

Madison-Morgan Conservancy

Newsletter
Winter, 2015-2016

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Letter from the President

Planning for our Future

A recent article in the editorial page of the AJC lamented Atlanta's growing pains. Being just 50 miles from the Southeast's largest metropolitan area, we are in line to see increased development as populations grow and existing suburban areas decline, and we certainly don't want to experience the same stressors our neighbors have seen. How we handle our growth is an immediate concern, and we want you to weigh in on your vision for Morgan County.

We recently sent a survey to all Conservancy members prepared by the consultant managing the County's comprehensive planning process. (If you have not submitted a survey, please see page 4 for the link, or contact us and we'll send you a copy.) In that letter we included our vision for Morgan County as it is presented in the Conservancy's Strategic Plan, and I think it's worth restating here:

We envision a thriving Morgan County to be a healthy, beautiful place to live and work for current and future residents, where clean air and water, abundant wildlife, healthy forests, and thriving agricultural and heritage tourism industries are vital and contribute to the regional economy. We aim to preserve the beautiful public vistas, agrarian heritage, rural crossroads, and small town atmosphere while attracting small to medium sized businesses to provide essential jobs and sustain our balanced tax digest. We envision an organization that makes an impact locally and uses its success to promote conservation and balanced growth throughout Georgia.

Our work here at the Conservancy is intended to provide education to our citizens and elected officials about conservation and development issues, while protecting our special places and promoting balanced growth. Farmview Market and the West Washington Gateway are prime examples of our advocacy becoming reality, both of which include responsible real estate development AND protection of precious resources.



In the coming year, the Conservancy will continue its advocacy, educational forums, and technical assistance to bring more of these scenarios to life. And we'll give you something fun to look forward to: Derby Day (May 7th). In the meantime, we will continue

to request your involvement in the County's Comprehensive Planning process. The more people care and advocate for Morgan County's natural, agricultural, and historic resources this year, the greater chance those resources will survive for future generations.

This community's conservation efforts are significant and impressive, but they are more about people than acres conserved and dollars raised. The Conservancy's partnerships with the Boys & Girls Club, the Cultural Center, and many other non-profits illustrate that the community conservation effort runs deep throughout Morgan County. Turn the page to see just how deep those roots are and how the Conservancy is nurturing that effort.

To our members, we thank you for your

Letter from the President, continued

Planning for the Future... *continued*

strong and growing support. To everyone else, please join us to support this work. Take advantage of the opportunity to support a countywide conservancy – there is no other opportunity like it in the state.

Sincerely, Bob Beauchamp, President

Educational Forum

Boys & Girls Club



They were unsure about the horses, enthralled by the cows, wanted to climb atop the hay roll, and shrieked with joy when they caught fish. Thanks to Dan Rather's hospitality, ten members of the Madison-Morgan County Boys & Girls Club enjoyed an afternoon at Wayside Farm frolicking, hay-riding, and fishing. The event was the third of its kind, in our continued effort to provide education to our youth about Morgan County's natural, agricultural, and historic resources. It seems to work best when it's fun. In this instance, Mr. Rather taught us about horses, cows, hay production, manure barns, and then let everyone fish to their heart's content. A big thank you must go out to Ree Goss of the B&G Club; to Bill Killmer, Joe Cardwell, Jim Jones, and Bob Dickson for arranging the bait, fishing poles, and lessons; and to Dan Rather and Joey Knight (who actually dropped a hay roll from the back of the machine right in front of us, which made Mrs. Davidson's day). As they say, this looks like the beginning of a beautiful partnership...

Educational Forum

Conservation Easement Workshop Recap

On October 1st, the Conservancy hosted its 11th Annual Conservation Easement Workshop at Burge Plantation, addressing the future of conservation easements, appraisals, and syndication. 65 people joined us from all over the Southeast: lawyers, appraisers, CPAs, land trusts, and the Land Trust Alliance, all of whom are involved in the conservation easement community, and many of whom have been gathering together at this workshop for years.

Madison-Morgan Conservancy | PO Box 752 | Madison, GA | 30650 | 706-818-8046 | mmcGeorgia.org

Educational Forum

WWII Symposium

In commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the end of WWII, the Madison-Morgan Conservancy partnered with the Madison-Morgan Cultural Center, the Morgan County Landmarks Society, and the Morgan County Historical Society to present a free Sunday Symposium exploring how the war impacted everyday life, transformed agricultural practices, and dominated the thoughts of the citizens of Madison and Morgan County. Held on November 1st, the symposium was very well attended by approximately 250 people. The event was second in a series of symposiums, the next of which will be the Sustainability Expo on April 3, 2016.



Conservation Easements

Enhanced Tax Incentive Made Permanent!

