



MADISON-MORGAN CONSERVANCY

Educating, Preserving, Conserving Morgan County

NEWSLETTER WINTER 2008—2009

937 AND COUNTING

2008 was a great year for the Conservancy, despite the radical change in our global and local economies. We are all facing tremendous challenges - families, businesses, non-profits, counties and municipalities – and we are all taking a long hard look at our resources and adjusting our future plans.

In spite of all this, the Conservancy's land conservation program accomplished more this year than ever before. Approximately 250 acres were permanently protected in 2008 through four donated conservation easements to be held by The Georgia Land Trust. **This brings the total land protected in Morgan County to almost 1000 acres** (937 acres to be exact)! Unlike land under the Conservation Use Valuation Assessment (CUVA) 10-year time restriction, the 937 acres under conservation easement are protected forever and will be maintained in substantially their present state for future generations.

So, please, think about this... if four (4) people protected 250 acres, how much land could we as a community protect if we were to prioritize land conservation to a higher level? Can we not put some of our own resources to the task of protecting the land that holds our history, natural resources and the beauty of our county? The answer is yes – just read the Trust for Public Land article on page 2 about how funding for voter-approved land conservation measures demonstrates substantial support for land conservation - **voters across America backed 62 of 87 conservation finance measures, generating a single-day record of \$7.3 billion in new conservation funding.**

The City of Madison has also made great strides in planning for the protection of greenspace through their Greenprint Addendum conducted over the last six months. Like the Morgan County Greenprint (after which our well-renowned Greenprint Ramble is named) **the Madison Greenprint Addendum catalogs the natural, cultural, and greenspace resources within the City** that are valuable to city residents, and the Greenprint provides goals and objectives for the protection of those resources.

The County continues to plan, too. At our Annual Meeting in November, our program featured the recent **county initiative to market and transport Morgan County's agricultural products**, thereby creating and enhancing the market for local food and making our agricultural industry more profitable. Russell Johnston and Jeanne Dufort, reported on this effort led by the Morgan County Board of Commissioners, and we cheered them on with a delicious glass of Johnston's Dairy Milk!

And, again in spite of the economy, we ask you...**ARE YOU READY TO RAMBLE?** **October 24, 2009, is the date for the Conservancy's next Greenprint Ramble**, so put it on your calendar. Elizabeth Branch and Emily Buck are co-chairing the event, so please respond to their call for help on page 7.

As a non-profit with our eyes on the prize, we continue to work to accomplish our mission. We ask you, even in these hard times, to continue to support the Conservancy's work as we all reorder our priorities. Thank you for your membership, your many hours of volunteer leadership, and your generous support, all of which have carried us along our successful path.

Sincerely,

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87 acres of Hundred Acre Farm permanently protected through a conservation easement.

CONSERVATION FUNDING WINS BIG AT THE BALLOT

Trust for Public Land Report

November 5, 2008

Funding for voter-approved land conservation capped a record-breaking year on November 4th, 2008, with voters demonstrating substantial support for open space ballot measures despite the current economic and fiscal crisis facing the nation.

Voters across America backed 62 of 87 conservation finance measures, generating a single-day record of \$7.3 billion in new conservation funding.

The results capped a record-breaking year in which voters approved 88 measures, totaling nearly \$8.4 billion in new public funding for land conservation. TPL, and its lobbying affiliate, the Conservation Campaign (TCC), played integral roles in the success of many of these ballot measures.

Among the other significant measures:

- East Bay Regional Park District, CA: a \$500 million bond measure received 71% support
- Hillsborough County, FL: a \$200 million bond measure received 78% support
- Hunterdon County, NJ: An extension of the county's 3-cent property tax for 20 years will generate \$152 million
- Community Preservation Act, MA: 7 of 8 measures approved, bringing the total of communities statewide that have adopted CPA to 140
- Blaine County, ID: a two-year property tax for open space will establish the first county conservation program in the state
- Johnson County, IA: a \$20 million bond will establish Iowa's first county conservation program

Complete details of this year's measures—and all conservation finance measures since 1988—are in TPL's [LandVote online searchable database](#), a service of TPL's Center for Conservation Finance.

