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WESTERN VIRGINIA LAND TRUST MISSION STATEMENT

A publicly-supported charitable organization providing voluntary means to promote the preservation of western Virginia's natural & cultural heritage



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HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

Warm wishes to you and yours as we end a busy year.

Land trust members have provided the essential financial resources to make 2003 such a success. Your support helps save more of the family farms, forested mountains and beautiful rivers that make us thankful to live in such a special place.

Many challenges and opportunities await us in 2004. Please consider a special end-of-year gift – perhaps in honor or memory of a cherished conservationist – to help us jump-start our projects in the New Year.

Remember, gifts made to WVLT by December 31 are tax deductible for 2003.



Land Protection *news*



WESTERN VIRGINIA LAND TRUST

WINTER 2003-2004

WVLT Redefines Its Borders

Botetourt County Connections – New Territory Includes Old Neighbor

(See page 9)

New Service Area Announced

The Western Virginia Land Trust Board of Trustees has made the first revision to the land trust's designated service area in its seven-year history.

"The new 10-county WVLT service area will let us better serve landowners and operate more efficiently," explains executive director Roger Holnback, "and our new territory recognizes the good work being done by the New River Land Trust and the emerging Land Trust of Southwest Virginia."

ice area." With two new land trusts up and running, WVLT is able to concentrate its resources closer to its Roanoke Valley and Blue Ridge Parkway roots.

WVLT is proud of its legacy across western Virginia. The land trust's largest deal to date, the Big Survey, protects 8,500 acres in Wythe County. Last year, WVLT



helped preserve scenic bluffs above Claytor Lake in Pulaski County. Landowner outreach in Tazewell County's Burkes Garden, the length of Virginia's New River and other special places continues to inspire new interest in land conservation.

Three WVLT counties – Carroll, Floyd and Montgomery – are also served by the New River Land Trust. The two groups are already cooperating on a number of projects and have just recorded their first joint conservation easement (see "Green Development" on page 8). WVLT co-holds a 289-acre conservation easement with the Virginia Outdoors Foundation in Montgomery County and just recorded its third easement on Floyd County's Little River, a

Continued on page 11



The 300-acre farm surrounding this Franklin County home on the National Historic Register is one of many new conservation easements that WVLT arranged this year.

The new service area includes the counties of Bedford, Botetourt, Carroll, Craig, Floyd, Franklin, Henry, Patrick, Montgomery and Roanoke. WVLT's original service area included Virginia's 23 westernmost counties – and area larger than Vermont.

Founding director Rupert Cutler explains that WVLT started with such an enormous area because "there was nobody else out there. We were the first and only land trust in western Virginia and felt a responsibility to offer our services everywhere needed." One of WVLT's original goals, Cutler points out, was "to support the creation of community-based conservation groups within our serv-

More Special Places Preserved

- Blue Ridge Parkway/Smart View Scenery
- One Hundred Acres in Blacksburg
- Two Miles of Buffalo Creek
- Peaks of Otter Scenic Tract
- Historic Franklin County Farm
- Another Mile of Little River
- Bedford and Boones Mill Horse Farms

Look inside for details of these and other exciting projects!



Director's Report

Roger Holnback,
Executive Director

We Need Your Time, Passion and Energy

We are very excited about the conservation initiatives we have helped accomplish in 2003, with a record number of easements in the works or recorded. David and I have talked to many individuals, community groups and civic organizations this past year and are seeing a very positive response across the board.

We are also excited about our service area changes because we will be able to do better work in a smaller area by not trying to be everywhere, for everybody, doing everything. But serving the citizens of even ten counties is a huge challenge and we can't do it alone. We need your help. We need your membership donations to keep us financially viable, but just as important; we need your time, passion, and energy.

This past year we have worked very closely with the Bedford Citizens for Land Conservation (BCLP). By partnering with these dedicated citizen advocates we have seen a significant increase in easements in Bedford, with more calls

coming in every day (see "Partnerships" on page 8).

