

A photo from the Historic American Buildings Survey, showing members of Roane family, who owned Mount Prodigal in the 1930s.

CONSERVATION NEWS

Winter 2022

landtrustva.org



LTV EASEMENT #226

Rich Land Farm Protects Decades of Preservation by Loving Landowners

Charles and Beverly Rich of Rich Land Farm in Saluda, Gloucester County, have been passionate conservationists since they moved onto the 228-acre property in 1974. The then newlyweds began restoring the c. 1690 dwelling on the farm, known as Mount Prodigal, to be their family home.

Originally, over 2,000 acres, the land where Mount Prodigal sits, was patented by the Hubbard family in the mid-1600's and they lived there until the Revolutionary War. In 1820, the Roane family purchased the property. The last Roane to own the land, Harvey Roane, sold it to Ernest Bristow,

who had a small dairy farm there until the Rich family purchased it.

The couple spent a year building a period appropriate addition onto the structure to raise their two children that included a modern kitchen and laundry room, a living room and upstairs bedroom suite. It was designed to match the original building with no expense spared, including matching roofline, window size, brick color and pattern. Heart pine floors were milled from railroad ties and installed. Over the next 17 years they restored the original

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Charles Rich receiving his award from TSWCD in 2021.

Rich Land Farm (continued)

house one room at a time with Charles noting, “if I had extra money, I did something on the house.”

All the while, Charles ran a farming operation that he began after graduating from high school in 1967, including raising cattle, hogs, grain, and timber. From the beginning he was focused on conservation practices including erosion control, no-till farming, growing cover crops and maintaining and practicing a Nutrient Management Plan on all his cropland acres. This dedication and leadership earned him a Clean Water Farm Award in 2021 from the Tidewater Soil and Water Conservation District (TSWCD).

Recently retired and planning for the future, in the early spring of this year the Riches reached out to Conservation Partners, LLC to discuss the possibility of pursuing a conservation easement to protect the property from development.

“They gave me the nuts and bolts of what needed to be done and my wife and I liked what we heard,” said Charles. “The money down here comes from solar farms and subdivisions. I wanted this tract of land to stay just the way it is because I have a real attachment to this land.”

In addition to Mount Prodigal, the property contains 114.7 acres of “Prime Farmland Soils” or “Farmland Soils of Statewide



Importance”, 111 acres of forest, and 8.73 acres of wetlands including a 1.8-acre pond.

A conservation easement was recorded with LTV in October with funding from LTV’s Malcolm Forbes Baldwin Fund, used to assist with costs to protect agricultural properties. We are honored to participate in the stewardship of this land and thank the Riches for their generosity!

FOUR WAYS TO GIVE AND MAKE AN IMPACT!

This giving season, there are four ways you can support LTV and our work to conserve open space:



1. L.A.N.D. Monthly Giving Program: Joining our treasured community of *Landscape And Nature Defenders*, our monthly giving program is the safest, simplest, and most effective way to support LTV.



3. Planned Giving: What is it that you love about Virginia? With a planned gift, your love can last forever! A gift through your appreciated assets or will, including real estate, can make sure that the places you love are conserved for now, and forever. You can support LTV forever without giving a cent today.



2. Amazon Smile: If you are shopping from home, please consider adding us as an Amazon Smile partner. It costs nothing to you and provides ongoing support to LTV.



4. Donor Advised Fund: Have you set up a DAF? DAFs are one of the fastest growing charitable vehicles in the U.S. and are an alternative to direct giving. DAFs are easy to use and provide a large tax benefit to the donor. They are set up and administered through community foundations and financial managers, who manage the donor’s donations while the donor retains advisory privileges over how their account is invested, and how their money is distributed to the charities they like to support.

<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/54-1601471>

FROM THE CHAIR



Last December, I wrote in our newsletter how 2021 was a year of growth for Land Trust of Virginia. Little did we know that it was only the beginning of what was to come this year! I speak on behalf of the entire organization when I say that we are so grateful for the swell in support of our

mission, both from landowners interested in conservation, and from new community members attending our events and joining our ranks as advocates.

