want to be sitting

with the team. When you're in the communal area, you get to be a part of everything that is going on—and I like that a lot. I get to hear the conservation, land use and programmatic things going on as they happen."

Continued on page 2

Bringing Landowners and Farmland Seekers Together

Increasing the local food supply and expanding opportunities for next-generation farmers in the Piedmont depends on improving access to affordable farmland. Many Piedmont landowners are interested in expanding the agricultural use of their land, and many farmers are eager to partner with landowners through farmland leases. However, both landowners and farmland seekers say that it often proves very difficult to make these matches in Virginia.



Guests network during the social hour at one of PEC's farmland leasing workshops this past fall. Photo by Carolyn Sedgwick

PEC is working to make farmland leasing easier and more widespread in the Piedmont. Earlier in the year, thanks to a grant from the Beirne Carter Foundation, we released the publication "Finding a Place to Grow: How the Next Generation is Gaining Access to Farmland." The booklet included eight profiles of successful farmland lease arrangements in Virginia.

This fall, we held two workshops for landowners and land seekers focused on farmland leasing. The workshops were made possible by grants from Prince Charitable Trust and the Nicolaas and Patricia Kortlandt Fund of the Northern Piedmont Community Foundation.

PEC held one workshop in Middleburg and another one in Charlottesville. The keynote address was given by Kathy Ruhf, senior program director for *Land For Good*, an organization that helps farmers secure land

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Together Again

Continued from cover

CHRIS MILLER, PEC President

Time at PEC: 20 years. He worked at PEC in 1993-1994 during the Disney's America debate. And from 1996 to present he has served as PEC President.

"The building has some great green features. It has a high performance building envelope, local and formaldehyde-free materials, recycled-content materials, low-VOC paints, low-flow plumbing fixtures, LED lighting and a geothermal heating system. We're also in the process of installing solar panels."

Chris' favorite part about the headquarters office?

"I'm happy that our staff, board members and partners can all meet in the same office now. We have a variety of spaces in the building—you have places to shut the door and do quiet work, and then you have rooms you can have 60 people for a public meeting. Also, I'm

enjoying all of the natural light—it provides a much nicer working atmosphere."

DOUG LARSON, PEC Vice President

Time at PEC: 15 years

"There's a lot of great things about the renovations and the new addition. The property has many native flowers, shrubs and trees around the office now, including a pollinator garden installed by Hill House Farm and Nursery. John Magee, a PEC Board member and landscape architect, designed the landscape plan, and a significant portion of the plants were donated by another PEC board member, Mark Ohrstrom. We also set it up so the gutters and drains feed to swales and rain gardens, to reduce stormwater runoff."

Doug's favorite part about the headquarters office?

"I really like the outdoor terrace. I think we're going to get a lot of use out of it—from having lunch out there to conducting workshops that showcase our native plants. The

landscape gives us the ability to enjoy it and use it for educational purposes. We'll have the opportunity to show how to use natives in a more urban setting."

KRISTIE KENDALL, Historic Preservation Manager

Time at PEC: 4.5 years

"As a preservationist, it's exciting to be able to showcase PEC's office as a great example of how to adapt historic buildings as an organi-



Warrenton Mayor Powell L. Duggan, PEC Board Member Jean Perin, PEC Vice President Doug Larson, PEC Board Member Marie Ridder, PEC Board Member George Ohrstrom, Center District Supervisor Chris Granger, and PEC President Chris Miller at the ribbon cutting ceremony for the opening of PEC's newly renovated and expanded headquarters office on Horner Street in Warrenton, Va. Also attending the event were representatives from the Fauquier Chamber of Commerce and representatives from the Greater Warrenton Chamber of Commerce. Photo by Paula Combs

zation's needs change over time, while still maintaining the historic character and integrity of the building."

Kristie's favorite part about the headquarters office?

"Having space for all of our staff under the same roof has to top the list. But I also really like the large windows that let abundant light into the building. It creates an inviting, cheerful workplace."

So what's my favorite part of the office? Besides having the entire Warrenton team in the same location, my favorite part is the attic and the old, narrow stairs leading to it. Going

up there lets me easily drift back in time and imagine the house's previous tenants, dressed in 18th-century garb and carrying a small lantern to light their path. To survive from 1784 to 2015, the house is a treasure, and we're happy to have it as part of our office.

If you haven't already, we hope you'll stop by soon to say hello and see the renovations!

