

WVLT land-lovers,

Happy Valentines!!!!!! "Virginia is for Lovers--of Virginia!"

I wanted to let yall know that, thanks to David Hurt, Roger, WVLT, Beth Obenshain, and the New River Land Trust...ALONG with Trust for Public Land, Andy and George Kegley, and some people's genuine prayers!--1477 lovely wild creek-run acres are getting protected in Wythe County, Feb 22nd (closing date)!!!!!!

This land was at the top of the wish-list of the National Forest for a few years. It was a tract owned by Char-Lo Timber Company, and came onto the market 2 years ago. It borders the Jefferson National forest, but is quite close to the town of Wytheville. So we were worried!!!

Roger and David brainstormed suggestions for how to save this land, when federal funding fell through for its purchase by NFS, and after Senator Allen sent back form letters to all of us (and you) who wrote to request his support for appropriations. (The form letters of reply were irksomely about a completely different forest service topic! Phone calls to the office did not help. I'm not sure the staff ever even read our letters.) Sen. Warner did request the bucks to buy this land (for the forest service) but it wasn't funded. That was last summer.

Thanks to wonderful e-mail "to" lists of Eric and Broaddus Fitzpatrick's (which I blatantly cut and pasted for this one save-land alert) and great responses to TPL from people like Jim Woltz, Broaddus, and other WVLT board members, the Trust for Public Land decided to retain the option on this land while looking for a conservation buyer.

Meanwhile, since the option was running out soon, they brought Richard Pritzlaff of MD down here to see the land in October. Andy Kegley and his son Reed went with them and were able to provide lots of local history because George grew up here and Andy lives in the county, w/ a conservation easement on his farm.

Richard buys and conserves and resells land--NOT for development and subdivisions, but for conservation! How refreshing! THAT is what TPL was looking for. He fell in love with this rare piece of land, is closing on it Feb 22, and just met with VOF's Neal Kilgore (formerly of DCR) this week to work on the conservation easement.

So we are still looking for the final conservation buyer of this incredible piece of land--woods, some open space, unruined clear creek, loads of wildlife, diverse forest and biodiversity, and NFS border (the Jefferson)--yet very close to Wytheville in a lovely area called Black Lick. Beth Obenshain has all the details at the NRLT office. I'm attaching the newsletter article about the land (our newsletter isn't out yet) in case anyone knows of a conservation buyer looking for a small and reasonably-priced paradise that will already have a conservation easement on it.

Yea to everyone. It's a real Valentine! Once again WVLT (and NRLT) and all of you have protected some acreage into perpetuity. That's a real living history.

Liza