



May, 2008

## Conservation News and Notes

### LTV'S JUNE 1 GARDEN PARTY

Please join us for LTV's Annual Garden Party on Sunday, June 1 from 5-8 pm at Jim and Donna Hackman's Highland Spring Farm, located near Marshall. The Hackman's gardens are designed by Donna (who is a professional garden designer), are renowned for their beauty. The Garden Party funds LTV's basic operations. Tickets are still available by contacting LTV Headquarters at 540-687-8441.



Directions to Highland Spring Farm:

From Middleburg, Virginia: West on Rt. 50 to Zulla Road. Turn left and proceed 4.8 miles to right turn on Rock Hill Mill Road (which becomes Frogtown Road). Proceed 3.2 miles to intersection of Rectortown Road. Turn left on Rectortown Road and proceed 1.5 miles to Chestnut Forks Road on right. Turn right and follow Chestnut Forks Road to Highland Spring Farm entrance on the left. Follow signs to parking.

From Warrenton and Route 66: Exit Rt. 66 at Exit 28. Turn north on Rt. 17 Business. Proceed north to intersection of Rt. 55 and go straight through the intersection. Follow Rectortown Road 1.5 miles to Chestnut Forks Road on the left. Turn left and follow Chestnut Forks Road to the Highland Spring Farm entrance on the left.



### MEET DON OWEN, LTV'S NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR!

The Land Trust of Virginia is pleased to announce that Don Owen has been hired as the organization's new Executive Director (see the story on page 3). Don has more than 30 years of experience in land protection and management, and has worked for the last 23 years protecting and managing the Appalachian Trail.

Don will be at the Garden Party to meet members and to outline his plans for LTV. Don't miss this opportunity to get to know Don and his wife, Amy.

LTV has been seeking a new Executive Director since Art Campbell, LTV's former Executive Director, resigned for health reasons in December 2007. Art and his wife, Claire, will also be at the Garden Party, so you can wish Art well and congratulate him on his valuable service to LTV.

## **LTV NATIONAL ACCREDITATION APPLICATION RULED COMPLETE**

LTV is among the first few land trusts in the nation chosen to apply for national accreditation of its program by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission. LTV submitted its application on May 1, 2008, and was recently notified that its application was complete.

The next steps in the accreditation process, which will likely extend over the rest of this year, involve review of the voluminous LTV application by the Commission against specific indicator practices that address the ethical and technical operation of a land trust. The Commission has already scheduled for October 2008 its interview with LTV on its application.

LTV's Board and staff believe that national accreditation is essential to providing assurance of quality and permanence of land conservation operations at a private land trust like LTV. LTV applied for accreditation because, having spent the last several years improving its professional and technical capacity, LTV felt confident that it was ready for national accreditation.

Public written comments can be submitted to the Commission until June 14, 2008 at the Commissions office at 112 Spring Street, Suite 204, Saratoga Springs, NY, 12866. Comments must relate to how the Land Trust of Virginia complies with national quality standards.

Be sure to check LTV's website:

[www.LANDTRUSTVA.org](http://www.LANDTRUSTVA.org)

## **LTV'S STEWARDSHIP MONITORING**

Stewardship is at the core of LTV's mission - in fact, it is the cornerstone of our conservation efforts on an ongoing basis. Stewardship consists of maintaining landowner and community relationships and visiting properties to monitor them for conservation easement compliance. It helps ensure the ongoing protection of eased land.

All property monitoring visits are unique. LTV's Stewardship Coordinator, Ashton Cole, visits each property each year, to review the property's conservation values and distinct features and to check on easement compliance. The language of the easement and the baseline documentation report for each property are the critical tools for stewardship, since the easement terms and the original character of the eased land as well as its current condition must be considered in determining compliance.

Discussions with landowners before, during and after each visit promote communication, coordination and cooperation between LTV and landowners. These communications are the essential elements of a healthy stewardship program, along with regular stewardship visits. This maintenance of relationships and the monitoring compliance visits on at least an annual basis represent a proactive approach, which helps prevent problems from arising.

This year, LTV has already monitored roughly half of its easement holdings and is on track to complete the annual visits by late fall. LTV has not yet had to deal with major violations of the terms of any of its easements. A high quality stewardship program helps prevent these problems. Fortunately LTV has such a program, made possible by generous contributions from landowners and conservation minded members of the local community.

## **LTV WELCOMES DON OWEN AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Don Owen starts as LTV's new Executive Director on June 2nd. Don has just retired with 30 years of government service from the National Park Service. He has a B.S. in Psychology from Tufts University and a M.S. in Natural Resource Administration and Planning from the Graduate School of Forestry and Natural Resources at Colorado State University.

Don brings a wealth of experience to LTV. He worked with the USDA Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management before going to the National Park Service in 1985. At the Park Service, Don has specialized in land planning, land acquisition by fee and conservation easement, and land protection and management for the Appalachian Trail from Maine to Florida, including 8 years on special assignment to the Appalachian Trail Conservancy working on conservation issues.

### **A WORD FROM DON**

One of the first lessons I learned working on the Appalachian Trail is that land conservation is, ultimately, about people and their love of the land. People want to save the things they care about most -- family heirlooms, personal belongings, and most of all, the land that they have learned to love over a lifetime.

The landscapes of Virginia are our legacy. Its mountains, farms, forests, water, and history are the most important gifts we can pass on to our children and grandchildren. If we don't act soon, these treasures are in very real danger of being lost forever. Just look at what's happened in the past 25 years in eastern Loudoun County and other once-rural communities that have now part of the

Washington metropolis. In another 25 years, will that happen to us?

Land trusts are the single most effective means of preserving our farms and forests while still providing for private ownership and productive use in perpetuity. We can preserve what's important to us, allow for use of the land in a manner that protects those values, and do so in a way that provides financial benefits as well.

Our door will always be open at the Land Trust of Virginia's office in Atoka. Please stop by and see us, or call me or send me an email. You can reach me directly at [exedirlandtrustva@earthlink.net](mailto:exedirlandtrustva@earthlink.net) or at 540-687-8441.

I look forward to serving and working with each of you to protect the rich cultural and natural heritage of Virginia.



**Don Owen, LTV's New Executive Director**