



SUMMER

2018

virginiaoutdoorsfoundation.org

\$769,500 Approved for Public Access Projects



The Virginia Outdoors Foundation is directing \$769,500 from its Open-Space Lands Preservation Trust Fund to facilitate five open-space easements that will increase public access to natural areas. The funding aids with the costs associated with the conveyance of the easements.

SUFFOLK PARK

City of Suffolk, \$200,000

The City of Suffolk is interested in acquiring a parcel of land to create a city park adjacent to the Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge. A contact station, environmental education facility, and wetland restoration area are planned on an adjacent site by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The project would create a strong connection and access point between downtown Suffolk and the refuge.

CAPTAIN SINCLAIR RECREATIONAL AREA

Gloucester County, \$180,000

The Captain Sinclair Recreational Area is a 97-acre property with more than a mile of frontage on the Severn River near Mobjack Bay, gifted to the Middle Peninsula Chesapeake Bay Public Access Authority in 2013. The county approved a waterfront recreational site plan in 2015, but the lack of basic infrastructure and maintenance funds has hampered its implementation and use by the public. The funds from conveying an easement on a 40-acre portion of the property would help create fishing access and other recreational opportunities on the waterfront.

CULPEPER CROSSING AT RAPPAHANNOCK STATION

Culpeper County, \$150,000

Situated on the south bank of the Rappahannock River at the Town of Remington, Culpeper Crossing is historically significant for its strategic importance to Union and Confederate soldiers seeking to control the territory around the river. The property is highly visible and provides public access opportunities for heritage tourism and waterfront recreation. The Civil War Preservation Trust has a purchase contract on 200 acres that includes this tract and intends for it to be included in their



Captain Sinclair Recreation Area

proposed Brandy Station-Cedar Mountain state park.

LEE MEMORIAL PARK

City of Petersburg, \$139,500

Lee Memorial Park once contained more than 1,700 acres, but has been reduced to roughly 300 acres over the years. The park was largely developed by the Civilian Conservation Corps and the Women's Division of the Works Progress Administration during the Great Depression. Today, it's listed on the National Register of Historic Places and offers trails, historic areas, gardens, and access to Wilcox Lake. The easement would protect natural areas in the park as public open space for future generations.

TUCKER FAMILY CEMETERY

City of Hampton, \$100,000

Located in the historic Aberdeen Gardens community, this cemetery belongs to the descendants of the first American born of African descent, William Tucker, who was born in 1624. As such, it is one of the oldest African-American historic sites in North America. The Tucker family recently formed the William Tucker 1624 Society to preserve and restore the cemetery in honor of our shared heritage as Virginians and Americans, and VOF's grant will not only assist with this effort but also ensure that the cemetery remains a publicly accessible resource into the future.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Eleanor Brown (Chair)
Viola Baskerville
Raul Garcia Lopez
Elizabeth Obenshain
Stephanie Ridder
Thomas G. Slater, Jr.
Brent Thompson

OFFICE LOCATIONS

Executive Office / Northern Region

39 Garrett St., Suite 200
Warrenton, VA 20186
(540) 347-7727

Appalachian Highlands Region

468 Main St., Suite 400-B
Abingdon, VA 24210
(276) 623-8256

Central Region

1010 Harris St., Suite 4
Charlottesville, VA 22903
(434) 293-3423

Shenandoah Valley Region

103 East Beverley St., Suite B
Staunton, VA 24401
(540) 886-2460

Southeast Region

600 East Main St., Suite 402
Richmond, VA 23219
(804) 314-9557

Southwest Region

900 South Main St.
Blacksburg, VA 24060
(540) 951-2822

Tidewater Region

P.O. Box 909
Tappahannock, VA 22560
(804) 443-3029

Reaching More Communities

Letter from the Executive Director

During most of VOF's first 50 years, we worked primarily in the countryside, protecting Virginia's farms and forests at a rate of nearly two acres every hour. The resulting portfolio is unmatched anywhere in the country: more than 4,000 open-space easements on properties ranging from a few acres to several thousand acres in size.