Our mentors, the Valley Conservation Council (VCC) out of Staunton, formally created a community partners group in each of their 11 counties years ago. After experiencing how well we were able to leverage our efforts in Bedford by partnering with BCLP, I am convinced we need to find partners in each of our 10 counties as well. In some cases, we may have to foster the creation of our own community partners, but if there are conservation/preservation groups out there already, by partnering with them we're a step ahead.

So we need your help to identify any conservation or preservation groups in your area that might wish to learn about the work of WVLT and work with us to give us the opportunity to promote land conservation. These groups may or may not want an official alignment with WVLT, but what we need is the organizational skills and connections to the local community to help us get our message out.

This can be done by co-hosting presentations, speaking at scheduled public events, bringing in guest speakers on special topics such as smart growth or providing organizational advice and support. For example, we have partnered with the Read Mountain Alliance so that it can accept tax-exempt contributions through WVLT, and we worked together to secure the mountain's first conservation easement last year.

So if you know of or are a member of any civic groups that might be willing to listen to our pitch, please give David and me a call and let's get the ball rolling.

And remember, your membership counts. Please keep supporting land conservation with a WVLT membership and encourage like-minded folks to do the same.

Happy Holidays to all and may you and yours have a safe and joyous New Year!

Book a Land Trust Show Today!



Are you and your neighbors curious about conservation easements?

Would your civic group like to learn about how land trusts serve communities?

Does your local government need information about land conservation options or the values of open space?

WVLT is always eager to speak to groups about conservation. Please call 540/985-0000 if your community or organization is interested in hosting WVLT. Our staff can tailor a vibrant, informative presentation to any time frame or audience.

Friends Honor Cutler's 70th



Friends of Rupert Cutler, WVLT trustee and founding director, honored him on his 70th birthday in October by contributing more than \$1,000 to the land trust. The following individuals contributed to the generous gift to support Cutler's lifelong passion for conservation.

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| Cabell Brand | George Kegley |
| Maureen Castern | Barbara Lemon |
| Lucy Ellett | Jack Moffitt |
| Liza Field | Janet Scheid |
| Broadus Fitzpatrick | Catherine Smeltzer |
| Roger Holnback | Jay Turner |
| Bob Hunt | Richard Wells |
| Mary Ann Johnson | |

Redefining Borders, *continued from page 1*

significant tributary of the New River. Parts of Carroll and Floyd counties will also be the focus of a major WVLT initiative to preserve more Blue Ridge Parkway viewsheds.

"All of western Virginia is seeing enormous landscape change. We're happy that points farther west are being served by land trusts closer to their communities, and we're eager to help them whenever we can," says Holnback. "Land trust resources are always thinner than we wish they were, but we're leveraging every resource we can find to continue and expand projects in the 10 western Virginia counties that are WVLT's home."

What are Conservation Easements?

Conservation easements are permanent, deeded agreements that preserve special features of the land, such as scenic views, historic resources, prime farmland, water quality or wildlife habitat.

Conservation easements are voluntary and tailored to fit each piece of land and its owner. Preserving land can also save money through tax deductions and credits and better estate planning.

For more details, visit WVLT online at www.westernvirginalandtrust.org or call 540/985-0000.

WVLT Seeks Partnerships with Businesses

The Western Virginia Land Trust Board of Trustees has created a new membership class to recognize special support from the business community.



land conservation and invitations to annual conservation celebrations.

For more details on how business membership dues will help WVLT preserve more land, call 540/985-

Development

Committee Chair Gwen Mason explains: "WVLT has always worked well with the business community and our land conservation efforts help business as well as the environment. We've always stressed voluntary measures that preserve our sense of place and quality of life. These are things that attract tourism, increase property values and make our part of Virginia such an attractive place to live, visit and do business.

"Our current campaign is a marvelous opportunity for businesses to be very visible in their conservation efforts."

