

# Land Protection

NEWS



WESTERN VIRGINIA LAND TRUST

FALL/WINTER 2004

## \$750,000 for Last Chance Landscape

Congressman Bob Goodlatte (R- Roanoke) announced on November 20 that the U.S. Congress approved \$750,000 for the conservation of Blue Ridge Parkway scenery in Roanoke County – an area declared a Last Chance Landscape by Scenic America in 2003.



*This 60-acre Roanoke County tract donated to WVLT was the focus of Scenic America's award for Best Preservation of a Scenic Viewshed.*

The Western Virginia Land Trust is working with the National Park Service, Roanoke County, and Friends of the Blue Ridge Parkway on a conservation plan that identifies 53 overlook and roadside view areas along the 28 mile-long section of the Parkway in Roanoke County. Of those 53 view areas, 35 are being proposed for landscape buffer tree plantings or conservation easements. WVLT and its partners have worked with Congressman Goodlatte and his staff over the past year to develop a range of conservation proposals for federal funding. The funds appropriated will be used to buy a limited number of parcels adjacent to the Parkway at critical locations in the Roanoke Valley.

*(continued on page 7)*

## Land Trust and Partners Win Scenic Award

Scenic Virginia honored WVLT among a coalition of five groups for their work in preserving a view on the Blue Ridge Parkway south of Roanoke.

They received a Scenic Award at a Richmond luncheon in October in the category of Best Preservation of a Scenic Viewshed. Their efforts came a year and a half after Scenic America selected the 28-mile stretch of the Parkway in Roanoke County as a Last Chance Landscape.

Partners with WVLT were the National Park Service, Roanoke County, Friends of the Blue Ridge Parkway and Radford & Co., a Roanoke Valley builder. Leighton Powell,

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## Tax Credit Helps Save Horse Farm

A 76-acre Franklin County horse farm is permanently protected from future development thanks to the actions of its owner and to the Virginia Land Preservation Tax Credit.

The sale of Virginia Land Preservation Tax Credits between the landowner, Ms. Gary Goodale of Camlach Farm near Boones Mill, and the tax credit buyers, Richard and Christiana Maxwell from Roanoke, took place on the property December 1.

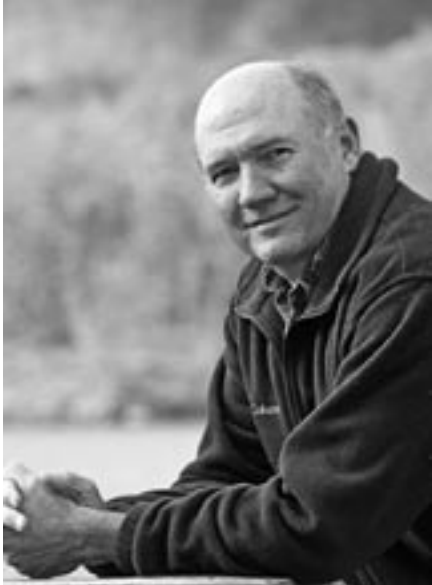
The Commonwealth offers income tax credits as an incentive to encourage Virginia landowners to permanently protect their land with conservation easements. In 2002, the Virginia General Assembly enhanced the tax credit provision to allow landowners to sell their unused tax credits to other Virginia taxpayers. Tax credits can be used to offset a taxpayer's Virginia income tax liability dollar-for-dollar. Conservation Partners, LLC from Lexington brokered the sale of Goodale's credits.

"This land is very attractive to developers and in a fast changing part of Franklin County, but it's important to me to make sure these pastures will be around long after

*(continued on page 3)*



*Gary Goodale stands in one of her horse pastures that is permanently protected through her actions. Cahas Mountain in the background is home to a WVLT conservation easement on an upper ridge.*



DOUG MILLER

In late November I was asked by Leisure Publishing to make a submission for their regular feature "If I ran the Valley...." for the upcoming January/February 2005 Almanac Issue of the Roanoker Magazine. They have allowed us to reprint the article here. Writing the commentary proved to be a very thought provoking process. How to put into 650 words what you would do differently to solve some of our community's problems is something we all should do now and again. For once you articulate what is

needed, it is only a small step to begin to take the actions required to see your vision realized. In one way or another, I am attempting to see each of my goals realized, and by my "conservation ethic" theme you can see why I love my work at WVLT.

## If I Ran the Valley...

Roger Holnback, executive director of the Western Virginia Land Trust for the past three years, has traveled the world as a yacht captain, owned a manufacturing company in Roanoke and sits on the boards of organizations including the Urban Forest Council and Roanoke City Parks and Recreation.

