



# The Piedmont View

A MEMBERSHIP NEWSLETTER OF THE PIEDMONT ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL

AUTUMN 2019

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Thank you for helping  
to protect the Piedmont!



## From the Blue Ridge to the Bay

In June, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, working with The Montpelier Foundation, donated three conservation easements to PEC that permanently protected 1,024 acres at James Madison's Montpelier in Orange County, Virginia. Thanks to a generous gift from the Mars family, the three easements will ensure the protection of agricultural resources, forest resources, scenic open space, historic landscapes and views, and wildlife habitat that exist on the property.

These easements build on 25 years of investment in the restoration, interpretation, and stewardship of Montpelier's land. This project more than doubles the acreage protected by easements at Montpelier, resulting in the permanent conservation of 1,941 acres or 71 percent of the property's 2,700 acres.

This achievement alone is cause for celebration, but it is also a key milestone in PEC's

developing strategy to accelerate conservation and restoration in the region.

Montpelier and the additional 14,922 acres of land under easement within the Madison-Barbour Rural Historic District are an anchor for conservation in Orange County. They also provide protection for the Rapidan River as it descends from the reforested flanks of the Blue Ridge in Shenandoah National Park and the Rapidan Wildlife Management Area to enter the fertile rolling terrain and wider floodplains of the Piedmont.

After it winds its way through some of Virginia's most productive farmland, numerous Civil War Battlefields, and sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places like Fort Germanna, the Rapidan merges with the larger Rappahannock River west of Fredericksburg. The banks of both rivers near that junction are protected by a conservation easement donated by the City of Fredericksburg. From



Montpelier and surrounding conserved lands.

Photo by Aaron Watson, courtesy of The Montpelier Foundation.

there, the river flows south for about 90 miles until it reaches the Chesapeake Bay.

The connection between the headwaters of the Rappahannock-Rapidan watershed and the Bay is vital for hundreds of thousands of people who drink from its waters, and who fish and paddle in its rivers and streams. Locally, the Rapidan and Rappahannock Rivers serve as a drinking water source for the towns of Madison,

Gordonsville, and Orange, the community of Lake of the Woods, counties of Stafford, Spotsylvania, and Orange, and the City of Fredericksburg.

These river systems also support diverse habitats including cold waters clean enough for brook trout, free-flowing connections for migrating species like American shad and American eel,

Continued on page 4

## A Dirty Secret

By Julie Bolthouse

Steve and Jennifer Rainwater have lived on a 5.2-acre farm on Brent Town Road in Fauquier County for 14 years, where they care for two rescue draft horses. Jennifer described the home she bought in December 2005 as "beautiful and quiet." She described a house surrounded by woodland, barbecuing on the back patio, and her kids camping down by

the pond. "This place was our haven," she explained.

However, their world was turned upside down in 2017 when an access road was built along their property line and hundreds of dump trucks started arriving to dump dirt, non-stop, on a section of the property, behind their house. The new access road created runoff and flooding problems that dam-

## HOW CONSTRUCTION WASTE IS MAKING ITS WAY ONTO RURAL LANDS

aged their pastures and a small pond which had provided fresh water for the horses. Although silt fences were used in places, they regularly collapsed and were generally ineffective. The view from their second floor has changed from woods to a never-ending construction site.

Steve and Jennifer showed me a short video of dozens of dump trucks lined up on the road behind their house, and explained that there were as many as 349 trucks on a single day. At its peak, Jennifer described coming home to her horses and house covered in dust from the constant stream of trucks. "They've taken away everything I bought the property for. I would move tomorrow if I could," Jennifer said. They've

taken a \$170,000 loss on their home according to their most recent appraisal. Even though the dumping directly behind their house has slowed down and moved to another part of the property, the stream beds have permanently dried up, the land behind their house remains barren, and they worry about the safety of their well water into the future.

This is sadly not a unique case. As road projects and development have picked up in other areas of the state, the need to find locations to cost-effectively dispose of dirt has also increased. Many rural landowners have found that they can make significant money by accepting large quantities of dirt and rubble

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This is an 18-acre site near Hamilton that has been scrutinized and documented by [LoudounRuralLandfills.com](http://LoudounRuralLandfills.com). They estimated that the owner took 28,000 truckloads and potentially received payment of \$11.8 million accepting the dirt and rubble.



# Greenways Plan Complete. Next Step: Implementation

By Peter Krebs

Albemarle and Charlottesville reached an important milestone this spring when the Jefferson Area Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan received final approval. This document maps a comprehensive network of bike lanes, sidewalks, and shared-use paths that connect Charlottesville and Albemarle neighborhoods to schools, shopping, downtown, and natural areas while also identifying bicycle connections to and among adjoining counties.

By attaching it to their Comprehensive Plan, Albemarle County encoded bike/pedestrian connectivity into its vision for the future. Infrastructure of this kind is safe, appealing, and useful, improving the quality of life for all residents, and providing everyday access to fresh air, relaxation, and the natural world. It also increases transportation options while reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and air, noise, and water pollution. Charlottesville intends to similarly reference the report in its forthcoming Comprehensive Plan as well.

