



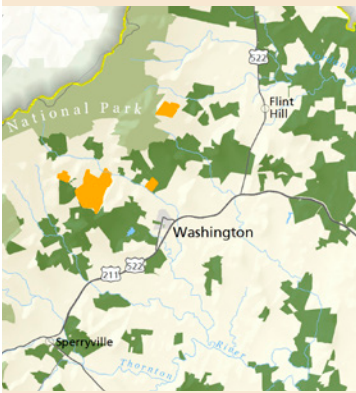
The Piedmont View

A MEMBERSHIP NEWSLETTER OF THE PIEDMONT ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL

SPRING 2016

CONSERVATION EDITION

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Thank you for helping to protect the Piedmont!



This Year's General Assembly

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE COLOR OF MONEY

By Dan Holmes

Each winter, one hundred state delegates and forty state senators convene for the Virginia General Assembly, in either a 45-day "short session" or a 60-day "long session." This year—it was a long session.

As I'm writing this article, the General Assembly is in its closing days. And while not everything is final, I can provide a fairly good rundown of what occurred this session from PEC's perspective.

On the subject of land conservation funding, it's looking more and more like a win. Not one of monumental scale—and not the amount many had hoped—but still a substantial increase in funding for conservation programs for 2016 and 2017. On bills related to land use and transportation, there was evidence, yet again, of the influence of money on policy.

The Good

Conservation Grant Funding

Thanks to a multi-year bipartisan effort, the Governor's budget, put forward in December, contained \$40 million for grant programs for land conservation (\$20 million each year for two years).

This funding fulfills a bi-partisan commitment made by the General Assembly in 2013, when it passed House Bill 1398. The legislation, introduced by Del. Lee Ware of Powhatan County, promised additional funding for open



The General Assembly meets in Virginia's capital of Richmond.

spaces, farms and forests, and the protection of historic resources through three grant programs: *Virginia Land Conservation Foundation*, *Virginia Battlefield Preservation Fund* and the *Office of Farmland Preservation*. Unfortunately, the promised funding has never been included in a budget—until this year.

But here's where it gets a little messy: The budget that passed the House trimmed it down to \$39 million (\$19.5 million per year for FY 2017 and 2018), and worse, the budget that passed the Senate cut it in half to \$20 million (\$10 million per year for FY 2017 and 2018). The conference committee opted to go with the smaller number passed by the Senate. Now, the budget goes back to the Governor for his signature with this reduced level of funding.

While \$20 million is a significant increase, it's half of what was promised, and half of the amount both the Governor and the House supported. We are requesting the Governor send back an amendment bringing the level of funding back up to \$40 million, or as close to that as possible.

Agricultural Best Management Practices

We consider items such as stream buffers and alternative water sources for livestock as one of the most important measures the Commonwealth can take toward improving local water quality and meeting its obligations for the Chesapeake Bay. As well, these

Continued on page 4

Burning to Restore Farmland

By Paula Combs

PEC is heating things up. We are conducting a controlled burn, also known as a prescribed burn, on approximately 20 acres of our property near the intersection of Route 50 and Route 15 in Loudoun County.



As part of land restoration efforts on PEC's property near Gilbert's Corner, a prescribed burn will be conducted on 20 acres of the conserved land.

Photo credit: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

"The burn will occur at the property's northwest corner, within the triangular area by Howser's Branch Drive," says Celia Vuocolo, wildlife habitat and stewardship specialist at PEC. "For more than a decade, this area was left fallow and was unusable for agricultural production due to invasion by red cedar and non-native invasive species such as Japanese honeysuckle, multiflora rose and autumn olive."

The prescribed burn helps to control invasive species (without the use of herbicides), put nutrients back into the soil, avoid soil compaction that occurs when land is mechanically cleared, and facilitate management of the area for agricultural production.

The Virginia Department of Forestry (DOF), who will perform the burn, prepared a management plan for the property, which included a fire break around the perimeter of the 20-acre area and instructions to conduct the prescribed burn during favorable weather conditions. We are also coordinating with the Loudoun County Fire

Continued on page 4

Another Good Year for Conservation

By Paula Combs

Every year our conservation staff gather data for the total land conserved by landowners with the help of the private land trusts and government agencies within PEC’s nine-county service region. And for 2015, we are happy to report that a combined total of 11,517 acres were protected in Albemarle, Clarke, Culpeper, Fauquier, Greene, Loudoun, Madison, Orange and Rappahannock Counties.

Our director of conservation, Mike Kane, enthusiastically explains that “Almost 60 landowners and families last year made an investment in their communities by donating conservation easements that will ensure future generations are able to experience the history and beauty of our rural landscape.”

One of the conservation highlights in 2015 was The Ellis Mine easement in Culpeper County, which is held by the Virginia Department of Forestry (DOF). The 1,219-acre forested property borders the Rappahannock River, and it was named after the significant gold mining that occurred there in the late 1800’s. In addition to the land’s rich forestal values, the easement protects 1.5 miles of frontage and 25 acres of floodplain along the river.

“This large working forest easement was particularly desirable for conservation because in addition to providing the common woodland benefits of wildlife habitat and wood products, it protects the water supply of Fredericksburg and several historic sites and structures,” says Larry Mikkelson, acquisition and easement coordinator for the Virginia Department of Forestry.

