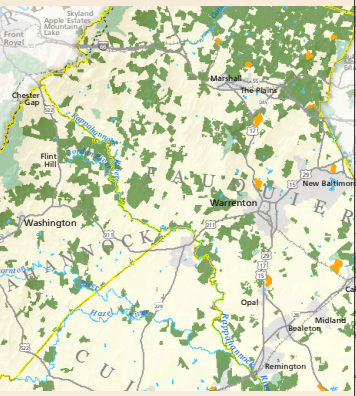


CONSERVATION
EDITION

PAGE 2 Land conserved
in 2016



PAGE 3 Solar Campaign
Begins



PAGE 4 PEC's Favorite
Hikes



Support PEC

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Warrenton, VA 20188
540.347.2334
pec@pecva.org

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Thank you for helping
to protect the Piedmont!



Your Voice Made the Difference for Conservation

By Dan Holmes

The 2017 session of the Virginia General Assembly has come to a close. The bills and budget are now with the Governor's office, and awaiting his review.

Before the session began, there was a massive budget shortfall to the tune of \$1.5 billion. Given the budget deficit, we knew the majority of our efforts would be focused on defending essential conservation programs. And because of your support and action, we consider this session to be a tremendous success.

It has been a pleasure to represent PEC and you at the General Assembly. Here is a rundown of what occurred this year with the legislative and budgets.

Legislation

HB1470 - Land Preservation Tax Credit

We were very pleased this bill was tabled in subcommittee, effectively killing the bill. This bill would have cut the Land Preservation Tax Credit — the single most effective tool Virginia has to protect farm and forest land, clean air and water, historic and scenic landscapes, and important natural communities and ecosystems.

LPTC was established in 1999, and the

program has worked because it offers a meaningful incentive for landowners to voluntarily donate land or conservation easements. These protected lands play a significant role in meeting numerous federal, state and local policies.

The bill was introduced as seeking modest cuts, as a way to "protect the program." But the legislation, when combined with prior cuts over the last 5 years, would have brought the program down by over 55 percent. This was considered acceptable by some, as some members in the House were discussing capping the program at \$25 million or zeroing it out entirely. In good faith, three years ago, we worked with the General Assembly to avoid the very cut that was proposed this year. That agreement resulted in a cap of \$75 million. We viewed this year's legislation as a retraction of the previous deal, forcing us to take a strong stance to protect the program in its current state.

PEC and conservation partners joined with Virginia Farm Bureau to rally around a central message of protecting one of the most



Virginia General Assembly in Richmond. Photo by Emily Onufer

successful programs in the nation. And there is no doubt that your calls and emails in support of land conservation had a huge impact on the outcome of this bill.

HB2196/ SB1282 - Telecom Wireless Bills

HB2196 died on the house floor, and SB1282 passed with an improved substitute. As originally drafted, the legislation was an attempt to remove local zoning authority and

Continued on page 5

Matchmaker, Matchmaker...

FARMERS SEEKING LANDOWNERS

By Paula Combs

"If you can connect and have a good relationship, farmer to landowner, this can be an amazing, beautiful and productive thing. It really can work," says Katharine Wilson, manager of the new Berrey Hill Farm in Madison County.



Farmers and landowners meet at the "Farmland Leasing Social Hour" in Albemarle County in 2016. Photo by Jess Palmer

We held a "Farmland Leasing Social Hour" last year where Katharine, a farming intern at the time, met landowners, Holly and Peter Maillet.

"We saw a gap between aspiring farmers and landowners who want their land in agriculture," says Jess Palmer, farm and food program coordinator for PEC. "So one of the things we decided to do was host a social happy-hour-style event, where landowners and land seekers can mingle and talk about their property or their business ideas—it's an opportunity for connections to be made."

When speaking with Katharine and Holly, it's immediately apparent the right people have come together to form a partnership. They both seem equally as passionate about protecting the health and ecology of the land and building community through healthy food.

"When my husband and I bought our farm, we were

Continued on page 5

More Land Conserved in 2016

Protecting more wetlands, farmland and forests

By Paula Combs

We always enjoy reporting the yearly totals for land conservation. Our staff pulled the data for our nine-county service region in 2016, and a combined total of 7,595 acres were protected in Albemarle, Clarke, Culpeper, Fauquier, Greene, Loudoun, Madison, Orange and Rappahannock Counties, in 2016. This brings the total acreage of land under conservation easement in the region to 394,963 acres.

“One of the lessons I’ve learned over the years is that landowners choosing to permanently conserve their land, generally do so out of a sense of optimism about the future. They believe in the intrinsic value of the Piedmont’s farms and forest, history and beauty, and want to protect those resources for future generations,” says Mike Kane, director of conservation at PEC. “That wonderful spirit is evident again as more than 60 families, landowners, farmers, organizations and local governments conserved—in just one year—more farm and forest land in our region than the entire land area covered by the City of Charlottesville.”

Buck’s Elbow Mountain in Albemarle County is one of the conservation highlights from this past year. The landowner, Mitch Carr, conserved 263 acres of valuable forestland. The land is also important locally because it’s the site of the 1959 Piedmont Airlines Flight 349 crash, and remnants of the fuselage remain on site.

“Conserving this forested property helps contribute to water quality, as it contains streams that ultimately flow into the South Fork Rivanna Reservoir. It contains two globally-rare

significant natural communities, and it has the potential for rare plants,” says Kim Biasioli, forest conservation specialist at Virginia Department of Forestry, and who oversees the easement.

Another conservation success from 2016 includes farmland with ties to the Civil War. Howard and Jane Grove conserved 181 acres of their beef cattle farm in Morrisville, Virginia through the Fauquier County Purchase of Development Rights program, which purchases easements to conserve working farms and farmland in the county.