Pulling this regional bike and pedestrian plan together was just the first step. Now comes the hard work of transforming a plan into reality, and getting the plan's projects installed "on the ground". PEC is doing this work because we want results. The Plan's ambitious recommendations will require increased local funding, cooperation between governments and among agencies, and sustained advocacy and engagement from residents, organizations, and businesses.

There are good signs so far. Albemarle County's next budget includes a new multimillion-dollar commitment to bike/pedestrian quality of life projects in the urban core. The City of Charlottesville has multiple projects underway and has increased its commitment as well.

Implementation of the Plan's ambitious recommendations cannot happen without the strong support and sustained advocacy from area residents. We worked with several partner organizations to craft a broad letter of endorsement to show leaders, funders, and other potential partners that the community is solidly behind this vision. Hundreds of individuals and organizations have already signed on.

As we advocate for durable physical connectivity, we are also actively working to nourish the robust civic

infrastructure needed to bring about positive change through activities such as our social bike rides (see On the Ground). These relaxed all-ages, all-ability rides make bicyclists more visible in the community, encourage safe bicycling, and create a stronger network of advocates. We are working with neighborhoods, homeowners and community groups to create new connections to parks and other resources.

PEC is also planning an active mobility advocacy summit to connect groups and organizations that share the desire to improve bike/pedestrian connectivity in Charlottesville and Albemarle. The purpose of the event will be to organize and focus the energies of both traditional and non-traditional partners toward rapid implementation of the Jefferson Area Plan. We will be looking for new alliances between groups and commitments on specific actionable steps.

The community is galvanized behind a shared vision for connectivity; now the real work begins. You can read the Jefferson Area Plan, add your name to the letter of support and learn more by visiting [www.pecva.org/cvillegreenways](http://www.pecva.org/cvillegreenways).



The new McIntire Park pedestrian bridge is an important link for City and Albemarle residents. Photo by Peter Krebs



Social bike rides like the June 1 Tour de Solar are an opportunity to educate, while building the advocacy community and having fun! Photo by Peter Krebs

## Volunteer Spotlights

### Reilly Oare

**What inspired you to volunteer with us?**

I was inspired to volunteer with PEC by my love for the environment! I am an avid rock climber, hiker, and all-around outdoor enthusiast, so I wanted to find a way to help improve the environment that has given me so much.

**What is your favorite part about your volunteer work?**

My favorite part about my volunteer work is doing fieldwork. I love going out to practice water quality monitoring and surveying new locations since they inspire me to think of new project ideas (and are super fun)!

**What is the most valuable thing you've learned?**

The most valuable thing that I've learned at PEC is how to move forward toward a goal. It has been very eye-opening to see how actual projects move and function with many different people and parts, as well as the amount of work it takes!

**Since volunteering at PEC, has anything changed about the career path you want to take?**

A little bit! I was originally interested in seeing if I enjoyed environmentally-focused jobs, but now I am almost positive that is the direction I would like to move towards.



### Rachel Pack

**What inspired you to volunteer with us?**

As an undergraduate student in my senior year I kept getting pulled further into that scary tornado question of "what do I want to do with my life?" I love the environmental science field, but I needed to learn more about it outside of the classroom, so I reached out for some volunteer hours and landed an exciting summer internship!

**What is your favorite part about your volunteer work?**

First off, I get really amazing hands-on field experiences while also learning about the general behind-the-scenes work that goes into making different projects come to fruition. Secondly, working with an incredible staff has really made my time volunteering so enjoyable. It makes all the difference to be around people who truly enjoy the work they are doing.

**What is the most valuable thing you've learned?**

The most valuable thing that I've learned so far is how strongly a community can affect change. I always knew it was important for people to be educated on many different topics, but I now understand just how important it is for community involvement.

**Since volunteering at PEC, has anything changed about the career path you want to take?**

I wish I could say that I have had that big "a-ha" moment for defining my future, but I haven't yet. I still have a lot of interests, but thankfully, the one thing that hasn't changed since my time volunteering at PEC is my chosen field of study. I know I've finally found the right field for myself and I feel confident that I will have a meaningful and ambitious future.





# Summer on the Farm

The summer season at PEC’s Community Farm at Roundabout Meadows has been a busy one. Volunteers have come out every week to help pick piles of produce, including tomatoes, tomatillos, and melons, for Loudoun Hunger Relief. Farmer Dana Melby says, “ Our first season on the farm has been a great success! Our primary focus has been on rebuilding our degraded soils, but along the way, we’ve donated thousands of pounds of produce. The thing I’ve enjoyed the most is getting to know our neighbors in Loudoun and building strong connections in our community. We are lucky to have a group of fabulous volunteers that are passionate about getting their hands dirty for a good cause.”