The PEC team wants to give a big thank you to the donors, board members and staff who made this project possible. Getting this project funded and finished was a tremendous effort, and we are extremely grateful for everyone's contribution.



Karen Hunsberger-Adam, Director of Membership, speaks with Diana Gebhart, bookkeeper, in one of the renovated rooms in the historic part of PEC's headquarters office. Photo by Paula Combs

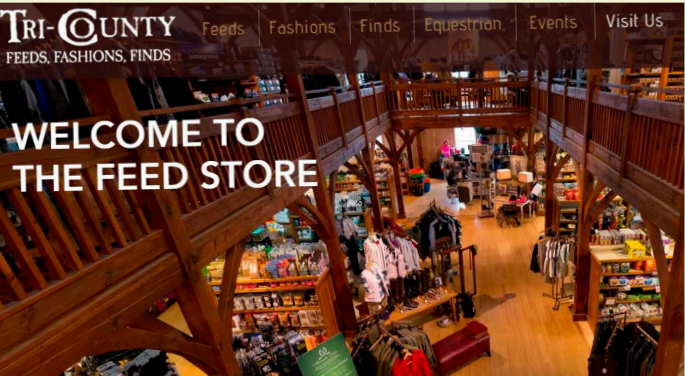
Giving Back

We wanted to thank Tri County Feeds, Fashions and Finds owners Bill and Jeri Jackson. Back in 2011, they developed a feed that comes in a 're-recyclable' package and decided to give a portion of each sale of that feed to PEC and Goose Creek Association. Over the years, their generosity has resulted in a significant amount of funding for each of our organizations.

You might be asking 'what does re-recyclable even mean?' Tri-County's "Feeds for the Piedmont" sack is made of recycled brown paper and features a liner that can be used as a garbage bag on the inside. This environmentally friendly "bag within a bag" helps make recycling easier.

"We give to PEC and Goose Creek Association because we want to preserve this absolutely wonderful countryside," says Bill Jackson. "It's really important we're all stewards of the land."

Thank you Bill and Jeri for your continued support!



A screenshot from Tri County Feeds, Fashions and Finds website shows their store in Marshall, Va.

The Conservation Learning Circle
Women and the Future of Farming

Nearly a third of the nation's farmland—301 million acres of U.S. land—is now farmed or co-farmed by women. Some are new farmers and others have inherited family land they farm themselves or lease out to neighboring farmers. Over the next two decades, the American Farmland Trust estimates that 240 million acres of farmland are expected to change owners as aging farmers retire or leave their land to the next generation. Many of these new owners, with some estimations up to 75 percent, will be women.

Due to the evolving demographics in farming and land ownership, it's important to address any obstacles that these women face in order to keep land actively farmed and in open space. That's where the Conservation Learning Circles come in. The women-only circles foster a welcoming, positive atmosphere that is aimed at assisting female farmers and landowners, at any level of experience, to become more knowledgeable and confident about farm conservation issues, practices and available resources. These resources could include connecting women with local soil and water conservation programs, with informational sessions on generational farm transfer and estate planning, with land lease arrangements, or with field trips to properties to see practices on the ground. In addition, the circle provides networking and fellowship opportunities for attendees to meet one another and discuss their concerns, challenges and experiences.

PEC's end goal is to gain insight into how conservation-based organizations can better serve and assist this growing demographic in our area while ensuring protection of agricultural land and open space for future generations. We have hosted two workshops in Warrenton this fall and are slated to keep the circle active in the coming year. If you or someone you know are interested in learning more about the circle, please contact PEC!



Carolyn Sedgwick, PEC's Rappahannock and Clarke County Land Conservation Officer, talks to women landowners at the Conservation Learning Circle. Photo by Paula Combs

Bringing Landowners and Farmland Seekers Together

Continued from cover

in New England, as well as provide guidance to help farmers, landowners and communities navigate the complex challenges of land access, tenure and transfer.

During Ruhf’s presentation, she emphasized that leasing is an approach that can meet the needs of both landowner and farmland seeker. She explained that successful land-leasing relationships are based on the landowner and farmland seeker having a shared vision, good communication and some flexibility. This calls on both landowners and seekers to assess their goals, values and expectations before coming to the table to negotiate the lease. Ruhf provided a variety of examples and resources for how to approach this assessment, particularly landowners interested in leasing land.

After the keynote address, attorneys Mark Botkin of BotkinRose and Steve Price of McCandlish & Lillard, P.C. provided their perspectives on working with local landowners on farmland leases in the region.