The demand on land trusts across the country and on professionals that support the easement process including attorneys, appraisers, and surveyors, has remained relentless. This has made it a difficult time to keep to hard deadlines! It was highly unusual for LTV to not record an easement until September but with such a small group of qualified professionals who do this work across the state, everyone was spread very thin! Despite these challenges, at the time of publication, LTV has recorded 10 easements, totaling over 2,600 acres across nine different counties, with the hopes of recording 10 more easements by December 31st. Another banner year of conservation wins across our highly diverse Commonwealth.

Between juggling these easement projects, we have spent this year streamlining our processes to prepare for Ashton

Cole's ascension to Executive Director in January. This was no small task with new staff needing to be hired and trained and three large fundraising events to host! Sally Price has been indispensable over the past six years and despite all the work she has done in the last year to make this transition as smooth as possible, it will still be a very hard goodbye. I hope you will join me in sending her a heartfelt thank you and good luck this holiday season.

In speaking with Ashton about our goals for 2023 and beyond, the message remains clear. Our mission is to protect open space and we will not waver from that. Each year we strive to work harder than the year before to protect farmland, waterways, rolling hills, and our nation's founding history, one easement at a time. With a staff of now NINE, new leadership, and a board of the most dedicated individuals to conservation I have ever had the pleasure of serving with, we are ready to tackle the threat of development head on!

With appreciation for your support,

Childs Burden
Chairman

ESTABLISHING AN ENDURING CONSERVATION LEGACY

Through Planned Giving

Donating a planned gift to Land Trust of Virginia's Legacy Giving Fund demonstrates a strong and deep commitment to protecting, in perpetuity, Virginia's beautiful open spaces and natural and cultural resources. By so doing, you will be supporting the continued growth of new easements and ensuring the protection of the properties already entrusted to us for generations to come. Are we part of your estate plans? Please let us know so we can thank you for your generosity.

Members of the Legacy Giving Fund

- Steffanie Burgevin**
- Childs Burden**
- Lolly Burke**
- Christopher C. Dematatis**

- Andrew S. Garrett**
- Joseph Miller**
- Kathleen Ribaldo***

**Deceased*



2022 VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR- SUZANNE OBETZ

As a community supported organization, LTV is so grateful for the dedicated help of knowledgeable and passionate volunteers. Fulfilling endlessly diverse tasks to keep the show going takes a special type of person to donate their free time in support of our mission. When staff were asked who embodies that spirit, the answer was unanimous: Suzanne Obetz.

Obetz laughed when asked how she began her tenure as an LTV volunteer in 2018.

“My first event was LTV’s Annual Garden Party, held at Rose Marie Bogley’s ‘Peace and Plenty’ at Bollingbrook,” she said. “Sally and I had worked together at another organization before she joined LTV, and she had just barely gotten started when it was this huge garden party. She called me the *day* of the event and said can you be here right now? And I said absolutely.”

That trial by fire did not put Obetz off and she completely fell in love with the Garden Party and LTV.

“I love seeing the behind-the-scenes of putting on an event like that, but my favorite part is seeing everyone so happy and smiling,” she said. “I want to tell our guests, we put so much work into this to see that expression on your face and to know you understand what LTV does and you appreciate this organization as much as I do.”

Obetz has always had a passion for history and following a return to school for a degree in Historic Preservation from University of Mary Washington, she joined the Middleburg Museum Foundation as its first Executive Director in 2018.

She brought to the organization a vision of focusing on community events and the creation of rotating exhibits of local



artifacts, explaining that if people can physically see the history, they can better connect to what this special area is really about. That mentality and creativity has made Obetz instrumental in the evolution and expansion of LTV’s Annual Garden Party and Sunset in the Field Party. She has willingly undertaken any job to ensure the guests have a meaningful experience.

“When people come to these events, they understand so much more about why this community is worth saving,” she said. “We all get so wrapped up in our everyday lives and when we see a development come in where the houses are already being built, we think, ‘oh that is so awful’ but there is so much that could have been done years before if we had been paying attention. I think that is the message the guests walk away with. We have to pay attention and be out talking to landowners about conservation easements.”