“I used the funds to buy more farmland, more family farmland, to start piecing it back together,” says Mr. Gove.

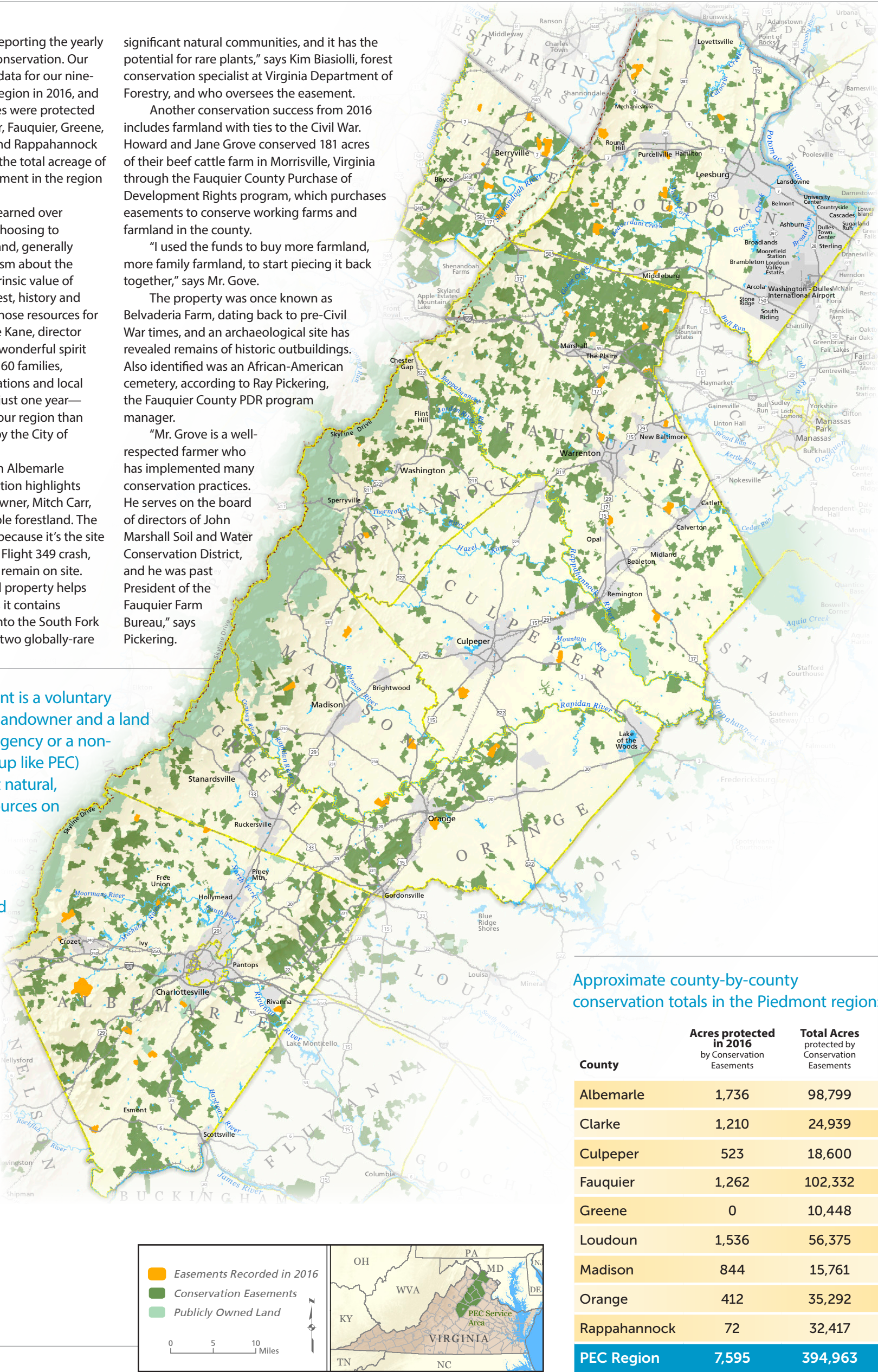
The property was once known as Belvaderia Farm, dating back to pre-Civil War times, and an archaeological site has revealed remains of historic outbuildings. Also identified was an African-American cemetery, according to Ray Pickering, the Fauquier County PDR program manager.

“Mr. Grove is a well-respected farmer who has implemented many conservation practices. He serves on the board of directors of John Marshall Soil and Water Conservation District, and he was past President of the Fauquier Farm Bureau,” says Pickering.

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 the nine counties have protected approximately:

- 1,633 miles of streams;
- 9,603 acres of wetlands;
- 186,256 acres of prime farming soils;
- 186,100 acres of forests;
- 106,184 acres along Scenic Byways;
- 118,478 acres in the viewshed of the Appalachian Trail;
- 124,734 acres in historic districts; and
- 28,626 acres of Civil War battlefields.



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

Waterloo Bridge — Still Closed. Still Waiting for Repair.

By Julie Bolthouse

The other night as I drove home, I paid attention to each bridge crossing. There were 18 concrete slab bridges. A majority of our roadways are repetitive monolithic creatures with little character or interest of their own. This reminded me of a statistic I once heard about how the drive to somewhere can be a valuable part of the tourist experience. Most people probably don't travel out of their way to visit a historic bridge, but crossing one is a memorable part of the journey. And if you live near one, it probably is a part of what defines 'home' for you.

I see these historic and modern road structures similar to how historic downtowns compare to new shopping centers. They both provide for the use needed, but one is pretty standardized, and the other is unique in design and built in an era when things were meant to be repaired rather than replaced.

