

Support Your Community Conservation Partner!

- I would like to **discuss** sharing my expertise 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.
- Please contact me to discuss Estate Planning Opportunities.

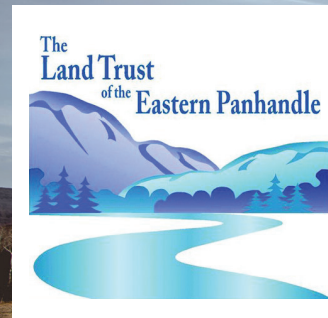
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Mail to: Land Trust of the Eastern Panhandle • PO Box 2240, Martinsburg, WV 25402
 Visit our website for more information: www.landtrustepwv.org



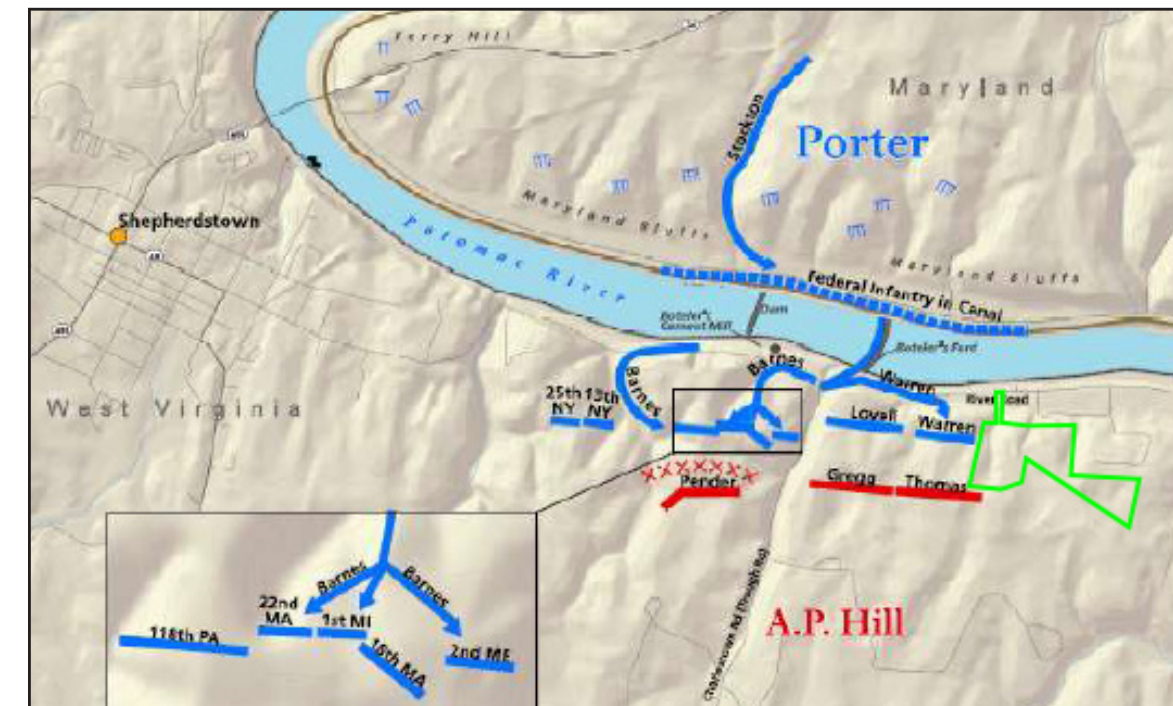
Landscapes

News from the Land Trust of the Eastern Panhandle Summer 2019

24 ACRES OF SHEPHERDSTOWN BATTLEFIELD LAND PROTECTED

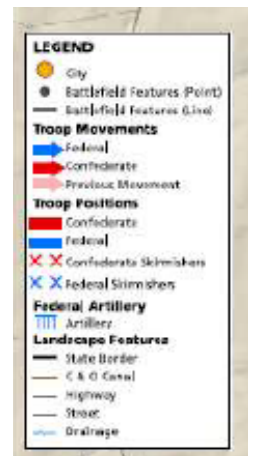
Conservation easements have played a vital role in our local history, including the protection of land constituting Confederate General A.P. Hill's right flank in the 1862 Battle of Shepherdstown. This occurred with the placement of a conservation easement on 24 acres of Potomac River Bluff where Hill's forces dislodged Union troops who had pursued General Lee's army after the Battle of Antietam.