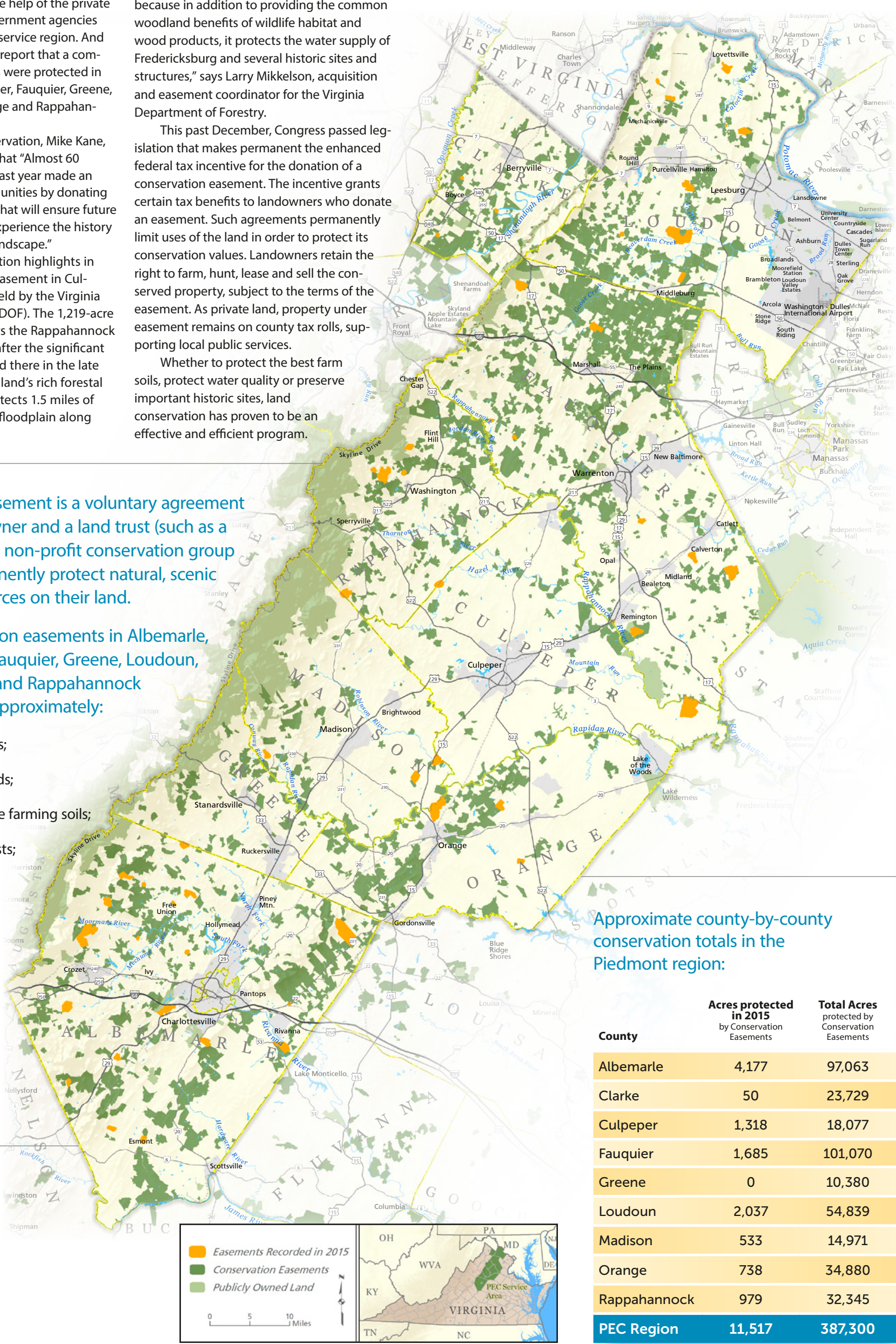
This past December, Congress passed legislation that makes permanent the enhanced federal tax incentive for the donation of a conservation easement. The incentive grants certain tax benefits to landowners who donate an easement. Such agreements permanently limit uses of the land in order to protect its conservation values. Landowners retain the right to farm, hunt, lease and sell the conserved property, subject to the terms of the easement. As private land, property under easement remains on county tax rolls, supporting local public services.

Whether to protect the best farm soils, protect water quality or preserve important historic sites, land conservation has proven to be an effective and efficient program.

A conservation 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.

In total, conservation easements in Albemarle, Clarke, Culpeper, Fauquier, Greene, Loudoun, Madison, Orange and Rappahannock Counties protect approximately:

- 1,608 miles of streams;
- 9,381 acres of wetlands;
- 181,974 acres of prime farming soils;
- 182,087 acres of forests;
- 105,500 acres along Scenic Byways;
- 115,763 acres in the viewshed of the Appalachian Trail;
- 123,485 acres in historic districts; and
- 27,786 acres of Civil War battlefields.



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

County	Acres protected in 2015 by Conservation Easements	Total Acres protected by Conservation Easements
Albemarle	4,177	97,063
Clarke	50	23,729
Culpeper	1,318	18,077
Fauquier	1,685	101,070
Greene	0	10,380
Loudoun	2,037	54,839
Madison	533	14,971
Orange	738	34,880
Rappahannock	979	32,345
PEC Region	11,517	387,300

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. Warrenton | JWR

Good News for The Brook Trout

By Paula Combs

We're continuing our efforts to increase the habitat available to the eastern brook trout and other fish species with two pilot culvert removal projects, slated to begin this summer.

These current projects stem from work that began in 2013, when we partnered with Trout Unlimited. Together, we sent a survey to landowners to gauge their conservation interests. Once that was completed, PEC conducted an extensive inventory of brook trout streams in 2013-2014 in Rappahannock, Madison, Greene and Albemarle Counties.

"We used the inventory data to compile a list of the worst barriers," says Celia Vuocolo, habitat and stewardship specialist for PEC. "After considering many factors, like channel constriction and culverts perched a foot above the water—trout can't jump higher than a foot, we selected two properties for restoration work."

This Summer

For both pilot projects, Ben Hutzell, biologist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, designed plans for fish-friendly crossings. As the efforts kick-off, Seth Coffman, project manager at Trout Unlimited, will help PEC staff secure permits and develop monitoring surveys.