Spanning the Rappahannock River, the Waterloo Bridge connects Fauquier and Culpeper Counties, and it's a treasured historic resource for many people, including myself. Unfortunately, it's been closed and waiting to be repaired for three years. Built in 1878, it was the oldest metal truss bridge still in service in Virginia, before it was closed to traffic.

Due to the length of time the bridge has been closed, it's now a victim of what's called, "demolition by neglect." In 2015, Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) issued a hopeful public statement saying, "preserving the historic character of the bridge is an achievable goal." However, no rehabilitation is underway, and when asked about the maintenance plan for the closed structure, VDOT representatives explain they are simply inspecting its condition.

Fauquier and Culpeper County citizens have written their supervisors, state representatives and VDOT. Many have also put up yard signs saying, "Save



As of January 2017, the Waterloo Bridge has been closed for three years. Photo by Julie Bolthouse

Truss bridges, once a popular bridge type during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, are now rare. They are one of the earliest modern bridge types, and demonstrate remarkable efficiency and diversity. They are a symbol of American ingenuity at its best.

Waterloo Bridge." We are continuing to push for the bridge to be rehabilitated and reopened to vehicular traffic. In the past three years, we have hired engineers to give a cost estimate of rehab, pursued VDOT maintenance and revenue share funds, looked into

grants from nonprofits and secured a private match contribution of \$1 million. But there still hasn't been any movement on repairs.

Waterloo Bridge is not alone, though. Truss bridges, once a popular bridge type during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, are now rare. They are one of the earliest modern bridge types, and demonstrate remarkable efficiency and diversity. They are a symbol of American ingenuity at its best. Since VDOT's first survey of these remaining structures in 1975, we've lost 90 percent of them and another 24 are slated for replacement within the next 5 years.

There are two major reasons these bridges are disappearing. First, there is no dedicated funding source for rehabilitating historic bridges in Virginia. This means, the bridges have to compete in categories such as capacity, safety and ease of maintenance. Second, VDOT's policies indicate a clear push to remove these historic structures from their system.

It's no wonder we are having so much trouble saving Waterloo Bridge — every metal truss bridge in the state is under fire. There are only six metal truss bridges built before 1900 left in the state, one of which is in Brunswick and slated for replacement in 2018. And another one is the Waterloo Bridge, which — as of now — is being left to deteriorate.

The Counties and VDOT need to act before it's too late. VDOT has said that rehabilitation, with increased load capacity, is possible. They have determined rehabilitation would cost \$4.5 million— that is \$2 million cheaper than replacing the bridge outright (which is the current plan). With a private donor generously offering \$1 million towards rehabilitation, the question now is — what are we waiting for?

Pop Quiz

QUESTION:
How many metal truss bridges, built before 1900, are still in service in Virginia?



ANSWER
b) 6

There are only six metal truss bridges built before 1900 that are still in service in the state! This is one of the reasons we've been fighting so hard to rehabilitate the Waterloo Bridge that spans the Rappahannock River connecting Fauquier and Culpeper Counties.

Solarize Piedmont Back for a Third Year!

If you missed our Solarize campaign in 2015 or 2016, you have another chance to sign up this spring! PEC supporters and area businesses 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 will run from March 15 – April 30, 2017. If you've been thinking about installing solar panels on your home, farm or business, this is your opportunity to find out if it will work for you.

To get started or learn more, visit pecva.org/solarize. This campaign is a cooperative program with PEC, Local Energy Alliance Program (LEAP) and the Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NRVC) to bring solar power to more people in the Commonwealth.



Installers put up solar panels on PEC's office in Warrenton last year. Participate in this year's campaign, which starts on March 15, 2017. Photo by Paula Combs

"We are tracking to have our investment recuperated in about 10 years. After that—every month is money in the bank. In the meantime, our electric bills are half to fully zero of our previous bills and we are showing our neighbors that it can be done."

— Jimmy O'Connor
Participant in the 2015 Solarize Piedmont campaign

"We are delighted with the results and are waiting for the days to get longer and our Dominion bill to decrease. The final look turned out to be totally unobtrusive both on the residence and the commercial building."

— Lynn Wiley
Participant in the 2016 Solarize Piedmont campaign

"Our Dominion bills for May through October were \$8 a month, which is the standard connection fee."

— Tiffany Parker
Participant in the 2015 Solarize Piedmont campaign

"We're very excited to move to 100 percent solar generation for our farm."

— Kathryn Barker
Participant in the 2016 Solarize Piedmont campaign

Looking for places to hike?

Here are some of our favorites

By Paula Combs

Spring is here, and it’s time to get outside and put those hiking boots back on. I asked my fellow coworkers at PEC to recommend a variety of trails, and this is the list we came up with:

➤ Riverview Park Loop Trail

LOCATION • City of Charlottesville, Virginia
LENGTH • 2.7 mile loop

RECOMMENDED BY • Rex Linville, PEC’s field representative for Albemarle and Greene Counties

The Riverview Park trail has a great paved greenway running along the Rivanna River. It makes for a perfect evening walk and is typically filled with families, runners, dog walkers and bicyclists. On the other side of the river, just parallel to Riverview Park trail, is the more rustic Old Mills Trail, which is a single track multi-use dirt path. In the summer, you frequently see people floating down the Rivanna River on inner tubes and boats.

➤ Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve

LOCATION • Leesburg, Virginia
LENGTH • More than 20 miles of hiking trails to choose from
RECOMMENDED BY • Julie Bolthouse, PEC’s field representative for Fauquier County

My family’s favorite is hiking at Banshee Reeks, because my son, Charlie, can run free and choose his own adventure. It’s an easy hike with kids, and it’s large enough that there is a lot to see, such as a pond, Goose Creek, wetlands, meadows and forest. The trails and park are only open on Saturday and Sunday from 8 am - 4 pm.

