



ROGER HOLNBAC

All of the open land shown here and much of the forest behind it was gifted to WVLT to eventually become part of the Blue Ridge Parkway.

## Land Trust Secures “Last Chance” Viewshed *60 acres along Blue Ridge Parkway gifted by developers*

One of the most scenic pastoral foreground views along Roanoke County’s portion of the Blue Ridge Parkway – and a tract that had been considered one of its most threatened – has been secured through WVLT ownership and will later become the property of the American public. All thanks to the work of partners galvanized by Scenic America’s “Last Chance Landscape” designation of this part of the parkway and the generosity of civic-minded developers.

Frank and David Radford of Radford and Associates

**“...this gift is a true jewel for the Blue Ridge Parkway.”**

donated 60 acres of critical parkway viewshed to WVLT during a press conference on Thursday, May 20. The transfer of title came after months of work by the Radfords, the Land Trust, Roanoke County staff and the National Park Service.

The property is commonly known as “the bowl” and is an increasingly rare agrarian landscape in the midst of a residential development boom in Southwest Roanoke County.



DAVID HURT

Frank and David Radford sign the deed to a 60-acre gift to WVLT’s Executive Director Roger Holnback.

At one point planned as part of an 800-unit subdivision, the property was purchased by Radford and Associates this year. Frank Radford said, “We’re happy to make this gift because it’s the right thing to do. We hope that this project serves as a model for how development should be done along the

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### 14,000 Acres Saved!!!

WVLT is at the 14,000-acre mark in land saved since 1996. Our pace of land conservation is growing every year – see page 11 for details.



## Director's Report

*Roger Holnback,  
Executive Director*

**W**e have been very busy at WVLT over the past three months. We just produced a 12-page color Carvins Cove Watershed special edition newsletter with the assistance of the Carvins Cove Task Force members. The newsletter focuses on water quality issues for all residents of the Carvins Cove watershed in Roanoke and Botetourt Counties and was mailed to about 1,500 folks all told. Funding was provided by the City of Roanoke.

We have worked very closely with Blue Ridge Parkway staff, Roanoke County staff and the Friends of the Blue Ridge Parkway to plan for the preservation of several critical parkway viewsheds in Roanoke County and just received a gift of 60 critical acres of parkway viewshed at Mile Marker 125 from Radford & Associates, which we will transfer to the National Park Service at no cost to the Parkway or taxpayers.

These are great accomplishments, of which we are proud, but what we are most happy about this year are the record number of private landowners who have called and want to look into conservation easements to preserve their properties. Conservation easements are really catching on as a way for landowners to capture cash value out of their land, without having to sell

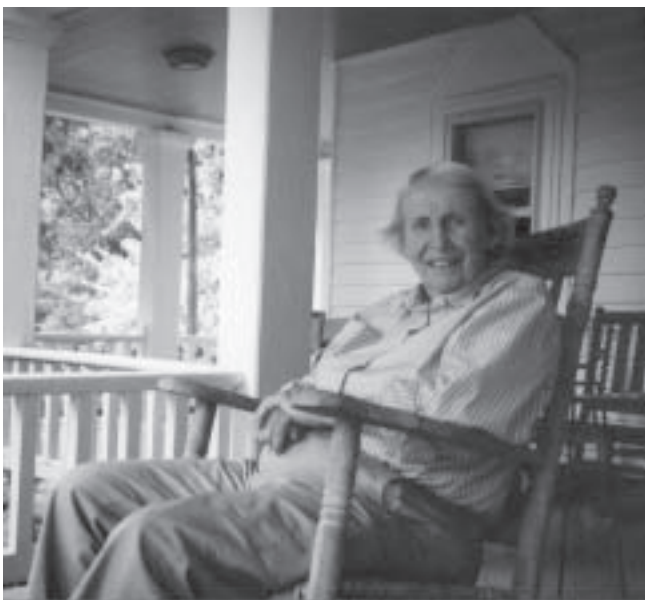
off road frontage. The meetings we have hosted or spoken at are paying off in a meaningful way. In addition, the benefits of key neighbors having donated easements and talking them up can't be underestimated. Call after call, folks tell us they have spoken with Mr. X or Mrs. Y who did an easement and was proud to have a story in the paper about what they did and why. These wonderful people, like Ned and Janet Yost, Jeanne and Rusty Martin, Jim Wilson and Marion Sumrell whom we have showcased as "Landsavers" in past newsletters are truly Landsavers because they influence whole communities by their words and deeds.