**Seven generations.** A Virginia Tech grad student interviewing me a few months ago started a question with "as a conservationist what do you think about...?" – implying I could speak for conservationists or there was a one-size-fits-all conservationist party platform. I explained that I think of conservation in terms of an ethical framework to view choices I make every day. That I believe in conserving what is best of our past, of our urban and rural communities, historic structures and the family farms and home places that dot our rural valleys. That I believe in preserving our natural heritage, scenery, air and water, quality of life. It is why I love my work at the WVLT. But I am also not for just stopping the clock or not facing the real world. So I also support change where those changes improve the quality of our lives and will leave the world and our valley better than we find it today.

**The wise leaders** of the Iroquois Confederacy began their council meetings with the invocation "in our every deliberation we must consider the impact of our decisions on the next seven generations."

If citizens and leaders here in this valley come to each decision with this mind set, we will not only conserve what makes the Roanoke Valley such a wonderful place to live, but take the actions today that will secure an even higher quality of life for the next seven generations of Roanokers.

**Protect our water.** The 11,075-acre Carvins Cove Natural Preserve, in its role as natural area, water supply and recreational resource for our valley, would be secured for future generations with

a well-conceived conservation easement. The easement would allow for outstanding recreational uses but restrict future decision makers from "utilizing" the cove for something that would degrade its incredible beauty. The stewardship of this large natural area, so unspoiled by man's hand, this close to a metropolitan center, is too precious to be left to chance, expediency or changing political winds.

**Redesign Roanoke River parks and greenways.** We would scrap the much-revisited Corp of Engineers' plans to re-channelize the Roanoke River. While much more must and can be done in the urban environment to reduce storm water runoff, realistically, a two-foot reduction in the water level in the river and its flood plain during high water events will not solve our flooding problems. Rather we should admit that development in the flood plain is a bad idea, and expand our existing greenway and parks into one continuous beautiful tree-lined greenway park, dotted with flood-tolerant sports and recreation facilities.

**Celebrate the Blue Ridge Parkway and the Appalachian Trail.** No other metropolitan area has both the BRP and the AT running through it. In my valley, not only would we celebrate this special distinction when promoting the valley as a place to visit, locate a business or retire, we would actively protect these significant resources. The citizens of Roanoke would stand up for their preservation and be willing to fight long and hard for the creation of overlay districts or protective zoning measures necessary to provide real protection for these special resources. In my valley we would also not sit by and watch every hilltop be leveled for big box stores or covered in condos. We would preserve our forested mountains and the open spaces that reduce storm water runoff, provide water recharge and the scenery that defines the place we live.

**Revive our core neighborhoods and brownfields.** In my valley, we would restore our core city neighborhoods and reclaim and reuse our older strip malls, tired commercial centers and industrial brownfields. We would thereby reduce our tendency to sprawl into virgin greenfields and forested hillsides to meet our community's needs for commercial and residential development space, and in the process create a more attractive and vibrant city while retaining our history and cultural diversity.

**Wish list.** And there are always my plans for removing the political boundaries that prevent valley-wide thinking, planning and resource utilization; much needed urban reforestation; dedicated funding for WVLT from the counties we serve... and 4,000 new members so we can spend more time promoting conservation.

**MARION J. SUMRELL** passed away on October 11, 2004. Well known and loved throughout Franklin County, Sumrell protected his nearly 300-acre farm on the Blackwater River with a conservation easement in late 2003. His action inspired many neighbors to explore conservation easements, assures the permanent protection of a farm that surrounds a home on the National Historic Register and protects an exceptional scenic value to western Virginia. Sumrell, a WWII veteran, tobacco farmer and long-time Farm Bureau insurance agent, is survived by two sons and will be missed by many.

## Thoughts from the Board

(This is the first in a series of columns by trustees of the Western Virginia Land Trust)

By Jim Kermes

My wife, Pat, and I moved to Roanoke about one year ago, after having lived and worked in the metropolitan areas of New York, Atlanta, Chicago and Philadelphia. The most common question asked of us has been, "Why did you move to Roanoke?"

The answer is all around us. Just look at the mountains, streams and farms. For many years, we drove down I-81 on our way to the North Carolina mountains. We always commented about the natural beauty of this part of Virginia. When I retired and we finally had the opportunity to live wherever we wanted, it did not take long to conclude that Western Virginia was high on the list. I am amazed at the number of people who live in this area who seem to take for granted the natural beauty that is all around us.

Even before we moved here, I became aware of the startling fact that nearly 70% of rural land in Virginia is expected to change ownership in the next decade. This is due primarily to the aging of the existing owners and lack of interest on the part of the next generation of owners. Depending upon who becomes the future owners, we could see a dramatic and irreversible change in the natural beauty around us. What may have been taken for granted is rapidly being put at risk of being changed.