➤ Montpelier-Grelen Trail

LOCATION • Orange County, Virginia
LENGTH • 3.9 miles (a total of 8+ miles around Montpelier)
RECOMMENDED BY • Peter Hujik, PEC’s field representative for Orange and Madison Counties

I’m a little biased because of the work we’ve done with our partners to help open the Montpelier-Grelen trail, but it really is one of my favorites! It has great views of the Blue Ridge and Southwest Mountains. Hikers can spend time visiting

historic James Madison’s Montpelier, and then hike over to The Market at Grelen for lunch. The trail is also kid friendly, and it includes several loop options. The trailheads at Montpelier and Market at Grelen are open during their business hours.

➤ Piedmont Overlook Trail/ Ambassador Whitehouse Trail

LOCATION • Sky Meadows State Park in Fauquier County, near Paris, Virginia
LENGTH • 3-mile round-trip
RECOMMENDED BY • Celia Vuocolo, PEC’s habitat and stewardship specialist

Sky Meadows is one of my favorite places to hike in our area! It offers spectacular views of the Piedmont, including the gorgeous view from PEC’s Piedmont Memorial Overlook property. Take the Piedmont Overlook trail from the main parking area to the Ambassador Whitehouse trail to enter our property. The hike is good for all levels, but please be aware it has some considerable elevation. You can also access the Appalachian Trail on this hike.



Photo by Marco Sanchez

Buy Fresh Buy Local

COMING SOON!

By Jess Palmer

I spent an evening this week planning our backyard garden. There’s so much anticipation for the prepping of the garden beds and sharing ‘planting day’ with my kids! Our garden doesn’t provide everything we’ll eat over the summer, so we supplement with offerings from area farmers.

As I work on updating PEC’s *Buy Fresh Buy Local* guides, I make a list of local food options that we can incorporate into our meals. I’ve signed up for a produce CSA, re-upped my weekly egg share, signed up for a monthly kraut culture club, made a semi-annual bulk meat order, and I’ve taken note of a farmers’ market or two that are convenient to my drive home.

This is something you can do, too! Our 2017 *Buy Fresh Buy Local* guides will be hitting mailboxes in April, and inside you’ll find pages of farms, markets and stories connecting you to our local food community.

➤ PEC staff take in the view at Piedmont Memorial Overlook. You can enjoy this view by taking the Piedmont Overlook trail from the main parking at Sky Meadows Park to the Ambassador Whitehouse trail, and then enter PEC’s Piedmont Memorial Overlook property.
Photo by Paula Combs

MEET PEC

John McCarthy

John W. McCarthy joined our staff this past January. He retired from local government in June of 2016, after 28 years as the Rappahannock County Administrator. John has served as member and officer of the Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission, the RSW Regional Jail and the Virginia Municipal League Insurance Programs. He has also served on numerous non-profit organization governing boards, including as Chairman of the Fauquier Hospital Board, the PATH Foundation and the Northern Piedmont Community Foundation.

He received a Bachelor’s degree from Mary Washington College, where he also served as an adjunct professor for twenty-five years, and a Master of Planning degree from the University of Virginia. A long-time supporter of PEC’s mission, John is excited to be continuing his career with an organization so committed to preserving the quality of life and natural resources of the place he loves.

“John has worked on a range of local issues and with state leaders, all across the region, and he is a valuable asset to have,” says Chris Miller, PEC President. “John has the ability to really help get our work and our message out there.”

“Local issues such as telecommunications are becoming more and more complex, and with John’s county administrator experience, he’s dealt with such issues and understands there’s a delicate balance,” Miller explains. “John has a good idea of what people want and what the market will provide—and the gap between the two.”



Photo by Marco Sanchez

MEET PEC

Nancy Terseck

We want to introduce Nancy Terseck, who joined our staff this past fall. Nancy has over 20 years of non-profit finance experience. She spent the majority of her career in various roles in finance and administration at the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. Prior to joining our team, Nancy served as the Controller for CRDF Global. She holds a degree in Accounting from the College of St. Benedict in Minnesota and a certificate in association management from the American Society of Association Executives.

As a transplant, Nancy has grown to love the beauty and rich history of Virginia. “I’m enjoying being a part of an organization that works to preserve and promote the natural beauty of the Piedmont region,” says Nancy.

She is looking forward to spring when she and her family can hike to the Piedmont Memorial Overlook, one of PEC’s properties near Paris, Virginia, to “enjoy the breathtaking view of our region.”

In her spare time, she enjoys exploring the historic towns of the area with family and friends. “I’m also enjoying the PEC headquarters in historic Old Town Warrenton. It’s nice to be so close to Main Street, and to be surrounded by the historic houses and buildings — including our own office!” says Nancy.



Photo by Paula Combs

Your Voice Made the Difference for Conservation

Continued from cover

reduce the time period in which a locality could act on a proposal for wireless facilities and infrastructure. Your letters and calls helped put pressure on legislators to eliminate the worst aspects of the bill. While we still have concerns about the impact to historic resources and gateways, the amended version is limited to existing structures.

HB2108 - Telecom Broadband Bill

HB2108 passed with an amendment. As introduced, the bill would have prevented localities from building their own infrastructure to meet rural demand — stopping local government from providing broadband in areas where the utility companies are unwilling to make the investment. A substitute was introduced, which removed the worst aspects of the bill.

SB1423 - Viewshed Mitigation Bill

SB1423 was passed by indefinitely — simply put, it was defeated in committee. In certain utility infrastructure projects, mitigation is required when there are severe impacts to a natural, scenic or historic resource and its viewshed. Under this legislation, mitigation funds would have been given back to the industry to research and develop new renewable energy projects instead of addressing the impacts of their infrastructure (benefiting the very company that created the impact).