I am saddened to report that one of our favorite Landsavers recently passed away. Barbara "Bobby" Hatcher of Bedford will be sorely missed. But we can all be thankful for the conservation ethic that led her to preserve her homeplace with a conservation easement, preserving it for us and future generations to enjoy. We can only hope that, while no longer with us to talk up conservation, her message of stewardship, often repeated to family, friends and neighbors, will continue to echo among the hills and valleys of Bedford County that she so loved.



Western  
Virginia  
Land Trust  
Join the Western Virginia  
Land Trust Today!

## In Memory of Bedford Landsaver



GEORGE KEGLEY

**B**edford County has lost a fine lady, but she leaves a conservation legacy that will keep many places in her beloved county green forever. Barbara Hatcher passed away April 26, 2004.

Barbara Hatcher was a Bedford County conservation pioneer in 2000, preserving her 158-acre Twin Oaks Farm where she was raised at the foot of Peaks of Otter with a conservation easement held by WVLT and the Peaks of Otter Soil and Water Conservation District. Not content to conserve just her heritage, Barbara was a tireless advocate for WVLT and conservation easements. Her example led at least three of her friends and relatives to preserve their land, and WVLT is still working with many others whom she referred.

Hatcher was featured as a WVLT Landsaver in the spring 2003 issue of *Landsaver News*. Asked for the story why she granted a conservation easement to WVLT, she simply replied, "I wanted it to stay the way it is."



## Stewardship

David A. Hurt, Project Manager

### Signs of Change

So goes the land, so goes “the wave.”

I’m not talking about the ocean or sports fans’ shenanigans, but the surest sign that you’re in the country. I grew up with the wave being an automatic gesture while driving close to home. A hand in the air greeted every car met and was returned in kind. We didn’t wave once we drove into town (“town” being Roanoke for my family), but resumed the habit once back over the mountain.

Today, the wave is getting scarce in my part of the world and that’s not a good sign.

Not waving doesn’t really mean people are less friendly, but that the rural nature of a community is changing. WVLT strives to preserve “the natural and *cultural* heritage of western Virginia.” While a “save the wave” campaign is not in the works, keeping your eyes open to how often a hand goes up on the highway is a pretty good barometer of how the culture of a place changes as land use changes.

As more land is subdivided and developed, rural roads get busier, people move in and out at a faster pace, and neighbors lose track of who’s who. The wave seems to last as long as roads don’t have so much traffic to make it tiring or impractical; as long as people aren’t in too big a hurry to pay attention to what’s around them; and as long as people figure they must know you or your family whether they recognize you or not.

If the wave is leaving your community, you probably notice other changes. The culture of your place is probably changing with the land.

Western Virginia has a rich cultural heritage that’s worth preserving, and it’s a heritage that is fully intertwined with the land. The green pastures that dot the Old Dominion are there as much for culture as agriculture. Most farmers who maintain those pastures make their living elsewhere, but run livestock because it’s what they love – it’s their heritage. Yes, they make a few bucks in a good year, but more reliable extra income could be had from weekend shifts at a burger joint. If we didn’t have a culture of people who love to work the land, we wouldn’t recognize our landscape. And if we don’t preserve a rural land base, we won’t recognize our culture.

Land trusts are working hard to offer voluntary options to preserve the farms and forests that define our region and its people. If you own land, you owe it to yourself to learn

more about conservation easements and other options that might provide financial benefit while helping you keep things the way you want. If you love the country—as a landowner, resident or admirer—please support WVLT with your membership today.

And don’t forget to wave.



WVLT’s 10-county service area.

## “Last Chance”

(continued from page 1)

parkway.” He added, “We simply couldn’t have done this without the Western Virginia Land Trust.”

The donated land is next to Mason’s Crest, a residential development being created by Radford. The homes will share public space for hiking trails and natural areas, and barely a rooftop will be seen by Blue Ridge Parkway visitors – thanks to careful building placement, planned tree screenings, and the 60-acre gift.

Larry Hultquist, Landscape Architect for the Blue Ridge Parkway, said of the partnership that put this deal together, “The parkway has worked in a lot of areas to build partnerships, but this is the best example of a partnership to help the parkway I’ve ever seen.” He added, “The parkway is only 1,200 feet wide in most places, but we have nice larger areas that we call ‘the pearls.’ Well, this area is going to be a true jewel.”

WVLT’s flexibility as a non-profit organization allowed the gift to be made in a timely manner. After working through government channels, the land trust expects to transfer the land at no cost to the taxpayers as an addition to the Blue Ridge Parkway.

## Couple Conserves 120 Acres of Bedford Horse Country

When former Californians Stephen Stevick and Nancy Raine found a rolling, wooded tract of land in the middle of Bedford County, they saw it as a piece of heaven on earth. To keep it that way, the couple worked with WVLT staff to arrange a conservation easement, which was accepted by the Virginia Outdoors Foundation in late 2003.