The Jefferson County Historic Landmarks Commission acquired the 24 acres on Hill's right flank with the assistance of the American Battlefield Trust and the National Park Service's American Battlefield Protection Program, which required placement of a conservation easement to permanently protect the property. That document was signed July 31, 2019 with the Land Trust of the Eastern Panhandle as the easement holder, responsible for its monitoring



National Park Service Map from the Shepherdstown Battlefield Special Resource Study, Battle Map #3 September 20, 1862.

Green outlines the 24 acres of protected land.



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THE BEGINNING OF THE LAND TRUST OF THE EASTERN PANHANDLE

If the idea of conservation easements seemed new for West Virginia 25 years ago, that's because it was relatively new everywhere. It was December 1994, and a group of Eastern Panhandle residents gathered in Shepherdstown to explore the possibility of forming a land trust that would use conservation easements to protect land in the Eastern Panhandle.

Nationally, the number of land trusts was growing exponentially and a national association, the Land Trust Alliance, had been formed to provide services, training and opportunities for collaboration. The IRS had established regulations covering the deductibility of the value of conservation easements. Land conservation across America was being strengthened through land trusts.

Here in West Virginia, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) had done a few easements by a cumbersome process under which the easement had to be attached to an adjacent property owned by the same entity. In the case of Altona Marsh easement — one of a few easements done by TNC before adoption of the law — the landowner deeded to TNC an acre in the center, to which the easement was attached. The passage in 1994 of the West Virginia version of the Uniform Conservation Easement Act, cleared the way for what have become standard conservation easements and sets the stage for critical, local action.

Fortunately, that December night at the home of Susan Nash on Old Prospect in Shepherdstown, the room was alight with individuals with a variety of experiences, including conservation, and essential connections and community stature. All of whom would pave the way for the effort's forward movement and credibility. They would form the steering committee of the future land trust.

Sue Nash had been chair of the Jefferson County League Women Voters; Karene Motivans had monitored easements and preserves

with TNC on Long Island; Cam Tabb is a respected Jefferson County farmer; David Malakoff was a science writer who had worked with environmental organizations in West Virginia and nationally; Jean Neely, founding president of the Potomac Valley Audubon Society; the late Bob Putz, a West Virginia native and internationally known fish biologist who would later be instrumental in locating the National Conservation Training Center in Jefferson County; Martin Burke, worked for the National Park Service; and others.

As the articles of incorporation were prepared, the group was joined by Stuart Wallace, Motivans' husband, who also had land trust experience in New York, and attorney Lacey Rice III. On April 24 1995, the Articles of Incorporation for The Land Trust of The Eastern Panhandle, Inc. were filed, signed by L. Campbell Tabb III and Martin Burke. The Land Trust was official!

While some nonprofit founders are hard-driving forces who lead the march, Nash saw herself as the convener. Her job, she would say, was to get the right people in the room so that every idea was heard. When consensus was reached on an action, she would ask, "Who can take this on?" And, always, "Who else should we invite?"

Ultimately, Sue's example would define the Land Trust of the Eastern Panhandle, and today she says "founding the Land Trust was the single most important thing that I did and what I am most proud of."

Today, the LTEP has 50 conservation easements protecting 4,838 acres of farmland, historic viewsheds and key riparian property. Next year's newsletter will share how all the people and partners got from the humble beginnings in 1994 to that total, and how the easements continue to be protected and new easements purchased and protected. We look forward to sharing those success stories of the people and the protection of the land and water with you.

Conservation easements already protect 26 acres of Historic Landmarks Commission land upstream, at the intersection of Trough and River Roads, where both armies had crossed the Potomac at Packhorse Ford and where the heaviest fighting occurred. In addition, the Land Trust of the Eastern Panhandle and the Jefferson County Farmland Protection Board hold easements on 57 acres of privately owned land further up Trough Road, protecting it from development.

