



New River Land Trust

Conserving farmland, forests, open spaces and historic places in Virginia's New River region since 2002

NEWS SUMMER 2016

Douthat Family Farm Conserved in Pulaski County

Last year, we facilitated conservation of a farm in Pulaski County. In many ways it exemplifies what we strive for when we work to conserve the New River region's rural landscape and heritage. The owner, Tom Douthat, really gets to the heart of it:

"I grew up on the Douthat Farm, which has been in the family for over 68 years. Over the years, I have watched as several surrounding farms have been sold off to become residential and commercial properties. The northeast property line of my farm now doubles as the dividing line between the Town of Pulaski and Pulaski County. The farm that previously lay on this boundary is now an industrial park. I truly love farm life and all the beauty of God's creation. I wanted to preserve this way of life so it passes on to the next generation, and a conservation easement has allowed me to do this."



Tom Douthat

The Douthat Farm's 412 acres are now forever protected with a conservation easement with the Virginia Outdoors Foundation. Conservation of a farm next to residential and industrial land demonstrates progressive thinking on the part of Pulaski County.

However, when first presented with the

conservation easement proposal, the County had concerns about restricting the property to agriculture. The Land Trust was able to address those concerns by pointing out the benefits of conserving the property, including:

- Protecting farmland adjacent to I-81 and an industrial park provides a scenic viewshed for residents and travelers;
- Water resources are protected; The farm borders Peak Creek, a tributary of the Claytor Lake section of the New River;
- Future land use for the property had been designated as agriculture, an important sector of the regional economy.

Conserving land often requires a team effort on the part of the landowner, county government and the Land Trust. For Tom Douthat, his commitment to conserve the property ensures his farm will be there for future generations.



The 412-acre Douthat Farm

Save the Date!

Mark your calendar for our annual **Land & River Revel** event on **October 2** from 2-5pm at Smithfield Plantation. Activities will include tours of the plantation, a bird walk and tour of old growth trees, a cider press, blacksmith demos, live music, activities for kids, food, beer & wine - and more!



Historic Smithfield Plantation

In Remembrance: Dr. T. Marshall Hahn



Peggy and Marshall Hahn

When the New River Land Trust started in 2002, it hosted a regional seminar to spread the word to landowners about conservation easements as a means of protecting their family land. Dr. T. Marshall Hahn was one of the landowners who attended that seminar. After listening to a day-long panel of experts, he and his family decided a conservation easement was their best tool to protect their 900-acre farm and

mountainside in Ellett Valley. Their action gave immediate credibility to the concept of easements and the work of the New River Land Trust. Dr. Hahn's early support was crucial in the rapid success and spread of conservation easements here in Southwest Virginia. Betty Hahn, one of Dr. Hahn's daughters, currently serves on the board of the New River Land Trust, continuing the family commitment to conservation.

NRLT to Partner with Lifelong Learning Institute

NRLT will offer a seminar and field trip through the Lifelong Learning Institute at Virginia Tech (LLI) in October titled Preserving History: Conservation of Historic Places. LLI is designed to provide intellectual, cultural and social experiences for adults 50 and older.

The seminar will be part of the "VT Class Sampler" seminars and will take place Tuesday October 4th. There will also be a separate field trip to the conserved and privately-owned Ingles Ferry Farm properties on October 14th. Participants will view historic structures like the Ingles Tavern, circa 1772.



Ingles Ferry Tavern c. 1772

To learn more about LLI, classes offered and to view or order a catalog, visit www.cpe.vt.edu/lifelonglearning/

Youth Outreach Offers Outdoor Family Classes



Emily Davies leads an Outdoor Family Class

Our youth outreach initiative inspires children and families to value nature and fosters stewardship of farmland, forests and watersheds. For the first time, we are offering four free Outdoor Family Classes, one for each season. In May, we taught "Pollinator Partners," at the Pandapas Pond pollinator garden. "Animal Homes," will be held on July 23 at Heritage Park.

July 23 - Animal Homes

September 24 - Seed to Harvest

December 3 - Animal Survival

All classes are on Saturdays from 9:30-11:30. Snacks are welcome. Comfortable play clothes and walking shoes are encouraged. Classes are free, but you **MUST** register in advance. Please email emilydavies@newriverlandtrust to reserve your spot today!