

## Family protects miles of Claytor Lake shoreline

By JUDY SCHWAB

When Laura Bullard and her 91-year-old mother, Mary, drive their Mercedes into their Claytor Lake-side pasture, the 500-pound calves like to come over and lick the hood ornament. The Bullards don't care. The car is 26 years old, and they bought it used. All that's missing are "Farm Use" plates. The Mercedes in the pasture seems to sum up the Bullard attitude — unpretentious elegance.

These two women, with the support of their family, preserved their 447-acre farm by working with the New River Land Trust to grant a conservation easement to the Virginia Outdoors Foundation. They are also rescuing the farm from neglect through hard work. Their easement protects over 2½ miles of shoreline on Claytor Lake — assuring it will always remain as farm and forest land. Of their decision, Mary Bullard says, "When we were growing up there was plenty of everything, water, grass. I think we've done the right thing."



Photo by Judy Schwab

*Laura Bullard and cow on the family farm.*

The Bullard property is the largest privately owned tract on the lake. It lies downstream of Claytor Lake State Park along a popular route for boaters headed from the park toward the dam. The Bullards could have sold their lake shore property to developers for a

great deal of money, but they decided to protect and nurture it. Laura Bullard calls it a memorial to the family. The result of the work is a stunning view of the lake from one of the farm's pastures. The easement also ensures a stunning view from across the lake where homeowners forever will see undisturbed shoreline backed by fields and trees.

The family's commitment to land conservation was recognized state-wide. "Future generations will benefit from the Bullards' act of generosity. We appreciate this contribution towards Governor Kaine's goal of conserving 400,000 acres across the Commonwealth," said Secretary of Natural Resources L. Preston Bryant Jr.

Mary Ingles Barton Bullard is the great-great-great granddaughter of

### **New easement tax incentives benefit farmers, landowners**

A farm family who wants to conserve their land will find unprecedented federal tax incentives this year for donating a conservation easement. A farm family will receive a 100 percent federal tax deduction for up to 16 years or the amount of their easement if they act in 2007. Virginia's income tax credit, which can be sold for cash, also increases the benefits of land conservation. Call the Land Trust **now** to donate an easement this year.

Thanks to these incentives and the hard work of the Virginia Outdoors Foundation, the New River region had another record-breaking year in 2006 for land conservation with 6,700 acres protected. A total of 18,700 acres have now come under easement in our region since the New River Land Trust's inception in 2002. Landowners who give up their land's development value to conserve their family heritage deserve our thanks and support.

*See Shoreline, page 6*

# Demand for easements creates backlog in 2007

Increasing landowner interest together with generous federal and state tax incentives for land conservation have created a problem we never expected —



more easement requests than manpower to complete them.

If you own a farm or land along a river corridor or mountain ridge you want to protect, **call now** if you want to complete an easement in 2007. The New River Land Trust will meet with you to explain the benefits and restrictions of an easement and determine if your property meets state guidelines.

For the first time, however, the Virginia Outdoors Foundation, the state agency that holds easements, may not be able to complete contracts on properties under 100 acres this year. Already, 55 landowners have easement requests in the pipeline.

The Land Trust will work with VOF to prioritize lands by their conservation value, including size. We will continue our active outreach efforts and target them toward landowners with property that has exceptional conservation value in our region.

## Landowner heroes

Each landowner who comes to our office has a special story to tell, a history interwoven with their land. I only wish we could share all their remarkable stories with you.

For Tillie Wood, her daughter, Mary Jo Osteen, and granddaughter

Neville, it is a story of 21 years of providing a bunkhouse and breakfast for weary hikers along the Appalachian Trail at Woods Hole in the Giles woods. It's a setting of ancient trees and moss-covered forest floor that would make even Bilbo Baggins of Hobbit-hospitality fame proud. A handsome, white-haired matriarch, Tillie Wood and her scrapbooks of hikers will be featured in the Appalachian Trail Museum in Harpers Ferry, W.Va. Their easement protects an historic cabin and forest of pristine beauty.