In Madison County, one of the projects will remove a restrictive single pipe barrier on the Robinson River, and a low water ford will be installed in its place. "These efforts will reconnect 4.35 miles of stream habitat," explains Peter Hujik, PEC's Madison County land conservation officer and manager of the Robinson River project.

The other pilot, which reconnects two miles of stream habitat, will be conducted in Rappahannock County on Sprucepine Branch, which flows into Hittles Mill before connecting with the Jordan River. This restoration project will remove the only road-stream crossing barrier for fish passage on the tributary. Additionally, three perched round culvert pipes will be replaced with an open bottom arch, which will allow trout and other aquatic species to move freely under the new crossing.

"The restoration project has been a terrific partnership among local, regional, and federal partners," says Carolyn Sedgwick, PEC's Rappahannock County Field Officer and manager of the Sprucepine Branch project. "This is part of a larger initiative we're undertaking to conserve the headwaters of the Upper Rappahannock River Basin through barrier removals, land conservation, riparian plantings, community outreach and the promotion of best management practices along streams."

Funding for the Sprucepine Branch restoration project was provided by PEC's Krebsner Fund for Rappahannock County Conservation, a National Fish Passage Program grant from USFWS, PEC, the participating landowners, and Trout Unlimited. The Robinson River project was made possible by a second USFWS National Fish Passage Program grant, the participating landowners, PEC, and Trout Unlimited.



One of the problem culverts that will be replaced during the brook trout restoration project. The brook trout is a marquee species for water quality, and the "brookie" has seen a sharp decline in population due to a combination of physical barriers to streamflow, rising water temperatures, and habitat loss.

Photo by Carolyn Sedgwick

Garden Awards!



By Jessica Palmer

We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the winners of our 2015 School and Community Garden Awards! The competition recognizes gardens that celebrate the relationship between nature, food and community. And, as always, deciding the winners among such a wonderful group of gardens was a difficult task.

The gardens that received the \$500 Award include:

➤ **Fifth Street Community Garden**
CHARLOTTESVILLE

➤ **Frances Hazel Reid Elementary School Garden Classroom**
LEESBURG

The gardens that received the \$300 Award include:

➤ **New Roots Community Garden**
CHARLOTTESVILLE

➤ **Round Hill United Methodist Church GrOwen Garden**
PURCELLVILLE



The Fifth Street Community Garden currently has 18 plots and is managed by participants from the Prospect neighborhood. Photo courtesy of Hill United Methodist Church GrOwen Garden.

It was wonderful to see such a diversity of applications from around our region. We had schools, community organizations and neighborhoods highlight their gardens. It's exciting to learn about innovative programs and see stronger communities built around these gardens.

Thank you to everyone who applied to the 2015 competition! Our next round of School and Community Garden Awards will be held in 2017. So until then, happy gardening!

Visit pecva.org/gardens for more information.



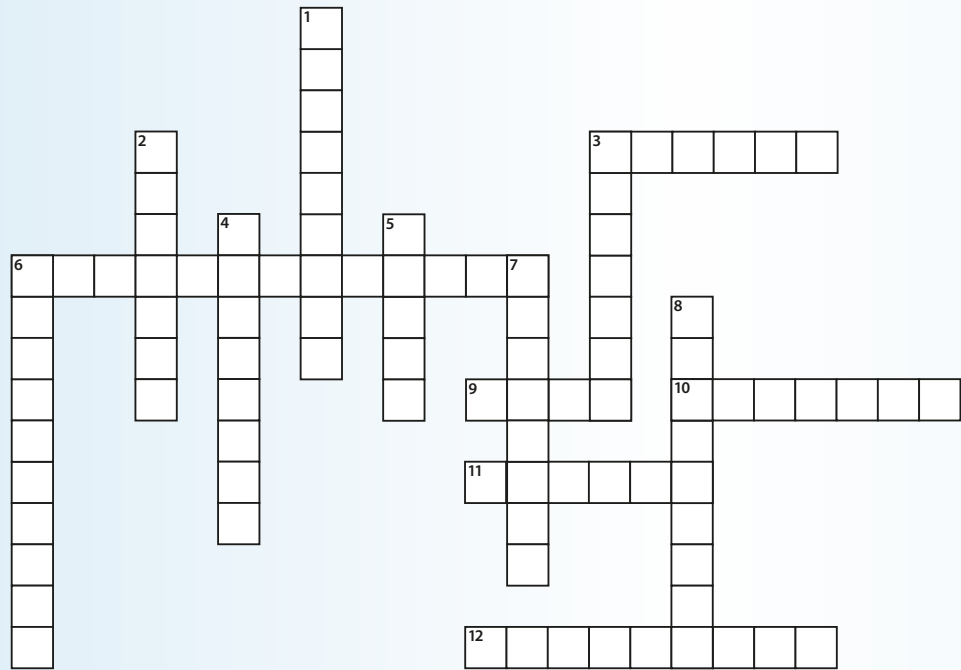
Time to plan your garden

Order seeds through Southern Exposure Seed Exchange and support PEC. Thirty percent of the proceeds go to our *Buy Fresh Buy Local* program when you purchase these seed packages:

- **Welcome-to-the-Garden Pollinator Collection:** Support your pollinators with this special collection of 12 old-fashioned single-blossomed heirloom, open-pollinated flowers and herbs.
- **Virginia Heritage Seed Collection:** A specially priced collection of 12 varieties rich in flavor and history, all associated with Virginia and the Appalachians.
- **Rainbow Starters Mix:** A colorful mix of 10 easy-to-grow flowers and vegetables, great for families and for beginning gardeners.

Visit www.southernexposure.com.