"This area is stunningly beautiful. It speaks for itself. It cannot and should not be lost," said Stevick, after the couple placed the easement on their 120 acres. They live in a former Bedford Hunt Club house between Otterville and Cifax, north of the county seat.

Stevick and Raine enjoy country life with their horses, goats, dogs and cats. He retired as executive director of the Sierra Club Foundation and Raine, a writer of poetry and non-fiction, reviewed grant requests for the National Endowment for the Arts.

In character with their interests and philosophy, Stevick and Raine led in the establishment of Bedford Citizens for Land Preservation in 2001. The citizens describe themselves as "a volunteer, citizen-based organization promoting public policies and private opportunities to honor Bedford's natural heritage and agricultural tradition." The group "supports growth that respects Bedford County's unique character, farmland, open space and natural resources."

Why did they preserve their land with an easement? "It's almost an honor to have the opportunity to do this...It's so consistent with the character of the land," Stevick said. "I was surprised at how good it felt," Raine added. "Nobody tells me what to do with my land. You get the feeling that you decide."

The financial incentives for easements are an added bonus for the couple. The deductions and tax credits are "financially wise options...We can't afford not to do it."

Stevick and Raine lead by example as they work to encourage other Bedford County landowners to consider the many benefits of conservation easements.



GEORGE KEGLEY

Nancy Raine and Stephen Stevick enjoy time with one of their horses.



ROGER HOLINBACK

A gravel road meanders through forest leading to the Muse home.

## 12 O'clock Knob Tract Preserved

Betty Carr Muse recently took a long-planned-for step to secure the future of the land she loves. Muse placed a conservation easement on 93 acres of woodland surrounding her home on Roanoke County's 12 O'clock Knob. The property is across from Back Creek Elementary School off of State Route 221 and provides a scenic backdrop and wildlife haven in rapidly developing Southwest Roanoke County.

Betty Carr Muse placed the conservation easement on her property in anticipation of selling it. The new owner – and every owner of the property from here on out – will be bound by the easement terms. Like most conservation easements, Muse's agreement with WVLT permits a single-family home and associated buildings such as a guest house, garage and barns, but protects the land from commercial, industrial, or residential subdivision use. Mrs. Muse is happy to leave a legacy for her property that will never include billboards, cell towers or other trappings of modern life that increasingly mar so much of western Virginia's natural landscape.

Betty Carr Muse's late husband, Leonard Muse, was a founding Trustee of WVLT and an avid outdoorsman. It had been his wish to see the land preserved. The WVLT easement assures that the scenic quality and wildlife habitat of the Muse property will be preserved in perpetuity.

## What is a conservation easement?

A conservation easement is a permanent deeded agreement that is designed to protect natural, scenic or historic features on a piece of land by limiting the types of development while also respecting private property rights.

When landowners protect their property with conservation easements, they still own the land and can sell it or pass it to their heirs – but all future owners must abide by the terms set forth in the easement.

Conservation easements are as individual and varied as the land they protect. Landowners and a land trust negotiate specific terms to meet their mutual goals. The land will never be turned into a subdivision, industrial park or strip mall, but traditional rural land uses such as hunting, fishing, farming and forestry are retained.

Conservation easements are the best way for landowners to "keep it country" while reaping tax savings for their conservation efforts.

## Catawba Valley Easement *Building in harmony with nature*

For Paul Hinlicky, ordained Lutheran minister and Jordan-Trexler Professor of Religion at Roanoke College, farming is as much about exercise and quality of life as it is about good land use.

"At my age," he says, "it's a heck of a lot more interesting than running on a treadmill."

Hinlicky and his wife Ellen are in the process of placing 66 acres of land (once part of an older farm straddling 2,300-foot Sandstone Ridge) under easement in the Carvins Cove watershed in Catawba. Already buying the land in order to keep it undeveloped, they learned about the Western Virginia Land Trust in Virginia Wildlife magazine, and contacted them.



DOUG MILLER

Ellen and Paul Hinlicky

"I bought it to keep it as pristine as I could," says Paul, "but I'm sure without this project I wouldn't be able to afford what I'd like to do now."

That includes farming, gardening, hunting and, in the future, carefully managed timbering.

Paul spent his childhood summers close to the land. His father had 80 acres in his native New York state.

"We'd cut hay and manage the woods," he remembers. "We built a pond, stocked it, raised sheep."

Paul and Ellen are building a passive solar house that will harmonize with the landscape. Through the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program, they are planting 1,400 shrubs this spring to create

wildlife habitat and plan to establish a riparian buffer along the stream their land drains into.