*See Chair, page 3*



Photo by Ruth Babylon

*Tillie Wood on her cabin porch.*

## Please help: Talk to your legislators, Congress

The General Assembly this month appropriated \$950,000 to hire additional staff for the Virginia Outdoors Foundation. This small state agency is critical to our efforts to save land. Its lack of staff and funding has meant that we cannot complete many easements in the New River region this year.

Thank your legislators for increasing VOF's funding but urge them to make this one-time budget increase permanent. For the state, it's a minor budget item; for land conservation, it's huge.

Go the General Assembly site

[<http://legis.state.va.us>] to e-mail our region's legislators, including Delegates Jim Shuler, Dave Nutter, Bill Carrico, Anne B. Crockett-Stark and Senators Edwards, Wampler and Puckett.

### In Congress

The unprecedented federal tax deduction approved by Congress last August for conservation easements dies in December. Senator Baucus of Montana has introduced legislation [S. 469] to extend this conservation incentive.

One Virginian, Rep. Eric Cantor (R), 7th District, sits on House Ways and Means and has been very support-

ive. Please contact him, our congressman, Rep. Rick Boucher, and Senators Warner and Webb to urge their support for this legislation.

This incentive raises a landowner's tax deduction for donating a conservation easement from 30% of their income to 50% and allows qualifying farmers to deduct up to 100% of their income for up to 16 years.

To e-mail Congress: Go to home pages.

- [www.Boucher.house.gov](http://www.Boucher.house.gov)
- <http://webb.senate.gov/contact>
- <http://warner.senate.gov/contact/contactme.cfm>

## Brookside Farm and Saddle Creek Mill

Jim and Marguerite Cox of Grayson County are one of the landowning families who have chosen to conserve their family heritage this year with an easement on their farm. This farm of 443-acres, in the Cox family for over 100 years, boasts not one, but three historic buildings and is on the Register of Virginia Historic Landmarks.



The white frame farmhouse dates to 1870.



The mill with its huge waterwheel ground corn and grain into meal and flour for the surrounding community.



## Chair

*Continued from page 2*

In Montgomery County, two generations of a farm family in Riner, the Bishops, have conserved their family farm so the next generation can continue to operate a dairy and raise crops on land that could have sprouted only houses.

In Wythe County, two sisters have protected their family homeplace, Walton Furnace, that serves as a gathering

spot for widespread children, spouses and grandchildren. The huge outdoor iron furnace still stands on the farm as does the white frame farmhouse, with bedroom floorboards decorated by an itinerant minister in the 1800s.

These are just some of the lands that will continue to enrich our historic and natural heritage here in the New River region thanks to the landowners' sense of stewardship.

## Advisory Council

Nola Albert  
 Paul Angermeier and Betsy Stinson  
 Phil Araman  
 Ricky Bailey  
 Mary and Mike Barbour  
 David Bernard  
 Christy Brown  
 D. Brian Calhoun  
 Abigail Convery  
 Jackie and Woody Crenshaw  
 Howard Dickerson  
 Gary Duncan  
 Shelley and Joe Fortier  
 Robert H. Giles  
 Ann Goette  
 Joyce Graham  
 Ed Gralla and Randy Schwartz  
 Tom Greene  
 Dr. and Mrs. T. Marshall Hahn  
 Phil and Charlotte Hanes  
 Shawn Hash  
 Lynn and Linda Hayes  
 Than and Mary Anne Hitt  
 Rachel Holloway and Bob Denton  
 Lesley Howard  
 Bud and Ann Jeffries  
 Dean Jim Johnson  
 Andy Kegley  
 Jack Lawson  
 Lydeana Martin  
 Senator Madison Marye  
 Chris McKlarney  
 Matthew Miller  
 Andy Morikawa  
 Jim and Jan Politis  
 Joe Powers  
 Sherry Quillen  
 Jesse Richardson  
 Greg and Fran Rooker  
 Ron and Mary Rordam  
 JB and Joann Sutphin  
 Chris Thompson  
 Tamara Vance  
 Donna and Stan Whitmarsh  
 David and Mary Wiley  
 Ned and Janet Yost

---

# Gift of land and spirit enriches the Land Trust

By LESLEY HOWARD

In her own words, Clare McBrien, born and raised in New York City, “never knew anything about land conservation until I came to Southwest Virginia.” As a child, however, she lived near Inwood Park, on the Harlem and Hudson Rivers, and she experienced the benefits of land conservation early. She recalls spending “many happy hours of my childhood on 196 acres of primordial forest and salt marsh in Inwood Hill Park. We knew the exact spot where Peter Minuit supposedly purchased Manhattan Island for \$24. In it we hiked, rafted on the river, played ball, pretended we were Indians living there, and went sleigh riding in the winter.”