Obetz’s passion and ability to connect with others is only rivaled by her sense of humor, making even the most mundane assignments entertaining for other volunteers and staff. When asked what the best part is of being a volunteer for LTV, Obetz replied, “We are a family. A group of people that all care about the same thing and you will never not have fun!”

All of us at LTV thank Suzanne for her service and are proud to name her our 2022 Volunteer of the Year. If you are interested in volunteering, please reach out to Kerry Roszel, at kerry@landtrustva.org. We have duties for a variety of skillsets and are always looking for those wanting to make a difference in the conservation community! Plus, we have fun!

SAVE THE DATES

**25th Annual Garden Party to
Save Virginia’s Countryside**

Cocktails in the Garden
Sunday, May 14, 2023

3rd Annual Sunset in the Field Party
Sunday, October 22, 2023

WHY IS LTV EXPANDING INTO NEW COUNTIES?

Over the past two years, LTV has rapidly expanded beyond our core area of work, and we are often asked why. Isn't there more to be done in development stricken northern Virginia? The answer has been an organic evolution due to several factors.

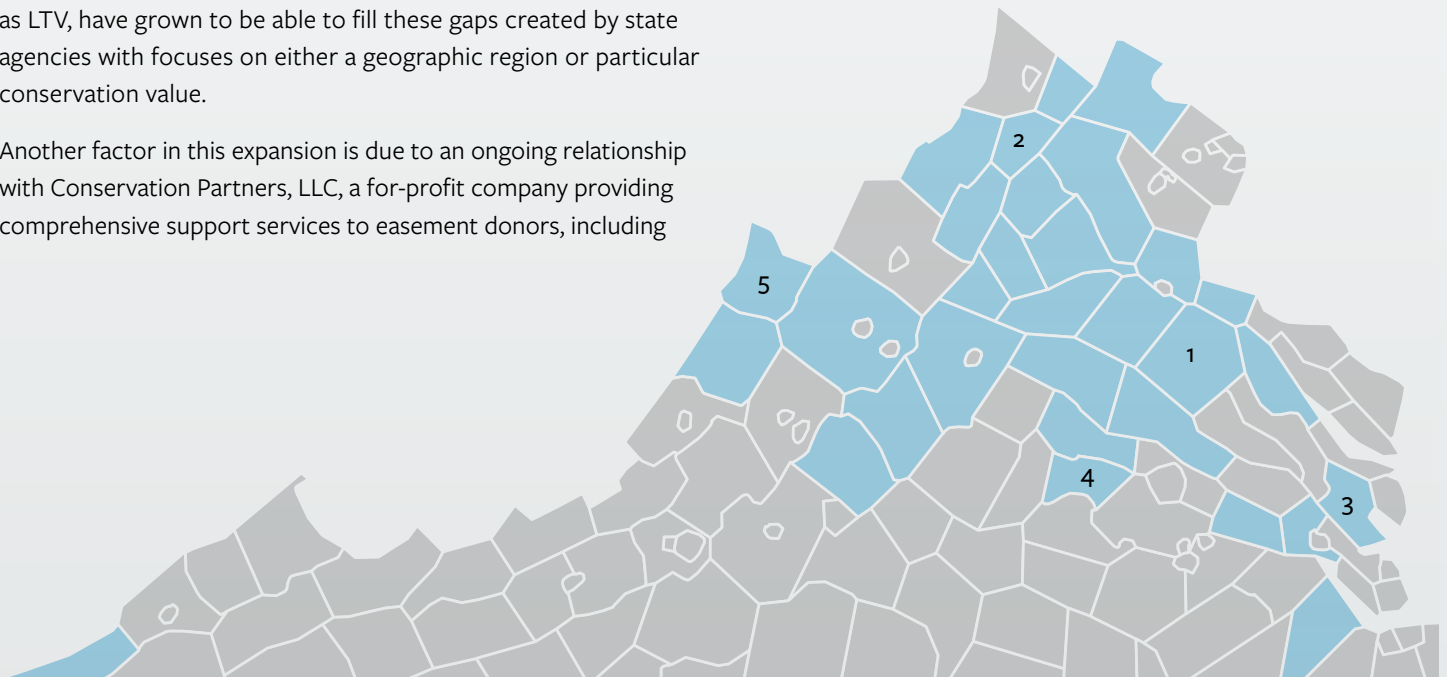
First of all, yes the rate of development in Loudoun and Fauquier counties is rapid and concerning, and we continue to work with landowners in these areas who are conserving their properties. Because the conservation easement program is voluntary, we are dependent on those landowners to reach out to us to work together on an easement. That is precisely why we have expanded from holding easements in 18 to 29 counties in just two years, with five new counties this year. We are answering the call from interested landowners across the state. We go where we are needed. Again, this is due to several factors.

