

Landscapes



News from the Land Trust of the Eastern Panhandle

Summer 2008

Harewood and Four Other Properties Protected in 2007

Protection of Dolly Madison's view the day she was married at Harewood topped the list of the Land Trust achievements in 2007. The Land Trust also closed four other easements in cooperation with either the Jefferson or Berkeley County Farmland Protection Boards, bringing its easement total to 25, covering 2360 acres.

Harewood

Walter Washington, current owner of Harewood and a direct descendant of George Washington's brother Samuel, placed the easement on the 219 acres of farmland surrounding Harewood mansion. Built by Samuel Washington in 1770, the mansion was not only the site of the marriage between James and Dolly Madison but also featured in the battle of Summit Point in 1864.



A conservation easement was placed on land around Harewood by Walter Washington, the current owner, a direct descendant of George Washington's brother Samuel.

The Land Trust facilitated the funding package for the easement, with money coming from the National Park Service's American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP), the Jefferson County Farmland Protection Board, the US Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Nature Conservancy – the latter to protect the 40-acre marl marsh in the center of the property that is one of the water sources for Evitts Run and is habitat for several plant and animal species considered rare in West Virginia.

The easement value exceeded \$1 million, representing the difference of the value of the 219 acres for development and their value for strictly agricultural purposes, when development is prohibited. Since the funding contributions did not reach this amount, Mr. Washington donated the balance of the value of the easement.

The Land Trust has the lead responsibility for monitoring and enforcing the

Harewood easement. Also, the Land Trust is ready to serve as an intermediary for future ABPP money.

Other Jefferson County Easements

In addition to Harewood, the Land Trust joined the Jefferson County Farmland Protection Board on three other easements in 2007, totaling 182 acres:

Jack and Dorothea Quinn placed an easement on 102 acres around their historic home in the northern part of the county. Currently used for cattle and hay, the land boasts the oldest swamp white oak in West Virginia. It is the fourth easement protecting a portion of Rattlesnake Run and adjoins the 2006 Renaud easement.

Paul and Carolyn Willis protected 20 acres adjacent to the 59-acre 2005 Printz easement.

David and Tracie McCormick put into easement their 60-acre farm, which straddles the Jefferson County – Berkeley County line and includes a portion of both Rocky Marsh Run and a tributary to it. The Berkeley County Farmland Protection Board co-holds this easement as well.

Berkeley County Easement

In another easement crossing county lines, the Berkeley County Farmland Protection Board accepted a donation of an easement from Steve and Deborah Bauserman protecting their 159-acre farm along Opequon Creek, a portion of which extends across into Jefferson County. Silver Spring Run also crosses the property and enters Opequon Creek. Both the Land Trust and the Jefferson County Farmland Protection Board co-hold this easement, which was a straight donation and involved no payment by the Farmland Protection Boards.

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of the Eastern Panhandle

Your Partner in Rural Conservation

Our mission is to encourage people to preserve open space and rural landscapes in West Virginia's Eastern Panhandle. We use private, voluntary initiative and education to:

- Preserve the scenic beauty and historic character that have long made our region attractive to people;
- Promote a healthy, balanced local economy by preserving productive farmland and encouraging appropriate development;
- Encourage wise stewardship of the region's natural resources.

We are a private, non-profit, tax-exempt charitable organization incorporated in West Virginia in 1995. Our board is composed of men and women from a variety of backgrounds from Morgan, Berkeley, and Jefferson counties.

We meet monthly at the Martinsburg law firm of Hammer, Ferretti & Schiavoni, and we thank them for opening their office to us.

Board Members

Cory Belton
Terry Rieman Camilletti
Ron Gunderson, D.D.S.
Barbara Humes
Edward Moore
Grant Smith
Bonnie Stubblefield

Land Trust of the Eastern Panhandle

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LTEP News

The Land Trust in Action

Working to preserve the Eastern Panhandle

New Board Members

Terry Rieman Camilletti: Terry is a life long resident of West Virginia. Originally from Charleston, she graduated from West Virginia University in 1975 and West Virginia University College of Law in 1978. She lived in the northern panhandle of West Virginia from 1978 until 2006. During that time she was a partner in the law firm of Schrader, Byrd & Companion, PLLC, where her practice was primarily banking and real estate related matters, employee benefits, and charitable organizations. She sat on the board of several charitable organizations in Wheeling and was on the Board of Directors of Security National Bank & Trust Co. and also was a member of its Trust Committee. Terry retired from the practice of law in 2006 and now spends most of her time at the Woods in Berkeley County.

Cory Belton: Cory was born and educated in the Southern part of the Netherlands. She has fond memories of biking and hiking with her family in a large area of woods between Germany and Holland. One day while picking blackberries, she saw the result of the Germans having confiscated all the bikes in Holland (1944) as truck after truck with bikes went past. The part of the country she grew up in had so many places to take long walks or bike trips, including 2 castles and parks and meadows for picnicking and mushroom hunting. While studying at Catholic University in Nijmegen (further North and again close to German border) she enjoyed long walks and sailing on the Dutch lakes. You see most of her young life was spent outdoors.