By the time I was hired as executive director in 2013, VOF had protected land in all but two counties: Buchanan and Dickenson. However, VOF was underrepresented in Virginia's independent cities, where we protected open space in just 13 of 38 jurisdictions.

One reason for this gap is that open space is a scarce commodity in urban areas. Another reason is that Virginia law requires open-space easements to comply with local comprehensive plans. Since these plans tend to emphasize development and growth in cities, open-space preservation has been largely viewed as a rural priority.

From a planning perspective, this makes sense. It is generally preferable to let developed areas be developed, and prevent sprawl from encroaching into the countryside. Concentrating growth allows infrastructure to be more efficient, which means a better return on tax dollars.

However, cities need green space, too. Parks, gardens, waterfronts, and other natural areas play a vital role in shaping the quality of life in communities. They offer people a respite from urban life. They serve as playgrounds and classrooms for children, improving health while fostering an appreciation for the natural world. For many people who will never own land and don't have the means to travel far, urban green spaces may be the only opportunity to grow their own food, see wildlife in its natural habitat, or dip their toes in a stream.

The motivation behind VOF's creation in 1966 was to preserve these natural connections for future generations—not just future generations of landowners, but future generations of all Virginians. While we have had great success, some communities have benefitted more directly than others.

Over the last few years, our board has expressed a desire to balance our work, to engage more communities, and to provide more direct benefits to more people. To get us there, the board has earmarked most of our Preservation Trust Fund money in recent years for projects that expand public access for recreation and education, especially in cities where we have not worked before.

Over the last five years, we have earmarked more than \$2 million for such projects. We have completed projects in three new cities: Richmond, Norfolk, and Alexandria. We are close to completing our first project in the City of Charlottesville, and we have begun exploring opportunities in Petersburg. We have also been working more in Hampton, Virginia Beach, Radford, Roanoke, Suffolk, and other urban and suburban communities where opportunities to increase public open space exist. The common thread between these projects is the desire to connect more people to open space.

The response to this work has been amazing. New communities have embraced our mission. We are building new relationships and finding new allies. People who didn't know what VOF was 10 years ago now see us as a key partner in their communities. The more success we have, the more we hear from other communities that want to explore ways to work together, too.

It has been deeply gratifying to be part of this effort. We are achieving more than land conservation; we are preserving the connections that make people want to conserve land. Whether our work is preserving the farms of the Shenandoah Valley or the playgrounds of Northern Virginia, we are committed to making sure that all Virginians benefit from the preservation of our natural treasures.

Brett Glymph, Executive Director
bglymph@vofonline.org



Bacon's Castle Plantation, Surry County

23,446 New Acres Protected in 2017

The Virginia Outdoors Foundation recorded 75 new open-space easements in 2017, protecting 23,446 acres of open space for farming, forestry, and recreation in 47 localities.

One of the largest easements is on Bacon's Castle Plantation, a 1,260-acre farm in Surry County that surrounds the oldest documented brick dwelling in the United States. The house, now owned by Preservation Virginia, was built in 1655 for merchant Arthur Allen and later became known as Bacon's Castle because it was the site of an uprising against the Colonial government led by Nathaniel Bacon. The owner of Bacon's Castle Plantation, a 10th-generation Surry County farmer whose mother grew up on the adjacent property that is now Chippokes Plantation State Park, worked with VOF, the Department of Conservation and Recreation, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service to complete the easement.

Another new easement is on a 9-acre tract in Virginia Beach, protected in partnership with the Living River Restoration Trust, the City of Virginia Beach, and the Department of Conservation and Recreation. The property, a mix of wetlands and forest, will eventually become the first public park in Virginia Beach offering paddling access from the southern shore of the Elizabeth River.

In addition to the new easements, VOF amended 27 existing easements to increase protected acreage and improve conservation. The foundation also took ownership of 1,100 acres of high-value conservation land as mitigation for impacts to 11 easements from two proposed federally regulated natural gas projects.



