



Landscapes

2023

The Land Trust Partnership Network

The Land Trust of the Eastern Panhandle’s mission is to “Conserve land, water, and open space-forever.” This mission is enhanced by collaboration with many partners through our Partnership Network.

The Land Trust has been working in the Eastern Panhandle for almost 30 years with Landowners to preserve and protect their land. Partnerships have been built with the Berkeley and Jefferson County Farmland Protection Boards, with whom we share co-holds on 40 easements. In Morgan County, the Land Trust holds 3 easements, one a 100 acre forest. We work with Cacapon Lost River Land Trust in Morgan County, a partner with a common mission. Other organizations involved in Historic Preservation are also part of the Partnership Network.



The Potomac Valley Audubon Society (PVAS) held its monthly meeting in Berkeley Springs, WV and invited Emily Warner, Cacapon and Lost Rivers Land Trust, and Jeff Feldman, Land Trust of the Eastern Panhandle to share the need for Land Protection as a critical element in supporting water quality, wildlife habitat, and open space, as land development pressures are mounting.

Not only preserving land, but also preserving ecosystems that the land sustains is the focus of many partners. Thanks to easement owners, the Potomac Valley Audubon Society establishes programs to facilitate activities, which are dedicated to “preserving, restoring and enjoying the natural world through education and action.” For example, a nesting Box Turtle is protected by shifting the mowing time to protect the nest and eggs from being crushed. Similarly, Grass Land Birds nesting season, was protected by farmers who shifted the mowing time for their agriculture fields. Old dwellings closed large chimneys with the increase in modern heating systems. This resulted in Chimney Swifts losing their roosting and nesting locations. The community funded large, tall, freestanding chimneys to be built near their original roost, to provide alternative roosting and nesting sites.

The Potomac Conservancy, hosts the Safe Water Conservation Collaborative, working with a broad array of land conservation

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On a Conservation Easement, a Chimney Swift Tower was placed in an open area in an orchard adjacent to an historic home where the chimneys were all sealed.



A Legacy of Preservation

Since their creation in 2000, The Land Trust of the Eastern Panhandle has had the privilege to work in close collaboration with the Jefferson County and Berkeley County Farmland Protection Boards (FLPB) on stewardship of farmland conservation easements. These partnerships helped expand the number of conservation easements in the Eastern Panhandle ensuring the protection and preservation of farmlands and addressing one of the key components of the LTEP’s mission. “Promote a healthy, balanced local economy by preserving productive farmland and encouraging appropriate development.”

2023 marked a change and transition in the leadership of the BCFLPB. Mark Schiavone, the Executive Director of the BCFPB retired after 8 years of leadership. Mark’s accomplishments, for the benefit of people, historic farmland, wildlife, and plants are extraordinary. Under his leadership, 34 properties were put under easement and over 4,000 acres protected. His efforts have made a

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LTEP Legacy Fund Update

An overwhelming gratitude and thanks for our many donors that have stepped up to help us develop and build the LTEP's Legacy Fund. Here are a few updates and some brief background to consider being part of the Legacy Fund.

ESTABLISHED: In honor of the Land Trust's 25th Anniversary on July 8, 2020.

PURPOSE: To provide funds to the Land Trust to support and offset costs associated with influencing, establishing, and maintaining conservation easements in West Virginia's Eastern Panhandle Counties of Berkeley, Jefferson, and Morgan to protect our communities' land and important water resources.

MANAGED AND STEWARDED BY: The Eastern West Virginia Community Foundation (EWVCF) a public nonprofit 501(c)(3) and is one of the largest philanthropic grant makers in this region.

CURRENT TOTAL: Now over \$83,000 with the opportunity for grants within 2-3 years — pending new donations

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE LEGACY FUND AND OUR OPERATIONS/GENERAL FUND: The Operation Fund's purpose is to support the day-to-day operations of our all-volunteer non-profit 501(c)(3). **The Legacy Fund** grows with the assistance of donors and the EWVCF's investment

strategies and will soon be strong enough to provide small grants to stewards of new conservation easements to assist in items such as Closing Costs, Land Surveys, and Appraisals provided by the landowner. Please consider joining us with a targeted donation toward the LTEP' Legacy Fund. **It is Your Legacy, Your Land, Your Water, and Your Open Space-Forever.** It ensures that the Land Trust's Legacy is financially sustainable and inclusive.

To Donate:

VISIT OUR WEBSITE:

1. <https://landtrustepwv.org>
2. Select "Donate" in the upper right corner
3. See the Legacy Fund option and click on the "donate button." -OR-

SEND A CHECK:

The Land Trust of the Eastern Panhandle
P.O. Box 2240, Martinsburg, WV
25402-2240
Please indicate "**Legacy Fund**" on the check's memo field.



Mark Schiavone, Grant Smith (Land Trust of the Eastern Panhandle) and Martin Burke (Historic Landmarks Commission) are monitoring and recording information of the status of the land of the Osborn Farm for the Conservation Easement, which will exist in perpetuity.

Mark's Legacy of Preservation from page 1

substantial, positive, impact for our community and its environment. He worked closely with landowners/stewards and partners every step of the way, listening and understanding their wants and needs. If you have walked an easement with Mark, it is a true pleasure as his heart and mind are fully dedicated and his knowledge and cooperative approach bring forth amazing outcomes.

Working closely with Mark Schiavone and Liz Wheeler, Director of the Jefferson County FLPB, are a critical part of the LTEP's approach to encouraging people to preserve open space and rural landscapes.

Thank you, Mark, Liz and all staff and members of the Eastern Panhandles' Farm Land Protection Boards for your efforts. We look forward to many, more years of productive cooperation as we "conserve land, water and open space - forever."

Please join us in wishing Mark the best in the new chapter of his life on his own farm in Berkeley County, and in welcoming him to the Land Trust Board.