CRISIS MAY LEAD TO 'NATURAL' CAPITAL

Oct 21, 2008 4:23 p.m., Source: Reuters, Partial Reprint

The worst financial crisis since the 1930s may be a chance to put price tags on nature in a radical economic rethink to protect everything from coral reefs to rainforests, environmental experts say.

Farmers know the value of land from the amount of crops they can produce, but large parts of the natural world - such as wetlands that purify water, oceans that produce fish or trees that soak up greenhouse gases - are usually viewed as "free".

"Most of our valuable assets are not on the books," said Robert Costanza, professor of ecological economics at the University of Vermont. "We need to reinvent economics. The financial crisis is an opportunity."

Advocates of "eco-nomics" say that valuing "natural capital" could help protect nature from rising human populations, pollution and climate change that do not figure in conventional measures of wealth such as gross domestic product (GDP) or gross national product (GNP).

"I believe the 21st century will be dominated by the concept of natural capital, just as the 20th was dominated by financial capital," Achim Steiner, head of the UN Environment Programme, told Reuters at the International Union for Conservation of Nature congress in Barcelona earlier this month.

"We are reaching a point...at which the very system that supports us is threatened," he said.

Conventional economists often object it is impossible to value an Andean valley or the Caribbean. "We have struggled with nature-based services: how does a market begin to value them?" Steiner said.

Costanza helped get international debate underway a decade ago with a widely quoted estimate that the value of natural services was \$33 trillion (NZD\$53.5 trillion) a year - almost twice world gross domestic product at the time. Some economists dismissed Costanza's \$33 trillion as an overestimate. Others pointed out that no one would be alive without nature, so its value to humans is infinite.

SAVE THE DATE: Thursday, March 5, 2009

Land Talks: Greening Downtown: Good for Business

First Baptist Church, Monroe, GA, 4 p.m. Open to the Public, Free

Please join us for the Fifth Land Talks to discuss greenspace development in downtown. The cities of Covington, Madison, and Monroe have developed, or are in the process of developing, greenspaces in their downtowns. Come here why these cities are investing in this green infrastructure and what the economic, social, and environmental benefits are of such an investment.

Jim Durrett (Livable Communities Coalition) and Dan Reuter (Atlanta Regional Commission) will be joined by representatives of each of the three cities and will discuss redevelopment, greenspace planning principles, and the specifics of these three park projects. Our own Monica Callahan, City of Madison Planner, will discuss the economic and environmental benefits of Madison's new Town Park.

Land Talks is presented by the Madison-Morgan Conservancy, Smart Growth Newton County, and Friends of Walton County, and the Center for Community Preservation and Planning.

Our objective is to provide a venue for the continued conversation about the future of this region of Georgia—a region rich in natural, cultural, and agricultural resources and one facing increasing pressure from rapidly expanding Metropolitan Atlanta.

CONSERVATION EASEMENTS PROTECT 250 ACRES IN 2008!

What a year for land conservation in Morgan County! Four landowners saw fit to permanently protect a total of approximately 250 acres in 2008 in order to protect a variety of conservation values, including but not limited to natural areas, wildlife habitat, wetlands, farmland, and historic sites. This brings the total amount of permanently protected land by private landowners to almost 1,000 acres in Morgan County!



A conservation easement is a legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust or government agency that permanently restricts use of the land in order to protect the land's conservation values. It allows the landowner to continue to own and use the land and to sell it or pass it on to heirs. When a landowner encumbers his or her land with a conservation easement, the landowner gives up some of the rights associated with the land, usually development rights. Future owners are bound by the terms of the conservation easement, and a land trust usually ensures compliance with the terms of the easement through yearly monitoring. Here in Morgan County, the GA Land Trust holds the conservation easements and is responsible for the monitoring and defense of the easements in perpetuity.

