



The Piedmont View

A MEMBERSHIP NEWSLETTER OF THE PIEDMONT ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL SUMMER 2016

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A Thank You and Best Wishes TO THE MAN IN THE CRAZY SOCKS

By Karen Hunsberger Adam

The band has played its last song for the night and the crowd has started to leave. Congratulatory hugs and handshakes are an indication of another successful event. Doug Larson, PEC's Vice President, rolls up his shirt sleeves and starts helping with the cleanup, all while he has a smile on his face and a little more enthusiasm about the future of PEC. This could be a scene from one of many events Doug has been involved with over the past sixteen years.

As Doug plans for his retirement in July, I reflect on what an honor it has been to work with him through the years. We all know Doug as hard-working, passionate, funny and fearless. We also know him as the man who wears the best crazy socks.

He has been my boss for the majority of his time at PEC, but most importantly, he has been my friend. He never asked staff to do anything that he wouldn't do, always standing and working beside us to see an event or project through to the end. He always encouraged us to grow our

interest and ideas into projects that may align with PEC's mission, while igniting our excitement that we too are helping make a difference.

Before sitting down to write this article, I thought long and hard about what has impressed me about Doug over the years. Of course his ability to tackle high dollar campaigns is impressive, but that wasn't it. It's his ability to understand and recognize the need of future generations. His ability to work with his staff to bring programs to fruition that will have the staying power to help grow our next generation of environmental leaders.

For instance, former staff member Melissa Wiley was very enthusiastic about the 'whole food' movement taking place across the United States in 2006. She attended a conference in Atlanta where she heard about the *Buy Fresh Buy Local* campaigns. When she brought her enthusiasm back to PEC, Doug was eager to work with her to find like-minded supporters to help launch a *Buy Fresh Buy Local* chapter in our



Doug Larson at PEC's headquarters office in Warrenton, Va. After 16 years at PEC, Doug is retiring this July. Photo by Carolina Leonard

area. Ten years later, you can find nine *Buy Fresh Buy Local* chapters throughout the state of Virginia. PEC is the regional coordinator of three of those chapters, and manages the statewide *Buy Fresh Buy Local* website.

Another example of when Doug helped a program come to fruition is when a phone call came into his office from a prospective donor, who asked if we offered

anything that educated the next generation of environmental leaders. Doug discussed our internship program, but quickly realized the donor was looking for something more in depth. After working with the staff to devise a detailed proposal outlining curriculum, projects and fieldtrips—our nationally acclaimed Fellowship Program came to life. Ten years

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Montpelier-Grelen Trail Receives "Virginia Treasures" Award

Developed in partnership with James Madison's Montpelier, Grelen Nursery, and PEC, the Trail connects residents and tourists to the area's rich natural and cultural origins.



Virginia First Lady Dorothy McAuliffe poses with Luke and John at Grelen Market after hiking the Montpelier-Grelen trail. Photo by Sharon Hujik

Part of a nine-mile trail system with old-growth forests and meadows, the Montpelier-Grelen Trail links the historic James Madison's Montpelier with Grelen Nursery, a 25-year-old working tree nursery in Orange County. On April 19, the Trail was officially designated as a "Virginia Treasure" by the Office of the Governor for being an outstanding recreational asset open to the public in the Commonwealth. Virginia First Lady Dorothy McAuliffe and Department of Natural Resources Secretary Molly Ward presented the award to Kat Imhoff, President and CEO of James Madison's Montpelier, Dan and Leslie Gregg, Co-owners of Grelen Nursery, and Chris Miller,

President of The Piedmont Environmental Council. "Montpelier, the historic home of James and Dolley Madison, is such an important site in the story of our Commonwealth and our Nation. The Montpelier-Grelen Connector Trail allows visitors to walk in the footsteps of those who lived, worked on, and visited this site over the last several hundred years," said First Lady Dorothy McAuliffe. Sections of the trail have signs with QR codes that provide hikers with the opportunity to learn about the various trees and plants along the way. The trail network and the grounds of Montpelier offer some

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Support PEC

Make a donation or get in touch with PEC at:

Post Office Box 460
Warrenton, VA 20188
540.347.2334
pec@pecva.org

or make a secure online donation at www.pecva.org

Thank you for helping to protect the Piedmont!



A Thank You and Best Wishes to the Man in the Crazy Socks

Continued from cover

later, the program is still going strong and boasts more than 100 alumni—many working in significant environmental positions around the country.

