

In each of our nine counties, PEC's dedicated staff work relentlessly to advance land conservation, sound land use planning, the protection of natural resources and better climate and energy policy. We help landowners navigate easement transactions and forge strong partnerships that promote water and soil health, wildlife restoration and agricultural productivity. Our staff are deeply engaged in development proposals, zoning and comprehensive plans as a means of advocating for conservation and smart growth. And, we equip the public with tools and information needed to participate in the democratic process during critical decision-making moments. PEC's commitment to community engagement, combined with an active citizenry, fosters stronger, more resilient communities.



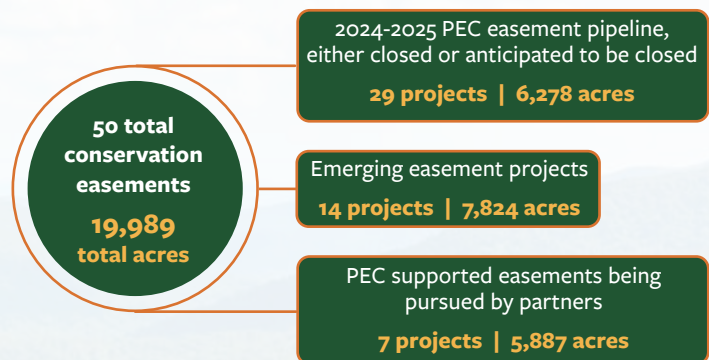
Land Conservation & Habitat Restoration

The Piedmont's natural areas are vital to thriving communities, supporting diverse wildlife and contributing to the state's economy. Thanks to PEC's comprehensive conservation strategies, which focus on safeguarding key lands, rivers, and streams, **over 25% of the region is now permanently protected**, making the Piedmont a national model for conservation.



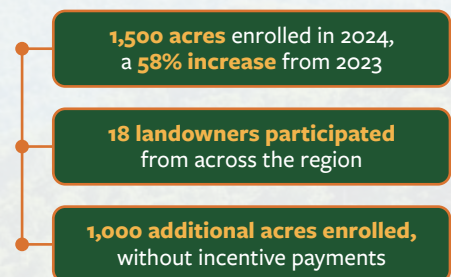
Easements

As an accredited land trust, PEC holds conservation easements that protect over 13,100 acres of vital rural land in the Piedmont. In addition to our own conservation efforts, we dedicate significant time and resources to supporting other organizations in advancing complex conservation projects. Through ongoing collaboration with our partners, we actively engage with landowners across the region to promote and facilitate conservation opportunities.



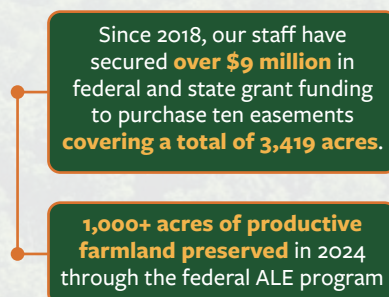
Virginia Grassland Bird Initiative

The Virginia Grassland Bird Initiative — a partnership of PEC, Smithsonian's Virginia Working Landscapes, American Farmland Trust, and Quail Forever — is pioneering new approaches to reversing the decline of grassland bird populations on working lands in the Virginia Piedmont, Blue Ridge and Shenandoah Valley. The program offers financial incentives to farmers who adopt delayed haying and rotational grazing practices, helping to protect grassland birds and enhance landscape resilience.



Protecting Farms with ALE Funding

Since 2018, PEC has capitalized on the federal Agricultural Land Easements (ALE) program to purchase conservation easements on productive family farms. These easements safeguard some of Virginia's finest agricultural soils while enabling farmers to reinvest funds into their operations, land stewardship practices and the local agricultural economy.



Spreading the Word

PEC conservation staff participate in outreach and educational events throughout the year. These dedicated professionals have connected with community members through 50 events between January and September 2024.

Land Use

A balanced approach to land use planning is essential for preserving the Piedmont's health and vitality, ensuring growth and development align with the protection of natural and cultural resources. PEC actively plans for the present and future, challenges incompatible projects and works to enhance livability while strengthening communities.

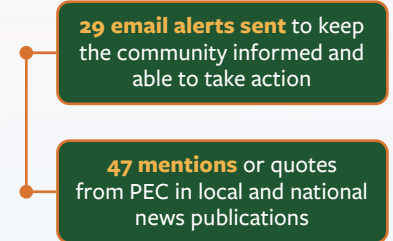
A Presence in Our Communities

Our highly localized approach to land use enables our staff to monitor, weigh in, and impact important decisions across our nine-county region, which leads to better land use decisions in these communities. These totals include PEC's commitment and leadership on the data center issue in our region and beyond in 2024.



Keeping You Informed

PEC plays a vital role in keeping communities informed on land use issues. In 2024, our land use team's efforts included:



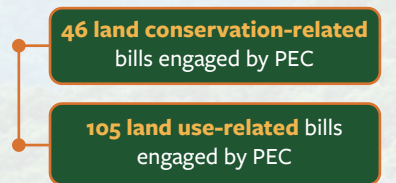
PEC's Data Center Campaign

Virginia is undergoing a massive economic, technological, and environmental transformation, all centered around the activities of one industry: data centers. In response, PEC has sounded the alarm of the cumulative impact of data centers and increased energy demands on communities natural resources and the climate. PEC is leading local initiatives in our region and a statewide reform coalition. Our work has changed perceptions and understanding of the data center industry in Virginia and beyond and is influencing media coverage and conversations at all levels. In 2024, we accelerated our work on this issue in the following ways:

- Engaged as a litigant and supported allies in three legal interventions: the Wilderness Crossing proposal in Orange, the Digital Gateway Project in Prince William and the approved Amazon data center in the Town of Warrenton.
- Filled comments in three cases before the Virginia State Corporation Commission (SCC) on transmission lines and rate setting.
- Tracked 25 transmission line proposals affecting the Piedmont and beyond.
- Voiced concerns with the U.S. Department of Energy's National Interest Electric Transmission Corridor planning process.
- Engaged in 20 data center applications in PEC's service area, maintaining a database of over 300 data centers statewide featuring an interactive map.
- Maintained an interactive map of 4,000 backup diesel generators serving data centers in the region.

At the State Level

PEC's work at the state level is guided by our broad perspective on the issues that ultimately affect this region, including land use, conservation of land and water resources and the health of local economies. In 2024, PEC engaged with over 150 pieces of legislation (including budget amendments) introduced in the General Assembly. We provided direct testimony (including letters), initiated action alerts, and met with legislators and staff.



Community Farm

PEC's Community Farm is a place for people of all ages to come together to learn about sustainable agricultural practices and the importance of rural land and community service. Our fresh produce was donated to support food-insecure communities in Loudoun and Clarke counties.