Conservation easements offer great flexibility to landowners. For example:

- ❑ Ellis Johnson of Hundred Acre Farm encumbered 87 acres in order to protect wildlife habitat; a special natural area including wetlands, bottomland hardwoods, and riparian areas; and significant geological and geomorphological features. The conservation easement allows forestry and agricultural practices and permits the construction of two residential dwellings on two acre lots.
- ❑ Ginny and Dan Rather encumbered 93 acres of farmland to protect a significant amount of agricultural land and the viewshed along the highest point in Morgan County on Fairplay Road. The conservation easement reserves one 5 acre home site, on which they or future landowners can build a single family residential dwelling.
- ❑ Janet and Bob Beauchamp encumbered 50 acres of farmland in 2008 adjacent to the 82 acres they encumbered in 2007 in order to protect a historic home site of an 1890 farmhouse, associated farmland, a significant stand of bottomland hardwoods, and a portion of Goose Creek and its associated wetlands. The two conservation easements reserve one 3 acre home site on the 132 acres, on which they or future landowners can build a single family dwelling.
- ❑ Mary and Bob McCauley encumbered 10 acres of land to protect the historic development pattern and the historic structures of the circa 1830 Sunnyside Plantation. The Conservation easement allows the reconstruction of structures existing on the property during the stated period of significance (1830—1910).

Unlike land under the Conservation Use Valuation Assessment (CUVA) 10-year time restriction, these 237 acres under conservation easement are protected forever and will be maintained in substantially their present state for future generations. *Pictured on page 4.*

CONSERVATION EASEMENT WORKSHOP

On Thursday, October 9th, 2008, in an intimate setting, Katherine Eddins presented a nuts-and-bolts workshop on conservation easements, their tax incentives, and the process for implementing conservation easements. Twenty individuals attended, four of whom were in the process of implementing conservation easements on their land by the end of 2008 (a total of 250 acres). As a result of these conservation easement workshops, the Conservancy has helped the GA Land Trust protect almost 1000 acres of land in Morgan County.

COST OF COMMUNITY SERVICES PROVES VALUE OF CONSERVATION USE

Last Fall the Morgan County Board of Commissioners hired Jeff Dorfman (UGA) to conduct a cost of community services study for Morgan County. The study, completed in July, shows that land in CUVA pays more in taxes than it receives in services – a surplus for the County budget. The study also shows that residential development pays less in taxes than it receives in services – a deficit for the County budget.

Mr. Dorfman's data shows that residences pay substantially less in taxes than they receive in County services, unlike commercial, industrial, farm, and forest land. **In return for \$1 of services: a residence pays \$.70 in taxes, while commercial/industrial pays \$4.01 in taxes, and farm and forest land pays \$2.61 in taxes.** It is clear from the data that taxes paid by commercial/industrial, farm, and forest land are subsidizing the cost of residential services.

Do you think you are paying more than your fair share of taxes? If you are a non-CUVA landowner, you may think the taxes you

pay are subsidizing the tax base because CUVA landowners are paying less than their fair share. However, if you are a CUVA landowner you may feel that the taxes you pay far outweigh the services you receive and that you are therefore subsidizing the cost of services to the non-CUVA landowners. We challenge you to walk a mile in the other guy's shoes and then consider that we may have reached a balance in Morgan County—we all may actually be paying our fair share of taxes.

Hopefully you can see the value of CUVA – it not only protects our agricultural land and our agricultural industry, but our natural resources, wildlife, quality of life, and (most importantly these days) it protects our County's fiscal health. Cows and cotton, hay bales and timber tracts are visual reminders that Morgan County and its cities, have managed to balance the delicate mix between rural character and sensible growth which is the envy of communities all over our state. We must take the long view in our planning for the future and focus on maintaining this balance that protects our quality of life.