There's also the time that former board member Merrill Strange suggested to Doug that they meet with Ruth Stolk, Senior Program Liaison with the Smithsonian Conservation Biological Institute, and Susan Sherman, President of the Shenandoah National Park Trust, to discuss a collaborative effort between the three organizations. The Summer Safari, now in its sixth year, blossomed from that meeting, and it's one of the most successful and lucrative events in the history of the three organizations. Doug, Ruth and Susan became the dynamic trio, pulling together a partnership that recognized each group's shared conservation goal of protecting Virginia's landscape.

While organizing hundreds of events, breathing life into new programs and building relationships between organizations and communities, Doug also embarked on a \$30 million dollar capital campaign, raised funds to complete the renovation of our Warrenton headquarters and helped to negotiate an easement on 900 acres of rolling foothills, which is now home to The Clifton Institute.

In Doug's last fundraising letter he wrote, "I read recently that many baby boomers facing retirement struggle to find meaning in the careers they are leaving

PEC President Chris Miller honors Doug Larson at PEC's Annual Meeting.



LEFT: PEC Vice President Doug Larson and Director of Membership Karen Hunsberger Adam at PEC's Annual Meeting. Doug and Karen have worked together for 16 years. Photo by Paula Combs



Doug Larson wearing his crazy socks at a staff meeting. Photo by Paula Combs

behind. They look back and wonder if the time they spent has had real impact or if they made any lasting contributions. Fortunately for me that will not be an issue. I can look back over the time at PEC and feel that I have been part of an organization that has made a difference."

As we all bid Doug farewell, I hope he knows how important he has been to the entire organization, and realizes the foundation he has helped to lay for future generations. We shall truly miss him, but we hope the next leg of his journey will be met with much deserved rest and relaxation. I know that he and his wife Liza are looking forward to traveling. Whether he chooses to sit on a beach in Mexico sipping a martini or taking a lazy cruise down the Blue Danube, I hope he embraces it with the same zest he has brought to PEC—and that he will be doing it all in his signature crazy socks.

"I have had the pleasure of working with Doug Larson for many years related to the Fauquier County Purchase of Development Rights Program (PDR). He has served on the PDR Review Committee for over ten years and has brought his passion and commitment for farmland preservation to our deliberations. He has been a great asset to the PDR Program and has played an important role in Fauquier County becoming the number one farmland preservation program in Virginia."



— Ray Pickering, Director at Fauquier County Department of Agricultural Development

"Doug came to PEC with a wealth of relationships based on years of service to the community theater, the local chamber of commerce, the Fauquier Hospital, and the Center for International Environmental Studies. His joy for life, for good food, good music, fine art, and shared laughter has energized us. His positive attitude has inspired each of us to work a little bit harder. He has the incredible ability to understand complex transactions and policies and translate them simply to others."



— Chris Miller, PEC President

"Doug Larson is one in a million. He is so talented in so many ways. It will take several people to replace him."



— Sue Scheer, long-time PEC member and member of the Board of Directors for Citizens for Fauquier

"Doug is a delight to work with. He isn't just doing a job; he is protecting and building his community. And he does so with care, humor, and vision."



— Diana Norris, PEC Attorney

Montpelier-Grelen Trail Receives "Virginia Treasures" Award

Continued from cover

of the only public access to the largely conserved Madison-Barbour Rural Historic District. Additional trails at Montpelier go through the 200-acre James Madison Landmark Forest with trees that have been virtually undisturbed by man since the 1790s, and include massive oak, beech and poplar trees.

"James Madison's Montpelier is open to the public seven days a

week," said Montpelier President Kat Imhoff. "We are delighted the Governor is recognizing this joint effort to bring more Virginians to our property to enjoy its history and natural beauty."

With trailheads located below David M. Rubenstein Visitor Center at Montpelier and at The Market at Grelen, the trail is free and open to the public during business hours.

The Market at Grelen is a casual café, event venue, garden shop and Pick-Your-Own farm. For hikers working up an appetite, lunch can be pre-ordered and enjoyed at a picnic table on the trail.

"We absolutely love having the trail open for our clients to enjoy! They get to experience the beauty of the nursery and land like never

before and it's gorgeous no matter what the season," said Leslie Gregg, co-owner of Grelen Nursery

The scenic Montpelier-Grelen Trail also crosses over the portion of Chicken Mountain that is protected under a conservation easement co-held by Virginia Outdoors Foundation and The Piedmont Environmental Council.