High school volunteer Jerald Soriano picking tomatoes. Photo by Marco Sanchez



Volunteers Xaviera Hessifer, her daughter Chloe and her sister Carolina Herrera. Photo by Marco Sanchez



Farm manager Dana Melby and farm production assistant Pete Walton sorting veggies. Photo by Marco Sanchez



FROM TOP: “Yellow Baby” watermelon, eastern tiger swallowtail on zinnias, pumpkin plants

## New IRS Rule Impacts Conservation Incentives

In June, the IRS issued a new regulation regarding how state income tax credits associated with a charitable donation are treated for federal income tax purposes. This new rule will affect tax incentives available to Virginians who donate conservation easements. Previously, easement donors in Virginia have been eligible for a federal income tax deduction equal to the value of their donation plus a state income tax credit equal to at least 40% of the value of their gift. Under the new IRS rule, easement donors must reduce their federal income tax deduction by the amount of any state tax credit that the taxpayer receives or expects to receive in return.

For example, if a landowner donates an easement worth \$100,000 and receives \$40,000 in Virginia Land Preservation Tax Credits they are only eligible for a \$60,000 federal income tax deduction as a result of the new rule. The new rule applies to donations made after August 27, 2018.

To maintain robust incentives for land conservation in Virginia, PEC is working with allies at the state and national level to change or mitigate the impact of this new rule through legislative and policy changes. Check [pecva.org/irs](http://pecva.org/irs) for more information.

## Pop Quiz

Which three U.S. Presidents had primary residences in PEC’s nine-county region?



Thomas Jefferson’s Monticello

**ANSWER**  
**Thomas Jefferson**—Monticello, located in Charlottesville.  
**James Madison**—Montpelier, located in Orange.  
**James Monroe**—Highland, located in Charlottesville and Oak Hill, located in Aldie.

\* Zachary Taylor is believed to have been born near Barboursville, VA, however most of his life was spent in Kentucky.



# From the Blue Ridge to the Bay

Continued from cover

and fertile estuaries rich with oysters and striped bass.

Protecting land in the Rappahannock-Rapidan river watershed also has a critical part to play in the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay. That point was driven home in the Chesapeake Conservation Partnership’s recently released Marking Milestones report, which is the watershed’s most comprehensive survey of land conservation and funding in a decade.

One of the eighteen success stories highlighted in the report was the 382 acres of Glenmary Farm along the Rapidan River that the Nixon family permanently protected in 2018 with the help of PEC, the USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service and Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District. *(Full story featured in our Fall 2018 Piedmont View, which you can find on our website.)*

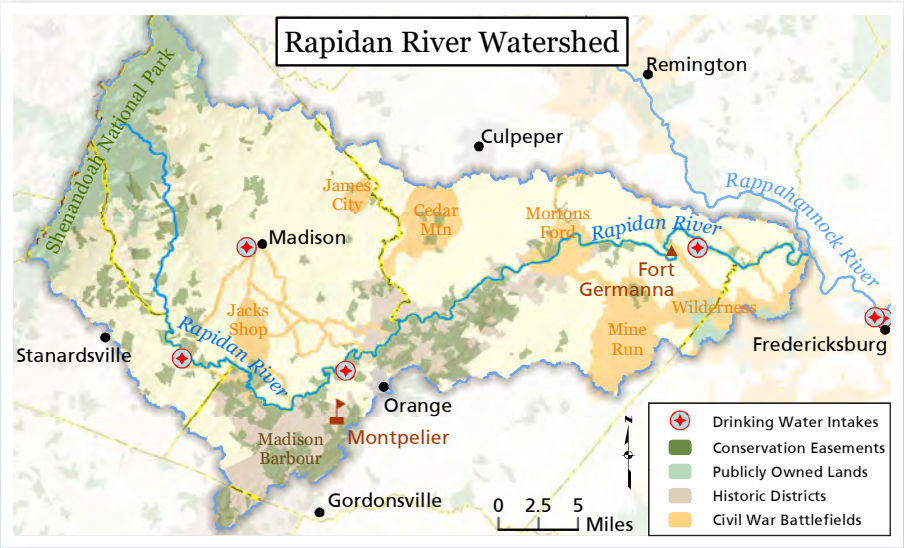
Since 2010, over 1.35 million acres of land have been protected throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed. That’s an incredible 68 percent of the goal to conserve an additional 2 million acres by 2025, which is outlined in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement signed by six states, the District of Columbia and the federal government.

But as far as we’ve come, achieving the next milestone will be no small feat. The integrated conservation policies of federal, state, and local agencies, including

Conserve Virginia, identify an additional 30-50 percent of the Chesapeake Bay watershed that should be conserved. These goals are remarkably consistent with PEC’s longstanding vision for 1 million acres of permanently protected land in the Piedmont for a variety of rural uses.