VA FIRST LADY JOINS TROUT RELEASE AT BRM

For more than a decade, students participating in Trout Unlimited's environmental education program Trout in the Classroom (TIC) have been raising brook trout in their schools and releasing them in state-approved streams around the Commonwealth. Recently, some schools in Northern Virginia have gotten permission to release their trout in Catharpin Creek at VOF's Bull Run Mountain Natural Area Preserve. Biologists weren't sure whether the trout would survive, but recent surveys have shown that they are taking hold. At a TIC release in May, students from Deer Park Elementary and Mountainside Montessori were joined by VOF staff and First Lady of Virginia Pam Northam, who participated in TIC herself as a teacher in Virginia Beach. They released dozens of trout and learned about the history and ecology of the preserve.



FOLLOW US ONLINE

- ▶ facebook.com/virginiaoutdoorsfoundation
- ▶ virginiaoutdoorsfoundation.org

HELP KEEP OUR RECORDS UP TO DATE

Please notify us if you have a new mailing address, email, or phone number. Send your new info to bcabibbo@vofonline.org or call (540) 347-7727.



From left, Joseph Reeder, VOF's Leslie Grayson and Kristin Jones, and Lance Mallamo from the City of Alexandria.

VOF Records First Easement in Alexandria

The Murray-Dick-Fawcett House in Old Town Alexandria is now permanently protected for the public by historic preservation and open-space easements held by the Virginia Board of Historic Resources and the Virginia Outdoors Foundation.

The easements were conveyed thanks to \$1.25 million in grants from the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation and VOF's Preservation Trust Fund.

The easement held by the Board of Historic Resources protects the historic house and garden and will be administered by staff of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR). The Board of Historic Resources holds 19 other historic preservation easements in Alexandria's Old Town district.

VOF's easement ensures that the garden will be permanently open to the public, and is the foundation's first open-space easement in the City of Alexandria.

The completion of the easements comes approximately one year after the City of Alexandria acquired the property from its owner, Joseph Reeder, using the grants and an equity donation from Mr. Reeder. The city granted Mr. Reeder a lifetime tenancy as part of the acquisition, and he will open the house to the public for special events several times a year. Eventually, the house will be converted into an educational center focused on domestic life in the 18th and 19th centuries.

"This project has been a perfect partnership with VDHR," says VOF Executive Director Brett Glymph. "Together we are protecting the fascinating historic structure and its adjoining open space. Most importantly, we are helping the City of Alexandria make this treasure accessible to the public for

generations to come."

Built circa 1775 for Patrick Murray, with distinct building campaigns in 1785 and 1796, the Murray-Dick-Fawcett House has long been recognized as worthy of preservation. In 1936 the Historic American Buildings Survey documented the property for its architectural and historic significance, and in 1966 the property was designated as a contributing resource to the Alexandria National Historic Landmark District. The district, now known as Old Town, is a destination for an estimated 3 million visitors a year.

Even within the historic context of Old Town, the house is unique. It is the only existing vernacular, middle-class frame dwelling of its period, and one of the few remaining examples of such a dwelling in any urban setting in Virginia.

The adjacent open-space garden area is also significant. From 1775 until 1970, it served a variety of commercial uses. It was the site of the original owner's commercial livery, and later repurposed as a grocery, a laundry, and finally a two-story school/office building used by a nearby church. Preserving the space enhances the historic setting of the house and maintains the historic Old Town streetscape.

The garden is currently open to the public, providing a welcome respite along busy Prince and S. St. Asaph streets. The house will be open to the public on a limited basis at first, with expanded access to follow. Together, VDHR and VOF will steward the house and its open-space, and the City of Alexandria will maintain the house as required by the terms of the easements. The Office of Historic Alexandria will operate the site as part of the city-owned museum system.

Decades-long Effort in Loudoun Reaches Milestone

A new open-space easement recorded by the Virginia Outdoors Foundation in Loudoun County is the final piece of the puzzle in a decades-long effort to create a regional park at the intersection of Routes 15 and 50, known as Gilbert's Corner.

