



New River Land Trust

Fall 2010 • Volume 9 • Issue 2

NEWS

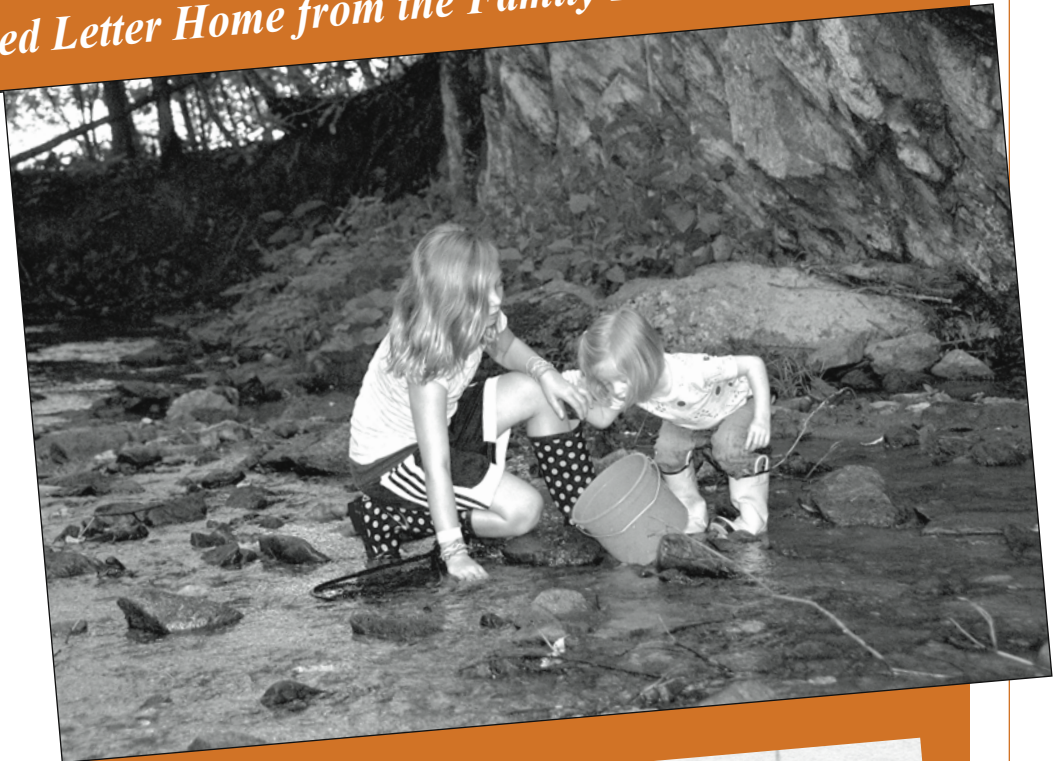
Conserving farmland, forests, open spaces and historic places in Virginia's New River region

This Land Goes On Forever

An imagined Letter Home from the Family Farm

This letter is from Molly, a 13 year old city girl staying for the first time with her paternal grandparents on their country farm. She comes to "belong" there as the place becomes more familiar and liberating in its freedoms. When she learns that it has been protected forever from future development by a conservation easement, she begins making plans to bring her own children there.

By Fred First



Dear Daddy,

I promised Gramma I would send you a letter, so I've been writing this for a few days. I'm glad you let me come here for the summer. I'm staying in your room upstairs when you were a boy. I found your name you wrote on the wall inside the closet. It is fun to think about waking up like you told me, hearing just the creek and the crickets and sometimes an owl. We leave the windows open all night. Early this morning, it sounded like waves at the beach but it was the wind in the trees.

I get up early here and its okay because there is a lot to

See Molly, page 2

do. And the mornings are cool and smell fresh, like sheets dried on the clothesline. Gramma and Grampa let me go to the hen house and get the eggs by myself, and then we had some for breakfast, and bacon, too. I'm always hungry and think food tastes better in the country.

I have my own stick for hiking. We went a long way today and Skipper went with us and he doesn't need a leash. This land goes on forever! Grampa told me about him being a boy here when they didn't have much. They planted corn with a mule and the big rocks they got out of the ground they made a wall with when he was little and they are still there under the leaves. He showed me. He said you moved some of the smaller rocks by yourself, so this is your wall too along the creek. Before I come home, I'm going to add some rocks on top.