Jess Palmer, PEC Buy Fresh Buy Local coordinator and Kathy Ruhf, Land for Good and workshop keynote speaker. Photo by Carolyn Sedgwick

Each of their presentations touched on many of the issues and concerns raised by both landowners and farmland seekers when leasing land.

“The discussion with the attorneys after their presentations led to a spirited question and answer session about leasing options and opportunities,” said Mike Kane, land conservation officer for PEC.

The workshops also included a panel discussion that included landowners, farmers leasing land, and professionals who assist landowners and farmland seekers with leasing arrangements.

Charlottesville’s panel included Andy Sorrell from Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services’ Office of Farmland Preservation, who talked about the Virginia Farm Link program that helps match landowners and farmland seekers. Heather Coiner and Ben Stowe, who were featured in the “Finding a Place to Grow” publication, talked about their experience finding a farm to lease through the Farm Link program. Now they have been operating Little Hat Creek Farm in Nelson County for over a year, selling produce and “old-time bread” at markets in the Charlottesville area and through an 18-member Community Supported Agriculture program.

Another landowner, Laura Farrell, from Temple Hill Farm in Albemarle County spoke in the Charlottesville panel about her continued search for the right farmer to lease her land. She expressed concern that few people who are seeking to lease her farmland are also prepared to run a farm business.

During Middleburg’s workshop panel, Chip Planck shared his insights gained from more than 35 years of owning and operating Wheatland Vegetable Farms in Loudoun County. Chip and his wife Susan began leas-



Attorney Steve Price of McCandlish & Lillard presenting the legal side of leasing to an audience of 50 people in Middleburg. Photo by Carolyn Sedgwick

ing some of their land, equipment, and infrastructure to independent vegetable farmers beginning in 2006, as they started to reduce their own full-time operation. Chip highlighted the success of this arrangement for all the parties, providing specifics on how they developed the lease terms and were able to work cooperatively with independent farmers.

Katie Meyer from Virginia Certified Farm Seeker Program and Jim Hilleary, who is the Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) unit coordinator and extension agent for Loudoun County, also joined the panel in Middleburg. Meyer explained that the Certified Farm Seeker Program helps farmland seekers through the development of a business plan and ensures that they are ready to begin their farm operation.

Hilleary emphasized that Cooperative Extension is a resource for both landowners and farm operators, noting that his

role is to enhance the local agricultural economy. Cooperative Extension is there to connect landowners and farm operators with the work generated from Virginia’s land grant universities, which can help match the right land for the right farm operation. Moreover,

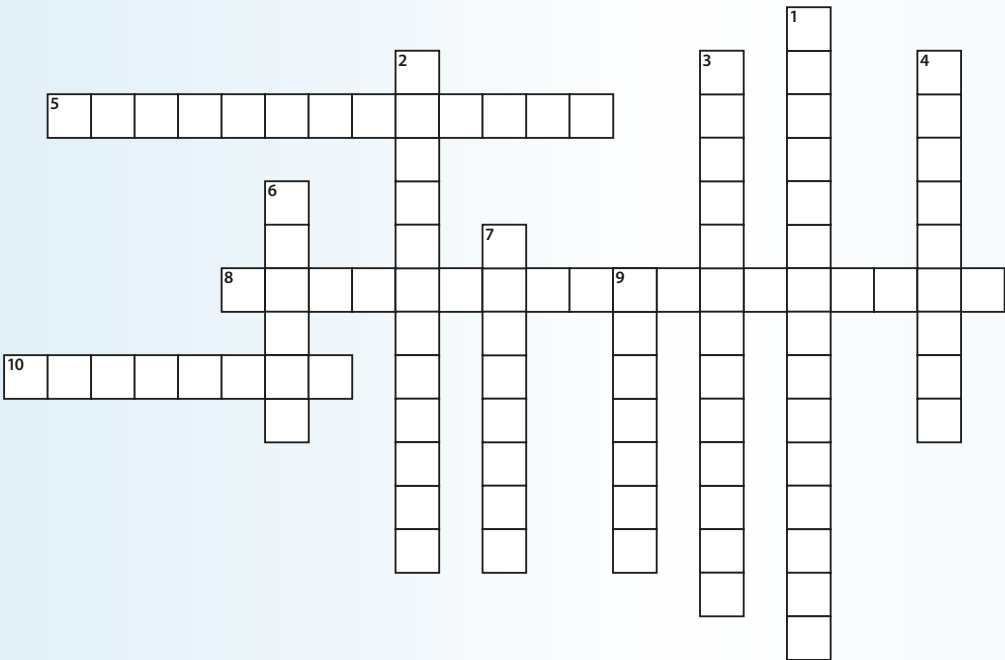
with his extensive contacts in the farm community, Hilleary talked about his informal role matching landowners and farmland seekers.