Business members will receive special recognition in *Land Protection News*, window decals to show their support for

0000. Or send business contributions in the enclosed membership envelope with your business name listed.

Business Membership Classes

Business Friend	\$ 100 - \$ 249
Advocate	\$ 250 - \$ 499
Guardian	\$ 500 - \$ 999
Partner	\$ 1,000 - \$ 2,499
Patron	\$ 2,500 - \$ 4,999
Conservator	\$ 5,000 and up

LANDSAVERS

Jeanne and Robert Martin Save a Forest on Walnut Knob

Robert “Rusty” and Jeanne Martin, owners of a Rocky Mount environmental consulting business, are eager to sign a VOF easement on their 136 acres of Walnut Knob woodland in a western corner of Franklin County. The Martins, true Landsavers at home and at work, say they want to leave their land as it is.

“We are interested in not developing. We would like for it to remain as it is,” said Robert. Jeanne heartily agrees – they may even place an easement on another 115 acres in the future.

The Martins live comfortably in a rambling log home on a back road a mile from the Blue Ridge Parkway, a stone’s throw from Floyd County and a long way from urban and suburban life. They are about 45 minutes south of Roanoke and 40 minutes from their Earth Environmental Consultants firm in Rocky Mount. From their porches, they enjoy scenic views of ridges and mountains galore.

Their background is an interesting story. Robert, descended from relatives in the Rocky Mount-Martinsville area, grew up near Richmond and studied environmental science at Ferrum College. He went north for a seasonal job at Boston Harbor Island Park where he worked with Jeanne, a Massachusetts native and graduate of Brown University. Robert brought Jeanne south – when she saw Virginia, she says, “it was love at first sight.”

Unable to find a job, he started his own company 14 years ago. Together, they lead a staff of six full-time staff, plus part-time help in soil and ground water work, asbestos inspection and environmental engineering for oil companies, manufacturers and banks looking at environmental liability on commercial loans. Their work takes them across the state and into North Carolina. Jeanne uses an MBA from Averett College to run the business side of the company.

Like many town and city dwellers, the Martins rode around

the countryside looking for land before they spotted the Walnut Knob tract. Much of the 136 rugged acres is in old growth hemlocks, some six to seven feet across, but the forest is infested by adelgids. After flying over the tract, Robert said the bug-damaged trees were white, like snowfall. He hopes the next generation of trees will be resistant.

The Martins enjoy walks to admire rare yellow, pink and white ladyslippers in the spring. Their property, bordering the Parkway, has two waterfalls coming together and a close view of the steep cliffs of Raven Rocks. They mainly use their woods for hunting and wood-cutting to heat their home.

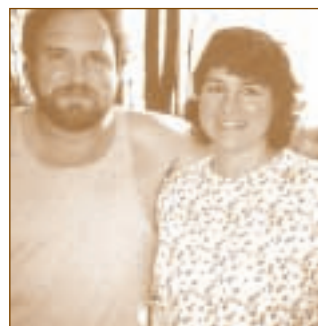
In their three years on the knob, the couple put in windows, floors, electric and plumbing work of the rustic home but they have more work ahead. Huge pine beams are overhead and their hemlock walls came from British Columbia. Both come from large families who often visit and they host retreats. They have no children, and two horses share a stable below their house and a few families live around the bend.

Occasionally they hear a motorcycle on the Parkway but usually “it’s pretty darn quiet up here,” Robert says. Walnut Knob, at an elevation of more than 2,800 feet, is 10 to 15 degrees colder than in Rocky Mount. When rain comes to Rocky Mount, snow may fall on the knob.

Jeanne says they are well-equipped for bad weather with “a generator, Aladdin lamps and a lot of books.” They work hard but they have so much to enjoy.



Jeanne Martin explores Roaring Run, a native trout stream on the Martins’ property further protected by a riparian easement held by WVLT and the Blue Ridge Soil and Water Conservation District.



Rusty and Jeanne Martin at their home on Walnut Knob.



Stewardship

David A. Hurt, Project Manager

Ain’t Nobody’s Business – Trusting a Land Trust

It not uncommon for farmers and other landowners to be asked, “So, how much land you got?”

Few of these inquisitive folks would be so pointed as to ask, “What’s your net worth?” But for some landowners, there’s little difference – in the dollar value or the personal nature of the question.