The public agencies in Virginia that hold conservation easements, such as the Virginia Outdoors Foundation and Virginia Department of Forestry, have evolved to have very specific criteria for accepting easements, meaning many worthwhile properties do not qualify for their programs. Land trusts, such as LTV, have grown to be able to fill these gaps created by state agencies with focuses on either a geographic region or particular conservation value.

Another factor in this expansion is due to an ongoing relationship with Conservation Partners, LLC, a for-profit company providing comprehensive support services to easement donors, including

matching interested landowners with the appropriate land trust to hold their easement. Located in Lexington, Conservation Partners has introduced a whole new community of landowners to LTV and many of our easements over the past two years have come through that relationship.

LTV's expansion into new counties is important because it has been readily observed over the 60-year history of conservation in Virginia that easements create a snowball effect. When a landowner becomes a conservation leader by placing an easement on their property, neighboring landowners are more likely to make the same generous choice. With each new county, we are increasing the likelihood that we will create a network of protection across multiple properties, strengthening their effect by creating critical wildlife habitat and corridors, protecting an area's watersheds, and more. By creating footholds of protection across the Commonwealth, we are ensuring the future of open space for generations to come.



The 2022 LTV Easements Recorded in New Counties:

1. Bernice Rowe's 419 acres in Caroline County
2. Samer Sibay's 94 acres in Warren County
3. Charles and Beverly Rich's 228 acres in Gloucester County
4. Bob Marcellus of Hidden River Farm's 86 acres in Powhatan County
5. John and Shirley Harner's 717 acres in Highland County



A Q&A WITH OAK HILL WEALTH ADVISORS



Patrick Larkin and Jeanne Campbell of Oak Hill Wealth Advisors have been passionate supporters of LTV for many years. Their new venture launched earlier this year and we were honored to welcome them as our top Business Sponsor for 2022.



OAK HILL
WEALTH ADVISORS

Tell us about Oak Hill Wealth Advisors and what makes you unique?

Oak Hill Wealth Advisors is comprised of an experienced group of financial professionals serving Loudoun County and beyond. By leveraging our team’s varied and extensive knowledge base, we are able to serve our clients and their families, often spanning multiple generations, with comprehensive financial planning, wealth management, and investment management.

What is your mission statement?

We’ve designed our services and developed our process to build and deepen relationships with our clients. Getting clarity with the right structure in place results in confidence. This holistic process is the Oak Hill CSC Wealth Advantage.

What are your goals for Oak Hill Wealth Advisors?

As fiduciaries, our overarching goal is pretty simple. Clients. First. Always.

What inspired you to become a business sponsor of LTV?

Being residents of Loudoun County, we stand behind LTV’s conservation efforts at their very roots. We salute LTV and the vital work they are doing to protect our beautiful countryside, agricultural communities, and historical sites across the Commonwealth of Virginia.

How do conservation easements benefit your life or enjoyment of this area?

The preservation of natural and historic resources is a perk for all of us. We’ve watched the population growth in this immediate area that has led to the loss of thousands of acres of open space and natural resources, never mind the negative impact it’s had on many of our historical sites, over the past several decades. The work LTV is doing benefits us all by helping to eliminate the risk we lose the beauty surrounding us in this splendid area. Preservation and conservation of Virginia’s land should bring us all peace of mind and promise.