**"I bought it to keep it as pristine as I could, but I'm sure without this project I wouldn't be able to afford what I'd like to do now."**

"My wife and I are really children of the '60s," Paul says. "This is something we've wanted to do for a long time."

## Blackwater River Conservation Catches On

With two pending easements ready to follow three established last year, Franklin County's Blackwater River has become a conservation hot spot.

The Blackwater River is certainly deserving of conservation efforts. It is a primary tributary to Smith Mountain Lake, a drinking water supply for the town of Rocky Mount, and is listed in the Virginia Outdoors Plan as an eligible State Scenic River. This small, meandering river is also the focus of an Environmental Protection Agency pilot project that offers grant funding to farmers to fence streams and implement other practices to improve water quality.

WVLT's role in helping the Blackwater River started in 2003 with two easements purchased with grant funds from the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation.

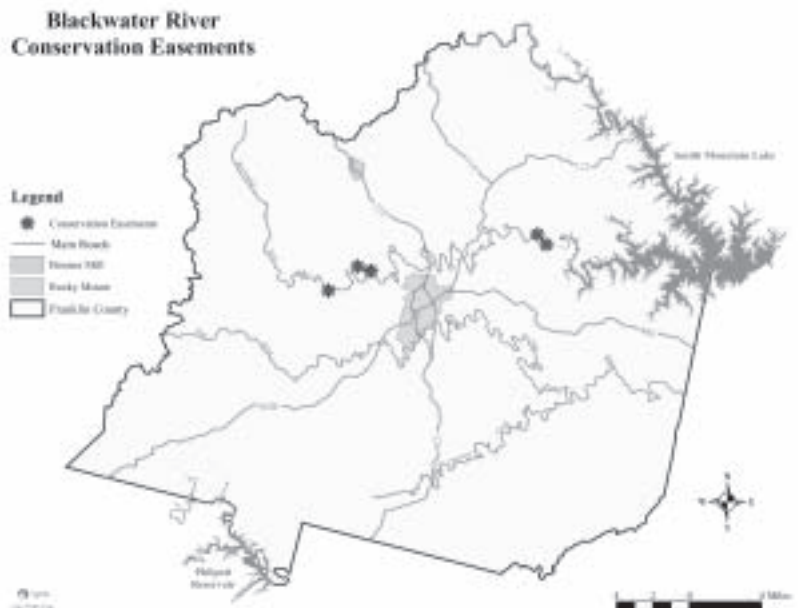
WVLT and the Blue Ridge Soil and Water Conservation District (BRSWCD) co-hold these easements and are finishing two more. WVLT is also helping a family preserve 95 acres along the Blackwater with a conservation easement through the Virginia Outdoors Foundation. When these pending deals are complete, two miles of the Blackwater will be permanently protected.

Scott Martin, Franklin County Director of Commerce and Leisure Services, says, "Appreciation of the Blackwater River is growing at a phenomenal rate. We're seeing increasing use by canoeists and kayakers, and the more people see and use these rivers, the more they want to protect them."



ROGER HOLNBACK

WVLT riparian easements maintain and expand forested buffers to protect the Blackwater River.



# Carvins Cove W



FRANK SOLITES

About a year ago WVLT pulled together a group of interested stakeholders and citizens to bring attention to the Carvins Cove watershed. As we recruited members and developed a plan, it became clear that this small but critical watershed illustrated all the types of important water quality issues that face the watersheds in which we all live.

Nature played her part, in creating the folds in the lands that formed Catawba Creek, which eventually flows into the James River. Carvins Creek and the headwaters of Tinker Creek in Botetourt County drain into the Roanoke River in the City of Roanoke.

But man has played an important part in two ways. First, a private land development company dammed Carvins Creek in 1928. The City of Roanoke purchased the dam in 1938, and 10 years later the reservoir was filled, providing a significant portion of Roanoke's water supply.

Second, two diversion/recharge tunnels were cut deep under Tinker Mountain, one from Catawba Creek to the north and one from Tinker Creek to the east near Daleville. These tunnels augmented the limited water naturally found in the 11,000 acres of the Cove and increased the effective area of the watershed to 36,440 acres, allowing Carvins Cove to remain a significant source of water for Roanoke.

The two profiles on the following page exemplify the types of good stewardship that protect water quality and other natural resources. The profiles also appear in a 12-page guide to watershed issues funded by the City of Roanoke. The issue highlights three broad topics – conservation easements, best management practices for agriculture and forestry, and lawn

and household activities that impact watersheds. The issue was mailed to all 1,500 households within the Carvins Cove watershed.