The workshops wrapped up with a networking social hour where the presenters, landowners and farmland seekers had a chance to meet each other and, potentially, make a connection.

“I was hopeful there would be interest in the leasing topic, but I was surprised at the strong response. More than 100 people participated over the two days, and we are looking forward to holding follow-up workshops in 2016,” said Kane.

“The discussion with the attorneys led to a spirited question and answer session about leasing options and opportunities.”

Crossword: Geography Round



ACROSS

- 5. Largest cavalry engagement during the Civil war took place here
- 8. Confusingly... mountain range found in the northeast portion of Albemarle County
- 10. Only county in Virginia to have 100,000 acres under conservation easement

DOWN

- 1. Only city in PEC’s 9-county region
- 2. River separating Fauquier and Culpeper Counties
- 3. Location in Orange County famous for being the birthplace of President Zachary Taylor
- 4. County Seat of Fauquier
- 6. Albemarle location, home to Starr Hill Brewery and setting for ‘Mrs. Murphy series’ by author Rita Mae Brown
- 7. Largest town in Virginia
- 9. Old Rag Mountain is located in this Piedmont county

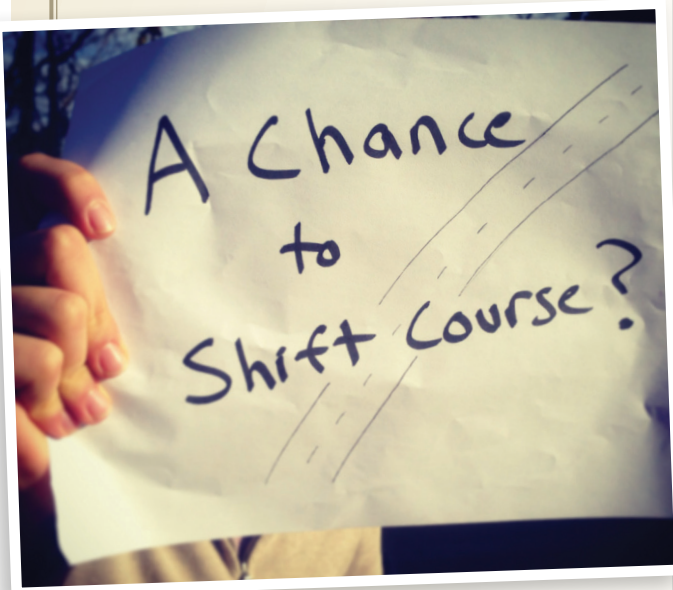
*Answers on page 7

PEC Highlights From



Albemarle

- ▶ PEC's Rex Linville has been collaborating with local groups and government agencies to identify right-of-way easements and connector trails that could link the future Biscuit Run State Park with downtown Charlottesville.
- ▶ Last winter we encouraged citizen support for the Rt. 29 Solutions Package in lieu of the western bypass, specifically the Berkmar Drive Extension, the widening of Rt. 29 north of the Rivanna River, traffic light synchronization, the Hilldsdale Drive Extension, the Best Buy ramp, and improvements at the Rio Road intersection. These are all moving forward.



- ▶ In June, the Board of Supervisors asked that 82 acres—which later ballooned to 223 acres—near the southwest corner of the Route 29/I-64 interchange be added to the county Growth Area. PEC alerted our supporters to the issue and generated citizen letters to the Board of Supervisors. In September, the Board allowed only a 51-acre expansion. In the end, this “expansion” merely aligned the Growth Area boundary to include an area that had decades ago been granted access to public sewer and water, thus precluding a precedent-setting decision.
- ▶ PEC hosted a professional education seminar on the lessons learned from recent tax court cases regarding conservation easements. The workshop was attended by approximately 100 professionals from around the region who heard presentations from IRS attorneys, Virginia Department of Taxation staff, a tax court judge and a legal scholar.