True, land records are public information and bank records are not. And not all landowners are shy about discussing the size of their spreads. Still, there are many details about family finance and real estate that some folks want to hold close. More power to them.

But concerns about confidentiality shouldn’t keep families from talking to a land trust.

WVLT, like all land trusts, works hard to earn the trust of landowners. Since all of our conservation work is voluntary, we have to.

A visit from WVLT staff comes at no cost and with no strings attached, but can help landowners in many ways.

Most of our visits deal with how a conservation easement might fit with a specific piece of land and with its owner’s

specific goals. There has to be a certain comfort level for these discussions to work, but land trusts still don’t have to know everything.

Some families tell us all about their inheritance plans and tax situations. Others are well served by just letting us share general information and letting them apply it to their own situation. In fact, land trusts do not offer financial or tax advice – financial and tax professionals should be consulted for that. But we can point out the many tax advantages of conservation easements, and our main job is to help craft a plan that best serves the land and the family that owns it.

Even when a conservation easement isn’t an option, there are other reasons to meet with a land trust. Land can be conserved by requiring a conservation easement through a will. There are many less permanent options such as forming an agricultural or forestal district with neighbors and local government.

WVLT can help landowners in seeking honorary designations such as historic landmark status or Virginia Century Farm designation. When land is going to be sold, we might be able to find a conservation buyer or suggest ways to develop the land while protecting some of its conservation value (see “Green Development” on page 8).

What we tell you is for your information – and what you tell us is kept between us.

Sure, we love to toot our horn about how much land we’ve helped save, but our publicity – in this newsletter and with the broader media – takes place with the landowner’s consent.

There are many conservation deals we are working on now that are confidential. Some will never be realized and never publicly revealed. A few might lead to conservation that will be kept quiet at the landowner’s request. Many will be the focus of future newsletter articles and press releases, with easement donors eager to tell their stories in hopes of inspiring others to do the same.

Consider a Land Trust Visit

If you have questions about conservation easements or other tools that can help you preserve your land, there’s no substitute for talking over a kitchen table or walking the land together.

WVLT staff will be happy to meet with interested landowners to tour their properties, answer questions and suggest which conservation options may work best for them.

Call our offices at 540/985-0000 to schedule a free site visit and consultation.



Virginia's Century Farms – Honoring Families on the Land



The sixth generation of Jamisons: the family has run a farm and orchard since settling the Roanoke County land in the 1870s. Jamison's Orchards was named a Virginia Century Farm in May 2003.

Virginia's Century Farm Program is an honorary designation that recognizes the importance of family ties to land.

"The Virginia Century Farm Program recognizes and honors those farms that have been in operation for at least 100 consecutive years," states the Virginia Department of Agriculture, "and the generations of Virginia farm families whose diligent and dedicated efforts have maintained these farms, provided nourishment to their fellow citizens and contributed so greatly to the economy of the Commonwealth."

Century Farm designation comes with no regulatory burdens. Owners of designated farms receive a certificate signed by the Governor and the Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, and a sign appropriate for outdoor display. In addition, the name of the farm and its owners will be posted on the Department's web site.

There is no fee to apply for the Century Farm Program. Details and applications can be obtained online at www.vdacs.state.va.us/century/index or from the Virginia Century Farm Program, Office of Communication and Media Relations, Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, P.O. Box 1163 Richmond, Va. 23218.

Century Farms in WVLT's 10-County Service Area	
Bedford	16
Botetourt	3
Carroll	8
Craig	6
Floyd	5
Franklin	23
Henry	1
Montgomery	1
Patrick	6
Roanoke	3
Total:	72

One reason land trusts save land for the future is to preserve our past. The families who have remained in the Old Dominion for generations can often tell Virginia's rich history from oral traditions. Our rural landscape, and the families who own it, also tell a history – from arrowheads plowed up in a field to Civil War battlefield trenches to evidence of the evolution of agriculture.