The realization of that risk caused me to want to get involved in efforts to manage the growth and development of this area in such a way that the natural beauty is not destroyed. That is what brought me to my involvement with the Western Virginia Land Trust (WVLT).

I was attracted to the practical and realistic attitude of WVLT toward balancing the preservation of land and the natural beauty around us, with the need for economic growth and development of the area. The two work well together to make this one of the best places in the country to live and work.

Recently my daughter gave me the book, *A Walk In The Woods* by Bill Bryson. The author writes about his experience walking the Appalachian Trail. I was struck by his comments about the section

of the Trail in Virginia. Upon entering Virginia from the south, he comments that each time he hauled himself to a mountaintop and stepped onto a rocky ledge, instead of seeing nothing but endless green mountains, he saw a real, lived-in world of farms, cluster hamlets, clumps of woodland and winding highways. He described what he saw as "an America that was busy and on the move but not too busy to be attractive." I believe that describes our work at WVLT, balancing the preservation of the natural beauty of the land and streams with thoughtful and well-planned economic development.

Our area of Virginia has the unique and enviable assembly of undisturbed mountain ridges, The Blue Ridge Parkway, the Appalachian Trail, family farms and a rich cultural heritage. These are not things to be taken for granted and people outside our area envy them. We need to work at preserving what we have. I hope that through my involvement with WVLT I can help make a difference and keep Western Virginia the envy of those who do not live or work here.



*Budding Conservationist - WVLT Trustee Jim Kermes getting in touch with nature at an early age.*

## Tax Credit Helps Save Horse Farm

*(continued from page 1)*

"I'm gone," said Goodale. "I treasure this land and am so happy that this tax credit sale lets me afford to preserve it." Like many landowners, much of Goodale's net worth is tied up in her farm. Though the conservation easement reduces the land's market value, the tax credit sale provides her with a nest egg to partially make up for the lower land value. Goodale still owns her land and will continue its current agricultural use without restriction.

Goodale has wanted to protect her land with a conservation easement since attending a WVLT workshop in 1996. But like many rural landowners, she was torn between wanting to conserve her land and needing its development value intact in case of unexpected financial need or future retirement expenses. Virginia's tax credit program provided just enough incentive to make the conservation agreement work for her. Goodale worked with WVLT and the Virginia Outdoors Foundation, a state foundation that will monitor and enforce the terms of the agreement.

# Membership Gifts – Thank You!

The following gifts were received from July 1 to November 31.

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Bob and Susie Fetter  
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(matched by Norfolk-Southern)  
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of George Kegley and Barbara Lemon  
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BB&T is proud to underwrite the great work of the Western Virginia Land Trust through this issue of Land Protection News.

BB&T has a long tradition of taking an active role in the communities where we do business. *You can tell we want your business.* To us, it's just part of being a good neighbor.

**BB&T**

Part of our mission statement says we want to make the world a better place to live by making the communities in which we work better places to be.

– James N. Hinson, Senior Vice President and Roanoke City Executive, BB&T

## Writers Boost Land Trust Support

Kind words from *Roanoke Times* columnist Joe Kennedy and Dan Smith, managing editor of the *Blue Ridge Business Journal*, provided a significant boost to the Western Virginia Land Trust's successful response to a \$20,000 challenge grant.

More support was needed to ensure that the Land Trust staff "continue to educate landowners about ... putting their property into scenic easements. It has to be replaced by David Hurt and Roger Holnback to help the willing create the arrangements to preserve their land, our region's top asset," Kennedy wrote in his "A Cuppa Joe" column.

"In a region where the beauty of the environment is a business talking point, the Land Trust's role is especially important," Smith wrote. He called the Land Trust "an organization which seems to have found common ground for environmentalists and the business community to the benefit of both as nearly three-quarters of rural land changes hands in the coming decade."



## \$20,000 Challenge Grant Swiftly Met

An anonymous out-of-state foundation that had supported WVLT since its inception sent word in September that increasing needs closer to home made it necessary to limit other giving. WVLT was forced to look elsewhere to make up a \$40,000 deficit.

Board member stepped in. Long-time supporters increased their giving. Trustees recruited new business members. And local writers publicized our need (see "Writers Boost Land Trust Support").

A local board member of the Ceres Foundation – a charitable foundation based in South Carolina – read of our needs and arranged for a \$20,000 challenge grant. The grant would be awarded if WVLT raised at least \$20,000 before December 31. With generous landsavers lining up to help, we met the challenge in 32 days!