Crossword: Flora & Fauna



ACROSS

- 3. One of only two wild fruit trees native to Virginia
- 6. Small ground-dwelling bird
- 9. Furry pollinators
- 10. Group of blue heron nests
- 11. Bird who says *drink-your-tea!*
- 12. Virginia's only terrestrial shelled reptile

DOWN

- 1. Protect your trash, they're not a true hibernator
- 2. Virginia state flower AND state tree
- 3. Spring-time chorus of amphibians
- 4. Monarch butterfly host plant
- 5. Invasive plant that covers trees
- 6. PEC project to remove/improve culverts helps this aquatic species
- 7. Winged insect, named after moon
- 8. Largest native bee, some think it's a pest

*Answers on page 6

This Year’s General Assembly

Continued from cover

measures stimulate the rural agricultural economy with the investment in our farms and provide employment in rural areas. The Governor provided \$61.7 million for Agricultural Best Management Practices, and this amount was preserved in both the House and Senate version, signalling strong support for the program moving forward.

The Bad

State Parks Bond

The Governor put forward a bond proposal that included \$140 million for new acquisitions and state parks, including money to

open land-banked parks (lands owned by the state but not open to the public). The House removed all funding, and the Senate provided only \$45 million, allowing no room for opening up parks or for additional acquisitions.

Virginia Outdoors Foundation Funding

Senator Vogel introduced a budget amendment for VOF that was rejected by the Senate. The agency is facing financial challenges as demands on their staff grow, both for new easement acquisitions and for the stewardship of the 750,000+ acres they already protect. Unfortunately,

those issues were not recognized, leaving VOF severely understaffed and using outdated technology.

And The Color of Money

Unfortunately, you can count on land use bills to bring out evidence of the corrupting influence of money in politics and on policy. Some years it’s Dominion Power or the Home Builders Association of Virginia. This year, it was both.

Gutting Proffers

Developers, primarily those associated with the Home Builders Association of Virginia, have successfully convinced the legislature to make sweeping changes to the proffer system. In Virginia, when a developer is seeking approval for a rezoning, they typically offer to help pay for specific costs generated by the rezoning. These voluntary contributions, known as proffers, help ensure that existing residents aren’t paying for the impacts caused by new residential development.

Proponents stated that proffer reform was necessitated by county abuse of the system. But, more likely, it is the influence of campaign contributions from the Home Builders Association of VA (HBAV) and individual developers that won the day—contributions from HBAV alone to political campaigns from 2006-2015 were over \$1,584,000.

The bill, which passed the Senate (33-Y, 5-N, 2-A) and the



Participants in PEC’s summer fellowship program visit Richmond to learn about state policy.

House (72-Y, 26-N, 2-A), relies on ambiguous language and legal uncertainty that will likely cause most localities to avoid any significant discussion or consideration of proffers. Senate Bill 549 (Saslaw and Obenshain) has already been signed into law, without amendment, by the Governor—despite the objections of multiple jurisdictions (including Loudoun, Fauquier and Albemarle), the Virginia Association of Counties, the Virginia Municipal League, and the conservation community.

Transmission Lines and Historic Resources

House Bill 908 (Minchew) sought to address deficiencies in the process for permitting transmission lines by adding language to the code on avoidance and minimization of impacts. After the Subcommittee hearing, the bill passed with a 10-2 vote. The full House Commerce and Labor Committee took up the bill and voted to refer it to a commission

that meets over the summer to study renewable energy issues. We had high hopes when the Subcommittee got behind the bill, but, with 48-hours between that vote and the full committee meeting, Dominion decided it was time to kill the bill.

Dominion used a full court press strategy and scare tactics to imply that they would have to build their transmission lines in residential neighborhoods, if they avoided historic resources. The good news is this conversation will now continue and will take place in a public forum with agencies and organizations weighing in. The bad news is, as one of the leading contributors to political campaigns (with over \$10,541,000 contributed from 2006-2015), the big utility’s influence on the legislature leaves many of us asking, “Whose ‘Dominion’ is it?”

To stay up to date on news, local issues and events, sign up for our email alerts at pecva.org/signup.

**Source Virginia Public Access project, 2006-2015*

Burning to Restore Farmland

Continued from cover

Marshal’s Office, Loudoun County Department of Fire and Rescue and the Sheriff’s Office.

We are planning to have the burned acreage planted in a cover crop to inhibit soil erosion. This part of the property will be available to lease for agricultural use in 2017.

Background on property

PEC has worked for more than two decades with a variety of public and private partners to preserve the look and feel of the rural landscape at Gilbert’s Corner. In 2013, we were given the 141-acre property, and we began restoring its degraded streams, enhancing wildlife habitat and

revitalizing the agricultural use of the land.

The acquisition and future plans for the property are part of a larger, multi-faceted initiative at Gilbert’s Corner, which includes the installation of the Route 50 traffic calming improvements, the establishment of the 155-acre Gilbert’s

Corner Regional Park on the north side of Route 50, and the creation of the Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area .

As part of the restoration work, we plan to initiate a rotational grazing plan and continue leasing the land to local cattle farmers. The new grazing system will encourage healthy pasture and improve water quality in Howser’s Branch, which flows through the property. PEC is enrolled in a cost-share program administered by the Loudoun Soil and Water Conservation District that will provide funding for fencing that excludes livestock from Howser’s Branch and new sources of water for livestock.

“One of our objectives for the property that we were given near Gilbert’s Corner is to highlight stewardship practices local landowners can undertake to restore a property’s agricultural productivity and natural resources.”

— Michael Kane
Director of Conservation for PEC

The southeastern corner of the property is set aside for wildlife habitat and includes a low wetland area and plans for an upland pollinator meadow. Also, on another part of the property, options are being explored to convert a 9-acre pasture into a native warm season grassland that could be grazed and provide habitat for grassland

species.