The challenge to realize this vision here is substantial. The Piedmont is positioned between two of the fastest growing areas in the U.S. in Northern Virginia and Charlottesville, and expanding cities like Fredericksburg and Richmond. Not only does this make the area a target for residential real-estate developers, but it has also caught the eye of companies interested in using the land for data centers, transmission lines, and large scale energy infrastructure projects. In the past two years alone, the Piedmont has seen proposals to convert over 10,000 acres of farm and forest land to industrial-scale solar. This means we must have a greater sense of urgency in pursuing permanent conservation.

The good news is that we’ve come to a moment in time rich with possibility. Increased conservation funds in the 2018 Farm Bill, when matched with state and local funding, offer the chance to make a better investment of public dollars. PEC, through its conservation funds and with the assistance of The Volgenau Foundation and other philanthropic supporters,



hopes to leverage this funding over the next five years to help conserve more working farmland and wildlife habitat, protect historic resources, and improve public recreational access.

PEC is working hard to educate lawmakers at all levels of government about these funding opportunities. Members of our field staff are also in contact with landowners every day to ensure they understand all conservation and sustainable land management tools available to them.

We hope that the efforts of landowners in and along the upper Rappahannock and Rapidan Rivers will serve as a catalyst for more conservation throughout the entire Rappahannock watershed. These efforts will be assisted by PEC along with partners like Friends of the Rappahannock, American Battlefield Trust, local



jurisdictions, soil and water conservation districts, and other agencies such as the Virginia Outdoors Foundation, the Virginia Department of Forestry, and the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.

Along the way, it’s important to celebrate conservation accomplishments, whether they be big or small. This summer’s success at Montpelier was a big one and we look forward to celebrating with you on September 21! *(see pg. 7)*

# A Dirty Secret

Continued from cover

on their land. Dumpsites similar to the one located behind the Rainwaters’ property are scattered throughout Fauquier, Prince William, and Loudoun. Neighbors of a site near Hamilton in Loudoun even produced a video of the activity and its impacts on neighbors (you can see the video on our website or by searching “www.loudounrural-landfills.com”).

The impact of tons of dirt being disposed of on agricultural fields and hundreds of dump trucks traveling on rural roads is severe. Neighbors have had to deal with dust, noise, runoff of mud

onto their properties, and sediment in streams. Public roads have been impacted by excessive dirt on the roads leading to slick conditions, damage due to excessive use by overweight vehicles, and increased traffic. There is also a lingering fear of groundwater contamination because much of this soil is coming from road projects and infill development in urban settings and no one is monitoring the soils and rubble for common contaminants like lead, petroleum, asbestos, and chromated copper arsenate.

Although there is a web of regula-

tion that plays a role in the oversight of these activities, there is nothing that clearly controls the scale of dumping that residents are dealing with. In our state code, there are regulations regarding stormwater management, erosion and sediment control, solid waste management, and wetlands protection. However, there are exemptions for “agricultural engineering operations” and the disposal of soil and “uncontaminated” rubble (concrete, asphalt, brick, etc.) in a “beneficial” manner. The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) references these exemptions, along with the fact that they have delegated stormwater management and erosion and sediment control responsibilities to local governments, as their reasons for not regulating these activities.

A couple of local governments, like Prince William and Fauquier, have attempted to pass zoning requirements limiting the amount of dirt that can be brought in and how it can be used. Some have also required stormwater management and/or erosion and sediment controls. However, contractors and land-

owners have found that enforcement is very weak and that localities are hesitant to challenge claims that they are exempt from regulations and zoning because they are actively farming part of the parcel or are preparing the land for future agricultural use.

So what’s the solution? A public call for change. Creating 10 to 20-foot plateaus of dirt and rubble, bringing in hundreds of dump trucks a day, and running the operation for years is not agriculture. People should tell their state elected officials that these unregulated dumpsites in rural areas are not acceptable and legislative changes are needed the tighten up exemptions and loopholes that are being exploited. With state support, localities will be better equipped to draft and enforce local ordinances that challenge absurd claims that these operations are agricultural practices.

If this issue is something you are experiencing yourself or something you would like to learn more about, please reach out to PEC field representative Julie Bolthouse at [jbolthouse@pecva.org](mailto:jbolthouse@pecva.org) or 540-347-2334 x. 7042.



**Hundreds of trucks dumped load after load of dirt and rubble on the property directly behind the Rainwaters’ house.** Photo, from 2018, courtesy of the Fauquier Times.



# On the Ground

## Albemarle

### > Largest Easement in County History

Years of work by PEC staff paid off when Albemarle Conservation Easement Authority accepted a conservation easement this July on approximately 4,500 acres of forestland just south of Monticello from James C. Justice Companies, Inc. We are delighted that WV Governor Jim Justice and his family protected this important part of Albemarle County.

### > Social Bike Rides Return

PEC co-sponsored six social bike rides this season in partnership with other organizations. These low-stress rides and events are a great way to build our advocacy base, supporting a more connected Charlottesville and Albemarle while demonstrating how easy it is to get around on a bike.