In a strong bipartisan action, the Senate voted 65-33 on December 18th to pass the bill that will make the tax incentive for conservation easement donations permanent. This follows the December 17th 318-109 vote in the House. This legislation has been a priority for the Land Trust Alliance and the conservation community for a decade, and it represents a huge win for conservation, for landowners and for land trusts. Once signed into law, the incentive will be applied retroactively to start January 1, 2015.

Over 2,500 acres in Morgan County are permanently protected by voluntary, donated conservation easements. Landowners who donate a conservation easement can claim a federal income tax deduction — an incentive that has been highly successful at encouraging private, voluntary land conservation.

First established in 2006, the enhanced incentive expired at the end of 2014. With the enhanced incentive in place, the pace of land conservation nationally increased by about 33%, exceeding one million acres per year. Now that the enhanced incentive is permanent, landowners will be able to operate with more certainty in the conservation and estate planning.

2016 is bound to be a VERY good year for conservation! Call us if you'd like to know more about the enhanced (now simply the) tax incentive for donating conservation easements.

Upcoming Events

Save the Dates

Jan. 21- Farm Market Conference

This program is hosted by Farm Bureau Morgan County, UGA Extension, and Farmview Market for locals in the surrounding community to become more educated on growing and producing fruits and vegetables to sell. 3:30-8:30 PM on Thursday, January 21, 2016 at Farmview Market. Cost \$20 includes dinner, preregistration is required - contact Morgan County Farm Bureau (706) 342-0414.

Feb. 25 - Protect and Prosper: *A Case Study of Madison, Georgia*

The Conservancy in partnership with the Madison Historic Preservation Commission, the Madison Greenspace Commission, and the Madison Downtown Development Authority presents a professional workshop for Land Use Professionals. Continuing Education available for lawyers, planners and realtors. 9 AM - 4 PM on Thursday, February 25, 2016 at the City of Madison's Meeting Hall. Look for more details soon!

March 18 - Membership Supper

Mark your calendars for the Annual Membership Supper - Friday, March 18, 2016, at Dan Rather's barn at Malcom's Crossroads. More details to come!

April 3 - Sustainability Expo

The Conservancy is partnering with the Madison-Morgan Cultural Center, with local support from other organizations, to present a FREE expo from 1:00-4:00 PM on Sunday, April 3, 2016 in the Cultural Center Hall. Mark your calendars for this Earth Day Kick Off!

May 7 - Derby Day

Mark your calendars - Saturday, May 7, 2016 - we'll be getting down and derby again! More details to come.



Historic Preservation

Sugar Creek Baptist Church Being Saved!



Good news: Sugar Creek Baptist Church will not be demolished! Crystal and Ellis Johnson of Hundred Acre Farm plan to move the church to their property in January. Despite the bittersweet nature of the situation (having to move a church to keep it from being demolished to make room for a parking lot), there are a few aspects of this move that quell our angst. First, the building will

be moved only .8 mile from its current location. Second, it will

still be visible from Hwy 278 – an important part of retaining the story the building tells of Morgan County's humble and rural founding. Third, the form will be preserved, so it will always look like a church. And finally, its use will be preserved: Hundred Acre Farm will use it as a chapel for its weddings and church retreats, and Ellis Johnson also offered, "Any of the people from Sugar Creek Church who want to come pray here will be welcome."

Crystal and Ellis Johnson have made a mark on Morgan County, and this is just the most recent one. In 2006, 92 acres of Hundred Acre Farm was permanently protected by a conservation easement – Ellis made a voluntary donation of development rights to the Georgia Land Trust in order to protect the wildlife habitat and water resources on the farm.

Crystal Johnson said, "It's just so sad that this building would be torn down, and we want to do what we can to save it." We are so grateful for the Johnsons taking on this project and will continue to assist in making it a reality.

Our Vision: We envision a thriving Morgan County to be a healthy, beautiful place to live and work for current and future residents, where clean air and water, abundant wildlife, healthy forests, and thriving agricultural and heritage tourism industries are vital and contribute to the regional economy. We aim to preserve the beautiful public vistas, agrarian heritage, rural crossroads, and small town atmosphere while attracting small to medium sized businesses to provide essential jobs and sustain our balanced tax digest. We envision an organization that makes an impact locally and uses its success to promote conservation and balanced growth throughout Georgia.

Farm to Market Alliance

Farm Diversity

Partially reprinted from *Georgia Grown 2015-2016*

You could say lifelong farmer Zeke Lambert knows how to move to a profitable groove. “You have to be able to dance and shift – sometimes on one foot,” says Lambert, a third-generation farmer in Madison. “Get into what’s hot, and get out of what’s not. It’s a business cycle.”

Growing and raising diverse farm commodities works for Lambert Farm Operations, LLC. Hay, cotton, canola, sesame, corn, soybeans, wheat, timber, grain storage operations and beef cattle pay the bills and spread the risk. This diversification reduces Lambert’s price risk and keeps him earning a living on the same Morgan County land his father and grandfather farmed.