Conservation Network Honors Brand and Thomas



Cabell Brand

Environmental Leaders awards were presented to former WVLT trustee Cabell Brand and retiring Del. A. Victor Thomas by the Virginia Conservation Network at its Environmental Assembly in Roanoke on Oct. 25. Trustee and Roanoke City councilman Rupert Cutler welcomed the Assembly to Roanoke. "Preserving What is Best about Virginia – Urban and Rural" was the Assembly theme.



Vic Thomas

Ten Ways You Can Support WVLT

WVLT depends upon membership dues and contributions in order to sustain and expand our efforts to preserve western Virginia's swiftly vanishing landscape. Though writing a check to WVLT is always appreciated and perhaps the best way for you to give, please consider the following options in planning a gift that will bring the greatest tax benefit to you while helping us to preserve more valuable open space. As you will see, some of the most valuable gifts may not require any financial investment.



You don't have to be a land owner to help preserve land.

1. Time. Volunteers are a gold mine for non-profit organizations. Consider sharing your skills with WVLT by contacting our office. Web page maintenance, clerical and data-entry work, workshop hosting, envelope stuffing, fundraising and writing are just a few of the tasks that could help further our mission.

2. Real Estate. The full value of a real estate gift is tax deductible. If land is given with conservation or open space value, WVLT can preserve it through a conservation easement.

3. Retained Life Estates. You continue to live on the property for life, but give it to WVLT for future income.

4. Gifts of Stock or Bonds. Gifts of securities can provide donors with greater tax benefits than cash gifts. Call WVLT for details.

5. Life Insurance. WVLT can be named a beneficiary, assuring your legacy of land preservation.

6. Bequests. You can reduce inheritance tax and support conservation by designating a gift to WVLT in your will.

7. Matching Gifts. Many companies offer to match employee charitable contributions. Check and see if your employer will multiply the power of your gift.

8. Life Income Gifts. Annuities and charitable remainder trusts are two ways you can assure income for yourself, reduce

your taxes and support WVLT.

9. Cash. Monetary gifts are deductible from your adjusted gross income. Contributions can be made in honor or memory of others and make lasting holiday gifts.

10. Talk! Spreading your enthusiasm for WVLT can be a powerful investment in conservation. Our members' conversations often lead to new members, additional gifts and, most exciting, gifts of conservation easements.

WVLT Adds Botetourt County to Coverage

While WVLT's service area is smaller than the original 23-county region, one special place is a new addition – Botetourt County.

"After months of consideration, our board decided that it just didn't make sense to not serve Botetourt County," explains WVLT executive director Roger Holnback. "Botetourt's challenges with urban sprawl come from Roanoke, and areas of four of our major initiatives – Read Mountain, the Blue Ridge Parkway, the Appalachian Trail and the Carvins Cove Watershed – are partially located there."

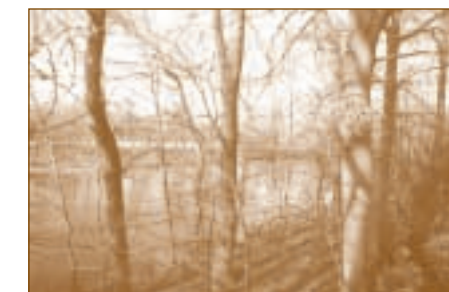
Botetourt is closely aligned with WVLT's service area through the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission, the Roanoke Metropolitan Statistical Area and overlapping state and federal electoral districts.

Just as Carroll, Floyd and Montgomery Counties are served by WVLT and the New River Land Trust, Botetourt County has been long served by another land trust. The Valley Conservation Council (VCC) is a Staunton-based group that works to preserve land in Botetourt and 10 other counties of

Virginia's Shenandoah Valley.

"The VCC is one of the best land trusts in the country. They provided invaluable support when we were getting started in the mid '90s," says WVLT trustee Bob Hunt. "We look forward to continued cooperative efforts with them as we work towards mutual goals of preserving Botetourt County's impressive natural resources."

WVLT already holds two conservation easements in Botetourt County. Both are riparian easements designed to protect water quality by preserving sensitive streamside habitat. One easement is along the James River and the other is near Carvins Cove.



A WVLT riparian easement along the Botetourt County banks of the James River.