Her awareness of land conservation grew when she arrived in Southwest Virginia in 1979, as part of a mission of Catholic Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Mary. McBrien learned that the economic problems she came to address were connected to land use and ownership.

McBrien believes that “Land trusts seemed to be a wonderful way of preserving land.” When the New River Land Trust started, she “followed what they were doing.”

In 2006, McBrien continued on the path of land conservation that began when she played among the rocks and caves of Inwood Park: she gave her house and 12.5 acres of Wythe County land with a sweeping mountain view to the NRLT. Of this contribution, she says, “I always felt my house was a gift, as is all of creation. In truth we don’t own the land. Over time my spirituality has centered more on the gift of creation. It is in that spirit that I decided to deed my house to the NRLT.”

Elizabeth Obenshain, executive director of the Land Trust, described the impact of such a gift. “Sister Clare’s belief in our work and investment in our future inspires us anew to the work of saving land.” The Land Trust also expressed its appreciation to Blacksburg attorney Melvyn Jay Huber who donated his time to complete the legal work on the gift.

McBrien says she is particularly impressed with the NRLT’s work in Grayson County. “Deeding my land is my contribution to their efforts.”

*To donate land or learn about bequests or planned giving, contact the Land Trust at (540) 951-1704 or [nrlt@newriverlandtrust.org](mailto:nrlt@newriverlandtrust.org).*

---

## New board members

---

### Katherine M. Johnston

Kathy Johnston retired in 2004, after a career of 31 years in financial management, both in higher education and private industry. She began her career as a high school mathematics teacher, then moved on to become a financial analyst for Ford Motor Company.



Over a 25-year span, she held financial positions

at three universities: Virginia Tech, the University of Minnesota, and Georgia State University. She served as the Chief Financial Officer at the Academic Health Center at Minnesota and Vice President for Finance and Administration at Georgia State University. In retirement, she works part-time as a consultant specializing in grant and proposal writing and resource management analysis. She has extensive consulting experience in areas such as strategic planning.

### Jim McKenna

Jim McKenna is a Professor of

Agronomy in the Department of Crop and Soil Environmental Science at Virginia Tech. Since 1984, his undergraduate and graduate classes have addressed sustainable agricultural systems and global ecosystems. He was one of the early investigators in the use of warm season grasses in forage systems. In his mid-career Jim was involved with prime farmland restoration



and most recently has worked with agroforestry, specifically at Kentland Farm in Whitethorne.

Jim and his wife, Deb, live at Whitethorne where they raise Katahdin Hair Sheep on a small farm. He also worked as an extension agent in Rockingham and Wythe counties before moving to Blacksburg and bred Highland Cattle. A lifelong farmer and teacher, Jim is passionate about rural life and the preservation of rural landscapes and lifestyle. He sees New River Land Trust as “a vehicle to help with the intelligent growth of the New River Valley.”

### Holly Taylor

Holly Taylor joins the NRLT Board after having served for four years as the Land Trust’s Executive Assistant. She started as a volunteer, but was soon persuaded to come to work organizing and supporting the work of the executive director and board. Holly’s professionalism and organizational skills have been key to the



trust’s growth.

Before moving to Blacksburg, Holly lived for 16 years in England where her work included administration at a private American school and supplies management at a private surgical hospital. Before moving to England, Holly worked in development at the National Cathedral School in Washington, D.C., in marketing, and briefly for the University of Texas.

Holly says, “I am honored to continue to serve by being on the board and plan to use my in-depth understanding of our history, policies and procedures to help further the mission of the Trust.”