Clarke

- ▶ As part of PEC's ongoing habitat restoration project at the Piedmont Memorial Overlook, a 5-acre shortleaf pine planting was completed in April 2015. Management of the new pine stand will begin this winter and early spring. Control of invasive Japanese stiltgrass will be implemented, and a prescribed burn plan for the pine site will be drafted.



Photo by Kent Murrell

- ▶ We 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.
- ▶ PEC's Gem Bingol and Carolyn Sedgwick orchestrated and participated in the annual Clarke Conservation Fair in October. This youth outreach day engages all 4th graders (public and private) in Clarke County on conservation issues and aims to help connect them with the natural world. This year's theme was “sharing nature.”

Culpeper

- ▶ We held an “Estate Planning for Rural Landowners” workshop for people interested in how conservation measures can facilitate transferring land to the next generation. Adam Downing, Virginia Cooperative Extension, and Rex Linville, PEC, discussed the advantages of planning ahead for the succession of farms and forests. Julie King, Esq., provided an overview of available legal mechanisms.
- ▶ We helped put on the first “Magical Farm Tour” in partnership with the Culpeper Tourism Department, which included monthly farm visits that started in May with Oak Shade Farm followed by Saddle Ridge Farm, Glengary Tree Farm, Old House Vineyards, and Bees & Trees Farm.
- ▶ In April, the first annual “Wild and Scenic Film Festival” kicked off in Culpeper—hosted by Friends of the Rappahannock, Trout Unlimited-Rapidan Chapter, and PEC. The Wild and Scenic Film Festival travels across the country and is a family-friendly opportunity to enjoy a broad spectrum of environmentally themed films.
- ▶ This past spring, we alerted members to a proposal for a new 230-kV transmission line through Orange, Madison and Culpeper counties. PEC made maps, hosted community meetings, and served as a resource for interested landowners.



Photo by Paula Combs

Fauquier

- ▶ This year, Fauquier surpassed 100,000 acres of privately conserved land. PEC met with the farmer that put the County over the 100,000 mark, drafted an article detailing the achievement, and worked with partners on a press release for local media. Articles were published in Fauquier Now, Fauquier Times, inFauquier magazine, and Middleburg Life.
- ▶ Our annual Sustainable Landscaping Workshop was the biggest yet, with about 100 attendees this year. At the end of the two hour workshop, attendees were able to get started right away by buying native plants from Hill House Nursery.
- ▶ PEC and partners kicked off the first annual family-friendly celebration of land and water conservation successes at Marriott Ranch, located in the headwaters of the Rappahannock River and at the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Seventy-five volunteers planted 350 trees and 700 live stakes over an area of three acres for watershed protection. The event featured oysters from Tappahannock, local beer and wine, live music, fly tying, and hayride tours of the tree planting sites.
- ▶ In March, horse owners crowded into our “Greening Your Horse Paddock” workshop focused on tools and techniques for enhancing small acreage grazing systems. Expert speakers from the Virginia Tech M.A.R.E. Center in Middleburg and both the John Marshall and Prince William Soil & Water Conservation District participated in the event.
- ▶ PEC's annual Thumb Run Open House provided an opportunity for watershed landowners to mingle with their neighbors and also learn about ways to improve water quality and wildlife habitat in the Thumb Run watershed. The next open house will be on January 16, 2016, 1 – 4 pm at Leeds Episcopal Church.

Greene

- ▶ PEC commented in opposition to a proposed shooting range in Greene County. The site of the proposed use was adjacent to an area planned for mixed use, containing a high

number of residences. The proposal lacked sufficient detail on the noise generated. Noise from the outdoor range could not have been effectively mitigated given its proximity to the homes. As well, a firing range may have precluded more desirable forms of economic development in the area. The proposal was ultimately voted down by the BOS in a 3-2 vote.

Loudoun

- › Sixty percent of Loudoun residents are part of a Homeowners Association (HOA) and the County is the largest single landowner. So, PEC is working hard on partnerships with HOAs and Loudoun public schools on a series of native habitat and tree plantings and stormwater management projects. This work includes the opening of a new outdoor classroom at Mill Run elementary.
- › This past spring, developers were pushing for a series of rezonings in the Loudoun Transition Area—the important stretch of land between higher density suburban development in the east and the rural area to the west. PEC kept our supporters and email list informed about each proposal and organized a letter-writing campaign to the Board of Supervisors. In the end, each one of the rezonings was turned down or pulled prior to expected denial.
- › PEC is organizing a series of land management improvements and outreach activities at Gilbert's Corner. We will transform a conventional livestock farming operation to a rotational grazing system, and demonstrate the benefits of agricultural best management practices, reforestation and native habitat plantings for soil and stream health as well as pasture yield.
- › This fall, we raised the alarm that the Loudoun Board is considering whether to allow more development in two environmentally sensitive areas—floodplains and steep slopes. Stay tuned.