“One of our objectives for the property at Gilbert’s Corner is to highlight stewardship practices local landowners can undertake to restore a property’s agricultural productivity and natural resources,” says Michael Kane, director of conservation for PEC. “DOF was a terrific partner in helping us complete the prescribed burn. We hope that landowners will continue to follow the progress of the restoration on our property near Gilbert’s Corner, recognizing that public agencies—like DOF and others—offer a variety of services that can cost-effectively help landowners achieve their agricultural and natural resource stewardship goals.”



A view of PEC’s 141-acre property near Gilbert’s Corner in Loudoun County. Photo by Paula Combs

On the Ground

Albemarle

> Route 29 Solutions

Decades of hard work are paying off as local solutions to congestion on Route 29 move forward. One of the solutions, the Hillsdale Drive Extension, is slated to begin this June. Other projects are scheduled for completion within the next 18 months.

Scheduled for completion in 2016:

- By May: Route 29/Route 250 Interchange Improvements.
- By December: Grade separation at Rio Road and Route 29.
- By October: Six-lane Route 29 from Polo Grounds Road to Towncenter Drive.

Scheduled for completion in 2017:

- By October: Berkmar Drive Extension.
- By Fall-Winter: Adaptive Traffic Signal Technology.

Clarke

> Partnering for Monarch Habitat at the Park & Ride

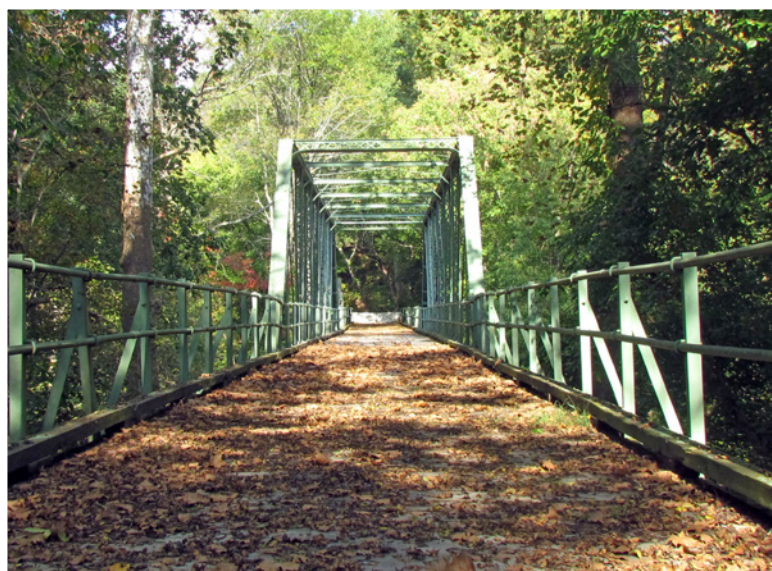
PEC is part of a coalition of groups working with VDOT and coordinating with Clarke County on a large monarch waystation and pollinator demonstration garden at the Route 50 park and ride facility. This is one of the outcomes from meetings between VDOT, County staff and non-profit groups to find ways to better protect monarch habitat in VDOT rights of way. The date for planting the demonstration garden has yet to be scheduled, but is expected to be in May or June of this year, and volunteers are encouraged to contact Gem Bingol at gbingol@pecva.org for more information.

Culpeper

> Community Support for Saving Waterloo Bridge

In February, PEC held a community meeting to provide an update about the Waterloo Bridge. About 45 people came out to the Orlean Fire Hall in Fauquier County, including Supervisor Mary Leigh McDaniel and representatives from Concerned Culpeper Citizens and Mosby Heritage Area Association. We talked about the timeline of what has and has not happened, and we ended with a call for continued pressure on VDOT and our local and state representatives. People left energized, ready to take action, and many bought “Save Waterloo Bridge” yard signs that we created. Following the meeting, PEC received interest from private donors who are willing to help provide some of the resources needed to preserve and rehabilitate the bridge.

> Despite VDOT saying rehabilitation is feasible, the Waterloo Bridge has been closed for over two years, without any official plans for repair. Photo by Julie Bolthouse



Fauquier

> SCC Finally Puts Option A to Rest

Great news! Our voices have been heard! After hearing testimony from PEC, Dominion, and Fauquier County, the Judges of the State Corporation Commission (SCC) accepted the recommendation of the Hearing Examiner in the Remington to Warrenton 230-kV transmission line case. Two options were being considered, Option A that would take 9.2 miles of new right of way through land in eastern Fauquier County and Option C that would use mostly existing right of way. The Hearing Examiner determined that Option C would have less impact. Also, see an update on the effort to save the historic Waterloo Bridge in the Culpeper County section.

Greene

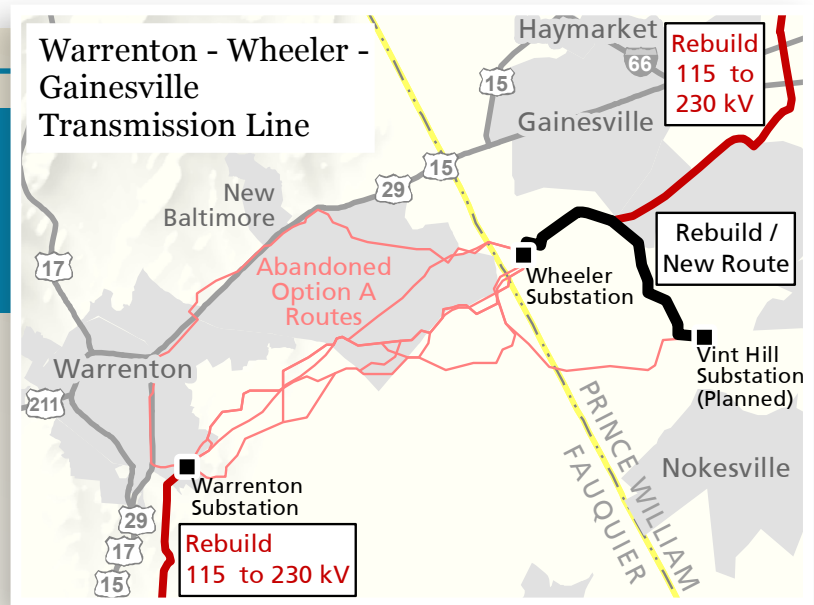
> Sources of Funding for Conservation Workshop Coming Soon

On, April 26, 2016 at 6:00 p.m., we’re holding a workshop at Blue Ridge Cafe in Ruckersville. This event is designed to help you decide among the wide variety of land management and land conservation programs available to farm and forest landowners in Virginia. Join us for an overview of federal, state and local programs and conservation options offered by land trusts and governmental agencies to see which one is best for you. You can register for the event by visiting pecva.org/events.