---

## Become a conservation buyer

The New River Land Trust can help you find that perfect piece of land **and** save on taxes. When we hear about land with significant conservation value — for example, on the New River or along a native trout stream — we share this information by e-mail with our Conservation Buyers List. These buyers should be willing to protect the property with a conservation easement.

New federal and state tax incentives make this transaction increasingly attractive. You can receive a federal tax deduction of 50 percent of your adjusted gross income for up to 16 years for donating an easement. A sampling of some the properties now available follows:

### **1. Beautiful farm, wildlife habitat in Giles County**

A young couple are selling their 89-acre farm up on the mountainside overlooking the valley of Spruce Run — across U.S. 460 from Newport. The views are spectacular. It is only 20 minutes from Blacksburg and Virginia Tech. This land is not on the New, but is near the New in a valley that deadends



*Snow scene on farm in Giles County's Spruce Run.*

at the river. There is a renovated small ranch house and a restored log cabin on the property. The farm also has a barn and several small outbuildings.

### **2. A forest wilderness in Wythe County**

The Trust for Public Lands has protected and is reselling 1,477-acres in the midst of the Jefferson National Forest. Mountain forest and flat wild-

life clearings are linked by extensive walking trails. The Jefferson National Forest surrounds it on three sides. A conservation easement will protect wildlife habitat. Perfect for a family retreat, retirement estate, or hunting club. Asking price \$1,300/acre.

*Join the Conservation Buyers List. E-mail Beth Obenshain at [nrlt@newriverlandtrust.org](mailto:nrlt@newriverlandtrust.org).*

---

## Earth Day Partnership with Duncan Automotive

The New River Land Trust is partnering with a locally owned business, Duncan Automotive, to promote land conservation in celebration of Earth

Day and Earth Week.

During Earth Week, April 16-22nd, the Duncan Motorplex Campus in Christiansburg at 2040 Roanoke

Street will host a display and information on the New River Land Trust while promoting the sale of hybrid and other energy-efficient vehicles.

On Saturday, April 21st, the Land Trust will join in a daylong event at the Motorplex that will focus on family-oriented, Earth-friendly activities as people try out the newest hybrid models.

Duncan Automotive will make a donation to the Land Trust for every vehicle sold.

So, if a new car is in your future, plan to join us on April 21st. This will be the Land Trust's first "green partnership" with a local corporation supporting land conservation.

---

### Your Kroger card funds conservation

You ate a lot in 2006 – and the New River Land Trust gained \$4,263.26 from your meals and snacks. Members using Kroger Gift Cards encoded with the Land Trust's number loaded almost \$100,000 on their cards. Without costing you a penny, the Land Trust received \$4,263.26 from Kroger once those dollars were spent.

Kroger donates 5% to us of any sales paid for with a Land Trust "Gift Card."

Call and we'll send you a Gift Card with \$5 of credit. You simply add more dollars each week or month at the Customer Service Counter, paying either with check or your credit card.

It's a painless way to underwrite our land-saving efforts. Call (540) 951-1704 or e-mail [[nrlt@newriverlandtrust.org](mailto:nrlt@newriverlandtrust.org)] for your free card. Shop 'til you drop. Your dollars are going for a good cause.

---

# Tax credits offer big payout for buyer, landowner

The New River Land Trust helped to sell \$1.8 million in tax credits in 2006 by directly connecting taxpayers with landowners who had protected their land with conservation easements. Tax credit buyers saved \$360,000 on their state income taxes by buying these credits from New River landowners. It's another way the Land Trust helps farm owners — and taxpayers — save both dollars and land.

If you did **not** buy a tax credit last year, now is the time to start planning for 2007. Unless you **like** paying taxes, you can benefit by buying a Land Preservation [Tax] Credit from a local landowner. You save 15 percent by buying a state income tax credit at a

discount. The landowners, who have just given up thousands of dollars in their farms' market values, benefit by selling tax credits they cannot use themselves. By selling directly to the buyer, they receive more money from their tax credit. It's a win for everyone.