Photo by Gem Bingol

Madison

- › PEC is overseeing two culvert replacement projects, including one in Madison, that will reconnect five miles of intact habitat for eastern brook trout. The projects will demonstrate to landowners and other stakeholders, such as VDOT, the benefits of improved culverts that mimic natural stream flow for fish passage and for flood mitigation.
- › 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 which honors the local families who were displaced by the creation of Shenandoah National Park. A large crowd gathered in November to dedicate the permanent monument that includes a stone chimney and granite plaque. Kristie Kendall, PEC's Historic Preservation Manager, served on the project committee.
- › This past spring we alerted members to a proposal for a new 230-kV transmission line through Orange, Madison and Culpeper counties. We made maps, hosted community meetings, and served as a resource for interested landowners.

Orange

- › This past winter, PEC worked with Montpelier and Grelen Nursery to develop a new five-mile trail network that links the two sites. In April, the new hiking trail opened to the public. With already existing trails, the Montpelier-Grelen trail network collectively provides the community with 10 miles of hiking trails.
- › Our Annual Meeting at Annadale Farm was full of educational opportunities. It featured workshops on transmission lines and gas pipelines, raising backyard chickens, sustainable landscaping, making your home more energy efficient, a hike at Grelen, and a fascinating perspective on national, state and local elections from the keynote speaker Trevor Potter.
- › The Department of Conservation and Recreation and PEC evaluated the Rapidan River to assess its eligibility for State scenic river designation. Results still pending.
- › PEC partnered with the Grymes School and Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage to plan and secure funding for a 15-acre native meadow planting.
- › This past spring, we alerted members to a proposal for a new 230-kV transmission line

through Orange, Madison and Culpeper counties. We made maps, hosted community meetings, and served as a resource for interested landowners. The proposed line has been filed with the SCC for consideration. Dominion has stated a preferred option of rebuilding the existing line between Gordonville and Remington, dropping the Pratts substation from the proposal. PEC will be participating in the process.



This is an example of a culvert that will be replaced by the brook trout restoration project because it prevents fish passage.
Photo by Carolyn Sedgwick

Rappahannock

- › We received a grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to assist with a brook trout restoration project in Rappahannock County. PEC's Krebsner Fund for Rappahannock County Conservation and the landowners are partnering together to provide the additional funds needed for this partnership project with Trout Unlimited, which will reconnect over two miles of stream.
- › PEC and the Rappahannock Historical Society hosted an all-day event celebrating Rappahannock's mountain heritage and the families that once lived in the land that is now Shenandoah National Park. Over 250 people attended the event, which included self-guided hikes to historic sites and presentations by mountain families.
- › We continue to work directly with landowners interested in protecting their land with a conservation easement. One of this year's projects was conserving a several-hundred-acre farm near Washington, VA with a conservation easement donated to the Virginia Outdoors Foundation.

Local field work needs local support.

Please consider making an extra donation to The Piedmont Environmental Council this holiday season. We wouldn't be able to do all of the great things mentioned above without you. From the entire PEC family, thank you for your membership and contributions.

Call **540-347-2334** or visit **pecva.org/donate** to make a special year-end gift.



Out&About

Unveiling an Outdoor Classroom at Mill Run Elementary

ASHBURN, VA • EVENT WAS HELD ON OCTOBER 14, 2015

▼ PEC President Chris Miller and Loudoun Land Use Officer Gem Bingol help guests make a homemade pot and plant native purple coneflower seeds. *Photo by Paula Combs*



PEC Loudoun County Outreach Specialist Oya Simpson poses with Ranger Rick at the opening of Mill Run Elementary School's outdoor classroom. *Photo by Paula Combs*



▼ A view of the outdoor classroom area at Mill Run Elementary. The wood deck can be seen on the right side of the yard. *Photo by Paula Combs*



Orlean Day

ORLEAN, VA • EVENT WAS HELD ON OCTOBER 11, 2015



▲ Mary Liles speaks with guest Leon Rector at the first annual Orlean Day. *Photo by Paula Combs*

▼ Sisters Kirsten and MaKenzie hold up their Buy Fresh Buy Local stickers they got at the PEC table at Orlean Day. *Photo by Paula Combs*



Pasture Management Field Day and Bean Hollow Grassfed Habitat Walk

FLINT HILL, VA • EVENT WAS HELD ON OCTOBER 15, 2015



▲ PEC Habitat & Stewardship Specialist Celia Vuocolo talks to guests during a walk at the Pasture Management Field Day. *Photo by Carolyn Sedgwick*

Guests walk with PEC staff at Over Jordan Farm during Pasture Management Field Day. *Photo by Carolyn Sedgwick*



Winners of the 2015 PEC Photo Contest!