Loudoun

> HOA Forum Success

On March 10, we held a HOA forum at the Algonkian Regional Park Conference Center for HOA leaders, HOA open space or grounds committee members, landscape contractors, property managers and interested HOA residents, and the turnout was great! Loudoun HOAs discussed how they have implemented sustainable landscaping practices. And guests learned about regional projects that help clean and manage stormwater more effectively while integrating native plants and trees to improve habitat, sustain biodiversity and support threatened pollinators. Attendees also learned how to get started in their own communities through partnerships with PEC, Loudoun County and other local groups.



> Option C, in black, was determined by the Hearing Examiner to have the less impact.

Madison

> Bring Back the Brook Trout!

PEC teamed up with Trout Unlimited and Early Mountain Vineyards on February 27 to provide an update on its efforts to open miles of Brook trout habitat on high quality streams flowing out of the east side of the Blue Ridge. More than 75 people gathered for a wine reception, fly tying, dinner and a presentation on the results of a recent PEC stream crossing survey that details the number of culverts that are impeding fish passage. PEC staff also presented two pilot projects slated for this spring that will remove or replace two culverts in Madison and Rappahannock Counties. Additional project details are on page 3.

Orange

> Dominion Seeks Approval for Damaging Upgrade of Existing Transmission Line

On April 18 at 6:30 p.m., PEC is hosting a meeting at the Rapidan Fire Hall to discuss the Remington-Gordonsville Transmission line project in advance of the Local SCC hearing.

The application for the Remington-Gordonsville Electric Transmission Project has been filed with the State Corporation Commission (SCC). This project includes the rebuild of the existing 115-kV line to carry an additional 220-kV circuit. To accomplish this, Dominion proposes to replace existing 52’ tall wooden poles with 103’-107’ tall steel monopoles. The SCC has released the schedule for that process and has set a date for a local public hearing. The hearing will be at the Orange County High School, located at 201 Selma Rd., on April 28, at 4:30 p.m. and 7 p.m. There is also an opportunity to provide written comments on the issue with a deadline later in June. PEC will be participating in the case as a respondent, meaning full participation in the legal process with the ability to provide expert testimony and cross-examination of any witnesses Dominion may provide.

Rappahannock

> Land Conservation and Stream Restoration

It was a great year for conservation in 2015 for Rappahannock County. PEC assisted many landowners and worked with partners to help protect nearly 1,000 acres in the County. Meanwhile, we’re gearing up to replace a road-stream crossing near Flint Hill that will reconnect over two miles of brook trout habitat. In February, around 100 people gathered at PEC’s Bring Back the Brook Trout event to celebrate PEC’s launch of its Brook Trout Stream Restoration Initiative. Do you live along a stream? Are you interested in land conservation, stream-side tree planting, or livestock fencing? Contact Carolyn Sedgwick in our Rappahannock Office at 540-316-8306.



UPCOMING Events

Farmland Leasing Social Hour

When > March 30, 2016 • 6 PM – 8 PM

Where > Parallel 38 in Charlottesville

Break the ice and make new connections! Landowners interested in expanding their land into agricultural use and land seekers searching for land to start a farming business are invited to this social hour. PEC, Virginia Farm Link and the Virginia Certified Farm Seeker program will be present to offer resources.

Free event, but registration required—contact Jess Palmer at jpalmer@pecva.org or visit pecva.org/events

For the Rappahannock, From the Rappahannock

When > Saturday, April 9, 2016

Where > Marriott Ranch, Hume

A celebration of land and water conservation in the Rappahannock River watershed. Join Friends of the Rappahannock, PEC and John Marshall Soil and Water Conservation District, and enjoy local oysters from the Oyster Company of Va., barbeque from Marriott Ranch, local wines and beers, live music and hay ride tours!

Register via Friends of the Rappahannock’s website. Discount codes available for landowners who have installed conservation practices on their land through John Marshall Soil & Water, FOR or PEC. Email cvuocolo@pecva.org for more details.

Madison’s Mountain Heritage: An Open House at Graves Chapel

When > Saturday, April 16, 2016

Where > Graves Chapel in Graves Mill

Open House at Graves Chapel will include tours of the chapel, stories and histories shared by local families, and presentations on the history of Graves Mill. Opportunities for hiking and self-guided tours in nearby Shenandoah National Park. Expect live music and refreshments!

Free event, but registration required. Visit pecva.org/events. For more information, call Kristie Kendall at (540) 347-2334 ext.7061.

Annual Bluebell Walk

When > Saturday, April 16, 2016

Where > Bonny Brook Farm, Catlett

Join PEC and the Julian W. Scheer Fauquier Land Conservation Fund for our Annual Bluebell Walk. Take a casual stroll through picturesque farm fields that have been preserved forever with a conservation easement on your way to the bluebell covered banks of Cedar Run.

Free event, but registration requested—visit pecva.org/events or contact Nicole Erickson at (540) 347-2334.