This year, we already have almost \$1 million registered with the Land Trust from exceptional easements saving farms and riverfront properties. When you buy a tax credit directly from a local landowner, you not only help that landowner but also encourage more easements by assuring landowners of a market for their tax credits.

Would you like a tax credit from a farm on Claytor Lake? Or would you

prefer to help a family conserving their dairy farm in Riner? Perhaps you'd choose to buy a credit from Wythe County sisters saving an historic farm?

Consult with your tax adviser. "It's a no-brainer" is what most tax and financial planners are telling their clients. You can ask your employer to stop withholding state income taxes, deposit that money in savings, then buy a tax credit at a discount and come out ahead on your 2007 taxes.

**You must buy your 2007 tax credit by Dec. 31, 2007. Companies as well as individuals can buy and use up to \$100,000 in tax credits each year.**

For more information, call or e-mail the New River Land Trust.

---

## Shoreline *Continued from page 1*

Mary Draper Ingles, a famed pioneer who escaped from capture by the Shawnees during the French and Indian War and followed the New River from Ohio back to her home in the New River Valley. The farm the Bullards own is what's left of an original 3,000 acres their ancestors owned by the Civil War.

In 1900, Mary's father, David Cloyd Barton, inherited 700 acres and began farming and constructing the homestead there. In a drive around the farm, Mary points out those very buildings, including a house built in 1910. That white frame farmhouse is still in pristine order and in use, as a coffee mug on a front porch chair and a half friendly guard mutt indicate. Mary Bullard explains the use of the various buildings — root cellar, smoke house and a small wash house where a fire was built under a large kettle to wash clothes. Not that she would trade places. She appreciates washers and dryers. She also likes her ice maker. The ice cut in the winter was stored under one of the buildings and transported "on the running board" in her day.

Mary and Laura Bullard are both self-proclaimed "tom-boys," and speak fondly of running wild on the farm. Laura and her brothers were gone until dark everyday when she spent summers on the farm. With her father in the Navy, Laura traveled the world growing up. Since 2001 she's been farming the Bullard land full time. She's working with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Skyline Soil and Water Conservation District to improve the soil, implement rotational grazing and protect the shoreline by fencing out cattle and installing stone rip rap to reduce erosion.

The family's decision is an important conservation vic-

tory for the lake and the New River region. "This easement addresses so many things FOCL (Friends of Claytor Lake) has been trying to do on Claytor Lake - sustainability, water quality, carrying capacity and, of course, the aesthetics on the lake," said Ron Powers, president of FOCL and chair of the New River Watershed Roundtable Board of Directors. The Bullards' easement will allow all those who enjoy or live along Claytor Lake "the ability to enjoy the lake in a more pristine and natural way."



Photo by Judy Schwab

**Mary Bullard and daughter Laura Bullard on Claytor Lake farm.**

---

# LandCare expands landowner opportunities

By CHRISTY GABBARD

The activities and energy of two LandCare groups in the New River region attracted visits from the U.S. Department of Agriculture this winter. In early December, a contingent from USDA led by Adela Backiel and Ruth McWilliams, who work with sustainable agriculture and forestry, visited the emerging chapters in Grayson County and the Catawba Valley.

The New River Land Trust introduced LandCare to citizens in the region. The movement, founded in Australia, helps landowners increase profitability while making their farms and forests environmentally sustainable.

In the past few months, the USDA has awarded Grayson LandCare \$23,000 to create a plan for a local meat processing facility. State and federal agencies are working with Grayson LandCare to design a locally based livestock industry that would include local processing and distribution. A steering committee is working with potential investors and managers for a branded product based upon the quality forages and water in the upper New River Basin.

Jerry Moles, the Land Trust's consulting director of land stewardship, presented a paper about Grayson LandCare efforts in October at the International LandCare Conference in Melbourne, Australia. Representatives from the Secretariat for International LandCare in Australia visited Grayson County.