Gilbert's Corner Regional Park, one of 33 regional parks owned by the Northern Virginia Regional Parks Authority (NOVA Parks), lies within the Aldie Battlefield Study Area that stretches along Route 50 through the town of Aldie. The park offers hiking trails, interpretive signage, and rolling countryside with a view of VOF's Bull Run Mountains Natural Area Preserve.

VOF kickstarted preservation of historic resources in the area in 1981, when the foundation acquired Aldie Mill, an historic grist mill located in town. VOF spent more than a decade raising \$1.5 million to restore the mill and open it to the public, donating it to NOVA Parks in 2006.

In 2005, the Mount Zion Preservation Association (MZPA) acquired 86 acres at Route 50 and Watson Road, and NOVA Parks purchased it from them 2009 for the purpose of becoming Gilbert's Corner Regional Park. Funding sources required that the parcel would be protected with a permanent open-space easement through VOF. The easement was recorded on March 28, 2018.

"This easement brings us one step closer to fulfilling a vision laid out by many partners over several decades," says VOF Deputy Director Leslie Grayson, who worked on the Aldie Mill restoration. "We are very proud of the role that we have played."

A key partner in the effort has been the Piedmont Environmental Council. In 2009, PEC purchased an additional 68 acres of adjacent property and sold it to NOVA Parks

to expand the park. In 2013, PEC also received a gift from Roundabout Partners LLC of 141 acres on the other side of Route 50. This property is now known as Roundabout Meadows, and PEC works collaboratively with NOVA Parks on a variety of public education and interpretative programs that highlight the area's unique resources.

"Creating the Gilbert's Corner Regional Park was critical to saving the character of the historic landscape in that location, which has long been viewed as an entry point to the rural Piedmont and, moreover, a key crossroads within the Journey Through Hallowed Ground Natural Heritage Area," says Christopher Miller, president of PEC. "The VOF easement ensures this landscape will remain forever for future generations to see and experience, firsthand."

The project at Aldie ties into a broader effort involving historic battlefields in the region. In December 2017, Governor Terry McAuliffe helped dedicate The Battle of Upperville/Goose Creek Bridge Historic Park in Upperville. This parkland acquisition completes an effort by NOVA Park, the Civil War Trust, and many other partners to have a chain of historic parks along Route 50 that tell the story of the Battles of Aldie, Middleburg, and Upperville. Gilbert's Corner and Mt. Zion Church, which was a hospital during the battles, are the eastern points on this chain. Mt. Defiance, which will open to the public this summer, was a central site in the Battle of Middleburg, and Goose Creek Bridge represents a turning point in the Battle of Upperville.

Says Paul Gilbert, executive director of NOVA Parks, "We are thrilled to work with VOF on the completion of this easement that is part of this larger effort."

New Waterfront Park Being Developed in Virginia Beach

Nine acres on the Elizabeth River are set to become a waterfront park, thanks to a partnership between the Living River Restoration Trust (LRRT), the Virginia Outdoors Foundation, the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, and the City of Virginia Beach.

LRRT bought the site late last year, securing \$141,525 from the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, \$73,475 from the City of Virginia Beach Open Space Program, and \$55,000 from VOF's Preservation Trust Fund. VOF placed an easement on the property, and LRRT gifted the parcel to the city. The easement, which was recorded in January, limits development on the site while also requiring permanent public access.

"This has been such a unique opportunity not only to conserve some of the last lands on the Elizabeth River but also provide public access to one of the most scenic portions of the river," said Diana L. Bailey, chair of LRRT.

Urban sites like this one are becoming increasingly vital to state and local conservation efforts. The Elizabeth River shoreline provides drainage for the city's built areas, helping to prevent flooding in surrounding neighborhoods and protect water quality in the river. And access to the river means a healthier city in other ways as well.

"Projects like this are important because research tells us, and common sense supports, that there is a direct correlation between mental and physical health and access to nearby open space for people who live in urban environments," said Brett Glymph, VOF's executive director.