Green Development Equals Smart Growth

A partnership among WVLT, the New River Land Trust and a Blacksburg development company proves that unlikely alliances can result in responsible land planning.

Nearly half of Coal Bank Ridge, a 225-acre subdivision under development in Montgomery County is under conservation easement.

“This is an example of a major developer who is doing it right,” says WVLT executive director Roger Holnback.

“We work hard to preserve farms and mountains, but realize that some land is going to be developed anyway. When preserving an entire tract isn’t an option, we’re eager to work with developers who are willing to think innovatively to preserve the best features of their land and end up with a better project for everybody.”

Joyce Graham, president of the New River Land Trust, calls the project “smart growth that balances development

and the environment.”

“Smart growth” balances a community’s development needs with land conservation. In the case of Coal Bank Ridge, a large wooded subdivision on Blacksburg’s northern edge, developers Bill Ellenbogen and Steve Bodtke are preserving scenic mountain views and wildlife habitats. The development will also include a network of new recreational trails for area residents.

The development is located on the Blacksburg/Montgomery County line where U.S. 460 begins its ascent of Brush Mountain. Two-thirds of the land is in Montgomery County and one third is in Blacksburg.

The Western Virginia and the

New River land trusts will co-hold the conservation easement. This is one of several projects that the two land trusts have worked on cooperatively where their service areas overlap in the New River region.



The conservation areas shown in this subdivision plot for Coal Bank Ridge will be protected through an easement co-held by WVLT and the New River Land Trust.

Partnerships: Moving Forward Together

WVLT is happy to announce a record year of conservation – and this progress was made possible through a record number of partnerships.

Working on so many projects in 10 counties with a staff of two can be quite a challenge. So WVLT continues to leverage its capacity by working with numerous partners. The following groups and organizations have worked together with WVLT this year to secure new conservation easements, launch exiting projects and help spread the news about land conservation.

- Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce
- Bedford Citizens for Land Preservation
- Beirne Carter Foundation
- Blue Ridge Environmental Network
- Catawba Valley Civic League
- Craig County Farm Bureau
- Franklin County Citizens Trails Task Force
- Friends of the Blue Ridge Parkway
- Impact at the Cabell Brand Center
- Landowners
- Local Governments
- National Park Service
- New River Land Trust

- Read Mountain Alliance
- Roanoke Regional Homebuilders Association
- Roanoke Valley – Alleghany Regional Commission
- Roanoke Valley Greenways Commission
- Soil and Water Conservation Districts
- Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation
- Virginia Department of Forestry
- Virginia Outdoors Foundation
- Virginia Tech
- Upper Roanoke River Round Table



Rob Lamar and WVLT trustee Janet Scheid on Lamar’s land along the Blackwater River. His property is preserved through a conservation easement held by WVLT and the Blue Ridge Soil and Water Conservation Easement.

Blue Ridge Parkway: Protecting Views



The WVLT-owned land in the foreground separates these Roanoke County homes from the Blue Ridge Parkway. Friends of the Blue Ridge Parkway is developing a plan to landscape this and three other sites with native trees and scrubs to screen development from Parkway views.

Two new conservation easements protect 190 acres of highly scenic Blue Ridge Parkway views, and other significant Parkway viewshed easements are in the works.

With the help of WVLT, Jeanne and Robert Martin have are protecting 125 acres of their forested mountain land through a conservation easement with the Virginia Outdoors Foundation (see “Landsavers” on page 10). Their property, near Smart View Recreation Area in Franklin County, was identified in a 1999 WVLT critical lands inventory as an important scenic resource for the Parkway.

A 65-acre private tract adjacent to National Park Service

land on Peaks of Otter in Bedford County will be preserved by a WVLT easement before the end of 2003, providing scenic views from the Blue Ridge Parkway, State Scenic Byway Route 43 and many points across Bedford County.

Protection of the Blue Ridge Parkway corridor has always been a top WVLT priority. The two new easements will make seven conservation easements brokered or held by WVLT since 1998 that have preserved more than 850 acres of scenic land visible from the Parkway – America’s most visited national park. But we are redoubling our efforts and working with many partners to speed protection of this endangered national treasure.