BEAUTIFUL LANDSCAPES WINNER ▲
Bluemont Vineyard by Wellington Selden

▼ LOCAL FARMS AND FOOD WINNER
Silkies and Egg of the Day by Bridget Bryant

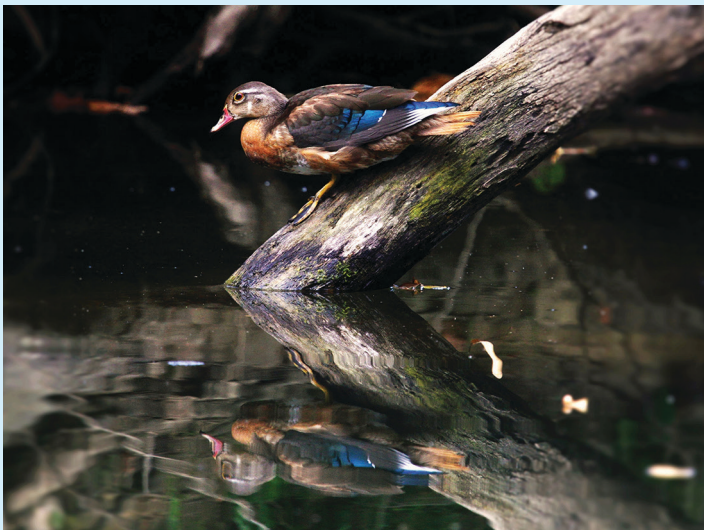


Thank you to everyone who submitted photographs and voted on this year’s finalists. As usual, we received great images of our beautiful Piedmont region—from breathtaking landscapes to native wildlife to life on the farm. A special thanks to all of the Youth Category participants. For two years now, we are blown away by the talent of our local youth photographers. PEC would also like to thank our expert guest judge, Ken Garrett. So, without further ado, here are the 2015 PEC Photo Contest Winners!



▲ YOUTH WINNER
Curious Horse by Jack Hardie

NATIVE PLANTS AND WILDLIFE WINNER ▼
Reflections by Denise Machado



Pop Quiz

Which tributary of the Potomac is sometimes associated with West Virginia due to a famous song by John Denver, even though the majority of the river and its forks flow through Virginia?



ANSWER: The **Shenandoah River** is prominently mentioned in John Denver’s “Take Me Home, Country Roads,” which associates the river with the state of West Virginia. However, only the last 20 miles of the river are in West Virginia, and more than 92 percent of the river and its forks flow through Virginia.

Crossword Answers

from page 3

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| ACROSS | DOWN |
| 5. Brandy Station | 1. Charlottesville |
| 8. Southwest Mountains | 2. Rappahannock |
| 10. Fauquier | 3. Barboursville |
| | 4. Warrenton |
| | 6. Crozet |
| | 7. Leesburg |
| | 9. Madison |

Celia’s Back

We are excited to welcome Celia Vuocolo back to PEC! Previously, Celia was our Sustainable Habitat Program assistant for 2 ½ years, starting back in 2013. This past spring, Celia left PEC for a Graduate Fellowship at the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute, during which she worked as the Grassland Plant and Pollinator coordinator for the Virginia Working Landscapes program.

Once Celia completed her fellowship, she returned to PEC as the Habitat & Stewardship specialist. “I am very happy to be back! I’m looking forward to continuing and strengthening PEC’s habitat initiatives and working with the good folks that call the Piedmont home,” says Celia.

Celia is also currently attending the Environmental Science and Policy graduate program at George Mason University where she is researching the occurrence of the parasite *Nosema bombi* in bumblebee populations in Virginia under Dr. Rebecca Forkner.

At the moment, Celia is focusing on habitat restoration at several PEC properties, including Gilbert’s Corner in Loudoun County and the Piedmont Overlook in Fauquier County. She’s also working on moving habitat projects such as the Thumb Run Watershed Wildlife Corridor project and Brook Trout Stream Passage project to their next phases.