Grampa says the big trees by the water are sycamores. They have smooth bark that looks like camouflage. I climbed up not too high in a big one that leans. He showed me where one used to be by the creek that had your initials, but it was gone now. Today Gramma showed me Queen Anne's Lace and Spicebush (It smells nice!.) It makes them seem like friends, and next year when I come back, I'll know them already.

Wow! I didn't know how much stuff to do there could be in the country. Our back yard at home doesn't seem very big now that I've explored here on the farm. Tomorrow we're going fishing again--Gramma's coming too! Then I'm taking my butterfly net into the field. Hay mowing is next week, but today, there are dragonflies and butterflies and stuff in the tall grass.

The farm was bigger long ago, Grampa said, but the highway took some of it, and there are houses like ours on some. We can't see that from here. I'm just glad we still have this place. And he said it is protected and would stay this way, even when I'm grown, that I don't have to worry about it being a parking lot or anything. It will still be fields and meadows and creeks with minnows. I can come back to my favorite tree by the frog pond and watch the blackbirds in the cattails like I do every afternoon.

When we get rain, we're going to plant more trees. I have my own shovel! I'll get to see them growing next summer. Grampa taught me this (he made me remember it): that a wise and generous man plants the trees, but others will enjoy their shade. I think he means that he's doing this for me and my children some day, because he'll be gone when they are big trees. They will remind me of him and Gramma. It will be our forest, all of us.

I am punching my initials in a can lid and we are going to hang it with wire from a limb on the tree above the pond. When I'm a momma, this will be where my kids come. I'll show them where everything is. It will still be here. Knowing this makes me really happy and thankful. Can I bring a friend next summer?

Love, Molly



In the past, New River Land Trust newsletters have focused on conservation easement stories. Conservation easements and the incredible landowners that donate easements represent the core of our work, but we felt that for this newsletter a change would be good.

In this newsletter, we wanted to highlight a number of very talented writers and photographers who live and work in the New River region of Virginia. These writers are all supporters of conservation. Their work both professionally and charitably reflects their passion for the New River region and for conservation of the region's rural landscape and heritage.

We asked each of these professionals to craft an article that fit their individual area of interest.

For Fred First that translated into something about a little girl and her grandparents farm. It should be noted that Fred is also a professional photographer and his article is accompanied by a couple of his spectacular photographs.

For Liza Field, her article is a plea to become engaged in conservation of a special trail corridor. Liza's article includes photographs from Joe Elton the Director of the State Parks for the Vir-

DIRECTOR'S CHAIR



JOHN EUSTIS

faceted approach.

This means engagement of future generations in nature as framed by Fred's letter home.

We must save our rural heritage for the next generation as well as help them to connect with the incredible classroom that is outside the walls of their homes. This message is mirrored by Liza's article which challenges us to step up to save rather than take for granted the beauty of special

Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation.

And for Ann Goette it meant an article celebrating the good work of New River clean ups in Giles County. Ann's article features stunning New River photographs from Debbie Carbaugh.

I very strongly feel that successful conservation now and in the future requires a multi-

places before they are lost forever.

Saving what needs to be saved is a matter of putting our money where our mouths are, but it is also about putting in time and effort. Ann's article and personal example demonstrates this fact. The accomplishments of her group of dedicated volunteers and the support given by the Giles County Administration needs to be duplicated in every county that is fortunate to have the New River flow through it.

It is worth reminding readers that the New River is the world's oldest river, one of only 14 American Heritage Rivers and the only one with such designation in Virginia. It is the source of a multitude of benefits including but not limited to drinking water which are critical to the health and wellbeing of our region. A region that is still largely rural. This presents us with an opportunity to steward the incredible resource that is the New River Watershed.

Our failure to conserve now will threaten the future inherited by our children, grandchildren and all the generations that follow ours. The choice is now, and it is the responsibility of everyone to meet the challenge.

The articles in this newsletter provide examples of how to do this!

Protecting the New River Trail

Walk away quietly ... The winds will blow their freshness into you, and the storms their energy, while cares drop off like autumn leaves.
~ John Muir

by Liza Field

Fresh, river-cooled air in July. Cathedral domes of yellow poplars. White sycamore limbs etching a soulful, winter landscape. Spring peepers at twilight. Corridors of peaceful solitude for weary minds.