“You have the land, the resources and equipment,” he says. “You have to shift with what is in demand.” Still, Lambert sometimes steps back from it all and takes in the big picture of a farm that has grown to about 2,000 acres.

“It has come a long way. My dad was a part-time farmer, and the farming operation was simpler and antiquated,” he says. “With all these technologies and improvements in place and diversity of it all ... the risk of it astounds me.”

Check out the article online: www.farmflavor.com/us-ag/georgia/Diversification-Provides-Farming-Flexibility, pages 106-109

Technical Assistance

Award-Winning TDR Program in Madison!

Yes, indeed. The City of Madison’s Transferrable Development Rights (TDR) Ordinance, adopted in 2014 has been receiving accolades from around the state. In September of 2015, the Georgia Planning Association presented an award for Outstanding Planning Initiative to the City of Madison. Then in November, the Georgia Urban Forestry Council presented the City with its Outstanding New Initiative Grand Award. Also in November and a bit closer to home, the Madison Greenspace Commission presented an everGREEN Award to the Conservancy for our assistance in designing the TDR program and writing the TDR ordinance.

Madison’s TDR ordinance is one of just a handful in the state and has already seen successful transfers. Madison’s TDR program has protected 25 acres of sensitive environmental resources by severing the development rights, and directed those development rights to a sustainable location with a \$6.5M investment by senior housing developer, Parallel Housing, Inc., of Athens. Additionally, the City reaped \$195,000 in revenues for future cemetery, greenspace, and urban redevelopment initiatives.

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Land Use Planning

It’s COMP PLAN Time!

One of the vital roles of local government is land use planning – how a community shapes and guides growth and development. A comprehensive plan is the result of a community-based planning process that draws on the general public, stakeholders, and experts.

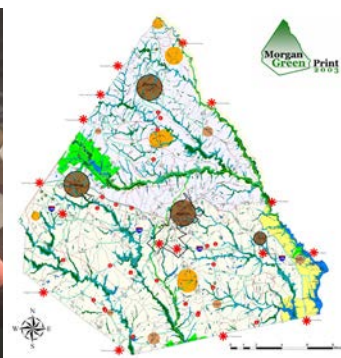
Local governments in Georgia are required to submit comprehensive plans to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs every ten years. A county and its cities are encouraged to create a joint plan, but may choose to do their own separate plans. All comprehensive plans must be done in accordance with certain criteria and may allow local governments to qualify for grants for which they would not otherwise be eligible.

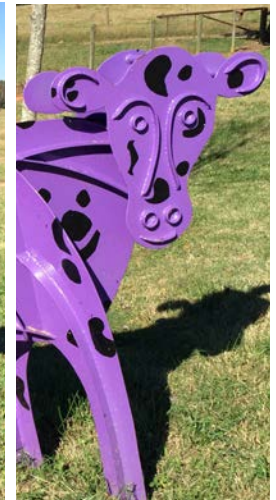
Morgan County and the City of Madison have begun their comprehensive planning process. They will prepare separate plans, unlike the most recent Comp Plan of 2004, in which they collaborated to create a joint plan. The Comp Plans must be adopted by June of 2017, and in the meantime, you will have an opportunity to express your vision for Madison and for Morgan County and its municipalities of Bostwick, Buckhead, and Rutledge.

This is a matter of utmost importance to the public this year – it will guide this community’s growth for the next ten years. It will set the stage for how we direct growth, how we protect our critical natural, agricultural, and historic resources, how we support our existing agricultural and tourism industries, and how we court new industry.

Morgan County has one of the most balanced tax digests in the state, with a balance of farmland, commercial, industrial, and residential land uses. As you probably know by now, agricultural land (even in CUVA) pays more in taxes than it receives in services. The last thing we need is to convert masses of agricultural land to residential land (which pays less in taxes than it receives in services), creating a deficit in our county budget. Instead, we need to guide growth toward existing infrastructure, hold on to as much farmland as possible, court clean medium-sized industries, and ensure the quality of all future growth.

Please visit Morgan County’s website, www.morganga.org, to find out more. Also, like the Facebook page “Morgan County Planning and Development.” Please take the survey you’ll find there.





