



Landscapes

2024

The Future

The Land Trust of the Eastern Panhandle having completed its 25 Year Anniversary in 2020 is well on its way to 30 years, continuing to help Landowners protect what they value and enjoy.

A growing concern today is the march of development and growth in the Eastern Panhandle of WV. The rapid loss of land, trees, and habitat to development, changes the landscape and impacts our water resources. It is important to protect the land surface in areas of limestone and karst so that pollution does not enter the surface and subsurface drainage, protecting water as it flows and becomes our source of drinking water.

Our landscape continues to change. Our green open space is finite and something to be protected for the enjoyment of all. Our water resources are not infinite and also need to be protected. The limestone karst geology of the Eastern Panhandle means pollution can spread quickly through surface and underground channels, making protection of streams and forests an issue and important for all living things.

As we reflect on our mission of our 29 years of non-profit history, we want to take a minute and thank our founders, donors, resource people and all board members who have brought their commitment and skills to our vision of "Conserving land, water, and open space -forever." It is on the shoulders of all that came before us that the Land Trust is able to continue to encourage people to preserve open space and diverse rural landscapes in the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia.

With this reflection comes a tremendous sense of gratitude to our longest running Board member, R. Grant Smith, who passed away April 6th, 2024. With his 23 years of



Grant Smith, President of the Land Trust of the Eastern Panhandle, was recognized by the Two Rivers Giving Circle for his contribution to conservation, having protected 5,000 acres of land in the Eastern Panhandle with 50 conservation easements. His vision and goal is "conserving land, water, and open space. Forever."

Incorporation were official on April 24th, 1995.

Today, the Land Trust has over 50 conservation easements protecting close to 5,000 acres of farmland, historic viewsheds, and key riparian property. These easements, which Grant played a large part in establishing, continue to be protected and new easements purchased and protected.

A conservationist friend, and Land Trust advisor counted Grant as a superb conservationist. Grant's core attributes were a passionate love of the land that was important to him; a commitment to its perpetual protection, particularly against the kind of threats in a region like the Eastern Panhandle increasingly faces; and a willingness to devote his energies and a lifetime of diverse experience to an organization dedicated to that goal. The Land Trust is fortunate to have had Grant's leadership, knowledge, guidance, and vision for 23 years.

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dedicated service to the Land Trust, much of which as the President, Grant almost saw our 29th birthday, as our Articles of

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Mark Schiavone, Grant Smith, and David Plummer of the Land Trust of the Eastern Panhandle, along with Martin Burke of the Jefferson County Historic Landmarks Commission, conduct monitoring and record updates on the 122-acre Osborn Farm. This property is protected under a Conservation Easement held by the Land Trust of the Eastern Panhandle, ensuring its preservation in perpetuity.

THE FUTURE, continued from page 1

WORKING TOGETHER

Preservation of our land and water relies on the shared value and protection by all of us. Voluntary conservation easements are the most effective way to protect both our land and water resources. Easement owners, friends, and neighbors have realized the value and importance of preserving the landscape and precious resources of the Eastern Panhandle to be shared by all who have made it home, people, and the wildlife that share the ecosystem.

As we move forward towards our 30th year, we celebrate each one of you that have given generously of your time, resources, and vision to our mission. Our Board is dedicated to strategically moving forward to continue carrying out the mission of the Land Trust taking on the challenges of a fast-changing region.

SHEPHERDSTOWN EASEMENTS

The Land Trust has been busy working with several property owners in the

Shepherdstown area, who are interested in placing their properties in permanent conservation easements. One parcel is 30 wooded acres and is an important part of the Teague Run watershed. A second parcel, 15 acres in size, contains two large sinkholes which are also located in a wooded area. Together, these parcels represent important groundwater recharge areas, which are important to help maintain drinking water supplies for Jefferson County. As development continues in Jefferson County at a breakneck speed, preserving groundwater recharge areas is becoming a critical area of concern for land conservation.

PROTECTING BATTLEFIELDS

Preserving Hallowed Ground in Jefferson County is key and valued. Jefferson County boasts five civil war battlefields as recognized by the National Park Service. Many of these include large working farms, yet within many battlefields are smaller parcels that are mainly wooded. These parcels are not

eligible for permanent conservation easements by the Jefferson County Farmland Protection Board or the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service since their focus is on agricultural land and not forest land. The Land Trust of the Eastern Panhandle has been interested in many of these smaller, wooded parcels that are within core Battlefield areas and has been actively working with the Jefferson County Historic Landmarks Commission to place such properties into permanent conservation easement. One important property, the 122-acre James Osborne Farm (locally known as the controversial Faraway Farm subdivision) sits as the core of the Battle of Shepherdstown and is now permanently protected by an easement held by the Land Trust of the Eastern Panhandle. In the area surrounding the Osborne Farm, we've worked with partners to protect over 200 acres of battlefield land. These efforts ensure that important battlefields-hallowed ground-are preserved from development forever.

LTEP Donations in Honor and in Memory of R. Grant Smith

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.

This spring many donors, partners and friends made special donations in honor and memory of Grant Smith, our long time President.

Legacy Fund

2024 DONORS

- Martin R. and Elise T. Baach
- Jefferson Cole
- Marc Goldman
- John Overington
- Ronald Parr
- Bao Phan
- Susan L Quainton
- John Smith
- Judith Strotz

The Land Trust's Legacy Fund housed at the Eastern West Virginia Community Foundation (EWWCF) in an Agency Endowed Fund established in 2020. The Land Trust's Legacy Funds are invested both for long-term growth and income, helping to grow the funds you have so generously donated. This Fund can benefit future landowners and protect and grow conservation easements through a growing source of sustainable revenue.

For more information on the Land Trust's Legacy Fund and other options open to donors, contact Susan Caperton, Executive Director of the Eastern West Virginia Community Foundation at 304-264-0353 or visit their website at EWWCF.org.

R. Grant Smith Memorial Fund

2024 DONORS

- Charlotte Belton and Tim Belton
- Angelica Braun
- Terry and Paul Camilletti
- Gat & Susan Caperton
- Betty Donley
- Robert W. and Georgia C DuBose
- Raymond C Ewing and Penelope Yungblut
- Jeff S. Feldman and Kristin Alexander
- Eleanor R Finn
- Bradford Hanson
- Than and Mary Ann Hitt
- Barbara Humes
- Georgia Jeppesen and Skylar
- Benedict
- Don and Vicki Kramer
- Lucien and Dimetra (Demi) Lewin
- Amanda Leiter
- Judith Miller-Jones
- Jennifer Mueller
- Theodore S Peyton
- Rebecca Phipps
- Robert Poole
- Potomac Conservancy
- Elinor Ross
- Mark Schiavone
- William E Senseney and Angie Soslein
- Peter and Vicky Smith
- Stephen Swartz
- Anthony Townsend
- Frank and Annette Van Hilst
- Sharon Villarosa
- Dale and Henry Walter
- Emily Warner – Cacapon Lost River Land Trust
- Lisa and Paul Welch
- Colleen Young

The R. Grant Smith Memorial Fund will provide distributions to support and offset costs associated with acquiring and/or maintaining conservation easements in Jefferson, Berkeley, and Morgan counties of West Virginia.

For more information, contact us at: landtrustepwv.org/contact

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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

Jeff Feldman
Georgia Jeppesen
Bonnie Stubblefield
Lucien Lewin
David Plummer
Mark Schiavone
Liz Wheeler
Steve Bauserman
Alex Beaulieu

Land Trust of the Eastern Panhandle
PO Box 2240
Martinsburg, WV 25402
www.landtrustepwv.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

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**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