CARBON SEQUESTRATION IN GEORGIA

By Josh Love, Georgia Forestry Commission

Global initiatives designed to address the climate effects of fossil fuel consumption, combined with a renewed call for independence from foreign sources of oil, have led to a resurgence of interest in national climate policy. Individual states are taking action on global warming by mandating reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, and industries across the country are making voluntary commitments to reduce their carbon footprints.

Carbon sequestration has generated significant interest because it provides a low-cost, flexible way to offset greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions generated by the combustion of fossil fuels. Today, “carbon sequestration” is typically achieved through modified land management techniques such as tree planting on marginal land or conservation tillage practices. As forests grow, trees absorb CO₂ from the atmosphere and trap (sequester) carbon in a variety of organic and inorganic pools. In addition to offsetting carbon emissions, forests also provide a myriad of equally important co-benefits, such as clean water, soil protection, aesthetics, and habitat for wildlife. By sponsoring activities that absorb excess carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, emissions-dependent entities can reduce their overall contribution of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere. Consequently, carbon stored in forests is a potentially valuable commodity that may provide a new revenue source for some landowners in Georgia.

In the United States the demand for effective ways to offset carbon emissions is growing at a frenzied pace. In only a few short years, the global carbon market has blossomed into a multi-billion dollar industry and it appears likely that the United States will enact regulations designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Contrary to the current administration’s political stance on the issue, both John McCain and Barack Obama have voiced support for cohesive GHG regulation, and support for climate change legislation in the U.S. Congress has increased dramatically in 2008.

For more information, please contact Josh Love, Staff Forester for the Georgia Forestry Commission.
Phone: 706 437 6961. Email: joshl@gfc.state.ga.us

Throughout the country, landowners are already participating in voluntary carbon markets and earning cash for implementing agriculture and forestry practices that promote carbon sequestration. In Georgia, an acre of managed southern pine forest can sequester between one and four tons of carbon per year, which is equivalent to 3.7—15.7 tons of CO₂ in the atmosphere.

Given these circumstances, **it is evident that Georgia’s forests have an important role to play in our nation’s current and future efforts to stabilize and reduce CO₂ emissions.**

Although it is clear that forestry and land-use will continue to be recognized as legitimate sources of carbon credits in the United States, current lack of federal policy means that a great deal of uncertainty surrounds what types of forest management activities will be eligible to generate and sell carbon credits in the future. A variety of standards exist that vary wildly and are often incompatible with one another. Generally, however, carbon credits from forests can originate from the following activities: afforestation, sustainably-managed forests, and avoided deforestation.

Afforestation refers to tree-planting activities on land that was previously dedicated to a non-forest use. These types of activities are the most widely accepted by existing standards.

Sustainably managed forests can generate carbon credits by increasing the total carbon sequestered in the forest. Carbon credits are generated by changing how the forest is managed; this may include longer rotation lengths, species composition, forest restoration, or reduced harvesting rates.

Avoided deforestation is a special case of carbon sequestration. In locations where forestland is under threat by development, landowners who agree to preserve their forests may be eligible to receive carbon credits by avoiding the emissions associated with forest conversion.

"A true conservationist is a man who knows that the world is not given by his fathers but borrowed from his children."

- Audobon



Left:
McCauley
conservation
easement.



Left:
Beauchamp
conservation
easement



Above: Rather conservation easement.
Right: Hundred Acre Farm conservation easement.



CONSERVANCY MEMBERSHIP SUPPER



Approximately 100 members gathered for a celebration of the Conservancy's successes in 2008, including the protection of 250+ acres of agricultural land and one historic site through the donation of four conservation easements to GA Land Trust. This brings our total acreage of permanently protected land in Morgan County to almost 1,000 acres.



The chili supper was held at the Rather's historic barn at Malcom's Crossing, and the chili was cooked by board members using only Morgan County meats. A special treat was the local whole milk from Johnston's Dairy. Russell Johnston and Jeanne Dufort spoke about the recent effort to create a marketing and transportation program for local agricultural products to enhance the market for local food in and around Morgan County.