MADISON-MORGAN
CONSERVANCY
SERVE † SAFEGUARD † SUSTAIN

FREDRICK PRESCOTT COLLECTION:

Artist's Price: **\$215,000** (as listed)

Donor's Purchase Price: **\$158,000**

SCULPTURES INCLUDE:

Purple Holy Cow, 2009, 76 x 100 x 34 inches

and Holy Calf, 2014, 54 x 73 x 23 inches

Artist Price: \$38,000 Asking Price: \$28,000

Black and White Holy Cow, 2007, 80 x 103 x 27 inches

Artist Price: \$38,000 Asking Price: \$26,600

Papa Red Horse, 2013, 210 x 118 x 48 inches

Artist Price: \$36,000 Asking Price: \$25,200

Papa Red Horse, 2013, 90 x 97 x 32 inches

Artist Price: \$24,000 Asking Price: \$19,000

Mama Blue Horse, 2012, 118 x 36 x 49 inches

Artist Price: \$36,000 Asking Price: \$25,200

Mama Blue Horse, 2013, 101 x 67 x 33 inches

Artist Price: \$24,000 Asking Price: \$19,000

Yellow Colt, 2013, 74 x 60 x 30 inches

Artist Price: \$19,000 Asking Price: \$15,000

Baby Flying Pig, SOLD

The MADISON-MORGAN CONSERVANCY is the recipient of a very generous donation of 9 Fredrick Prescott sculptures by Conservancy members Tricia and Ben Carter!

These pieces are for sale in an effort to monetize the donation to support Georgia's first and only countywide conservancy.

Through the visual and emotional impact of brilliant color on moving steel, Prescott produces larger-than-life sculptures, in which joy and animation simultaneously evoke the natural world and it's imaginary counterpart. The dichotomy between the real and the fantastical leads to the creation of a captivating, multi-dimensional art form at ease in a natural setting yet with an otherworldly quality.

Since 1974, Fredrick Prescott has exhibited his work all over the world and created special pieces on commission for both private and corporate collectors, including Walt Disney Co., Porsche, Bulova, and the Chicago Bulls, among others.

We are motivated sellers.

If you are interested in purchasing these sculptures, please contact us: 706-818-8046 or info@mmcGeorgia.org.

Your purchase will help fund our work to provide public education on conservation matters, to protect our special places for future generations, and to promote conservation and balanced growth throughout Georgia.



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Join or Renew Your Membership Today!

Madison-Morgan Conservancy

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Annual Membership Form

Support the Conservancy's mission with your annual membership:

- | | |
|---|--|
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(Watershed Donor Level) | <input type="checkbox"/> Donor - \$250 |
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Membership

Watershed Matching Program – We Did It!

Thanks to many very generous Watershed Donors, the Conservancy matched a \$50,000 grant from the Waterfall Foundation received in 2012. An annual goal, this is the first year we have met the match! Thank you to all the Watershed Donors – new and stalwart: you are substantially supporting this organization and are helping us protect Morgan County for future generations.



Madison-Morgan Conservancy
P.O. Box 752
Madison, GA 30650

Return Service Requested

Winter, 2016

This newsletter is printed on 100% post-consumer waste recycled paper.

The mission of the Madison-Morgan Conservancy is to provide public education on conservation matters and to protect and enhance the heritage and quality of life of the residents of Morgan County by preserving historic sites, greenspace, farmland, and timberland.

Farewell Christel Green and Greendale Farm

Conservancy Board Member Christel Green and her family moved back to South Africa this December. Christel joined the Conservancy Board in February of 2014, after being a significant part of the Conservancy team that created FARMeander in 2010. Her expertise in agritourism through her cheese business, Greendale Farm, was invaluable to the Conservancy in our programmatic work. Greendale Farm cheese was a local favorite and was run by Christel and her family on their farm in Apalachee. A self-taught cheese maker, Christel used local cow's milk from Johnson Dairy Farm. She produced cheeses so delicious some of the best chefs in the Southeast sourced their cheeses from her. Until spring, you can also find Greendale Farm cheese on Delta's International flights. We send a warm farewell to Christel and her family. We wish them all well and will miss them dearly.



Vason Building Fire Update

At midnight on December 15th, Patrick Alligood was making Christmas presents at Madison's beloved Antique Sweets on Main Street when he heard what he thought was a burglar upstairs in the Vason Building. He called the Madison Police Department who entered the building to find fire. Thanks to a swift and coordinated effort by the Madison and Morgan County Fire Departments, the fire was extinguished quickly.

The Conservancy's office was damaged only by smoke, but due to the extent of the damage in the rest of the building, we must relocate. In January, we will move to 162 N. Main Street, thanks to a generous offer by Madison's Downtown Development Authority to lease us space in a crunch. Look for our sign on Main St. and please stop by and see us.

A big thank you must be given to the Vason Family for their support of the Conservancy. Not only did Wayne and his daughter Katie found the Conservancy in 2000, the Vasons have been donating office space to the organization since 2007. We are distraught about the damage to the Vason Building, but look forward to its rehabilitation in 2016.

Need to Renew? Check Your Mailing Label.

The date printed above your name on the mailing label below is the last date on which you paid your annual membership dues. Please renew annually to support the Conservancy's work and to increase our programming.