The park will be the first in the city to offer access to the southern shore of the Elizabeth River for public recreation, with a kayak launch, trails, parking and other potential amenities managed by Virginia Beach Parks and Recreation. The city expects to open the park later this year. ✨

Civil War Site in Culpeper Receives Protection

The southern edge of Hansbrough Ridge in Culpeper County has been known by some colorful names: Devil's Jump, Wicked Bottom, and, in a short-lived attempt to rebrand the area for clean living, Temperance Hill. The names indicate a rich history, one that the Civil War Trust (CWT), the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR), and the Virginia Outdoors Foundation (VOF) are working to preserve by recording two conservation easements on 174 acres that include the ridge and its slopes, which are part of Brandy Station Battlefield.

While both easements are designed to protect the property permanently from development and will guarantee public access, one will be administered by VDHR and contains additional provisions protecting the historic aspects of the property.

"The Department of Historic Resources is pleased to partner with VOF in the ongoing stewardship of this site to preserve and interpret it for current and future Virginians and visitors to the state," said VDHR director Julie V. Langan.

The VOF easement contains restrictions that prohibit division of the property, protecting its scenic and natural values and the historic setting and landscape of the battlefield.

The landscape around the battlefield site is a vital link to the past. After the Battle of Brandy Station in 1863, the influx of more than 120,000 Union soldiers dwarfed the population of Culpeper County (12,000 in the 1860 census, more than half of whom were slaves). Over the course of five months, thousands of these soldiers camped along the crest of the ridge, home not only to infantry and cavalry troops but also to soldiers' visiting family members and to large hospitals where doctors, nurses and volunteers treated sick and wounded men.

VDHR listed Hansbrough Ridge as a Virginia Historic

Landmark in 2001, and in 2008 the site was named part of the Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area, a federally designated 175-mile corridor that extends across Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Maryland and Virginia.

"As a Civil War site, Hansbrough Ridge is unique," said Civil War Trust President James Lighthizer. "You just have to walk up to the top of the ridge to see how special it is. There are commanding views of the landscape in all directions, which made it a crucial defensive position during the Civil War."

Developers saw an opportunity to market those views in 2015, when they bought the property with the intention to develop a dozen residential lots. Reacting quickly, CWT negotiated a purchase of the tract before any development occurred, seeking support for the \$900,000 acquisition from VOF and the American Battlefield Protection Program, with the addition of a noncash donation from the owners that put the purchase price within reach.

A conservation easement on the ridge adds to the preservation of numerous significant battlefield properties in Culpeper County, including Culpeper Crossing—12 acres of historically significant battlefield land offering recreational access to the Rappahannock River. VOF's trustees approved funding for an easement on Culpeper Crossing at their February meeting.

Ultimately, the goal is to incorporate these properties within the Brandy Station and Cedar Mountain battlefields into a state park with educational and recreational opportunities. The views from Hansbrough Ridge will once again provide perspective. "From the top of the ridge, people will be able to read about the events of that period and survey the landscape," Lighthizer says. "It will be an amazing way to see the history of this place."

Wetland Restoration to Begin at Hayfields

A project to restore 3.50 acres of wetlands at Hayfields Farm in Highland County is slated to begin this summer, pending state and local permits.

It is the first major conservation project at Hayfields since the property was acquired by the Virginia Outdoors Foundation in late 2017. The acquisition resulted from the conversion of several VOF open-space easements that are being crossed by the Atlantic Coast Pipeline in Highland, Bath, Augusta, and Nelson counties. State law requires open-space easements that are converted for other uses to be substituted with open space of greater conservation value.

The wetland restoration is part of a mitigation plan put together by Dominion Energy to comply with Clean Water Act Nationwide Permit 12, which was issued earlier this year by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Hayfields component, which will provide the required compensatory mitigation for 2.51 acres

of wetlands being impacted in the upper James River watershed, was designed and is being overseen by Resource Environmental Solutions (RES), an ecological offset solutions firm working on behalf of Dominion.