"We appreciate the recognition of the Trail as a Virginia Treasure. The designation draws attention to the sustained conservation effort at James Madison's Montpelier and within the Madison Barbour Rural Historic District," said PEC President Chris Miller. "The Governor and the General Assembly have provided increased funding for conservation in the 2017-2018 budget, and PEC looks forward to working on additional conservation projects in the area."

Virginia First Lady Dorothy McAuliffe and Department of Natural Resources Secretary Molly Ward hike the Montpelier-Grelen trail with award recipients and guests.



(FROM LEFT TO RIGHT) Director of Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation Clyde Christman, President and CEO of James Madison's Montpelier Kat Imhoff, Department of Natural Resources Secretary Molly Ward, Virginia First Lady Dorothy McAuliffe, Co-owner of Grelen Nursery Leslie Gregg, President of Piedmont Environmental Council Chris Miller, Piedmont Environmental Council Board Co-chair Jean Perin, and Co-owner of Grelen Nursery Dan Gregg stand next to the "Treasure's Award" for the Montpelier-Grelen trail.

Remembering Bill Backer

Mr. William. M. Backer, known as “Bill,” long-time PEC supporter and a national leader in advertising, the equine sports industry, and land conservation, passed away Friday, May 13, 2016 in Warrenton, Virginia.

A brilliant communicator, Mr. Backer created iconic advertising campaigns such as the 1971 “Hilltop” commercial for Coca Cola featuring his jingle “I’d like to Teach the World to Sing,” “Tastes Great, Less Filling” and “MillerTime” for Miller Lite, and “Soup is good food” for Campbell.

Mr. Backer’s long engagement with PEC took on national stature during a 1993-1994 debate over the Disney’s America development proposal near Haymarket, Virginia. He encouraged PEC to focus its message on the viability of alternative locations for a theme park in the Washington metropolitan area that would have less impact on the region’s traffic, air quality, and history, and avoid the sprawling development that resulted from other Disney projects. His ideas became known as the “Disney: Take a Second Look Campaign,” which focused on alternative sites which

became the basis for the Coalition for Smarter Growth’s Blueprint for a Better Region, a vision for transit oriented development in the Washington region.

Mr. Backer became President of the Piedmont Foundation in 2004, which supports The Piedmont Environmental Council. As President, he led the Foundation’s first capital campaign, raising over \$15 million in gifts and pledges, including funding for the Piedmont Memorial Overlook, a conserved open space site adjacent to Sky Meadows State Park and the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, with expansive views of over 100,000 acres of conserved land in Fauquier and Loudoun Counties.



Piedmont Foundation President Bill Backer was an avid conservationist and long-time friend of PEC’s.



“ Looking up from the keyboard of a piano, on which he accompanied himself as he sang the words, he explained the message of the commercial, the perfect harmony of warm feelings with the product being advertised. What it achieved, he said, was to remind viewers that the product could in some small way serve as a “social catalyst,” uniting people whose differences in nationality, race and physical appearance were merely superficial. “Sometimes,” he said, “communications get better if you’re just sitting over a bottle of Coke and looking people in the eye. ”

— Martin Weil, *Washington Post*, May 17, 2016



ABOVE: Bill Backer sits on the porch at his farm near The Plains. Photo by Chris Miller

LEFT: Bill Backer with Rev. Brown Morton at the Piedmont Memorial Overlook dedication in Paris, Va. Photo by Jay Clevenson

“ Per her husband’s wishes, Ann Backer plans to scatter his ashes in the Blue Ridge Mountains, overlooking Virginia’s Paris Valley. Which is fitting; the man who wanted to buy the world a Coke, it seems, was always fond of hilltops. ”

— Max Kutner, *Newsweek*, May 17, 2016

A Sunny Investment

This spring, The Piedmont Environmental Council followed our own advice for local, distributed, clean energy. During our inaugural Solarize Piedmont campaign in 2015, we made sure to request a solar proposal for our headquarters building in Warrenton.

After working through the details with our contractors, Solar Solutions for All, we chose to move forward with a system with 38 photovoltaic panels. It’s just under 10kW in size, costs about \$34,000 and should produce around 16,000 kWh per year (with an estimated savings on electric bills of approximately \$2,000).

It’s a long-term investment, and one that we’re very proud of. We’d like to send our sincerest gratitude to the donors who helped with the upfront costs. In addition to the savings on our electric bills, it’s estimated that 338 tons of carbon dioxide will be eliminated from our footprint over the life of our system—equivalent to planting 7,875 trees or 329,354 pounds (164.7 tons) of coal burned.