Catawba Valley LandCare has had several meetings among local landowners committed to maintaining family farms, forests, and working landscapes in the valley. Stu-



*Jerry Moles [center] explains the LandCare concept to state and federal officials on a visit to Grayson County*

dents from the Roanoke Valley Governor's School are helping to identify streams and rivers that have water quality and erosion problems. LandCare then provides information on government cost-share opportunities to landowners to restore these waterways. Two landowners are now participating in stream restoration programs. Catawba Valley LandCare hopes to continue environmentally based educational opportunities to foster a relationship among students, the community, and their environment.

*For more information, contact Jerry Moles at [jmoles@igc.org](mailto:jmoles@igc.org) / (540) 345-5628 or Christy Gabbard at [cgunnels@earthlink.net](mailto:cgunnels@earthlink.net) / (540) 544-7594.*

---

## Proposed prison site impacts New River easements

The state is considering a private company's proposal to build a 1,024-bed state prison on the New River in Cox's Chapel, a farming community in Grayson County. This proposal has generated both strong opposition and vocal support in the community and around the state. Along this scenic stretch of river, several farms are protected by conservation easements.

The New River Land Trust for five years has worked with landowners who wish to leave a legacy of land protection for their children and neighbors. We also support economic development throughout the region. To assure that Grayson County maximizes the value of the New River's scenic viewshed, we assisted landowners in put-

ting conservation easements on their properties. Some of these families have owned their land since the French and Indian War. Now a prison is proposed in the immediate vicinity.

Many county residents, including board member Dr. Jim Nuckolls and his wife, Mary Lily, have worked hard to find alternate sites for a prison in Grayson County, one that would not require millions of dollars in state taxpayer funds to construct a bridge and other infrastructure.

The state government has already invested many thousands of dollars in promoting land conservation and in developing a Blueway Canoe Trail as an economic project on this stretch of river. The federal government is also propos-

ing to spend \$2.1 million on conserving 1,000 acres of forestland on the New River in Grayson County in partnership with the Virginia Department of Forestry and the New River Land Trust. Such government investment recognizes the unique value of the New River for recreation, for tourism, for its historic and natural heritage and for water quality.

We support the idea of comprehensive land use planning, and we stand ready to work with the county in finding the most appropriate site for the state prison to minimize negative social, economic and environmental impacts on the New River and to maximize the economic value of the project to the citizens of Grayson County and Virginia.



**New River Land Trust**

**P.O. Box 11057  
Blacksburg, VA 24062**

**Phone:  
(540) 951-1704**

**e-mail:  
nrlt@newriverlandtrust.org**

**Visit Our Website:  
www.newriverlandtrust.org**

**Our Mission Statement:**  
*Conserving farmland, forests, open  
spaces and historic places in Virginia's  
New River region.*

## **NRLT Board Members & Staff**

### **Board Members**

*Term ends January of year shown:*

**Dixie Leonard** (2008), President, Galax VA  
**Christy Gabbard** (2010), Vice-President, Newport VA  
**Diane Green** (2009), Treasurer, Blacksburg VA  
**Jeff Armistead** (2010), Riner VA  
**Alice Coddington** (2008), Blacksburg VA  
**Jerry Cross** (2008), Blacksburg VA  
**Tom Hammett** (2008), Blacksburg VA  
**Kathye Johnston** (2010), Blacksburg VA  
**Jim McKenna** (2010), Blacksburg VA  
**James Nuckolls** (2010), Grayson County  
**Lynn Nystrom** (2009), Christiansburg VA  
**Don Philen** (2010), Grayson County  
**Caroline Stephens** (2009), Wytheville VA  
**Bruce Stephens** (2009), Wytheville VA  
**Holly Taylor** (2009), Blacksburg VA  
**Jeff Waldon** (2009), Blacksburg VA  
**Carol Wampler** (2008), Pulaski County  
**Davis Wildman** (2008), Floyd County

### **Staff**

**Beth Obenshain**, Executive Director, Blacksburg VA  
**Mona Charney**, Office Manager, Blacksburg VA  
**Jerry Moles**, NFWF Grant  
Consulting Director of Land Stewardship

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Blacksburg VA  
Permit No. 201

**New River Land Trust**  
P.O. Box 11057  
Blacksburg VA 24062