What would the New River Trail be without these qualities? Unless we who love the

place take action, we'll soon find out.

At 57 miles, Virginia's longest State Park is also her narrowest — a mere 80-foot right-of-way through private land. This means that the quiet woodlands, songbird habitat, pastures and majestic views visitors seek along this trail are NOT part of the park. They've been kept rural by generations of private landowners.

Today, family lands are turning over at a rapid rate, leaving most of the trail corridor wide-open to development.

"Hardly a day goes by that I don't see an advertisement for 'developable' property along the Trail," said Dixie Leonard. "Without more protection of



the corridor, folks in the future will be walking through RV parks and backyards, instead of farms and forests."

When the Leonard family

put their 9th-generation family farm under conservation easement — and inspired neighbors to do likewise — their stew-

See Trail, page 6

NRLT 2009 DONORS

Our members and donors made it possible for us to save over 3,900 acres of land in 2009. We thank each and every one of you for your support. Those of you who have generously donated in 2010 will be recognized in the 2011 newsletter.

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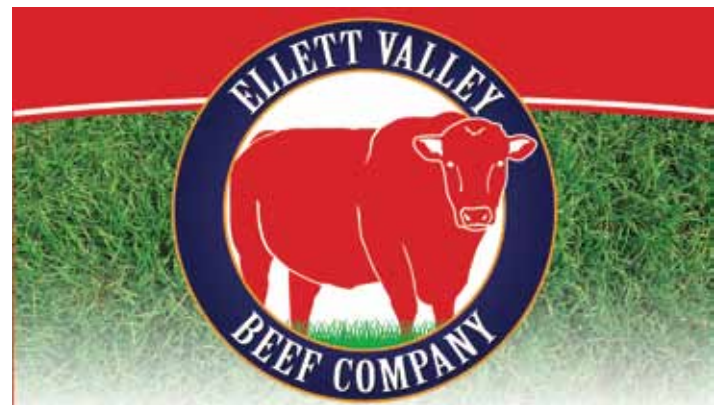
A bequest to the NRLT through your will is simple, easy and can reduce estate taxes. If you already have a will, your lawyer can add a bequest through a codicil.

Some of your options include:

- A specific amount of cash, stock or real estate.
- A percentage of your total estate.
- All or a percentage of the remainder of your estate after all other distributions are made.

If you have already made a bequest in your will to the NRLT, please let us know. We would like to thank you personally for helping to ensure that the NRLT remains an educational leader on the benefits of conservation easements.

If you would like to learn more about planned giving, please contact Annie Armistead at (540)951-1704 or e-mail annie@newriverlandtrust.org



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Thank you to these folks who have so generously hosted fundraising dinners for the NRLT. What great fun – and these dinners have raised over \$10,000 and brought us many new members!

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Our Volunteers Are The Best!

To all our volunteers who have served on our committees, volunteered for our events, and have helped in the NRLT office:

Many Many Thanks!

If you are interested in volunteering for the NRLT, please contact our Office Manager, Mona Charney, at mona@newriverlandtrust.org or 540.951.1704

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ReNew the New: The Giles Miles

ReNew's two annual clean-ups have pulled more than a thousand tires and over 12 tons of debris from the river

By Ann Goette

Steep cliffs are reflected in jade mirrors of deep water along the magnificent thirty-seven mile stretch of the New River that runs through the heart of Virginia's Giles County. There are places where a bare-footed child carrying a fishing pole could almost wade the pebbly width of the river.

The thirty-seven miles flow past farmland, wild meadows, shadowy forests, and the swirling water of creek mouths; woody islands part the river's current and secluded caves are tucked under leafy rock ledges along the riverbanks.

Since early 2006 ReNew The New has taken on the stewardship of those thirty-seven miles of the river. The ReNew Committee includes river guide organizations, Department of Game & Inland Fisheries (DGIF), National Committee for the New River (NCNR), Giles Sheriff's Department, Army Corps of Engineers, and Giles County personnel; as well as private citizens committed to the preservation and renewal of the historic New River.