The Task Force is making progress, with a new conservation easement in the works (see "Catawba Valley Easement" on page 5), more farmers signing up for cost-share programs with the Blue Ridge and the Mountain Castles Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and increased public awareness of watershed issues. Our thanks go out to Task Force members, all of whom volunteer their time for early morning meetings, and to all the residents of the Carvins Cove watershed who are working to preserve land and water to help their neighborhood and the entire Roanoke Valley.

Thank you,

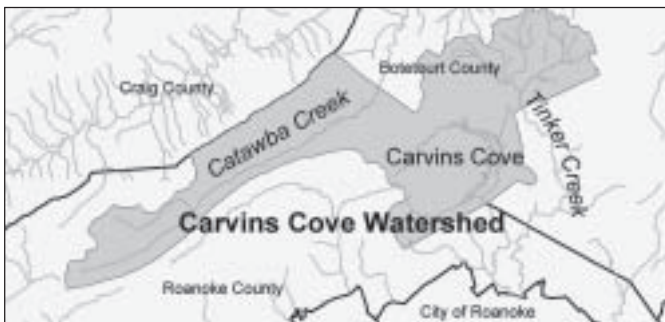
**Roger B. Holnback, Executive Director**

*Western Virginia Land Trust*

*May 2004*

## CARVINS COVE WATERSHED TASK FORCE

Blue Ridge Soil & Water Conservation District  
Botetourt County  
Botetourt Community Partners  
Catawba Civic League  
Catawba State Hospital  
City of Roanoke  
Impact & Amplitude  
Local Landowners and Residents  
Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Mountain Castles Soil and Water Conservation District  
Roanoke County  
Roanoke Valley – Alleghany Regional Commission  
Roanoke Valley Greenways  
Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation  
Virginia Tech  
Upper Roanoke River Roundtable  
Virginia Department of Environmental Quality  
Western Virginia Land Trust  
Western Virginia Water Authority



Map courtesy of Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission.

# Watershed Update

## The Cave Mill Dairy Farm: Clean Water, Clean Farming



ROGER HOLNBACK

I'm the fifth generation to farm and the fourth to dairy." Jeffrey Henderson is talking about his 350 acres of land at the base of Tinker Mountain, land whose agricultural history stretches back into the 18th and 19th centuries.

The Cave Mill Dairy Farm has been

designated a Virginia Century Farm. Henderson, with his father Jerry, two full-timers and two part-timers, farms the same land his grandfather farmed. His Hostein cows are all descendants of three registered calves his grandfather bought during the Depression in the 1930s.

Henderson has always wanted to farm. "My father-in-law put it best one day," he explains. "He said it has to be something in your blood."  
**"You learn something new every day. This business is changing constantly, and you've got to keep up."**

Farming has changed over the years – small farms, and small dairy farms, are disappearing – so running Cave Mill (which produces 7-8,000 pounds of milk a day) is an achievement. The Hendersons are exercising Best Management Practices by working through agencies including the Natural Resource Conservation Service and the Virginia departments of Environmental Quality and Game and Inland Fisheries to protect the waterways that cross their land – most significantly, Tinker Creek, which feeds Carvins Cove.

Henderson uses a combination of natural solid and liquid manure and commercial fertilizer to maintain quality and reduce erosion on his land. He has built holding tanks to collect waste from the dairy to use in manuring rather than letting it drain into Tinker Creek. He's fencing cattle away from the creek and planting buffer strips of vegetation to reduce erosion and filter the water, and building hardened walkways for cattle to reduce wear and tear on the soil.

"Long-term," says Henderson, "It'll be worth it."



DOUG MILLER

## Bill and Katherine Cochran: Preserving Land at CrossTrails

We are natives of the Roanoke Valley. We purchased property in the Catawba Valley in the mid-1980s, and built a home on it in 1995. We operated our home as a bed and breakfast for eight years, calling it CrossTrails, because it was located where the Appalachian Trail and the TransAmerica Bicycle Trail cross.

We had guests from throughout the world and we particularly liked to show Tidewater Virginia visitors where Catawba Creek meanders across the backside of our property. The creek is only a couple good leaps wide, but I would tell the flatlanders, "This is the beginning of your mighty Chesapeake Bay."

The lesson is that the water belongs to everyone. How we treat it during the brief period it crosses our lives plays a role in the blue crabs and red drum and quality of life a couple hundred miles down the way.

We don't own a major farm in Catawba, just 15 acres, but even small holdings are important when it comes to preserving a watershed. Nearly half of our property is in a scenic easement. Last year we planted 50 mast-bearing trees to benefit wildlife. An old Christmas tree planting is growing up into thick clumps of cover for wildlife. We annually plant food patches for wildlife and songbirds. We have erected boxes for blue birds and wood ducks, and have built a pond.