Celia Vuocolo is back at PEC, now as the **Habitat & Stewardship specialist**. Photo by Katherine Vance

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.

The winter comes in with a rush of holiday activities, as well as the end of the year push to complete projects and set the agenda for the new year to come.

For us, this past year was one of investment in the future of PEC. In October, we moved back into our offices at 45 Horner Street, completing a long planned renovation. We are happy to be home where all of the staff can work under one roof together, with great new meeting space, and just a short walk to all of the resources of downtown Warrenton. Thank you to all of the donors who made this project possible. We look forward to welcoming old friends and new visitors, and talking to you about our plans for the future!

November 3 was election day for every member of the General Assembly and many county officials. Local elections confirmed that quality of life is a major concern. People strongly value the rural, agricultural and scenic character of the region. Politicians throughout the state learned (again) that people find unacceptable plans by Dominion to build massive new transmission lines through local communities, particularly without a full consideration of alternatives and mitigation of negative impacts. Another recurring theme was concern over traffic and frustration at the lack of any clear solution.

This winter will be a busy one at the General Assembly. The debate will focus mostly on budget priorities. Within that debate, two important issues for us will be funding for land conservation and funding

for agricultural best management practices to improve water quality. This funding is needed to meet water quality goals, provide new areas for public access, protect prime agricultural lands, continue the preservation of Civil War battlefields and historic sites, and provide for wildlife habitat.

Specifically, the budget needs to include money for the Land Preservation Tax Credit, which remains the most effective and efficient conservation program in the United States. In addition, PEC supports additional funding for the Virginia Outdoors Foundation to enable it to increase the rate of land conservation and full funding of the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation at \$20 million, including \$2 million for agricultural purchase of development rights and \$2 million for Civil War battlefields. The budget should also provide the \$73 million necessary for the implementation of agricultural Best Management Practices to achieve water quality goals.

Finally, we support \$300 million for the acquisition of additional land for conservation as part of any bond bill offered this session. The funds would be to purchase land for state parks, wildlife management areas and state forests. PEC is working with partners and state agencies to identify critical projects for eligibility in the bond.

On other fronts, PEC will continue to advocate for strong local government authority over land use decisions. In recent years, there has been a push to reduce local review of many land uses, including



Photo by Rose Jenkins

The winter comes in with a rush of holiday activities, as well as the end of the year push to complete projects and set the agenda for the new year to come.

commercial uses related to agriculture. Now, we are concerned that Dominion, in its desire to expand transmission rapidly, will seek to reduce local government authority over siting of large electrical substations, wind farms and other generation proposals.

As in any General Assembly session, there will be thousands of bills submitted. PEC staff and our partners will endeavor to keep you informed about proposals that affect the Piedmont region and our quality of life.

Sincerely,

Chris Miller, President



The Piedmont View

A MEMBERSHIP NEWSLETTER OF THE PIEDMONT ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL WINTER 2015



INSIDE
Learn about our Farmland Leasing Workshops, the opening of PEC's newly renovated and expanded headquarters office, the Conservation Learning Circle for women landowners, and the 2015 PEC Photo Contest winners!

Photo by Edward Payne

Pop Quiz

Which tributary of the Potomac is sometimes associated with West Virginia due to a famous song by John Denver, even though the majority of the river and its forks flow through Virginia?

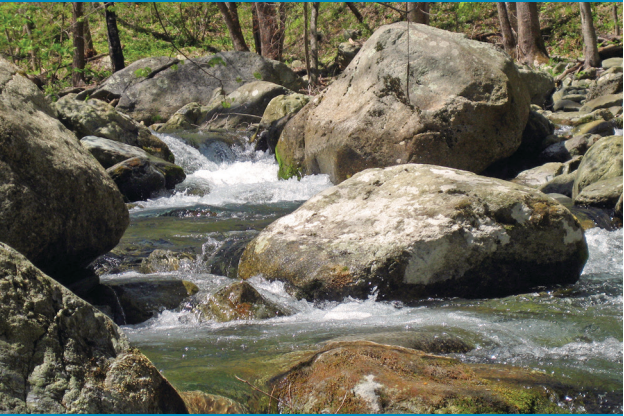
a) Rappahannock River

b) Cacapon River

c) Jackson River

d) Shenandoah River

ANSWER ON PAGE 7





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Environmental
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