LTV ANNOUNCES FIRST EASEMENT IN WARREN COUNTY

17 building lots permanently retired protect the scenic drive into Front Royal.

“My whole life I was always interested in nature and the beauty of farmland,” said landowner, Samer Sibay. “It would get me so upset living in the Washington, D.C. area to see these places lost to development. I inherited this piece of property from my parents, and I was determined that it wouldn’t face the same fate. I chose to work with LTV because they provided the cost assistance I needed to protect my property with an easement. It’s a really beautiful piece of land.”

Starting in early 2022, LTV worked with Sibay to conserve his 94-acre property in Front Royal, finally recording the easement in October. Sibay’s entire property is within the Study Area and 42.3 acres are in the Core Area of the Civil War Battle of Manassas Gap. Additional natural resources protected include 27 acres of “Prime Farmland Soils” or “Farmland Soils of Statewide Significance” and 74 acres of forest cover. There is a 0.6-acre pond and 1.32 acres of wetlands.



This easement was completed with cost assistance from the Ohrstrom Foundation, LTV’s Deborah Whittier Fitts Battlefield Stewardship Fund, and the Virginia Piedmont Heritage Area Association.

LTV'S CONSERVATION TEAM IS BIGGER AND BETTER THAN EVER



Ashton, Damian, Natalie and Willy with "Big Red."

With a staff of now four working on our easement program, they have officially been coined the *Conservation Team*, ready to tackle the threat of development head on! This is the largest conservation staff we have ever had at LTV, and we expect great things this upcoming year with the recent addition of Damian Martin and Willy Kates, both joining us as Conservation Associates in August.

Damian was born in Charlottesville, VA but grew up in Bakersfield, CA and the Midwest. He obtained both a bachelor's degree and master's degree in Environmental Science with a focus in ecology from the University of Virginia. Before joining LTV, he was a Mapper for a title insurance company based out of Florida. Damian is also a freelance illustrator for a couple of breweries in central Virginia.

Willy was born and raised in Kent, CT and graduated from the University of Colorado-Boulder with a BA in history. Prior to LTV, Willy worked as an environmental educator for the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, taught middle-school social studies while dean of students at French Broad River Academy in North Carolina and most recently has worked on his family farm in Fauquier County.

Together with Ashton Cole and Natalie Burns, the Conservation Team has undergone extensive training and planning this fall on both easement drafting and stewardship. In addition to hiring more staff, LTV has been researching new software and programs to streamline our processes to ensure we are meeting the needs of our landowners better than ever before. As a final icing on the cake, Board Member Steffanie Burgevin generously donated a vehicle to LTV, affectionally named "Big Red", to ensure the Conservation Team are riding in comfort and style and not putting wear and tear on their own personal vehicles! We are ready for 2023!

 An advertisement for Loudoun Mutual. At the top is a photograph of a large, two-story house with a gabled roof and a central entrance. Below the photo is a red banner with a white circular logo containing a red silhouette of a horse-drawn carriage. Underneath the banner, the text "LOUDOUN MUTUAL" is written in large, white, serif capital letters. Below this, in a gold-colored box, is the text: "Despite wars, economic travails, and pandemics, since 1849, Loudoun Mutual has helped preserve and protect properties in Virginia". At the bottom, in a dark red box, is the text: "Please go to www.loudounmutual.com to find a local Loudoun Mutual Agent". Below that, in a white box with a faint background image of a building, is the text: "Loudoun Mutual Insurance Company", "P.O. Box 58 • Waterford, VA 20197", "PHONE 1.800.752.3458 • FAX 1.540.882.4785".

SAVE THE DATE

Land Trust of Virginia & Goose Creek Association invite you to

A Forum on Environmental Justice
February 24, 2023, at 5:30 p.m.
at the Hill School Performing Arts Center

Join LTV and GCA for a discussion on the topic of environmental justice. Enjoy a viewing of three short films, accompanied by speakers to host a conversation and reception.

Free with a suggested donation of \$5, must register in advance at landtrustva.org.





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Land Trust of Virginia

PO Box 14
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 contact Kerry at (540)687-8441 or kerry@landtrustva.org