## Clarke

### > Water Quality in the Blue Ridge

PEC is partnering with Clarke County and Friends of the Shenandoah River to monitor water quality along the Blue Ridge Mountains and educate residents about the status of their local waterways. Join us in May to learn about water quality and monitoring techniques. Give it a try and see if you'd like to volunteer!

### > Blue Ridge Conservation Alliance

Over 30 organizations came together this June in Boyce to discuss opportunities to work together through a regional conservation partnership stretching from Front Royal to Harpers Ferry. Led by PEC staff, BRCA facilitates workshops and working groups throughout the year to increase our collective impact on conservation.

## Culpeper

### > Draft 2020 Comprehensive Plan

The Culpeper County Planning Commission is undergoing its review of the 2015 Comprehensive Plan to develop a draft 2020 Comprehensive Plan. At a time when proposals for utility-scale solar facilities and other high-intensity land uses (e.g. data centers) are being considered, the Plan becomes an increasingly important document, aiding county officials with difficult land-use decisions.

### > Cricket Solar – A Foregone Application

The Cricket Solar, LLC application, originally submitted by BayWa r.e. in December 2018, was officially withdrawn on August 26. Despite multiple Site Plan revisions to the 1,800+ acre proposal, BayWa felt that they had not adequately addressed citizen concerns nor effectively mitigated natural and historical resource impacts. An update to the County's Comprehensive Plan, associated historic maps, and zoning ordinance could help create more appropriately sited utility-scale solar proposals in the future.

### > Farmland Protection

The Natural Resources Conservation Service awarded PEC a grant to protect a 350-acre farm in eastern Culpeper County. Over 85% of the property contains

prime soils and soils of statewide significance. Located within the study area for the Battle of Chancellorsville, the farm has historic significance. Similar to the project that protected Glenmary Farm in Orange County last year, this federally funded project contributes to PEC's growing farmland protection initiative in the Upper Rappahannock Watershed.

## Fauquier

### > Rural Lands Comp Plan

Thanks to engagement from Fauquier citizens, the Board of Supervisors voted on July 11 to adopt Version A of the Rural Lands section of the Comprehensive Plan. This was a big win for conservation policies in Fauquier, signaling a resistance toward weaker land use planning.

### > Event Center Proposal

A new 32,000 sq. ft large event center, restaurant, and hotel complex called the Lodge at Barrel Oak is being proposed near Delaplane off of Grove Lane. PEC believes that hotels and restaurants should be located in the Service District of Marshall where they can help build the critical mass of activity and investment needed. A new event venue, with no tie to agricultural production, is not appropriate where it is being proposed.

## Greene

### > New Conservation Project Protects Family Farm

The Virginia Outdoors Foundation accepted a conservation easement on approximately 124 acres in Greene County this July from James "Goo" Eddins. The property has been farmed by Goo's family for over a century, is virtually surrounded by other protected lands, and has 3,000 ft. of frontage on the Conway River. In corresponding with VOF, Mr. Eddins wrote, "Having been blessed all my life by God allowing me to live on my family farm, I would like to see it preserved for posterity. There have been so many beautiful farms lost forever in this area and I do not wish mine to ever become a subdivision. I feel that a conservation easement is the morally right thing to do."

## Loudoun

### > New Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan ultimately adopted by the Board of Supervisors on June 20 was far better than the Planning Commission's initial draft, which would have brought suburban level growth to the Transition Policy Area by adding over 19,000 residential units. Thanks to a huge push from citizen activists, the Board only added ~2,180 units to the 5,086 units that were already approved to be built by 2040. Work on the zoning ordinance update is expected to start in the fall.

### > Conservation + Outdoor Recreation

After unanimously being approved in February, plans for implementation of Emerald Ribbons, a concept of conservation and public access through linear parks and trails, are being devel-

oped by a stakeholder group of organizations and trail users, including PEC.

## Madison

### > Utility-Scale Solar Ordinance

Over the past year, the Madison County Planning Commission charged an internal subcommittee to create a zoning ordinance related to utility-scale solar facilities. The ordinance, passed by the Board of Supervisors on August 7, limits these facilities to industrial-zoned land via special use permit. The creation of this ordinance has placed an emphasis on the County's desire to keep industrial-scale energy production in industrial-zoned areas. As of yet, Madison County has not received any applications for utility-scale solar.

*PEC has been selected as a member of the Department of Environmental Quality Regulatory Advisory Panel for the Small Renewable Energy (Solar) Permit by Rule (9VAC15-60). The RAP meetings will be held during the summer/fall of 2019.*

## Orange

### > Congressional Tour of Orange

PEC was fortunate to have the opportunity to share regional conservation success stories with Congresswoman Abigail Spanberger (District 7) on a tour of Orange and Culpeper counties in July. The tour spanned from the Town of Gordonsville to Messicks Farm Market in southern Fauquier and included stops at Verling Park to discuss trail connectivity, Clarks Mountain to discuss the region's watersheds and viewsheds, the Rapidan River, and various farmsteads under conservation easement. Rep. Spanberger serves on the House Agriculture Committee and is the Chair of the House Agriculture Subcommittee on Conservation and Forestry.