Remington-Gordonsville Transmission Line Meeting

When > April 18, 2016 • 6:30 PM – 8 PM

Where > Rapidan Fire Hall

We will be discussing the Remington-Gordonsville Transmission Line project in advance of the Local SCC Hearing (which will be held on April 28).

For more information, contact Peter Hujik at phujik@pecva.org.

Two Sources of Funding for Conservation Workshops

When > April 26, 2016 • 6 PM – 8 PM

Where > Blue Ridge Cafe,
Ruckersville, Virginia

When > Tentatively scheduled for
May 4, 2016

Where > To Be Decided,
Rappahannock County

There are a wide variety of land management and land conservation programs available to farm and forest landowners in Virginia. Join us for a **free dinner** and an overview of federal, state, and local programs and conservation options offered by land trusts and governmental agencies to see which one is best for you.

Space is limited. Free event, but registration required—visit pecva.org/events

Field Walk at Over Jordan Farm: Mob Grazing and Effects on The Plant Community

Where > May 10, 2016 • 1 PM – 3 PM

Where > Over Jordan Farm, Rappahannock County

Visit Over Jordan Farm for a pasture walk to learn about plant diversity and weed pressure in response to mob and rotational grazing of sheep and cows. Landowner Michael Sands and project field assistant, Shayan Ghajar, will discuss observations and changes in the pasture plant community over time.

Event is free, but registration requested. Contact Jess Palmer at jpalmer@pecva.org or visit pecva.org/events

Birdwatching for Beginners!

When > May 12, 2016 • 7:30 AM
(rain date May 18)

Where > Near Washington, VA
(directions mailed to registrants)

Join us for a bird walk in the height of spring migration. Learn how to identify what’s in your backyard and even identify a bird by its song. Find out about the importance of land conservation for birds and how you can help. No previous birding experience necessary. Don’t have a binoculars? No problem, just tell us when you register.

Registration required at pecva.org/events. Contact Carolyn Sedgwick at csedgwick@pecva.org with questions. Interested in a bird walk, but you’re already an experienced birder? Join us for another walk led by Carolyn in May: visit pecva.org/events to sign up.

PEC Annual Meeting

When > Saturday, May 21, 2016

Where > North Wales, Warrenton

A variety of exciting educational workshops on topics such as land-use efforts, native habitat, land management and land conservation.

Registration opens in April. Contact Nicole Erickson at (540) 347-2334 or nerickson@pecva.org

Pollinator Field Walk (Series of 3 Events)

Where > May 24, June 23 & September 15, 2016

Where > Bruce Jones Nature Preserve,
Little Washington

Attend one or all three events, and learn about the types of plants and habitat needed to support pollinators and about Virginia’s most imperilled pollinator species. This series aims to highlight the importance of providing habitat throughout the entire growing season.

Registration is required. Visit pecva.org/events

6th Annual Summer Safari

When > Saturday, June 11, 2016 • 4 PM – 9 PM

Where > Smithsonian Conservation Biology
Institute, Front Royal

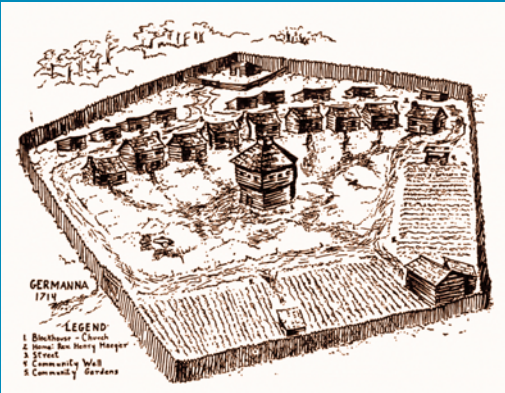
A collaborative benefit for PEC, Shenandoah National Park Trust and Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute. Enjoy wildlife tours, followed by cocktails and dinner on Racetrack Hill overlooking the beautiful landscape and Shenandoah National Park.

Benefit tickets: \$250 per person. For more information and sponsorship opportunities, contact Nicole Erickson at (540) 347-2334.

Pop Quiz

What year did the first wave of German colonists arrive in Virginia and settle at Fort Germanna in present-day Orange County, Virginia?

ANSWER:
c) 1714



Courtesy of the Germanna Foundation

Crossword Answers

from page 3

ACROSS

- 3. Pawpaw
- 6. Bobwhite quail
- 9. Bats
- 10. Rookery
- 11. (Eastern) Towhee
- 12. Box turtle

DOWN

- 1. Black bear
- 2. (American) Dogwood
- 3. (Spring) Peepers
- 4. Milkweed
- 5. Kudzu
- 6. Brook trout
- 7. Luna moth
- 8. Carpenter (bee)



Out&About

Thumb Run Open House

HUME, VA • ON JANUARY 16, 2016

▼ Celia Vuocolo, PEC’s habitat and stewardship specialist, presents at the Thumb Run Open House. *Photo by Paula Combs*



▶ Irv Woods, Hume landowner in the Thumb Run watershed, shares an experience and questions with other residents. *Photo by Paula Combs*



▼ Tania Cubitt, MARE Center Alumni, speaks to residents in the Thumb Run watershed about managing pastures to optimize environmental health. *Photo by Paula Combs*



Bring Back The Brook Trout Event

MADISON, VA • ON FEBRUARY 27, 2016



▲ Rapidan Chapter of Trout Unlimited and Friends of the Rappahannock led a fly tying demonstration before the formal presentation at the Brook Trout event. *Photo by Bri West*



▲ Residents listen to a presentation about the brook trout restoration at Early Mountain Vineyards, hosted by PEC. *Photo by Bri West*

PEC’s Solarize Campaign is Back

If you missed PEC’s solarize campaign last year, you have another chance to sign up!