A special thank you goes out to: Alan and Sue Ellen Verner for their beef, Robert and Anne Trulock for their venison, Jim and Elizabeth Branch for their beef and venison, Gay Morris for her delicious vegetarian chili, The Caboose from Rutledge for the salad, potatoes, tea, and dessert, and Jeanne Dufort and Russell Johnston for leading our discussion.

Top: Lyn Hunt, Jane Symmes (Board Member), Sandy Morehouse, and Andy Ainslie relax after supper. Middle: Ellen Warren and Dan Rather (Board Member) discuss conservation easements. Below: Julie Jenkins and Board Members Elizabeth Branch and Gay Morris take a break from serving chili for a photo op.

SUSTAINABILITY EXPO



The Madison-Morgan Conservancy, the Madison-Morgan Cultural Center, Hunker-Downs Freshmarket, and the Church of the Advent co-sponsored the "Stewards for the Earth" Sustainability Expo on Saturday, September 27th, 2008. About 100 attendees perused various sustainability exhibitions, learning from the vendors of sustainable technologies how they, as homeowners, could conserve energy, water, and land.



Vendors of green technologies displayed their products and services in the Hall at the Cultural Center; local produce was sold on the lawn; and the Woopets performed "Echoes of Eco," a puppet show of life-size puppets in the Cultural Center Auditorium.



Clockwise from right: Jane Symmes discusses eco-friendly cleansers and products with Stephen Cooke. Maryann Dartnell's Environmental Science class displays posters on a variety of sustainability issues. Devon Dartnell promotes Georgia's Forests. Joseph Kullman (Sun Solar Systems) and Tim Riley discuss solar power. Joe Rothwell (Ga Land Trust), Traci Clark (GA Trust for Historic Preservation), Lydia Doyle, and Christine McCauley. Linda Thoman promotes recycling and Keep Morgan Beautiful. Richard Simpson (Madison Gardeners) promotes the use of native plant species. Tim Riley (The Old Friends Company), describes the benefits of reuse (not replacement) of historic building material. Bob Beauchamp and Stephen Cooke discuss LEED certification. Julie Davie displays a rain barrel. Jennifer and Michael Dean of HunkerDowns Freshmarket sell local produce. "Key" volunteers Camilla Dartnell and Katherine Key (not pictured Frank and Ann-Marie Walsh).



Sustainability Vendors included:

Steffen Thomas Museum, The Woopets, The Farm Bureau (Zeke Lambert), GeoLoop (James Cook), Phelps Heating and Air (Jason Phelps), Hall Smith Office (Joe Smith), Rialto Property Partners (Amy Hibler and Stephen Cooke), Community Foundation for Morgan County, Georgia Interfaith Power and Light, SDA Rural Energy for America Program (REAP), The Old Friends Company (Tim Reilly), Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation (Traci Clark), GA Land Conservation Program (Kristina Sorensen), Morgan County Recycling (Monica Hayden), Keep Morgan Beautiful (Linda Thoman), Sun Solar Systems (Josef Kullmann), Branch Timberlands, Inc. (Jim and Elizabeth Branch), GA Forestry Commission (Devon Dartnell), Rain Barrels and Water Smart Landscaping (Jim and Julie Davie), Madison Gardeners (Rick Crown and Richard Simpson).

MADISON-MORGAN CONSERVANCY

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***CHARTER MEMBERS**

ARE YOU READY TO RAMBLE?

It's almost time! On October 24, 2009, the Conservancy will host the second **Greenprint Ramble** in the northwest-portion of Morgan County. Conservancy members will be offered early registration for the event. Registration will be limited for bus tours and supper at Cedar Lane Farm, so save the date and register early! **Member early registration will begin in August, 2009.**

Early in 2003, the Madison-Morgan Conservancy initiated the Morgan County Greenprint process with the assistance of the Morgan County Commissioners, the City of Madison and the Trust for Public Land. The Greenprint serves as a long-term strategy for the preservation of features that are valuable to Morgan County residents and landowners: the rural landscape, open spaces, agricultural lands, forests, environmentally sensitive resources, historic structures and landscapes, and a general quality of life. The **Greenprint Ramble** is designed to get residents and visitors out to these resources to experience these resources—after all, you are only inclined to protect what you understand.