HB1766/ SB1110 - 138kV Transmission Line Associated Facilities

HB1766 passed, and SB1110 was referred back to committee. This legislation shifts decision-making authority from local governments to the State Corporation Commission (SCC) for associated facilities (substations, switchyards transition facilities) related to 138 kV transmission lines. While the bill’s impact will not be felt in our nine-county region because we do not have 138 kV lines, the change sets a dangerous precedent. We are requesting an amendment by the Governor that would further limit the bill.

The Budget

The Governor’s introduced budget became the foundation for the House and Senate budget bills. While our focus was on changes to the conservation grant programs and the Land Preservation Tax Credit, we were also concerned by the lack of funding provided for Agricultural Best Management Programs (Ag BMPs). Here is what both chambers agreed to send to the Governor:

The Land Preservation Tax Credit (LPTC)

With one exception, no major changes were made to the budget with regard to the LPTC. There was an extension of the \$20,000 individual claim cap for one more year, which will return to \$50,000 next year.

Land Conservation Grant Programs - \$5.75 million

The original budget included \$10 million split between the three grant programs. The Governor cut this to \$5.43 million in his proposed budget this year. The General Assembly’s version of the budget fully restored the Battlefield Preservation Fund, but it included cuts to the other two programs.

- Battlefields Preservation Fund — restored funding to original \$1 million.
- Virginia Land Conservation Foundation (VLCF) — cut \$3.5 million of the original \$8 million in fiscal year 2018.
- Farmland Preservation Fund — cut \$750,000 of the original \$1 million in fiscal year 2018.

Final Number: \$5.75M between the three grant programs.

Agricultural Best Management Practices (Ag BMPs) - \$17 million

Needs for the program are estimated at roughly \$61.2 million. The introduced budget only contained \$8.8 million that is generated from the recordation fee, which adds to the \$8.2 million leftover from last year’s Water Quality Improvement Fund (WQIF).

Unfortunately, the remaining funding needs were not addressed (the Senate had considered a \$30 million line of credit that failed to get support in Conference Committee).

Final Numbers: \$17M - \$8.2M from WQIF and \$8.8M from the recordation fee.

Next Steps

Now, the Governor will be reviewing the legislation that passed and will be determining potential amendments and vetoes. We, along with many others, will be asking the Governor for specific amendments to legislation and the budget. Despite the challenging state budget deficit, this session turned out to be a success. And everyone who called their representatives, who sent letters and encouraged others to speak up, helped these positive outcomes. We thank you for staying informed and involved! Watch out for email alerts from us with updates and potential calls to action!



General Assembly Building in Richmond, Va.
Photo by Dan Holmes

Matchmaker, Matchmaker...

FARMERS SEEKING LANDOWNERS

Continued from cover

thrilled it was already in conservation easement, and the more time we spent here, the more we fell in love,” says Holly. “In the summer of 2015, we had a nice big vegetable garden, and we were having a ball growing all this food. But my husband is a full-time professor at UVA and I’m a botanical artist, and we came to a point that summer where we realized we didn’t want to become farmers.

“But we also have a really strong feeling about the local economy and the local food movement, and we were wondering if there was a way for us participate in that—in a more meaningful way.”

Holly and Peter decided they wanted their property to be farmed, but they wanted to find a farmer who aligned with their mindset and believed in regenerative agriculture, a practice of organic farming designed to build soil health and regenerate unhealthy soils.

Katharine had worked at Bellair Farm in southern Albemarle County for three seasons before she tried venturing out on her own. “As great as it was working at Bellair, I was ready for more responsibility. And I was trying to think about the next step, which was definitely not buying land,” Katharine recalls. “I loved the Virginia central region, and I wanted to stay here. But the high cost of land was prohibiting that as a real option, so I was

looking for alternatives.”

After meeting at the social hour event, Katharine continued discussing details about a potential partnership with Holly and Peter.

“We started meeting and getting to know each other, and talking about if we were to partner up. What would this look like? What do we want?,” explains Katharine. “I drafted up a business plan to present, and that was what we started tweaking; and then we finalized things in August.”

Holly and Peter formed Berrey Hill Farm, LLC, and Katharine moved onto the property this past November as the acting farm manager.

“It’s been great settling in and getting to know the property. One of the reasons I love farming so much is because it roots you to the place, and that it really is the piece of land that you get to know, and you never stop learning about it,” says Katharine.

The farm will provide ecologically-grown vegetables, herbs and blueberries, along with eggs from pasture raised hens, this coming season.

“We already have people signed up for our CSA,” says Katharine. “That was really important to us—building community. I think that made us match really well—is how focused on community we



Farmer Katharine Wilson (left) and Holly Maillet at Berrey Hill Farm in Madison County. Photo by Paula Combs

are, whether it be from building the local economy here in Madison County or feeding the wider central Virginia community with healthy food.”

Berrey Hill Farm will follow the organic standard, but they will not seek certification due to their current scale and startup budget.

“We’re also doing things like minimal

tillage, not using a ton of fossil fuels and trying to stay very aware of all of these things,” explains Katharine. “We want this business to protect the land and treat the soil well with the crops, but we also want the business to be sustainable and profitable. And we want this to happen forever. I want my grandkids to know this land. We’re thinking of this as very long term.”

We were excited to hear about this successful partnership that the social hour helped create. In an email to PEC, Katharine wrote, “Thank you so much for putting on such a great event, providing the opportunity for farmers like myself to look for land access alternatives outside of buying our own. I’m so grateful to have met the Mailllets at the Social Hour.”

The next “Farmland Leasing Social Hour” will be on March 30 at Wort Hog Brewing in Warrenton, Va. If you are interested in the event, or know of any landowners and farmers who should attend, please register by visiting pecva.org/events or by calling Jess Palmer at (540) 347-2334 ext. 7081.