### > Landmark Land Conserved at Montpelier

As detailed in the main article of this Piedmont View, PEC was excited to partner with the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Montpelier Foundation to conserve 1,024 acres at James Madison's Montpelier this summer. The easement protects the land around Montpelier's historic core and builds upon the previously conserved 915 acres at this landmark site.

## Rappahannock

### > PEC's Krebser Fund gives back to Rappahannock

On July 24, the Krebser Fund, an advisory fund of PEC for Rappahannock County, hosted over 50 landowners at the Rappahannock Farm & Land Conservation Workshop. A panel was offered by technical experts from Culpeper Soil and Water District, U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service, American Farmland Trust, the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute's Virginia Working Landscapes, and PEC. The Fund has also awarded a total of \$40,000 in grants to RappFLOW for the Rappahannock Elementary School Courtyard Project, to build an outdoor S.T.E.A.M. classroom; and to Rappahannock County Recreational Facilities Authority for conservation landscaping at the Rappahannock County Park, in Washington.



# Out&About

## Sunset Safari and Honoring Ernst Volgenau

SMITHSONIAN CONSERVATION BIOLOGY INSTITUTE, FRONT ROYAL, VIRGINIA • JUNE 6, 2019

The Piedmont Environmental Council (PEC), Shenandoah National Park Trust, and Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute (SCBI) celebrated our 9th and final year of Summer Safari, thus “sunsetting” the event that has occurred on Racetrack Hill year-after-year. Although it was our “Sunset Safari,” our collaboration continues as we all work toward common goals. In celebration of continuing conservation legacies, we honored The Volgenau Foundation. Their support of PEC, SCBI, and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy around Shenandoah National Park has helped protect our plants, birds, pollinators, and watersheds for the betterment of mankind. It is their belief that preservation of the environment is essential to the survival of life on our planet, and that people are both inspired and enriched by nature.



Maryanna Kieffer, Executive Director of The Volgenau Foundation, Susan Sherman, Executive Director of The Shenandoah National Park Trust, Lauren Volgenau-Knapp, Jennifer Volgenau Wiley, PEC President Chris Miller, Lisa Volgenau, Sara Volgenau, Steve Monfort, John and Adrienne Mars Director of the Smithsonian’s National Zoo and Conservation Biology Institute, Ernst Volgenau. *Photo by Gregorio Photography*



Mrs. Diana Prince, Doug Larson, George Grayson, Dr. Amy Johnson, program director of Virginia Working Landscapes, Maria Tousimis, Ken Garrett, Anne Backer, Bill Prime, Butter Strother, Mike Kane, PEC’s director of conservation, Susan Dunham. *Photo by Gregorio Photography*

## 2019 Fellowship

Here is a snapshot of this year’s seven-week PEC Fellowship program, where our 2019 fellows learned skills to help them go on to careers in land conservation, urban planning, agriculture, historic preservation, public policy, and other related fields.



The 2019 fellows, with PEC farm manager Dana Melby and habitat specialist Celia Vuocolo, learn how to create a “lasagna” bed at our Community Farm at Roundabout Meadows. *Photo by Robin Cross*

2019 fellows were challenged to plan their own community during one of several land-use planning activities. *Photo by Kaitlin King*



Fellows learn the skills to monitor water quality and stream health. *Photo by Claire Catlett*





# UPCOMING Events

Event details subject to change. Please check [pecva.org/events](http://pecva.org/events) for the latest information.

## Conservation Celebration with Fireworks

**When** > Saturday, September 21 • 6 PM  
**Where** > Montpelier, 11350 Constitution Highway, Montpelier Station, VA

A celebration of the additional 1,024 acres of land put under permanent conservation easement at historic Montpelier this summer. Join us for food, fun, and fireworks. This free event is perfect for the whole family - bring your walking shoes, a picnic, blankets, and chairs! Fireworks will begin at 8pm.

Visit [pecva.org/events](http://pecva.org/events) for the latest information. Contact Karissa Epley, [kepley@pecva.org](mailto:kepley@pecva.org), at 540.347.2334 x 7002.

## Rivanna River Festivities

**When** > September 27-28  
**Where** > Rivanna River from Darden Towe to Riverview Park

Celebrate the Rivanna River—and the trails along it—during a weekend of festivities. There will be a party at the Rivanna River Company on Friday from 4-8 PM. Come back Saturday (11 AM-4 PM at Darden Towe) for the FLOW Festival's art, music, song and dance plus a decorated boat parade. PEC will have a table at both events where you can learn more about our work and decorate your bike for Saturday's Bike Your Park Day.