The area being restored used to be wetlands but was converted to pasture by previous owners. In order to restore the hydrology of the wetlands, RES will remove topsoil to expose the original topography, which is closer to the water table. Eventually, the hydrology of the wetlands will be recovered and the site will be restored using native wetland plants.

RES will monitor and maintain the site for the first 10 years of the project following construction, to ensure the hydrology is properly restored, vegetation is successful, and the site meets all other required criteria. VOF is exploring the possibility of being the long-term steward of the mitigation site beyond the 10-year period, whether the foundation continues to own the property or not.

EASEMENT SPOTLIGHT

Hottel & Keller Homesteads, Shenandoah County

Virginia's Germanic heritage story starts with a title dispute. Anxious to settle the Shenandoah Valley, the Colonial Government at Williamsburg began selling off pieces of land west of the Blue Ridge in the 1730s. However, there was a catch: this land had already been claimed from across the Atlantic by the British Lord Thomas Fairfax. He would file suit, but lost his case in 1786, decades after his death.

The eventual winners of the suit were the farmers who had bought the land — descendants of immigrants who had originally settled in Pennsylvania from areas around the Rhine River in what we now know as Germany. These families had migrated to the Shenandoah Valley in search of more land to cultivate, bringing with them practices that would form the bedrock of early American farming culture.

This history is being preserved in part by Hottel-Keller Memorial, Inc. (HKMI), a nonprofit educational organization that owns the Hottel and Keller homesteads in Shenandoah County. HKMI runs the Shenandoah Germanic Heritage Museum on the site with volunteers from the Shenandoah County Historical Society.

"When Bill Jake Keller left the property to HKMI, his vision was to have a working farm and a museum building so that future generations could see how people used to live off the land, using technologies that influenced modern farming," says Karen Cooper, the founding president of HKMI.

Thanks to a \$400,000 grant from the Virginia Outdoors Foundation's Preservation Trust Fund, the site is now protected permanently with an open-space easement. The funding will be put toward the construction of a dedicated museum building, the restoration of the farmstead, and the expansion of educational

programs that demonstrate pre-Civil War Farming practices.

The architecture that remains on the site is central to Keller's vision. The remains of the old Hottel and Keller homes illustrate the layout of a typical Shenandoah Rhenish house, and the 1750s-era spring and loom houses are perfect examples of 18th-century know-how. Additionally, period artifacts remain that can tell the story of daily life on the farm.

"We have a good collection of items that would be useful in the early American kitchen, as well as old tools and other items that may have been used for carpentry, cigar molds and various other items. We are just now learning how to interpret many of them," Cooper states.

The property's natural functions are also essential to the project. "We want to encourage and preserve the habitat that exists here for migratory birds, butterflies and bees, get rid of invasive plants, and replace them with native ones," she says. Future plans also include creating a trail on the property that would connect with the Big Blue trail in the adjacent George Washington and Jefferson National Forest.

"As we see more and more housing come up in this area, we really feel that there should be something preserved so that people can imagine what life might have been like back then," Cooper adds.

Laura Thurman, a VOF easement manager who served as the project lead, agrees. "If you drive by this place, you remember it," she says. "It exemplifies what is wonderful about the Valley — farmland next to mountains, springs and streams and the stories of the families who lived here before us. I love that this place will be shared and that the folks who own it feel such a strong sense of stewardship." ★





Executive Office
39 Garrett Street, Suite 200
Warrenton, VA 20186
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

SUMMER ★ 2018

IN THIS ISSUE

- ▶ Board allocates \$787,500 from PTF for public access projects
- ▶ **VOF records its first easement in the City of Alexandria**
- ▶ 2017 easements add 23,000 acres to VOF's portfolio
- ▶ First Lady of Virginia Pam Northam participates in trout release at Bull Run Mountains NAP
- ▶ A museum in Shenandoah, a battlefield in Culpeper, and parks in Loudoun and Virginia Beach

VOF-protected lands include more than 4,100 inventoried historic sites of state and national significance.

virginiaoutdoorsfoundation.org

Shirley Plantation in Charles City County