The Historic Landmarks Commission, Farmland Protection Board and Land Trust of the Eastern Panhandle continue to look for opportunities to collaborate and protect additional iconic land that tells this important piece of our story and protects lands and waters in the Shepherdstown Battlefield area.

24 ACRES OF SHEPHERDSTOWN BATTLEFIELD LAND PROTECTED, CONTINUED

and enforcement. The easement area includes a neck running down to River Road, with the majority of the property on the crest of the bluff. It consists of four parcels, two most recently owned by Wayne Eyler and two by Noah Merkhham.

A house on one of the Eyler parcels has been demolished, leaving the entire partially wooded 24 acres without structures, which is how it must remain under the terms of the conservation easement. This easement is a great example of opportunities that also exist to protect land for the purposes of protecting rivers and water quality. "We commend the Jefferson County Historic Landmarks Commission and the Land Trust of the Eastern Panhandle for their work in using land conservation to protect our drinking water sources, such as the Potomac River," said Tanner Haid with WV Rivers Coalition.

PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE



Land Trust of the Eastern Panhandle Early Board members (1996/97). Front Row: David Lillard, Effie Kallas, Rodney Bartgis. Upper Row: Jim Keel, Charles Biggs, Martin Burke, Sue Nash, Bill Belton. Far Back is Stan Roach.

The Land Trust of the Eastern Panhandle is soon to celebrate its 25th anniversary. As part of our celebration of 25 years, we are devoting this year's newsletter (2019) to telling the story of the Land Trust's beginning and the people who were part of it.

As we look back to the origins of this movement, we also recognize the ongoing efforts and momentum of countless individuals and organizations whose focus on conservation has made a vital difference in protecting our land and water. Your support has been a huge part of that success. Please know how grateful we are for your partnership.

Past. The Eastern Panhandle in the 1990's.

The Creation of the Land Trust. In 1994 a small but committed group of friends and neighbors in Shepherdstown, united by their love of this region, and devoted to protecting and preserving its natural resources for future generations, banded together to form the Land Trust of the Eastern Panhandle. And not a moment too soon...

In 1999 **Scenic America** published a report entitled "Last Chance Landscapes" that listed 12 endangered American landscapes. Our region was among the 12 listed. Urban and suburban sprawl had become an issue even for us. Agricultural land, historically the backbone of our economy, was being converted into housing developments. Our topography, watersheds, aquifer recharge areas, wildlife habitat and stream corridors were all being altered. Population in the Panhandle increased almost 50% between 1980 and 1999.

Present. The Land Trust in 2019

Still all-volunteer, the Land Trust now holds conservation easements on, and faithfully monitors, nearly 5,000 acres of protected land. These properties are still privately owned, and they can be sold or bequeathed. But they can not ever be subdivided nor developed.

This is a great accomplishment, however, as of this writing, many acres of land are currently platted for future housing developments in Jefferson and Berkeley Counties.

Future of the Land Trust

Preservation of our environment will rely on the shared value placed on its protection by all of us. It has long been recognized that voluntary conservation easements are still the most effective means of protecting our water and our land. But how do we decide what to protect? How do we get people to sign on?

One of the key roles that the Land Trust will continue to play, with your help, is to give an equal voice to each and all of the precious natural resources that rely upon one another for their health and wellbeing — the land, the water, the trees and plants, and the abundant variety of animals that abide here.

Next year's newsletter will tell the story of accomplishments and challenges ahead as we look to the next 25 years, with new directions in response to future change.

Again — thank you for your partnership and support.

Landscapes

News from the Land Trust 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 developments;
- Encourage wise stewardship of the regions 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 Berkeley County Development Authority in Martinsburg. Special appreciation and thanks to Sandy Hamilton, Executive Director, for making her conference room available to us.

Board Members

Grant Smith
Barbara Humes
Georgia Jeppesen
Lucien Lewin
David Lillard
Kevin T. McLaughlin
Bonnie Stubblefield
Susan Whalton

Land Trust of the Eastern Panhandle
PO Box 2240
Martinsburg, WV 25402
304.876-2583 (Grant Smith)
www.landtrustepwv.org