# PEC Photo Contest

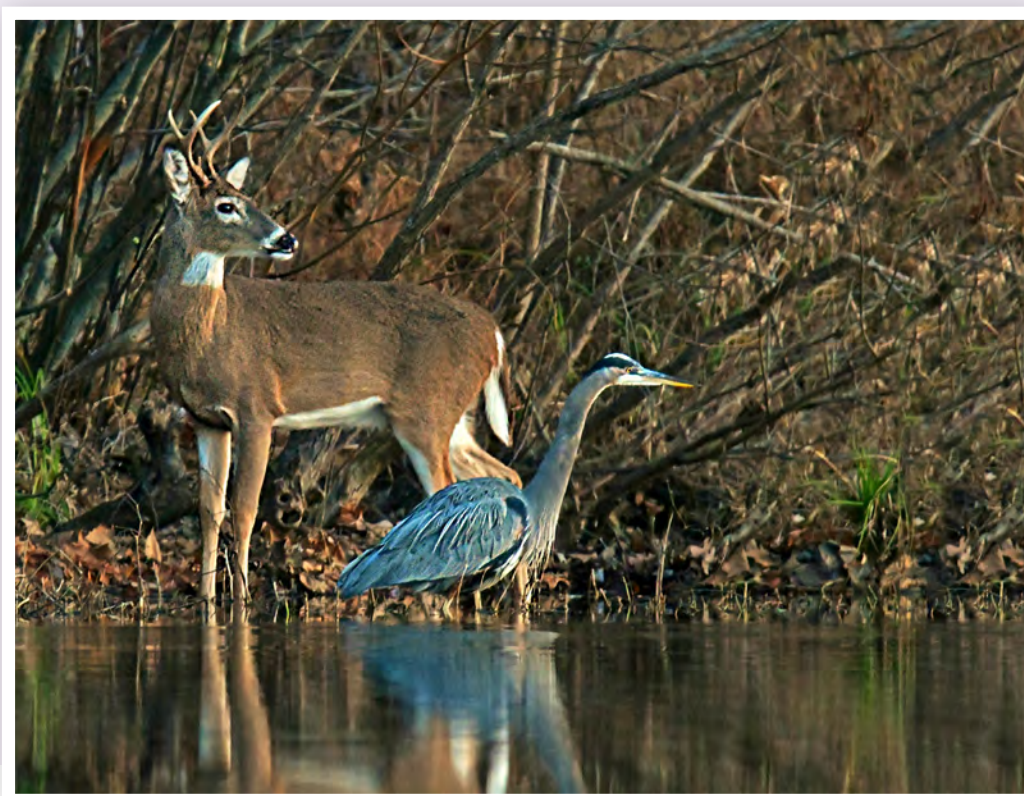
..... Get your photos in by **September 30!** .....

Submit your shots of bucolic views, downtown streetscapes, outdoor recreation, and wildlife. Each finalist will receive a free PEC membership and have her/his work featured in upcoming PEC print and online publications. The winners of each category will receive a \$75 gift certificate to a nearby *Buy Fresh Buy Local* restaurant! And the youth category winner will receive a \$75 gift card for iTunes, the Google Play Store or Amazon! Categories: **Beautiful Landscapes and Streetscapes, Native Plants and Wildlife, Recreation** and the **Youth Category** (for ages 17 and under).

Go to [www.pecva.org/photocontest](http://www.pecva.org/photocontest) for contest details. If you have questions, contact Cat Kutz, communications specialist, at [ckutz@pecva.org](mailto:ckutz@pecva.org) or (540) 347-2334 ext. 7022

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Winner of the “Native Plants and Wildlife” category in the 2018 Photo Contest. Photo by Susan Tucker



## Sustainable Landscaping Workshop

**When** > Sunday, September 29 • 1-3 PM  
**Where** > The Piedmont Environmental Council, 45 Horner St. Warrenton, VA

Join PEC for our 7th Annual Sustainable Landscaping Workshop in Fauquier County. After presentations from local experts from Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Department of Forestry and Hill House Nursery, there will be a tour of the Larson Native Plant Garden, where we've put into action many of the sustainable practices you'll learn about in this workshop.

Free and open to the public, but pre-registration is required at [pecva.org/events](http://pecva.org/events) due to limited space. Contact Julie Bolthouse at [jbolthouse@pecva.org](mailto:jbolthouse@pecva.org) with questions!

## Fauquier Farm Conservation Picnic Dinner

**When** > Wednesday, October 2 • 6-8 PM  
**Where** > Messicks Farm Market, 6025 Catlett Rd, Bealeton, VA

PEC's Julian Scheer Fauquier Land Conservation Fund invites Fauquier farmers and landowners to learn about the variety of local conservation options available to them, such as conservation easements, Purchase of Development Rights (PDRs), farm plans, fencing cost-share, riparian buffers, habitat restoration and more!

Registration: Free and open to the public, but space is limited. Please RSVP by Sept. 23 at [pecva.org/events](http://pecva.org/events). Contact Claire Catlett at [ccatlett@pecva.org](mailto:ccatlett@pecva.org) with questions.