PEC members within our service territory (Albemarle, Clarke, Culpeper, Fauquier, Greene, Loudoun, Madison, Orange and Rappahannock Counties) can take advantage of competitive rates and financing mechanisms designed specifically for solar energy systems. The campaign runs from **April 5 to June 15, 2016**.

With an April completion date, solar panels will be installed at PEC’s Warrenton office!

If you’ve been thinking about installing solar panels on your home or farm, this is your opportunity to find out if it will work for you. To get started, sign up at pecva.org/solarize.

This campaign is a cooperative program with PEC, Local Energy Alliance Program (LEAP) and the Northern Virginia Regional Commission to bring solar power to more people in the Commonwealth.

Watsun Randolph and Tiffany Parker, PEC staff and Warrenton residents, participated in last summer’s solarize campaign. They had 22 panels installed.
Photo by Bri West



Dear Friends,

In February, I faced a new challenge—explaining the mission and programs of PEC to millennials. I was asked to give a guest lecture to an audience of undergraduate and graduate students at the University of Pennsylvania, which included my daughter Caroline, a freshman.

Millennials, the next generation to come of political and economic age, care a lot about identity and quality of life. But like every generation before them, they have much to learn about the places where they live and the issues that ultimately determine that quality of life.

As a community-based nonprofit, PEC is best known for its work and programs impacting rural areas and residents of the Piedmont. Since our founding, we have advocated for local, state and federal policies and incentives that help landowners choose long-term conservation options over potential development.

So, how does PEC, or an organization like us, speak to millennials? On the whole, they are a generation that prefers to live in the urban core of metropolitan regions, taking advantage of the larger supply of rental housing, a greater diversity of restaurants and entertainment, and the possibility of a job that doesn't require a car.

I decided to start my lecture with smart growth. I spoke to the students about PEC's role as founder of the DC-based Coalition for Smarter Growth. And I spoke about the importance of good planning, and its impact on reducing sprawl and vehicle miles traveled. I highlighted key benefits of walkable communities such as reducing air and water pollution—through both reduced energy consumption and the opportunity to address failing stormwater infrastructure.

I spoke about the need to encourage diversity

of housing options, ranging from more affordable units such as those that are being developed in Middleburg, The Plains and Marshall to recent redevelopment projects in Charlottesville and Warrenton. And I shared with them the potential for transit-oriented development around the new silver line metro stations in Loudoun.

Another amenity that is highly valued by millennials is easy access to recreational opportunities. So, I described our work throughout the region to encourage trails, local parks and preserves and increased access to rivers and streams. I also told them about our efforts to encourage sustainable rural zoning and conservation of private land.

I found that one of the more challenging subjects when talking to a room of 18-22 year-olds, is that of historic and cultural resource preservation. The U.S. Census Bureau reports that, overall, millennials are more racially and ethnically diverse than the generations that preceded them. And for the millennials that are foreign born or first generation descendants of immigrants, how do we make the historic and cultural landscape of the Piedmont and the Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area relevant?

Certainly, educational materials and interpretation of significant sites, including the current context of the locations, is important. But it's no longer enough to post a solemn, cast-iron marker stating the names of battles and generals. We have to foster an understanding of the struggles those



Participants in PEC's 2015 summer fellowship program visit the historic Montpelier in Orange, Va. with PEC fellowship coordinator Mary Liles.

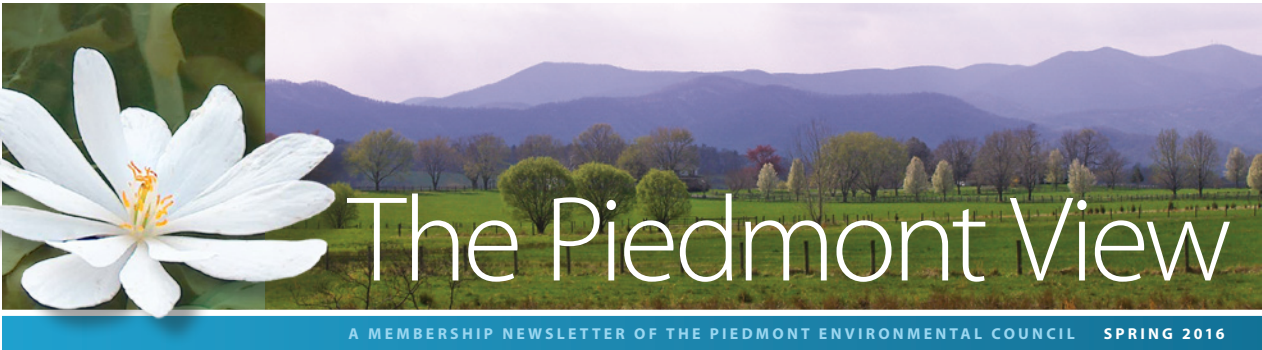
armies faced. And we have to be willing to recognize that appreciation will come from a combination of education with recreation and entertainment.

At the end of the night, there was polite applause and tough questions about whether Smart Growth and sustainable development are really being pursued outside of a few communities. And afterward, my daughter said she was proud of me and that her classmates were inspired.

But like always, you have to wait and see if that inspiration produces results. I hope that our message will continue to have a lasting impact, as it has on 9 years worth of PEC fellows, many of whom have gone on to careers in conservation.

Sincerely,

Chris Miller
Chris Miller, President



A MEMBERSHIP NEWSLETTER OF THE PIEDMONT ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL SPRING 2016



INSIDE

General Assembly update, prescribed burn and restoration on PEC property, conservation numbers for 2015, and more!

Photo by Patricia Temples

Pop Quiz

QUESTION: What year did the first wave of German colonists arrive in Virginia and settle at Fort Germanna in present-day Orange County, Virginia?

a) 1610

b) 1653

c) 1714

d) 1756

ANSWER ON PAGE 6



Courtesy of the Library of Congress



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