On the Ground

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Albemarle

➤ **Learn about Land Conservation, Land-Use, Wildlife Habitat & More**

Join PEC staff in an Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at UVA class to learn how land conservation, land-use planning, wildlife habitat protection and restoration, and development of a robust agricultural economy all fit together as necessary components of protecting an intact rural countryside with well-defined and vibrant urban centers. We will be giving presentations and conducting discussions. Citizen advocates with background and knowledge of these issues will be better able to participate in growth and development issues affecting their community. Course dates are May 2, 9, 16, and 23 and participants should register through www.olliuvaregistraion.org.

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Clarke

➤ **Future “Cost of Community Services” Report**

Clarke County has contracted with the Weldon Cooper Center to perform an updated Cost of Community Services in 2017. This will provide new information on the fiscal benefit of open space and agricultural lands in Clarke. The County is also working to increase collaboration and capacity for supporting compatible economic development that aligns with the Comprehensive Plan, whether in the countryside, in designated business sites at key cross-roads or in Berryville and Boyce.

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Culpeper

➤ **New Septic System Repair and Replacement Fund**

The Culpeper Soil and Water District recently secured funding from the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality for a Septic System Repair and Replacement Fund that’s available to residents of *Culpeper, Greene, Orange, Madison, and Rappahannock Counties*. Failing septic systems can affect both ground and surface water quality. The funds cover 50 percent of approved costs and are only available for a two-year term. We strongly support cost share programs like this that help landowners improve water quality by making improvements on their residential and agricultural properties. To participate, contact Amanda Chester at (540) 825-8591.

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Fauquier

➤ **Gardens, Trails, Roads and Development**

The Remington Walks planning effort funded by the PATH Foundation is in full swing! Our consultant has created base maps of trails and community features. A three-day planning charrette is planned for April 19-21, which will include a walking tour, interviews of residents and business owners and a public open house and presentation on the evening of April 21 at the United Methodist Church.

In other news, the Buckland Bypass proposal from ten years ago is back, unfortunately. Prince William County, using a study grant funded by the federal

PEC’s partner, The Remington Community Garden, has available garden plots for local individuals and families. Sign up for this season by contacting John Waldeck at (540) 439-1802.

Photo by Paula Combs



government, is reevaluating potential bypasses around Buckland and Gainesville that would cross through much of eastern Fauquier between Rt. 29/15 and I-66. The next public meeting will be in April, and the final report is expected in June.

There are also two major developments in the works in Fauquier, which are Walker Drive in the Town of Warrenton and the expansion of Blackthorne Inn off of Route 50. The Walker Drive proposal has received a recommendation of denial from the Town Planning Commission, and it will likely be going before the Town Council in March. Although Warrenton is an ideal location for mixed use development, theater and bowling alley, the proposal lacks commitment and detail to this type of development. In fact, there is no guarantee that the Town will get a theater, bowling alley or any mixed use development, as much of the multifamily residential could be built first. The Blackthorne Inn expansion is significant, with 20 additional rental cottages, 22,000 sq ft event facility, and a total of 106 large events per year. Blackthorne is in a rural area, so a mass drainfield, central water system and transportation improvements would be necessary. We are following both of these proposals carefully as the applications are finalized and become available for public comment.

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Greene

➤ **Expansion of Trout Stream Work**

We are ground-truthing potential fish passage projects in Greene, based on the findings from our 2013 study. The study assessed whether public and private road crossings are acting as barriers to aquatic organism passage, and it was conducted in Rappahannock, Madison, Greene and Albemarle Counties. Two pilot projects located in Rappahannock and Madison will begin construction this spring.

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Loudoun

➤ **Roundabout Meadows, and “Envision Loudoun” Project**

Along with Sustainable Solutions LLC, we have completed the first phase of preparing a 20-acre plot for future vegetable production at our Roundabout Meadows property near Gilbert’s Corner. Clusters of native persimmon trees, along with oak specimen trees, were saved to enhance habitat value. A prescribed burn is planned for this spring, which will burn off the mulch and remaining vegetation. A cover crop will be planted following the burn to hold the soil until production can begin.

We continue to be involved in the County’s Envision Loudoun project to revise the Comprehensive Plan on the Stakeholder Committee. Through the spring, the Committee will be working with the County and its consultant on developing scenarios based on the over 5,000 public comments that were provided, as well as the county development and demographic information. In the summer, there will be another set of public input meetings to get feedback on the

scenarios. Keep an eye out for email alerts and check out our website for updates.

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Madison

➤ **Planning for the Future**

Madison County will revise its Comprehensive Plan this year. If you would like to be involved in the process, check out the existing Comprehensive Plan completed in 2012 on the Madison County website at www.madisonco.virginia.gov, and stay tuned for meetings throughout the year where the community will be invited to provide input and review drafts. For more information, contact Carty Yowell, Planning Commissioner of Madison County, at cartyyowell@yahoo.com or (757) 615-0626.

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Orange

➤ **Gordonsville’s Ongoing Renewal, and Montpelier District On Hold**

Building upon the momentum developed by the recently completed streetscape project, the University of Virginia’s Department of Urban and Regional Planning students partnered with Gordonsville leaders and residents this past fall to conduct a planning charrette and develop a vision for the ongoing renewal of Gordonsville. The resulting conceptual plan included recommendations, a) to develop a parks district by refurbishing and connecting existing parks, and b) to connect Gordonsville to nearby communities and attractions, such as Montpelier, with a network of trails.