Responding to Scenic America’s designation of Roanoke County’s 28 miles of parkway as a Last Chance Landscape, WVLT is working closely with the National Park Service, Roanoke County and Friends of the Blue Ridge Parkway to implement an ambitious plan. We’re working to screen diminished vistas with landscaping, acquire a few specific sites for Parkway ownership from willing sellers, protect large tracts and critical views on private property with voluntary conservation easements and encourage sensitive site placement, design and landscaping when new development does occur.

Carvins Cove: Saving a Watershed

Nine months after launching the Carvins Cove Watershed Task Force, WVLT and its partners are making rapid progress to preserve water quality and open space in this 36,000-acre project area.

- **April 2003** – WVLT forms the Carvins Cove Watershed Task Force with local governments, state agencies, conservation groups, and private citizens.
- **May 2003** – The Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission develops a project area map with land ownership data.
- **July 2003** – WVLT co-sponsors a Catawba Valley bus tour with the Blue Ridge Soil and Water Conservation District to show farmers and public officials how Best Management Practices have improved the environment and farm efficiency.
- **August 2003** – The Task Force is joined by representatives from Virginia Tech to explore sustainable long-range land use plans for the university’s farm in the Catawba Valley.
- **September 2003** – WVLT meets with citizens from the Catawba Valley Civic League to explain conservation easements and other ways to preserve land and water in their valley.
- **October 2003** – Roanoke City pledges \$10,600 of support for the Tack Force’s public education efforts.

- **December 2003** – The Blue Ridge Soil and Water Conservation District enrolls the first Roanoke County farm in the Catawba Valley in a voluntary government cost-share program to protect streams from livestock and provide alternative watering sources.
- **Spring 2004** – The Task Force will launch a public outreach effort across the watershed to solicit conservation easements, enroll more land in voluntary conservation programs and educate homeowners about watershed protection issues.



The Carvins Cove watershed covers 36,000 acres, including portions of the Tinker and Catawba creek watersheds.

Map courtesy of Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission

Read Mountain: Partnership Saves Land

WVLT and the Read Mountain Alliance (RMA) are working together to preserve this Roanoke Valley landmark that straddles the Botetourt/Roanoke County line. The mountain is quickly becoming a natural island in a sea of commercial and residential development. Success of this effort will protect important views from the Blue Ridge Parkway, preserve vanishing natural habitat and provide recreational opportunities for a growing population.

In December 2002, WVLT accepted the first conservation easement on Read Mountain. Dr. Al Durham voluntarily donated all development rights to an 89-acre tract atop the mountain, assuring that this section will forever remain in its natural state.

In September 2003, RMA held the second annual Read Mountain Hike-a-Thon to raise funds for future land or easement purchases. About 100 hikers helped raise another \$13,000 to bring the Read Mountain Fund to \$39,000.

RMA leader Ron Crawford has forged positive relationships

with other Read Mountain landowners and secured permission to build trails on some of the land. The Read Mountain Middle School Builders Club is helping with trail maintenance and Crawford has recruited an Eagle Scout candidate to construct a footbridge.

RMA and WVLT continue to work with the landowners who control Read Mountain's fate. Relationships remain positive and both groups are hopeful that more conservation projects will be announced in the coming year. Contributions to the Read Mountain Fund can be mailed to WVLT at 722 First Street SW, Suite L, Roanoke, VA 24016.



A volunteer RMA clean-up crew pauses after the 2003 Read Mountain Hike-a-Thon.

Lynville Mountain: Challenging a "Last Chance"

In 2001, a WVLT nomination resulted in Scenic America naming Lynville Mountain and its surrounding landscape a Last Chance Landscape – one of 10 American places with exceptional scenic beauty that face eminent threats but show promise of being saved.

Lynville Mountain is just southeast of Roanoke in Franklin County. The designated landscape includes the 2,100-foot mountain, its foothills and rural lands within its shadow. The area forms a rough triangle from Explore Park to Booker T. Washington National Monument to Boones Mill and includes parts of the Roanoke River and the Blue Ridge Parkway.