PEC President Chris Miller speaks to reporters and guests at the announcement event of the Solarize Piedmont campaign at the headquarters office in Warrenton, Va. PEC showcased their 38-solar panel installation. Photo by Paula Combs

Our Solarize campaign is being extended to June 30, 2016. For more information, visit pecva.org/solarize

Pop Quiz

TRUE OR FALSE:

Frederick County, Maryland generates more solar power than the entire Commonwealth of Virginia.



Photo by Paula Combs

ANSWER

True. Frederick County alone generates 21 megawatts of solar power, while the entire state of Virginia produces only 20 megawatts of solar power.

On the Ground

Albemarle

> Key Parkland Purchase

PEC worked with the City of Charlottesville and local conservation buyers, which included Charlottesville musician Dave Matthews and DMB band manager Coran Capshaw, to help acquire a 27-acre property along Moores Creek that straddles the City/County border. The property is immediately across the street from Azalea Park, and it will allow for a new public access trail corridor to be constructed between Old Lynchburg Road and Sunset Avenue Extended.

> Historic Bridge at Risk

Also happening in Albemarle, a historic rural bridge is at risk of being torn down. VDOT announced plans to remove and replace a 1932 steel, pony truss bridge on Secretary Sands Road. The bridge spans the Hardware River, and is within the Southern Albemarle Historic District. It's one of only a few such bridges left in the County. How long until there are none left to save? PEC, local residents, and historic preservationists are following this situation closely.



The new trail along Moore's Creek provides a much better connection for the Rivanna Trail corridor, which had previously been routed along roads to complete the connection to Azalea Park.

Clarke

> River and Roots Festival

PEC will once again have a booth at the River and Roots Festival on Friday and Saturday, June 24th and 25th. Event organizers use the event to promote and support local nonprofits that help our waterways and support local farming.

Also, due to a delay in plant availability, the Monarch waystation and pollinator garden planting that was being planned in cooperation with VDOT, a coalition of nonprofits, and the County is on hold until the fall. We'll keep you posted on when the planting is rescheduled. A lot of volunteers will be needed.

Culpeper

> Working with Partners to Create a New Park

While this year's General Assembly state park bond discussion fell short, we continue to advocate along with our partners Brandy Station and Cedar Mountain State Park Alliance for the creation of a new park encompassing these two civil war battlefields. Besides protecting the largest cavalry engagement in North America, the new park would create expanded public access and tourism opportunities, including the potential for river access.

Greene

> Landowners Learn About Land Conservation and Land Management

PEC helped coordinate a landowner outreach workshop in Stanardsville with presentations from the Virginia Outdoors Foundation, Virginia Department of Forestry, Soil and Water Conservation District, and the US Dept of Agriculture. About 45 landowners attended to learn about assistance programs for land conservation and land management.

Loudoun

> Planning Underway for Loudoun's Future

Loudoun County is kicking off its Comprehensive Plan review, starting in June. PEC will be participating on the stakeholder committee and encourages residents to stay informed and involved. We will let you know about the many public input opportunities, so you can have a say in Loudoun's growth and future.

On a more short-term note, the Board of Supervisors will make a decision on two issues of concern to Loudoun residents in the rural and transition areas.

One of the issues the BOS is addressing is whether to approve or deny a Commission Permit for AT&T that was approved by the Planning Commission for a two-story, 160,000-square-foot building on the top of Short Hill Mountain. PEC and other members of the Loudoun County Preservation and Conservation Coalition expressed concern about the project at the Planning Commission meeting on April 26, 2016. Now, many Loudoun residents and members of the Board of Supervisors have raised concerns about the application, including the proposed use and visibility of such a large building located on top of the mountain. The BOS will take final action on the application on June 23, 2016.

The BOS will also hold a public hearing on June 15 to consider vastly expanding permitted uses (34 new uses) on open space lots, rural economy lots and common open space in HOAs by-right and special exception. County staff do not support moving forward with these uses without extensive public input. PEC and many residents are encouraging the BOS to sort through the uses to determine which ones may be suitable and which are not. And we want them to engage the public in a thorough outreach program. It is important for you to share your opinion with the BOS.

Madison

> Helping Native Brook Trout Habitat

Final designs are being prepared for the culvert removal project on the Robinson River, which will reconnect over 5 miles of native Brook trout habitat. PEC is teaming up with two families, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Trout Unlimited and a contractor to complete this project. Implementation is slated for later this summer.