Fencing cattle out of Catawba Creek is one of the major emphases of the task force. It is the quickest technique to send cleaner water downstream to Carvins Cove and beyond. The fenced-in corridors rapidly grow up in plants quick to regenerate when given an opportunity.

And the benefits extend well beyond water and wildlife. More productive farms can be a result.

When Roger Holnback, executive director of the Western Virginia Land Trust, invited Katherine and me to become members of his Carvins Cove Watershed Task Force, I lectured him on the importance of not approaching farmers as if they were some kind of country bumpkins. They are the people who have been stewards of the land through the generations. Roger, I am happy to say, has approached landowners with hat-in-hand humility.

–Bill Cochran

# LANDSAVER

## Archie Campbell

By Liza Field

Walking up Pine Ridge to Archie's house, I'm flanked by his daffodils to the right, and the distant, ruby-blue mountains of Big Survey to my left. Stepping through these ancient arms of a landscape someone has cared about, embraces a person with a trust in something deep and unseen.

"Why'd you plant all those flowers?" I asked Archie up in his study that looks out over the daffodil-studded woods. I wanted to know because, on walks around Wythe County, I was always bumping into Archie's garden. For decades he'd meticulously divided his bulbs among friend and stranger, so that daffodils now spread to the far reaches of our landscape, floating out of obscure woods, beaming from walkways or empty lots, bursting from the dead leaves like a garden party in March.

"Years ago in the county," Archie told me, "Gardening was considered sissy for a man. Well?—" this famous sportsman and statesman scoffed. "I thought that was a darn shame. So I decided to do something about it."

Flowers were not the only land cultivation Archie "decided to do something about." His respect for conservation made its mark in the General Assembly, through years of his service there. Maintaining a working farm, canoeing creeks, hunting, gathering spring mushrooms in the woods, he embodied the agrarian statesman. Grounded in a real place, aware that our life depended on the soil, a delegate like this could span the gap between theory and practice, politics and nature, Richmond and our mountains.

Archie's love of nature most affected our landscape and WVLT through his work to protect Big Survey. Back in 1996, I didn't know a soul who cared about the place, and it bothered me.

"This guy wants to buy those mountains from the heirs," I told Archie on Election Day, where I'd bumped into him at the high school polls. We were gazing toward the purple folds of Sand Mountain, and Archie looked intrigued.

A timber agent, I'd been told, was working to get two million dollars from Weyerhaeuser to purchase the 10,000 acre tract, which he intended to log, then chop into subdivisions. "Where do I find two million bucks?" I wondered without hope.

"Huh!" Archie coughed with scorn at this silly detail. "I've been wanting to save Big Su'VEY for thi'ty years!"

He listed off landowners to contact, and went to work with VOF's Tamara Vance, writing a conservation easement for the town's watershed—a step critical to getting support for the surrounding land. Archie's magnetism even brought local foresters to Town Council to support this deed restriction. When Council nonetheless voted it down, Archie already had Plan B in his back pocket—a formal resolution to protect the land, which council did approve.

By now on the board of WVLT, Archie helped connect lawmakers, property heirs, state agencies, skeptical town officials, and

county supervisors to keep the unwieldy project on track.

The state agency interested in the Big Survey needed a \$3 million loan from the General Assembly, which Archie's influence helped garner against all odds. But the agency also needed numerous thousands—immediately—for the option, appraisals, and legal transactions. The dilemma did not disturb Archie one particle. This jubilant man, at 79, had just married the nature-loving Mary Lou Harned.

Archie called up one day and sent me in his usual style ("Go! Now! Don't ask why!") off to crash someone's conservation meeting at the local college. Mary Lou's daughter, Hollis Wild of N.C., had told Archie of fellow conservationists who'd be attending.

"Archie Campbell said you should see this," I mumbled to some N.C. river advocates, who skipped their lunch break and sat dutifully through a Big Survey slide show.

Within two months, Mikki Sager, a N.C. representative for The Conservation Fund, had secured TCF's support, its clout, lawyers, and the funding needed to secure the deal.

Archie only chuckled with glee, dismissing any credit for another link to his beloved mountains. "If I hadn't married Mary Lou," he declared, pleased for this one stroke of genius, "None of this would have happened!"

As I descended their Ridge, between a thousand frail daffodils and the fire-blue glow of Big Su'VEY, I think about Archie's faith in the potential for doing the impossible. —For making beauty where it wasn't, for keeping greenery where there could have been ruin, and creating unity among many disparate souls to support the good of one place.

If even a few of us, in Virginia, could hold such a high vision, while digging in with our hands, the landscape in 50 years might still resemble the garden Archie Campbell has saved in my county.