The area's many historic resources include the birthplaces of Booker T. Washington and Confederate General Jubal A. Early, Native American archeological sites along the Roanoke River, Piedmont Mill, the Oak Hill German Baptist



WVLT is making progress to secure a conservation easement on the eastern face of Lynville Mountain.

Community and five homes listed on the National Historic Register.

Lynville Mountain provides scenic views of many parts of Roanoke and Smith Mountain Lake – the two areas that also threaten the landscape with sprawling residential development.

Since the Last Chance Landscape designation, WVLT has been quietly working with many landowners and is starting to show results.

- An existing WVLT and Virginia Outdoors Foundation (VOF) conservation easement near the southern base of the mountain was expanded by the addition of a small tract, bringing its total to 175 preserved acres.
- An 86-acre horse farm near Boones Mill was preserved this year through a VOF conservation easement with assistance from WVLT.
- With WVLT's help, the VOF also voted to hold an easement on nearly 300 acres of the mountain's highest elevations. The owner plans to finalize the agreement sometime next year.
- WVLT has had site visits and consultations with more than a dozen landowners within the Lynville Mountain Landscape, with many expressing the desire to conserve their land through conservation easements.
- WVLT assisted seven families within the landscape in getting state recognition as Virginia Century Farms.

Rivers and Streams: WVLT Buffers Eight Miles



Two miles of Buffalo Creek on the Bedford/Campbell county line have been protected with a new 60-acre conservation easement held by WVLT and the Peaks of Otter Soil and Water Conservation District.

With six newly recorded conservation easements combined with past efforts, WVLT has now preserved more than eight miles of western Virginia's rivers and streams.

Two miles of Bedford County's Buffalo Creek have been permanently protected through a WVLT conservation easement. The streamside corridor of hardwood forest totals 60 acres and is across the stream from a 114-acre Meade-Westvaco nature preserve in Campbell County.

Meade-Westvaco recently sold the property through an auction conducted by WVLT trustee Jim Woltz. They worked

together to encourage the new owner to donate a conservation easement, protecting the stream and buffering the adjacent nature preserve.

The easement donor is developing Northcote Village, a new residential development, adjacent to the site and plans to provide a community-accessible walking trail through the streamside forest.

This fall, WVLT completed the purchase of five other riparian easements with funds from a Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation grant:

- One and a third miles of Floyd County's Little River.
- Nearly one mile of Franklin County's Blackwater River (two easements).
- More than one mile of Franklin County's Roaring Run.
- One mile of Stony Creek and an unnamed tributary on Bedford County's Peaks of Otter.

These riparian easements are co-held by WVLT and local Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

Western Virginia's rivers and streams are an important natural resource for public water supplies, tourism, recreation and plant and animal habitat. Preserving land along rivers and streams has positive results far downstream by preventing erosion and sedimentation, filtering pollutants from runoff and moderating water temperature to benefit fish.

Family Farms: Our Cultural Past Lives On

An important part of WVLT's mission of "preserving western Virginia's natural and cultural heritage" is to help families preserve land for future generations. Whether it's a landowner's children or grandchildren who want a place on the land or a family that may live there years from now, many landowners want to assure that the place they love will be here well after they're gone. WVLT has been working with more than 30 families this year who are considering conservation easements. The following lands are among those that have recently been preserved by conservation easements or will be recorded by year's end:

- An 86-acre Franklin County horse farm.
- A 256-acre Bedford County cattle farm.
- 296 acres of cropland, pasture and forest in Franklin County.
- A 120-acre horse farm in northern Bedford County.
- Another 120 acres near Bedford County's Kelso Mill.



Ruth Babylon from the Virginia Outdoors Foundation gets a tour of Marion Sumrell's farm on Franklin County's Blackwater River. With WVLT's help, the farm is being preserved with a VOF conservation easement.

Many more owners of agricultural land in several counties are lined up to complete conservation easements in 2004.

Look for further details on these and other conservation easements in the next issue of *Land Protection News*.