Orange

> Gordonsville Renaissance

The Town of Gordonsville recently completed its Main Street Streetscape Enhancement Project in the business district from King Street to High Street. Enhancements include the replacement of deteriorating concrete sidewalks with brick sidewalks, curb and guttering, rehabilitation of drainage structures, and crosswalk safety and aesthetic improvements. The town also installed pedestrian-scaled street lighting, trees and landscaping. The Main Street corridor is part of the Gordonsville Historic District, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Rappahannock

> Working with Shenandoah National Park

PEC has been working on donating a property it owns to the National Park Service for inclusion in Shenandoah National Park. The property is surrounded by the park on three of its four sides, and it is adjacent to a designated wilderness area within the park.

In other news, our restoration project on Sprucepine Branch, a native brook trout stream, will take place this summer when water levels drop. The project will replace the only man-made barrier to fish passage on Sprucepine Branch and reconnect over two miles of habitat for aquatic organisms.

Grazing Along

Rotational grazing benefits health of land and livestock

A large herd of fluffy, yet still intimidating, sheep run full speed through a gate as they're rotated to an alternate pasture at Over Jordan Farm in Flint Hill, Va.

"I don't use herding dogs. The animals are trained to come to me and follow me," says farm manager and Bean Hollow Grassfed owner Mike Sands, who has over 30 years of experience in sustainable agriculture, environmental conservation and community-based economic development.

After receiving a grant from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service in 2013, PEC began working with Mike on a three-year project to create a place where livestock producers can see and evaluate different management practices and their effects on livestock health, weight gain and soil and pasture health.

Like many farms in the region, Over Jordan Farm is a pasture-based operation. But after years of overgrazing, the land faced issues that are common in the area—poor soil health, a lack of grass and plant diversity and the resulting lack of nutrients for livestock. This decreases a farm's profitability and it's also a major source of runoff and soil erosion.

Mike is very business driven, and also cares deeply about the land. "The goal is to make money farming and improve the environment at the same time—not to see those as conflicting goals."

Over the last two years, Mike has been implementing rotational and multi-species grazing—two techniques shown to improve the health of the land and livestock. With the use of portable

fencing, about 200 ewes, 220 lambs and between 15-25 cattle are moved from field to field.

"I use poly wire, which is basically plastic and metal on a reel, and I run the juice through that to make an electric fence. This allows me to change where I graze at any given time, based on how much grass there is, or drought conditions, or wet conditions, or middle of summer, or end of summer—whatever," explains Mike.

Other management objectives for the farm are native grasses for summer grazing, stockpiled fescue for winter strip-grazing, and improved and unimproved mixed grass pastures.

"In this environment, it doesn't make sense to just have native warm season grasses, but they are the perfect complement for me in July and August, when other grasses start to slump. And at that point, the warm season grasses—whether it's switch grass or big blue stem or Indian grass or eastern gama grass—they all produce an enormous amount of biomass," Mike stresses.

Every six months, PEC and Mike collect data on the farm to measure plant diversity, soil and abiotic characteristics, and water holding capacity. The project also measures animal performance and financial performance.

So far, there has been an increase in organic matter over the last three years in all of the fields. "There are no bare spots in the fields anymore. Greater soil cover. More diversity in the pasture," says Mike, "The benefits of grazing the sheep and cattle together, number one: they eat different things so you get a

RIGHT: A newborn lamb with his mother and sibling. Lambing season is the only time Mike Sands doesn't graze his sheep and cattle together. Otherwise, grazing the animals together is beneficial to their health and the farm's soil. Photo by Paula Combs



LEFT: After calling the sheep to come, Over Jordan farm manager Mike Sands stands by the gate while his sheep run into an adjacent pasture. This is called rotational grazing. Photo by Paula Combs

better utilization of the forage. And for soil health benefit: We try to group the animals tighter together in smaller areas. So what we're doing is giving longer rest periods but more intense pressure—disturbance—on the soil."

Mike's management techniques are also having a positive effect on plant diversity. Weeds are decreasing significantly due to the rotational grazing, which is safeguarding the lush grass that doesn't allow weeds to grow—this allows for less use of herbicides.

"Over the past two years we've seen an improvement in both the productivity of the pastures and the financial returns. Two years is a short period, but we expect

to see increased productivity and returns over the next few years," says Mike.

The project is wrapping up this fall, and Mike's advice to other farmers is, "If you're going to look at your animals on a daily basis anyways, then this type of grazing isn't more labor if you train the animals. And I think in the long run, it's actually labor saving because you're with the animals so much. They're much calmer around you. So, when you do have to put them into a corral, it's a piece of cake."

If you're interested in learning about the management techniques discussed in this article, there will be a pasture walk at Over Jordan Farm on June 24 and August 2.