2023 Donations in Honor and Memory

This past year, a number of our donors made their donations to honor or to remember a person or group of people.

Please join the Land Trust and those donors listed here in honoring and remembering those highlighted below.

2023 Legacy Fund Donors

Linda Benedict Colvin

In Honor and Loving Memory of brother, Dr. Mark Benedict. Past Board Member and dedicated conservationist.

Georgia Jeppesen and Skylar Benedict

In Honor of Dr. Mark Benedict - Husband and Father, who truly believed in the Land Trust of the Eastern Panhandle.

Martha S. White

In Honor and Memory of Pep White and Derek White. They valued the landscape and the importance of trees.

2023 Operations/General Fund Donors

Georgia Jeppesen and Skylar Benedict

In Honor of Dr. Mark Benedict - Husband and Father.

Peter and Vicky Smith

In memory of Clark Dixon, lifetime conservation professional and nature educator.

Ruhamah Strite

In memory of Dick Strite, husband and dedicated community member.

Note: The Land Trust will post an update of the honors and memories periodically. More information on the Legacy Fund can be found on our web site.

RIPARIAN BUFFERS AND EASEMENT ASSISTANCE

Landowner Opportunities Through the Safe Water Conservation Collaborative

The Potomac Conservancy's Safe Water Conservation Collaborative (SWCC) has brought new opportunities to landowners in the Eastern Panhandle of WV. The SWCC received a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) grant that included working with landowners in the implementation of riparian forest and stream buffers which will protect drinking water through land conservation using a priority agriculture best management practice and providing easement assistance. This funding opportunity is time-limited; if you are interested, **apply before July 1, 2024.**

The riparian buffer program offers assistance in covering the expenses of doing a conservation easement, such as a new survey, the report documenting the state of the property at the time of the easement, as well as some of the closing costs. This is a wonderful opportunity for landowners who are working on establishing a conservation easement and need financial assistance in making their desires a reality. Trout Unlimited, another partner, is ready with a crew of trained assessors from the SWCC to work with perspective landowners to determine if their acres and planned easement are good candidates for this program. An initial activity of the riparian buffer program has been to identify properties in Jefferson and Berkeley Counties located along key streams, such as the Opequon, Elks Run, Bullsken Run, and Back Creek that would benefit from conservation easements.

The Land Trust of the Eastern Panhandle (LTEP) participates in the SWCC's Working Groups to assist with conservation and education, along with outreach to landowners. LTEP has one conservation easement in the works, whose landowners can potentially benefit from the program and is seeking others. Visit <https://www.safewatercollaborative.org/trees/tree-planting-program> for more information.

We encourage landowners to reach out to the SWCC if they or their neighbors can benefit from this program. Please contact Alyssa Murray, SWC Coordinator, at murray@potomac.org or Avery Siler, Director of Land Conservation for The Potomac Conservancy at siler@potomac.org as soon as possible.

Community Opportunity

Last years Newsletter announced purchase of the 121-acre Osborn Farm in the heart of the Shepherdstown Battlefield by the American Battlefield Trust. Conclusion of the required conservation easement on the property and the transfer of it to the Jefferson County Historic Landmarks Commission should occur very soon. In preparation for holding the Easement, the Land Trust of the Eastern Panhandle has documented the condition of the land and buildings so that it can monitor the easement annually. The Shepherdstown Battlefield Preservation Association will hold a battlefield tour of the farm on **April 6, from 1PM-3PM.**

[LAND TRUST PARTNERSHIP NETWORK, continued from page 1](#)

agencies, organizations, and water utilities to identify and work with priority lands and land stewards. The goal is the protection of safe, clean drinking water for communities in the Eastern Panhandle, through land conservation. As a partner, we collaborate on projects such as riparian tree buffers on current conservation easements, thus protecting land and water, and assisting with education and outreach strategies to reach priority land owners.

The American Battlefield Trust, The Historic Landmarks Commission and the Shepherdstown Battlefield Association are just a few partners whose collaboration has resulted in critical historic lands and threatened ecosystems being preserved and protected.

The Eastern West Virginia Community Foundation provides a critical link to other non-profit organizations that serve the Eastern Panhandle and facilitates programs like our Land Trust Legacy Fund. This Fund focuses select donations for long-term sustainability and landowner inclusivity, providing options for landowners interested in conservation easements.

The LTEP's Partnership Network facilitates the preservation of our landscape, which preserves scenic and historic beauty, promotes a healthy balanced, economy, and encourages wise stewardship of our Eastern Panhandle natural resources. Partnerships are critical for the LTEP in carrying out its mission.

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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 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 individuals from a variety of backgrounds from Morgan, Berkeley, and Jefferson counties.

We meet monthly on Zoom.

Our vision is "Conserving Land, Water, and Open Space - Forever."

Board Members

Grant Smith
Larry Dean
Jeff Feldman
Georgia Jeppesen
Lucien Lewin
Kevin T. Mclaughlin
David Plummer
Bonnie Stubblefield

Land Trust of the Eastern Panhandle

PO Box 2240
Martinsburg, WV 25402
304.876-2583 (Grant Smith)
www.landtruststepwv.org

Support Your Community Conservation Partner!

- Please contact me to discuss **protecting** my land through a conservation easement.
- Please contact me. I am interested in **volunteer** opportunities and **sharing my expertise**.
- I would like to **support** the Land Trust with a tax deductible contribution:
 - \$1000
 - \$500
 - \$250
 - \$100
 - Other \$ _____
- I would like to have a part in the **Legacy and Future of the Eastern Panhandle**:
 - *My Legacy Gift \$** _____

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY/STATE/ZIP

PHONE

EMAIL

**More information about the Legacy Fund can be found on our website.*

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

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