Many thanks to the Ceres Foundation and all who responded to our call!

Dr. Charlotte Nutt  
Pam and Bruce Ogden  
Howard Packett  
Dr. Robert E. Paine, Jr.  
Case and Coby Pieterman  
Thomas and Janet Pindroh  
Glen and Sharon Proehl  
Mr. and Mrs. Michael Quinn  
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Bill Reiden  
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Dr. and Mrs. William H. Robison,  
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**\$1,000 to \$2,499**

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# New Homeplace Settled for Good

*Pennsylvania couple preserve Franklin County land with conservation easement.*

When Tom and Gail Malishaucki returned from a recent visit of their native Pennsylvania to their rolling countryside home in Franklin County, she said, "Thank you, Lord, for the peace and quiet here." That's why they moved south six years ago. Subdivisions and heavy traffic were crowding their horse farm in Perkasio, a small town north of Philadelphia, where Tom operated a pharmacy.

Thanks to the Malishauckis' foresight and good stewardship of their adopted home, there are 125 acres more of Franklin County that will forever be preserved as a refuge of "peace and quiet." After reading a news article last February about the late Marion Sumrell's decision to conserve his farm on the Blackwater River, Tom called the Western Virginia Land Trust for more information. After months of careful planning with WVLT and the Virginia Outdoors Foundation, the couple just signed a conservation easement that assures that their land will never be subdivided or developed.

Why did they preserve their land near Glade Hill with a voluntary conservation agreement? "Look what happened in Pennsylvania, look at what's happening at the lake. They (developers) have started approaching landowners" on the road above their land, Tom said. "We want to keep the land as it is, undeveloped," Gail added.

The agreement stipulates that the land will never be subdivided or used for industrial or commercial purposes other than businesses related to agriculture or forestry production on the property. The Malishauckis can maintain their single family home, restore an older homestead on the property and build a small guest home if they wish. Barns and other rural outbuildings are not restricted. Conservation easements do not require public access to the land, and the Malishauckis still own the property – but all future owners must abide by the terms of the agreement. Their easement also includes forested riparian buffers to protect Poplar Camp Creek, which flows through their property and then into the Blackwater River arm of Smith Mountain Lake.

In their first major project on the land, Tom and two other men built a big frame house in little more than six months. "Get a Lithuanian with a hammer and something happens", he said. He learned construction skills from carpenters and neighbors in Pennsylvania.

Tom, a talker and a doer, built a barn for their horse, Miss Nele, and a shed for Annabelle, Gail's potbellied pig, and they both built a sturdy four-plank fence. He has a productive garden, providing plenty of vegetables to keep Gail busy in the kitchen. Their 84 acres of forestland has a variety of tree growth. Some will be clear-cut and replanted. They started

with redbuds, dogwood and sumac and they're planning maples for next year. A seasoned hunter for deer, turkey and rabbits on his property, Tom also displays large animal heads from his big game trips out west and to Alaska.

"We have the best neighbors," Gail said. The nearest is Walter Hodges, who makes hay on the Malishauckis' open fields. They met the Hodges at a picnic soon after they arrived and they have worked together since.

Their daughter, Diane, bought their Pennsylvania home and horses and stayed to cope with the growing congestion. She has a 3-year-old son. Another daughter, Susan, followed her parents south to teach music at Ferrum College. She has an 11-year-old son.

Tom has worked out conditions in his easement for future land uses while assuring that the rural nature of the property will be preserved forever. The Virginia Outdoors Foundation, a taxpayer-funded state foundation, will monitor and enforce the agreement. "I think it will work out real well," he said after he filed the document in the county clerk's office.



*Tom and Gale Malishaucki in front of the home they built on their Franklin County land.*



## Virginia Blue Ridge Parkway License Plate *Sign-ups Needed Now*

How can you show the world you care about the Blue Ridge Parkway while providing additional funding to the Land Trust? Easy, just reserve parkway license plates for all of your Virginia-registered autos.

Mabry Mill, one of the most recognized landmarks on America's favorite scenic drive, will grace the vintage looking yellow tag. The state will only issue the tag once 350 orders are placed, so sign up today.

A portion of the tag proceeds will go to WVLT to fund parkway viewshed protection.

For more information, visit  
[www.brpfoundation.org/tag.php](http://www.brpfoundation.org/tag.php)  
or call 336 721 0260.

## Land Trust Partners

(continued from page 1)

executive director of Scenic Virginia, said the Blue Ridge Parkway "has gotten such a bad rap over the past few years. It's been a real fight to preserve this."