UPCOMING Events

Mob Grazing and Effects on the Plant Community

When > June 24, 2016
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Where > Over Jordan Farm,
Flint Hill, VA

Join us for a walk to learn about plant diversity and weed pressure in response to mob and rotational grazing of sheep and cows. Bean Hollow Grassfed owner Michael Sands and project field assistant Shayan Ghajar will discuss observations and changes in the pasture plant community over time.

The event is free and part of a Conservation Innovation Grant from the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Please register at pecva.org/events.

Summer Field Walk at Gilbert's Corner

When > July 16, 2016
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Where > PEC's farm property at Gilbert's Corner, near Aldie

During the field walk, PEC staff will share stories about the important historic and cultural resources of the farm, nearby Mt. Zion Historic Church and the surrounding landscape. PEC is working to improve water quality, wildlife habitat and pasture health on the property, and participants will learn about the farm and ecological restoration work we're doing.

The event is free, but registration is required. Register at pecva.org/events

A Feast From the Field

When > July 30, 2016 • 6:00 PM

Where > Moriah Farm, 8317 Meetze Road, Warrenton, VA

In cooperation with Moriah Farm and the Fauquier Education Farm, PEC invites you to this wonderful farm to table dinner and tour. Come and celebrate locally grown food and wine. Proceeds will go to benefit the Fauquier Education Farm.

Dinner tickets are \$75. Contact Karen Hunsberger Adam at (540) 347-2334 ext 7001 or at khunsberger@pecva.org

Pollinator Walk Series

When > September 15, 2016
2:00 - 4:30 PM

Where > Bruce Jones Nature Preserve, near Little Washington.

Learn about the types of plants and habitat needed to support pollinators! Participants will be introduced to Virginia's common and imperilled insect pollinators, their life histories and current issues in pollinator conservation. This walk is for folks that are taking their first step into the amazing world of pollinators. The series aims to highlight the importance of providing habitat throughout pollinator species' entire life cycles.

The event is free, but registration is required. Register at pecva.org/events



Photo by Amie Ware

Out & About

Social Hour: Connecting Farmland Landowners with Land Seekers

CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA • MARCH 30, 2016

Thirty one people attended the Social Hour event, which was geared at connecting landowners who are looking for farmers to lease their land and farmers (or aspiring farmers) who need access to land.

▼ Landowners and farmland seekers meet and talk at PEC's social hour at Parallel 38. *Photo by Jeff Werner*



Annual Bluebell Walk

BONNY BROOK FARM, CATLETT, VA • APRIL 9, 2016

Despite the rain, around 30 people came out for this walk through conserved land to the bluebell covered banks of Cedar Run.



▲ PEC's Julie Bolthouse and Doug Larson enjoy the bluebells despite colder than expected temperatures! *Photo by Chris Miller*

Doug Tallamy Lecture: A Case for Native Plants

HIGHLAND SCHOOL IN WARRENTON, VA • APRIL 12, 2016

More than 250 people attended this PEC-sponsored lecture that was part of Highland School's Earth Day celebrations.



▶ Doug Tallamy signs a book he co-authored with Rick Darke, *Living Landscapes*, for a guest. *Photo by Paula Combs*

Native Plant Walk

JONES NATURE PRESERVE IN RAPPAHANNOCK, VA • APRIL 14, 2016

A small group gathered for a walking tour of the Jones Nature Preserve to learn about the spring-blooming native plants and their benefits to the ecosystem.

▼ Bruce Jones speaks to guests about the native plants he put around a pond in front of his home. *Photo by Paula Combs*



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

GRAVES MILL, VA • APRIL 16, 2016

This spring, we hosted our Annual Mountain Heritage celebration, this time at Graves Chapel in Madison County. Nearly 300 attended over the course of the day. Visitors learned about the rich culture and traditions of the families that once called the Blue Ridge mountains home. Thank you to all who took part in this wonderful day!



▶ The Ace Strings Band performing at the Mountain Heritage event. *Photo by Paula Combs*



▲ Guests gather in Grave Chapel's yard at the Mountain Heritage event. *Photo by Paula Combs*

From the Rappahannock, For the Rappahannock

MARRIOTT RANCH, HUME, VA • APRIL 17, 2016

We were excited to team up again with Friends of the Rappahannock and the John Marshall Soil & Water Conservation District on the “For the Rappahannock” event. Volunteers planted 250 trees along Fiery Run; guests took hayrides to see the ranch’s conservation practices; and people watched fish electro-shocking demonstrations. Attendees also enjoyed Rappahannock oysters and local wine and beer with their friends and neighbors!