## 2019 Virginia Environmental Assembly

**When** > October 11-12  
**Where** > Virginia Union University, 1500 North Lombardy Street, Richmond, VA

This annual conference brings together conservation leaders from across the Commonwealth to discuss our common agenda to protect Virginia's natural resources. Hosted by the Virginia Conservation Network, which is a partnership of more than 100 Virginia environmental organizations, including PEC.

Open to the public, but registration is required. \$25-\$55. See [vcnva.org/assembly](http://vcnva.org/assembly) for details.

## Family Day at the Community Farm

**When** > Sunday, October 13 • 11 AM-3 PM  
**Where** > The Community Farm at Roundabout Meadows, 39990 Howsers Branch Drive, Aldie, VA

To celebrate the opening of our Community Farm at Roundabout Meadows this year, PEC is hosting this family-friendly event which will feature live music, children's activities, and local food truck vendors! \$10 per vehicle. Car passes checked at the entrance. Pay-at-the-door available.

Please register in advance at [pecva.org/events](http://pecva.org/events) so we know how many to expect! Contact Dana Melby at [dmelby@pecva.org](mailto:dmelby@pecva.org) with any questions.

## Land Conservation & Management Workshop

**When** > Thursday, November 14 • 5:30-7:30 PM  
**Where** > Unison Preservation Society, 21081 Unison Rd, Round Hill, VA

Join us for a gathering with landowners and neighbors to learn about programs and cost-assistance that help with conserving and managing your land. A short panel discussion will be followed by time to talk with organizations one-on-one. Refreshments provided.

This event is free, but registration is required at [pecva.org/events](http://pecva.org/events). Contact Tracy Lind at [tlind@pecva.org](mailto:tlind@pecva.org) with questions.



# Dear Friends,

At this summer’s Sunset Safari event, The Piedmont Environmental Council, the Shenandoah National Park Trust, and the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute recognized The Volgenau Foundation for its leadership and philanthropy in land conservation and restoration of native habitats in Virginia and beyond since 1994.

Accepting the award on behalf of The Volgenau Foundation, Dr. Ernst Volgenau called upon the audience to accept the challenge of serving our country through a commitment to conservation. He compared this to his decision to enter public service by attending the Naval Academy and leading a lifelong career to improve government. Leading by example, The Volgenau Foundation focuses its philanthropy on conservation action in Virginia and around the nation, as well as education and the arts.

In a time when the threat of accelerated loss of habitat and species as a result of development and climate change permeates the headlines, the positive impact of conservation at the regional scale offers hope for the future.

With the support and leadership from individuals like Dr. Volgenau and institutions like The Volgenau Foundation, PEC is working with communities of the Piedmont to provide a model of change towards long term sustainability. PEC and our partners have helped private landowners in the Piedmont region permanently conserve over 400,000 acres, despite the area’s higher rates of population growth compared to the United States and the state of Virginia over the past three decades. This land is in addition to the more than

140,000 acres of public land in the region which includes Shenandoah National Park, the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, and numerous state and local parks and wildlife management areas. Private land conservation extends conservation benefits across a broader landscape, enabling rural economic development to continue while protecting critical natural, historic and scenic resources.

The recent conservation success stories that we’ve highlighted in this newsletter—from the 4,500 acres in Albemarle County, to the 1,024 acres surrounding James Madison’s Montpelier, to the 350 acres of historic farmland in Culpeper County—remind us that positive change can continue and that there is still an enormous amount of work yet to be completed.

PEC is committed to accelerating the pace of conservation and restoration in the region. Over the next five years, we will be focusing on working farmlands, pushing state, local, and private investment and philanthropy to leverage the federal support for conservation in the 2018 Farm Bill.

With PEC’s technical expertise and organizing support, and thanks to the tireless advocacy of citizens over the years, private land conservation is also recognized in each of the local comprehensive plans in our service area as an effective tool to



Autumnal view of the Blue Ridge from Albemarle County. Photo by David Anhold

balance growth and maintain quality of life that comes from the combination of values protected by open space.

The result is a region that has many positive indicators of a higher quality of life and improving conditions for current and future residents. It is our hope that we are providing a model for sustainability; one that demonstrates effectively how to achieve prosperity while conserving natural resources and protecting environmental quality, with the citizens of the Piedmont acting as stewards of our country’s lands. Thank you for being a part of this positive vision.

Sincerely,

Chris Miller, President



## INSIDE

Conserving 1,024 Acres at Montpelier, Communities Struggle with non-Agricultural Fill Dirt, Summer at PEC’s Community Farm at Roundabout Meadows, Upcoming Fall Events and more!

Photo by Sara Rayaprol

## Pop Quiz

### QUESTION

Which three U.S. Presidents had primary residences in PEC’s nine-county region?

ANSWER ON PAGE 3



Photo courtesy Virginia Dept. of Historic Resources



Piedmont  
Environmental  
Council

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