Many followed and expressed concerns on the creation of a separate zoning district for Montpelier — a district that included by-right uses of lodging, restaurants and retail establishments that were not permissible under the agricultural zoning currently in place. Public comment at the Planning Commission hearing was largely tied to the lack of details related to the proposed uses. Most were supportive of Montpelier, but the proposal also raised concerns about expanded uses and their impacts to scenic Route 20 and the historic nature of the area. Based on the concerns, Montpelier has requested time to develop the necessary details to provide the community with a more accurate representation of their plans and district language. The County has deferred any action on the matter until such time as the applicant and Board of Supervisors reinstate the process.

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Rappahannock

➤ **Blue Ridge Heritage Project**

A group of over fifteen volunteers spent time on February 11 moving several tons of rocks that will be used in the creation of a local monument to families who were moved off their land in the creation of the Shenandoah National Park. The Memorial is being erected just east of the Park boundary, near Sperryville on Route 211. Similar memorials are planned in other counties adjacent to the Park.



UPCOMING Events

Farmland Leasing Social Hour

When > Thursday, March 30 • 7 PM – 9 PM

Where > Wort Hog Brewing Company in Warrenton, VA

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—take this opportunity to meet and begin a dialogue with others that could lead to a future match.

Event is free but registration is required. Register at pecva.org/events. Contact Jess Palmer at jpalmer@pecva.org with questions.

Annual Bluebell Walk

When > Saturday, April 8 • 1 PM

Where > Bonny Brook Farm, Catlett, VA

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.

The event is free, but registration requested — visit pecva.org/events or contact Nan Moring at (540) 347-2334 ext. 7005.

For the Rappahannock, From the Rappahannock

When > Sunday, April 9
Volunteer Tree Planting • 9 AM – 1 PM
Festivities • 1 PM – 4:30 PM

Where > Marriott Ranch, Hume, VA

Join Friends of the Rappahannock, Piedmont Environmental Council, and the John Marshall Soil and Water Conservation District for a day at the iconic Marriott Ranch. For several years, Marriott Ranch has volunteered to protect the water resources on their property and improve the health of their cattle through conservation best management practices. This event provides an excellent opportunity to showcase their conservation work and celebrate healthy water.

Tickets are \$35 for the afternoon portion of the event. Starting at 1 PM, fresh oysters, wine, beer, music and activities will be provided. Attendees that sign up as volunteers to do the tree planting at 9 AM can attend the rest of the event free of charge, but registration is required. Contact Friends of the Rappahannock for questions at (540) 373-3448.

Bobwhites on the Brink: Film Screening and Lecture

When > Friday, April 14 • 7 PM – 9 PM

Where > PEC office at 45 Horner St, Warrenton, VA

We cordially invite you for a showing of "Bobwhites on the Brink," an inspiring national documentary from the syndicated *"This American Land"* series, which details the plight of the Northern Bobwhite quail and efforts to restore its

habitat around the country. Following the movie, local experts from the Quail Recovery Initiative, Piedmont Environmental Council, and Virginia Working Landscapes will discuss the state of the Bobwhite in Virginia, what can be done to bring them back to your property, and how you can effectively manage the same habitat for pollinators, songbirds and big game.

Registration is free but required. Sign up at: www.vaworkinglandscapes.org/events. Contact Charlotte Lorick at 540.635.0038 or SCBIVWL@si.edu for more information or questions.

Remington Charrette

When > Friday, April 21 • 5 PM – 8 PM

Where > Remington Methodist Church 150 W. Bowen St., Remington VA

At the charrette, residents will have the opportunity to give PEC feedback about the initial plan developed for the Remington Walks project. The project is an effort to develop a more detailed plan for the parks and trails/pedestrian facilities in the town. Enjoy a picnic dinner and music from the local Margaret M. Pierce Elementary School. Dinner is free of charge, but donations are welcomed.

Contact Julie Bolthouse at jbolthouse@pecva.org or call (540) 347-2334 ext. 7042 for more information.

Greene’s Mountain Heritage: An Open House at Cecil Mission

When > Saturday, April 22 • 10 AM – 4 PM

Where > Cecil Mission, 5909 Spotswood Trail Stanardsville, VA

Come learn about the mountain culture of Virginia's Blue Ridge at the former Cecil Mission, which was organized around 1910.

The event will feature presentations, archival materials, film footage, exterior tours of the Cecil Mission Chapel, stories from families, live music, light refreshments and hiking opportunities in Shenandoah National Park to check out sites of old homesteads.

The event is free but registration is required. Register at pecva.org/events. Contact Robin Cross at rcross@pecva.org for more information or questions.

Spring Walk

When > Sunday, April 23 • 1 PM – 3 PM

Where > Roundabout Meadows, Loudoun County, VA

Join us for a tour of PEC's Roundabout Meadows farm property and the historic church at Mt. Zion near Gilbert's Corner! PEC and NoVa Parks will be on hand to interpret the cultural, historical and ecological characteristics of both properties. We will provide an update on the restoration and conservation efforts at Roundabout Meadows. Please wear long pants, layers and sturdy shoes. The walk will begin in the church parking lot.

This event is free, but registration is required. Register at pecva.org/events. Contact Celia Vuocolo at cvuocolo@pecva.org for questions.

PEC Annual Meeting

When > Saturday, May 20

Where > Middleburg Agricultural Research and Extension Center, Middleburg, VA

Visit with PEC to learn more about our efforts to preserve the historically significant landscape known as Gilbert's Corner. Participate in a workshop and listen to our featured keynote speaker. PEC's Annual Meeting is a showcase of our conservation work and plans for the future.

Registration fee is \$25 for Members/\$35 for Non-Members. For more details or to register, please contact Karissa Epley: kepley@pecva.org or (540) 347-2334.