▲ Friends of the Rappahannock programs manager Bryan Hoffman and PEC habitat & stewardship specialist Celia Vuocolo shuck local oysters. *Photo by Paula Combs*



▲ Volunteers plant native trees to help create a riparian buffer along Fiery Run. *Photo by Paula Combs*

PEC Annual Meeting—The Power of Place

NORTH WALES, VA • MAY 21, 2016

We held our annual meeting at the historic North Wales. The day was filled with workshops, habitat tours of North Wales, and the film screening of “When Mickey Came To Town.” The keynote speaker was Rick Darke, author of *The Living Landscape: Designing for Beauty and Biodiversity in the Home Garden* (co-authored with Doug Tallamy).



▲ Enduring the rain, guests at the PEC Annual event take wagon rides to learn about the various endeavors being implemented at North Wales to enhance wildlife habitat.



▲ Rick Darke signs his book for a guest at the Annual Meeting. *Photo by Paula Combs*

▼ PEC President Chris Miller gives Mike Sands, owner of Bean Hollow Grassfed and farm manager at Over Jordan Farm, an award for his implementation of best management techniques such as mob grazing and using native warm season grasses to improve soil and livestock health. *Photo by Paula Combs*



▲ PEC’s Rex Linville (LEFT) and Jeff Werner (RIGHT) speak with former PEC staffer Liese Dart. *Photo by Paula Combs*



Dear Friends,

We are mourning the loss of Bill Backer, long-time PEC supporter and Piedmont Foundation President, who passed away on May 13, 2016. An advertising genius who taught the “world to sing” when he created the 1971 “Hilltop” commercial for Coca-Cola—what many consider to be the most famous commercial ever. (See more on page 3).

Bill loved the Piedmont and chose to make Fauquier County his permanent home in 1994. I’ve known Bill for over 20 years. He was a man of incredible intellect and insight into the human spirit. And he was courageous, passionate, full of laughter and in the constant pursuit of happiness. We were extremely lucky to have him as a leader, supporter and friend over so many years. He truly loved the open land that he chose to live on at Smitten Farm and the surrounding fields and forests. But, more importantly, he loved all of us. He wanted

Bill wanted nothing more than to help find that common spark that would help resolve competing interests and unify around the common cause of land.

nothing more than to help find that common spark that would help resolve competing interests and unify around the common cause of land.

Working with Bill was energizing and exhausting, requiring great leaps of logic but also careful attention to detail. He could be a tough critic, but he always came back with a suggestion for a better approach. Who else but Bill could conceive and execute a spectacular party to thank Abe Pollin for the Verizon Center as a way of encouraging smart growth, complete with 500 developers and friends, an original one-act musical and a five-course meal at the vast National Building Museum?

He was open to big, new ideas and loved to be around creative people. But he also valued simple things like fried chicken and a perfect hamburger on the porch, while enjoying the view of open land, the breeze and the sounds of birds singing.

Bill taught all of us the importance of maintaining a sense of humor in the face of adversity. He believed that having fun made the

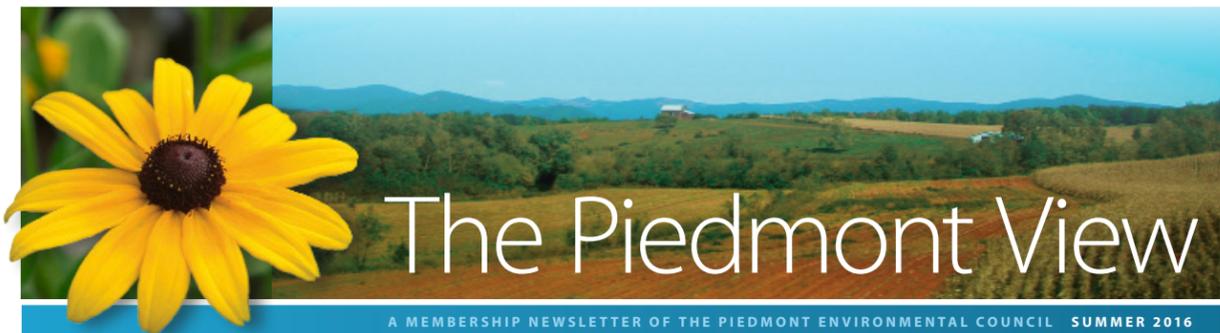


Bill Backer and Chris Miller speak to guests during an event at the Piedmont Memorial Overlook in Paris, Va.

hard work worthwhile.