She lived in Paris next to the Bois de Boulogne, the largest Park in Paris, before moving to Berkeley Springs in 1975. In 1986 she passed her Boards in Physical Therapy and worked for many years at the Winchester Medical Center and her last years before retiring she provided Home Health Care. Since the 1980s she has been a member of the Foxglove Garden Club, including 3 terms as president, and in 1999 she became a "Master gardener". The last 3 years she has organized wildflower walks for friends and groups. She is a fanatic recycler and makes yogurt to avoid the use of the plastic containers.

In 2005 she married Bill Belton and moved to Rocky Hollow in Morgan County, 150+ lovely acres, which has a conservation easement with the Land Trust. She has had a close association with Nature her whole life.



Representatives of organizations that made the Harewood conservation easement possible join with landowner Walter Washington to celebrate placing of signs marking the easement. From left to right: Kevin Wickey, State Conservationist; Gary Mast, US Deputy Undersecretary of Agriculture for Natural Resources and the Environment; Paul Hawke, Chief of the National Park Service's American Battlefield Protection Program; Walter Washington; Peter Fricke, President, Jefferson County Farmland Protection Board; Rodney Bartgis, State Director of The Nature Conservancy; Grant Smith, President of the Land Trust of the Eastern Panhandle

New WV Legislation to Fund Conservation

Spurred by a coalition of land trusts, Farmland Protection Boards, hunting and fishing groups and other conservation organizations, the West Virginia legislature in its 2008 session acted to create a flow of state money for farmland preservation and, for the first time, for preservation of non-farmland.

The Outdoor Conservation Heritage Act, signed by the governor April 3, dedicates revenue from a \$4 flat fee on the recording of deeds and \$5 flat fee on the recording of other documents to land conservation.

Half of the fee will go to the new West Virginia Outdoor Heritage Conservation Fund, for the protection of wildlife habitat; important ecosystems; hunting, fishing and recreation areas; wetlands and watersheds; forests; and areas of unique cultural, historical and archaeological significance. The Fund can do this directly or through the Division of Natural Resources, and can benefit from bonds issued by the West Virginia Economic Development Authority.

The other half of the money raised from the recording fee will go to the already created but never funded West Virginia Farmland Protection Fund. That should benefit the county Farmland Protection Boards, which

have never gotten the degree of Federal matching money as they originally expected and are suffering from the downturn in receipts from the real estate transfer tax.

State legislators considering the issue of land conservation visited the Harewood easement (see page 1) in the fall of 2007 with the assistance of the Land Trust of the Eastern Panhandle and other organizations participating in the coalition that supported the legislation.

The Land Trust stands ready to help prepare projects for funding by the Outdoor Heritage Conservation Fund and, of course, to join with the Farmland Protection Boards of the Eastern Panhandle as they seek money from the state Farmland Protection Fund.

LTEP Establishes Records Management Policy

With an eye toward accreditation by the Land Trust Alliance, the Land Trust of the Eastern Panhandle recently completed an organizational assessment of its strengths, including its mission, accountability, compliance, and land transactions and determined that one of its highest priorities was to develop a records management policy. Records include all documents (both electronic and paper) of the organization's

official business and all documents essential to each land transaction.

Board member Barbara Humes took on the task of drafting a policy and on February 25, 2008, the LTEP adopted a written records policy that governs how organization and transaction records are created, collected, retained, stored and disposed. All records are now in a secure, fireproof, and climate controlled location. Backup copies of the baseline reports that document each property's condition at the time the easement was placed have also been made.

Farm Bill Helps Conservation Easement Donors

The 2008 Farm Bill aids donors of conservation easements by extending for two years the 2006 enhanced federal tax deduction for easements. Under the enhanced benefit, the deduction can be for up to 50 per cent of income over 15 years -- and a farmer may be able to deduct up to 100 per cent of income.

Both houses of Congress passed the Farm Bill in mid-May by veto-proof majorities. The enhanced benefit is retroactive to the beginning of 2008, when the provision of the 2006 legislation expired.



Annually, members of the board of the LTEP conduct site visits to all of the conservation easements which they hold or co-hold to monitor any changes to the land. In memory of board member Mark A. Benedict and his prior leadership of the monitoring program, Boy Scouts and leaders from Troop 32 that Mark and his son Skylar enjoyed together, joined the LTEP Inspection Team and visited a conservation easement in Back Creek Valley for its annual site visit. In addition to learning about the importance of conservation easements, they also learned about using GPS location technology and topographic map reading. On a chilly November morning, the group walked the 83 acre property locating the easement boundaries and photo locations from the original baseline survey of the property. Both groups hope to make this an annual event.



The Troop 32 members that participated were: Scouts Ryan Inman, Skylar Benedict, Keith Carlson, Carl Thomas, Phillip Inman, and Leaders Matt Cole, Kevin Carlson, and Bruce Thomas. Land Trust Board Members that participated were Grant Smith, Ron Gunderson, and Bonnie Stubblefield.

Support Your Community Conservation Partner!

I would like to be a **Partner** with the Land Trust of the Eastern Panhandle.

- Please contact me to discuss **protecting** my land through a Conservation Easement.
- I would like to **support** the Land Trust with a tax deductible contribution
 - \$500
 - \$100
 - \$75
 - \$50
 - Other \$ _____
- Please contact me. I am interested in **volunteer** opportunities with the Land Trust.

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Mail to: Land Trust of the Eastern Panhandle • P.O. Box 2240, Martinsburg, WV 25402
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