ReNew The New is serious about protecting its stretch of river. Through an extraordinary commitment from the Giles County Administration, the group has



spearheaded a push for making penalties for littering more enforceable, supported the County in erecting boat ramp kiosks for use by DGIF, installed trash-pick-up bag dispensers at boat ramps, and collaborated with the Giles County Sheriff's Department in the apprehension of felons perpetrating graffiti on bridge abutments.

ReNew's two annual river clean-ups—"Ramps N' Roads" and "Fall Into the New"—have, in the past three years, pulled more than a thousand tires and over twelve tons of debris from the river. The group has met with officials at the Radford Army Ammunition Plant in an exchange of information and water monitoring concerns.

In the fall of 2008 ReNew The New and the New River Land Trust co-hosted a day-long riverside visit by officials from the Norfolk and Southern Railroad and received a commitment of proactive conservation efforts from the railroad, as well as a ten thousand dollar grant to aid river clean-up efforts.

ReNew has also submitted conservation recommendations, formally endorsed by the Giles County Board of Supervisors, for the current Claytor Lake relicensing process.

ReNew public relations initiatives extend



through a promotional song, "Re-New The New," written by Paul Moody, a ballad, "It Takes A River," written by Tom Maynard, a DVD donated by NYC installation artist, Margaret Cogswell, and posters and bumper stickers designed by Wild Country Studios.

ReNew is all about the New River. For more information about ReNew The New, please call 540-921-2525.

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Trail *Continued from page 3*

ardship protected over a mile of New River Trail viewshed, wildlife habitat and water quality in Chestnut Creek.

It also (along with buoyant crops of "For Sale" signs emerging up and down the trail) inspired the New River Land Trust (NRLT) to create the New River Trail Conservancy fund in 2002, inviting bikers, walkers and equestrians to contribute toward the collective cause of protecting the trail

corridors for future generations. This year, accumulated donations were sufficient to provide matching funds for the state's purchase of a scenic easement for the majestic cliffs along the Austinville section of trail.

NRLT's persistent lobbying also inspired the state's acquisition of the nearby "Cabbage Patch," a beautiful, large old farm between the Trail and the River. Last winter, the state rescued that property, earlier

slated for a housing development!

This year, Joe Elton, Virginia State Parks Director, provided the Trail Conservancy new signs and a donation page at the popular "Virginia Parks" website.

A cheerful, stouthearted Teddy-Roosevelt-enthusiast, Elton notes, "Public/Private partnerships are essential to our success as a nation. The private man has no right to sit back

and expect government to do it all for him."

To jump in and help protect New River Trail, visit virginiaparks.org, click "donate" and then "New River Trail Conservancy." To help protect all critical lands in the New River region, contact New River Land Trust.

Every tax-deductible dollar to either cause helps to protect farms, forests, open space and historic places in the region.



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JOIN – encourage others to become NRLT members. Help spread the message of land conservation and preservation in the New River region.

DONATE – NRLT is a member-supported organization. Your generous contributions help fulfill its mission to conserve farmland, forests, open spaces and historic places in Virginia's New River region.

ESTABLISH A LEGACY – You can help save the land and rivers that define our community by donating to the New River Land Trust either in your lifetime or in your estate. Some of your options include:

- Make a gift in your will. Talk to your financial advisor about the best way to leave a legacy to the NRLT.
- Include NRLT on your list of annual charitable contributions.
- Make a gift of land. Many people don't have heirs who will care for and love their land. One donor has chosen to leave her home and 12 acres to the NRLT.
- Consider a gift of stock.



Here's a PREVIEW of a few of the FABULOUS AUCTION ITEMS available at the OCTOBER 3 LAND and RIVER REVEL:

- This 13.5' fly fishing canoe was built in the 1930's. It has been restored by Thomson Canoeworks in Norfolk CT.
- Enjoy a guided float trip along the New River with fly-fishing expert Bruce Ingram.
- A large selection of jewelry, pottery, and gift baskets.
- The art auction features paintings by Robin Poteet, Vera Dickerson, Greg Osterhaus, and other local artists.
- The cut crystal and colored glass are amazing!



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Please join us from 2:00 p.m. 'til 6:00 p.m. for the live and silent auction, hors d'oeuvres, wine and beer & live entertainment.
The event is free to our members and friends but we hope that you will consider making a donation to support our conservation work.

at the
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Save the date
The New River Land Trust's
Annual
Land & River Revel
will be held October 3rd

New River Land Trust

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