Keswick Fox Trot

When > Saturday, May 27
Children race at 5 PM, adults at 6 PM

Where > Castalia Farm, Keswick, VA

5k race/walk to benefit PEC and Keswick Hunt. Includes "Hunt Breakfast" after the race, with wine tasting and beer. Registration is \$10 - \$35.

Register at www.KeswickFoxTrot.com. Contact Karissa Epley at kepley@pecva.org or 540-347-2334 for more information.

7th Annual Summer Safari

When > Saturday, June 3 • 4 PM – 9 PM

Where > Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute, Front Royal, VA

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

Benefit tickets: \$250 per person. For more information and sponsorship opportunities, contact Karissa Epley, kepley@pecva.org or 540-347-2334.

Chapman DeMary Trail—Annual Water Quality Day

When > Saturday, June 3 • 1 PM – 4 PM

Where > Chapman DeMary Trail, Purcellville, VA

We will test and improve water quality with activities such as stream monitoring, trash pick up, plantings, and other fun water activities.

No advance registration required. Contact Gem Bingol at gbingol@pecva.org for more information.

HOA informal gatherings and field trips

When > Late Spring

Where > Eastern Loudoun

These gatherings and field trips will be the first of ongoing activities for HOA boards and property managers to learn about sustainable management of their landscapes. Visit pecva.org/events for updates on the upcoming date and location.

Contact Gem Bingol at gbingol@pecva.org to sign up for the HOA newsletter.



Dear Friends,

At the core of our work, we strive to educate, engage and empower people to protect the place they love and call home.

We want people to have the ability to directly and effectively participate in establishing the public goals and policies that accomplish a shared vision. We encourage our members to be active at all levels of public policy — during the General Assembly debates, in stakeholder meetings on local comprehensive plans, and alerting us to specific projects that impact neighborhoods. But it is the individual determination to leave the world a better place that accounts for so much of the conservation success we report on each year, whether measured in acres placed in conservation easement or in the hundreds of small-scale projects that we all undertake — from adding native plants to our landscaping to putting solar panels on our roofs.

We see ongoing successes and interests from landowners for conservation and restoration programs, despite budget cuts to conservation and restoration funds last year and recent setbacks in the courts of Virginia. And the interest in local and sustainable food also continues to grow. I think positive change will especially continue on the local level, as long as we are successful in sustaining federal, state and local incentives and funding.

During the past few sessions in the General Assembly, one of the major priorities for PEC has been working with partners in the conservation, agriculture and local government communities to secure funding for conservation and best management practices. During the recently

completed 2017 General Assembly session, Virginia Farm Bureau Federation and many local governments were important advocates for sustaining the Land Preservation Tax Credit. We hope the coalition of supporters will expand over time to include businesses that rely on clean water, clean air, protected landscapes and sustainable farms.

What we’re trying to figure out right now is how to leverage the interest in self-determination into greater levels of sustained activity within local communities. For example, the Fauquier Education Farm has successfully channelled volunteers into helping with planting and harvesting sustainable produce. With 1.5 full-time

equivalent staff providing expertise and oversight, the Fauquier Education Farm has delivered 35,000 pounds of fresh produce to local food banks. PEC has assisted with funding and fundraising support, and Fauquier County has provided low

cost lease of the land. And other partners have contributed funding and equipment. The staff is also conducting high intensity training to help people produce their own food, and volunteers have provided almost all the labor.

We are hoping to replicate this type of involvement in other counties. At a minimum, it means the residents are directly supporting the nutrition of members of their own community.



PEC fellows help harvest garlic at The Farm at Sunnyside in Rappahannock County, Va. Photo by Marco Sanchez

The model may evolve further, however, to include support of other communities. We hope to produce more food than is needed to supply Loudoun food security charities at our Roundabout Meadow's property near Gilbert's Corner in Loudoun County, enabling us to provide a regular supply to regional social service organizations such as DC Central Kitchen and the Capital Region Food Bank.

Remember what we do every day matters. Actions such as taking advantage of our *Buy Fresh Buy Local* guide that is coming to your mailboxes this spring, planting natives in your garden and staying active in your communities, all matter. And we will help to let you know when there are bigger issues to weigh in on.

Sincerely,

Chris Miller, President

What we’re trying to figure out right now is how to leverage the interest in self-determination into greater levels of sustained activity within local communities.



The Piedmont View

A MEMBERSHIP NEWSLETTER OF THE PIEDMONT ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL SPRING 2017



INSIDE

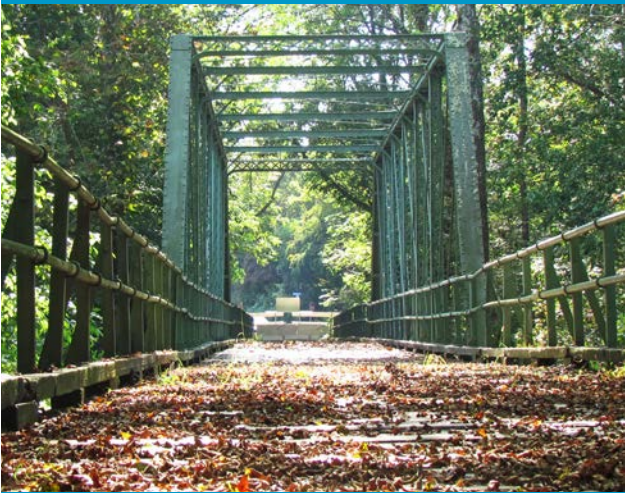
General Assembly update, land conserved in 2016, “Farmland Leasing Social Hour” success, and more!

Pop Quiz

QUESTION:
How many metal truss bridges, built before 1900, are still in service in Virginia?

- a) 1
- b) 6
- c) 23
- d) 59

ANSWER ON PAGE 3



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