The preservation effort centered on a 60-acre field between Merriman and Cotton Hill roads, south of Starkey, once part of the Beasley farm. In 1995, a Roanoke builder proposed construction of up to 800 houses in a plan worked out with Roanoke County and the National Park Service.

Development of the Beasley property depended on water and sewer lines being extended across the Parkway. This was permitted in exchange for concessions from the developers but they chose to leave the project and the land was sold to Radford & Co. After negotiations with the Parkway, the firm reduced its proposal to a plan for Mason's Crest, a development reducing the original 800 units to 350 homes hidden from the Parkway and with 93 acres of open space.

Radford gave 60 acres of the tract to the Western Virginia Land Trust and this property will be donated to the Parkway. Roger Holnback,



Roger Holnback, WVLT executive director; Frank Radford and Tom Wilson from Radford and Associates; Janet Scheid, Roanoke County Chief Planner; Gary Johnson, Chief Restoration Planner, Blue Ridge Parkway; Betty Gill Ware, award sponsor, Scenic Virginia; David Radford from Radford and Associates.

could influence other developers, she said. Scheid has talked to one other developer who is considering a sizable gift of property to protect a viewshed.

WVLT executive director, called the deal "sort of a win-win-win-win-win." The Parkway view was preserved, the economic value was protected and the developer retained the right to build homes. Holnback said this wouldn't have happened if Frank Radford and his son, David Radford, principals in the firm, didn't care about the Parkway.

Janet Scheid, Roanoke County planner and a WVLT board member, said the Radfords "deserve all the credit in the world for what they did." She and Holnback received the award in Richmond. This project

## \$750,000 in Funds

(continued from page 1)

"I was pleased to help obtain this important funding which will help preserve the beauty of the Blue Ridge Parkway," said Goodlatte. "The Blue Ridge Parkway is a national treasure and an important scenic attraction here in Roanoke County. However, the proximity of the Parkway to the largest metropolitan area along its route continues to pose challenges. This federal funding marks another step toward balancing our desire to preserve this national park for future generations while ensuring smart economic development that will help those future generations continue to work and live in this beautiful area."

The federal funds will be used to purchase a select number of critical tracts from willing sellers, and the lands will be added to the Parkway boundary. WVLT continues to work with private landowners on voluntary conservation agreements to preserve more scenic views.

## More Parkway Views to be Saved

Since 1996, WVLT has helped private landowners protect over 1,000 acres of Blue Ridge Parkway scenic views through conservation easements. That total is set to increase as new agreements near completion.

In 2004, the land trust helped two more Blue Ridge Parkway neighbors through the conservation easement process. The Virginia Outdoors Foundation, the state foundation that monitors and enforces over 250,000 acres on conservation easements across the Commonwealth, has approved the permanent conservation agreements on both properties.

One property is a wooded 140 acres in Franklin County adjoining the Parkway and a recreation area. The other is a nearly 400-acre Bedford County farm providing pastoral views from long stretches of the nearby scenic road. Further details of these agreements will be reported once they are formally recorded in late 2004 or early 2005.

## Survey Coming Soon

We have an ambitious two-year plan to build our membership to 5,000 landsavers like you. With the clock ticking and more mountain forests, family farms, and scenic views vanishing every day, only increased grassroots support will enable us to pick up the pace of land conservation.

We need your help to craft a successful recruitment message. In January, you will receive a survey to help us better understand why people support WVLT, what messages most inspire you, what we are doing right and what we need to do better.

We're seeking something invaluable to us – your opinion. Please make a point to respond.



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## Bedford County Easement Complete

*Horse farm preserved in high-growth area*

Sally and John Gilkey signed a conservation agreement on December 9 that preserves a scenic 50-acre horse farm in Lynchburg's backyard.

Just outside of the Lynchburg city limits in Bedford County, the Gilkey property is a pastoral landscape on Trents Ferry Road a short distance from the James River. Over the past year, WVLT worked with the Gilkeys and the Virginia Outdoors Foundation to craft the agreement that prevents any future subdivision of the land and preserves it for agricultural use and one single-family home.

Sally Gilkey, a horse enthusiast and a member of the Bedford County Hunt, was referred to WVLT by Bedford Citizens for Land Preservation. She says that she and her husband John

did a lot of homework about conservation easements and that "WVLT held our hand through the whole process and answered every question we had along the way. The people from the Virginia Outdoors Foundation were also very helpful. It all worked out just as we had hoped."



*The pastoral landscape of the Gilkeys' property in Forest will be preserved forever with a Virginia Outdoors Foundation conservation easement.*

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### Save Our Scenery

An end-of-year tax-deductible gift to WVLT will help us start 2005 better prepared to save more land.

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