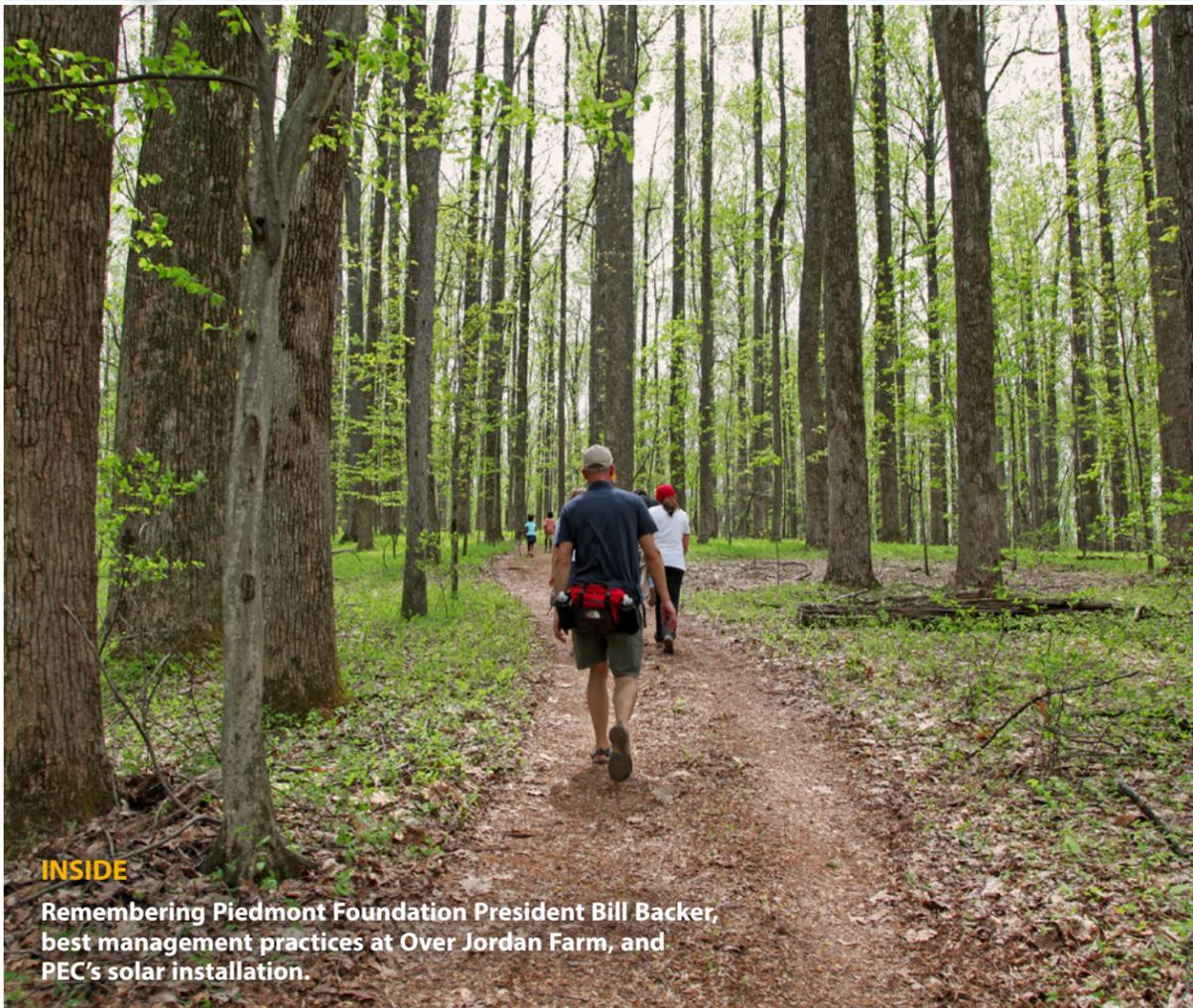
No person loved the open land and all that it provides more than him, and we are dedicated to continuing his work. He will be sorely missed.

Christopher G. Miller
Chris Miller, President



The Piedmont View

A MEMBERSHIP NEWSLETTER OF THE PIEDMONT ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL SUMMER 2016



INSIDE

Remembering Piedmont Foundation President Bill Backer, best management practices at Over Jordan Farm, and PEC’s solar installation.

Photo by Paula Combs

Pop Quiz

TRUE OR FALSE:

Frederick County, Maryland generates more solar power than the entire Commonwealth of Virginia.

ANSWER ON PAGE 3



Photo by Bri West



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