While going to press, we received word that Archie Campbell passed away quietly on June 1, 2004. He will be greatly missed.



Former WVLT director Michael Van Ness, Charlotte Burnett from the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation and Mikki Sager, NC rep. for The Conservation Fund—three of many conservationists brought together by Archie Campbell—view the Big Survey.



RON CRAWFORD

## READ MOUNTAIN UPDATE

### *Land purchase effort seeks grant funding*

A new funding effort is underway to purchase 160 acres of Read Mountain in Roanoke County. The property will be permanently preserved as a natural area and greenway.

The Read Mountain Alliance (RMA) and WVLT continue a partnership to preserve one of the Roanoke Valley's landmark peaks. The effort to preserve at least 500 acres of the mountain's highest elevations was partly realized in 2002 when WVLT accepted a conservation easement on 90 acres. A recent grant application made by Roanoke County on behalf of RMA promises to secure funds to purchase an adjacent 160 acres. If this effort is successful, 250 acres of Read Mountain will be preserved, getting us half way to our goal.

RMA leader Ron Crawford persuaded Roanoke County to submit a \$200,000 grant application to the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation. If awarded, the grant will provide matching funds to purchase 160 acres to be owned and managed by the County. The property will be natural parkland, left undeveloped and undisturbed but for a public hiking trail.

Crawford completed the detailed grant application and RMA is responsible for providing the matching funds. Past Alliance fundraisers provided a head start by building a nest egg of \$40,000 administered by WVLT that can be used only for the preservation of Read Mountain. With this start and some anticipated in-kind services, Crawford estimates that the Alliance will need to raise \$150,000. Gifts will be solicited over the next six months with a main fundraising campaign to begin with the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Take a Hike-a-Thon on September 12.

Even if the grant effort is not successful, RMA has an agreement to purchase at least 40 acres of the property that would preserve the top ridge and provide hiking access. With or without matching grant funding, all private contributions will be used to preserve land on Read Mountain. But if enough money isn't raised, the property will be sold to another buyer and most probably developed. This opportunity is a last chance to realize RMA's vision of saving Read Mountain for the benefit of all.

For more information, visit RMA's website at [www.readmountain.org](http://www.readmountain.org). Tax-deductible gifts to help save the mountain should be made out to Western Virginia Land Trust and mailed to WVLT, 722 First Street, SW, Suite L, Roanoke, VA 24016. Please note on the check that the gift is for the Read Mountain Fund.

*"My years in the Roanoke Valley were sheltered by Read Mountain. I learned to see in its shadow. Tinker Creek, flowing at the mountain's base, is only part of its beautiful world.*

*I urge us to protect this glorious treasure, to preserve it as it has stood for years. Protect Read Mountain from development, for the views of it from afar and for the vistas from its peaks.*

*Preserve it for its natural and cultural heritage, for the sake of those who have gone before us, and those who will come after us.*

*Please, shelter it from harm."*

Annie Dillard, Pulitzer Prize winning author  
of *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*.



RON CRAWFORD

*RMA volunteers take a break from trail building.*

*We are students in the fourth grade at Bonsack Elementary School. We can see Read Mountain from our classroom window. We think it is a beautiful mountain that we admire. Even though we are students, we understand how important the mountain is to us.*

*The mountain is fun to hike on, have great picnics on and enjoy the view from. If houses are built on the mountain there will be erosion. Animal habitats will be destroyed and oxygen will be decreased. We have learned about these things in our science and social studies classes. These are some of the reasons that we, the fourth grade class at Bonsack, think Read Mountain should be saved.*

- Letter in support of the grant application  
to purchase land on Read Mountain

## BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY UPDATE

### Partners Celebrate Last Chance Landscape Anniversary



LYNN MEYER

WVLT Trustee Anne Jennings, Executive Director Roger Holnback, Trustee Janet Scheid, Vice-President Lucy Ellett and Project Manager David Hurt at the Last Chance Landscaping press conference.

At a March press conference, WVLT, FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge Parkway, Roanoke County, and the National Park Service marked the one-year anniversary of Roanoke County's portion of the Blue Ridge Parkway being named a Last Chance Landscape.

The four partners highlighted the plan they devised to save critical parkway views, listed achievements from the past year, and spelled out what's next.

Roanoke County and National Park Service staff conducted detailed studies of the 28-mile parkway segment's most scenic areas that need preservation and the compromised views that can be screened.

The maps highlight 2,000 acres of private property that provide public value with their highly scenic views from the parkway. Respecting the fact that these lands are privately owned, WVLT and its partners are focusing exclusively on voluntary options, such as conservation easements, to preserve these views. The land trust is currently seeking funds to carry out an outreach effort to solicit conservation easements on these most critical tracts.

FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge Parkway is playing a valuable role in planning and raising funds for landscaping to screen four places where scenic views have been compromised by recent development.

The National Park service is using the new maps to plan modifications to its land management. For example, some areas may have agricultural leases not renewed to permit land to naturally reforest and block views inconsistent with the parkway atmosphere. Other areas may need expanded agricultural leases or tree pruning to showcase views that may not now

be as open as they could. There are also a few areas identified for purchase by the National Park Service if there are willing sellers and federal money is available.

Roanoke County is using the maps to better understand which viewsheds are most critical. The recent 60-acre gift by Radford and Associates (see "Last Chance Gift," page 1) preserves the highest priority viewshed identified and is what Roanoke County Administrator Elmer Hodge calls "a model for other developers to follow."



LYNN MEYER

With priority viewsheds identified and four partners with specific tasks – and the highest priority view already secured – Scenic America's "Last Chance Landscape" designation is paying off.

Dan Brown, Superintendent of the Blue Ridge Parkway, speaks of the need to preserve Roanoke County's portion of America's most visited scenic road.

## Show your support for the Parkway

by ordering a **Virginia Blue Ridge Parkway** license plate. See enclosed application, or visit [www.westernvirginialandtrust.org](http://www.westernvirginialandtrust.org) for more information.



## The land needs you!

Record numbers of landowners are calling WVLT asking about conservation easements, but funding is not keeping pace. In fact, as the Land Trust is poised to conserve more land than ever, the financial resources to do so lag far behind.

To save more land and to protect what is already under easement, WVLT needs your support. If you are not a member, please join today. If you already support WVLT, please consider a special gift.

***Give today to save land for tomorrow!***

## WVLT Approaches 14,000 Acres – And Then Some!

Since 1996, WVLT has helped secure the preservation of nearly 14,000 acres. With 44 completed projects from 1996 to the end of 2003, we now have 30 additional pending projects and receive calls from landowners on a daily basis.

Several partners deserve a share of the credit for many of these projects. The Virginia Outdoors Foundation, local Soil and

Water Conservation Districts and the New River Land Trust co-hold conservation easements with WVLT, and each project was dependent upon conservation-minded landowners who cared about the future of the land.

### Pending Projects

The following projects represent pending conservation easements with some reasonable assurance of completion before the end of the year. Although there is no guarantee that each project on this list will be finalized, it offers a glimpse of the strong interest in conservation easements throughout WVLT's service area.

<u>County</u>	<u>Projects</u>	<u>Acreage</u>
Bedford	6	814
Botetourt	2	67
Floyd	2	350
Franklin	12	1,698
Henry	1	173
Montgomery	2	681
Patrick	1	208
<u>Roanoke</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>181</u>
Total:	30	4,172



DAVID HURT

*McDonald's Mill sits on a 289-acre farm on the north fork of the Roanoke River in Montgomery County. Ned and Janet Yost preserved the property with a conservation easement co-held by WVLT and the Virginia Outdoors Foundation.*

### WVLT PROJECT YEARLY TOTALS

	<u>1996</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	(completed) <u>2004</u>	(pending) <u>2004</u>
TRANSACTIONS	none	none	3	1	8	4	14	13	1	30
ACREAGE	none	none	1,137	12	803	8,545	1,128	1,634	60	4,172

### COMPLETED WVLT PROJECTS BY COUNTY

<u>COUNTY</u>	<u>TRANSACTIONS</u>	<u>ACREAGE</u>
Bedford (and City)	6	508
Botetourt	2	23
Carroll	2	131
Craig	1	122
Floyd	7	647
Franklin	11	938
Henry	0	0
Montgomery	5	1,199
Patrick	0	0
Roanoke (and City)	8	1,173
Pulaski (former territory)	1	78
Wythe (former territory)	1	8,500

**Total Number of Completed Projects:** 44  
**Total Acreage of Completed Projects:** 13,319

### Large or Small, Conservation Matters

Most WVLT projects involve conservation easements – agreements that protect open space but keep land in private hands. But the Land Trust also helps with some public land purchases from willing sellers.

WVLT's largest and smallest projects are both now public lands – the 8,500-acre Big Survey Wildlife Management Area in Wythe County and a 1/2-acre lot in Roanoke that provided a missing link to the Lick Run Greenway. From entire mountains to important small sites, WVLT is working to fulfill its mission of "providing voluntary means to preserve western Virginia's natural and cultural heritage."



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ROGER HOLNBAC

*This Franklin County donkey seems glad his owner is considering a conservation easement as he approaches WVLT staff during a recent site visit.*

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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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