This year's Greenprint Ramble is being co-chaired by Elizabeth Branch and Emily Buck. Volunteers who have talents to contribute to the planning, organization, collection of histories, and/or preparation of the supper please contact Elizabeth Branch at 404-983-4296 elizabeth@branchtimberlands.com or Emily Buck at 706-424-5713 em1ly@me.com. They will need help with everything from growing vegetables and canning peaches for the supper to photographing sites along the Ramble route and interviewing residents of the area.



GREENPRINT RAMBLE OBJECTIVES:

- To provide an opportunity for residents and visitors of Morgan County to venture out into the rural and historically agrarian landscape for an educational and fun exploration of our countryside, history, and natural and cultural resources.
- To bring awareness to Morgan County's Greenprint – a map of the natural, historic and cultural resources of Morgan County accompanied by goals and objectives guiding the protection of those resources. Morgan County's Greenprint was the first county-wide Greenprint in the State of GA and was the first to be adopted by a local government as part of a Comprehensive Plan. In 2003 the Madison-Morgan Conservancy, Morgan County and the City of Madison joined forces to produce this document through a visioning process including public input/meetings and adopted it as part of Morgan County's Comprehensive Plan.
- To raise awareness about the diverse resources in Morgan County and to promote the stewardship of those resources.
- To promote Morgan County's rural quality of life, its thriving agricultural industry, and its history.



Right: Greenprint Ramble Co-chairs Emily Buck and Elizabeth Branch headed to a "Ramble Recon" meeting at the Conservancy's office in the Vason building in downtown Madison.

MADISON-MORGAN CONSERVANCY

Educating, Preserving, Conserving Morgan County

P.O. Box 752, Madison, GA 30650, Phone: 706-342-9252, Email: mmconservancy@mindspring.com
www.mmcgeorgia.org

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FORM

Yes, I would like to support the Madison-Morgan Conservancy by making a tax deductible contribution at the following level:

- Daniel Morgan Society \$5,000 or more
- Benefactor \$1,000 or more
- Supporter \$500 or more
- Donor \$250 or more
- Preservationist \$100
- Conservationist \$50
- Naturalist \$15

- I would like to contribute an additional:
 \$ _____ to the Annual Fund.
 \$ _____ to the Land Acquisition Fund.
- My company has a matching gift program.
Please contact me to initiate a matching gift.
- I would like to volunteer.

Name: _____

Name as it should appear in the newsletter's membership list:

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____

*Please make check payable to **Madison-Morgan Conservancy**, and send to the address above.*

NEW MEMBERS

Mrs. Patricia Aldridge
Allgood & Associates
Ashley and Chris Braswell
Bryans Family Foundation
Mr. and Mrs. Charles Conner
Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Cowart
Dr. & Mrs. Joseph M. Craver
Donna Crouch
Kimberly and John Curro
Mr. and Mrs. Lane Dennard
Jeanne Dufort & Pat Walker
Karen and Mike Garrett

Pierre and Dina Glardon
Grayland Farms
Charles and Beth Haney
Mr. and Mrs. Pat Hardy
Marian W. Hill
Bob and Rosemary Hughes
Hundred Acre Farm, Ellis Johnson
Ashley and Weyman Hunt
Ed Latham
Anna D. Marett
Rob McCauley
Mr. and Mrs. Pete McTier

Mr. and Mrs. Aubry Moon
Sally and Lee Nunn
Irene and William Paul
Mr. Bob Prior
Alex Rilko & Jacqui Coburn
Michael and Heleena Roush
Mr. S.J. Saffold
Judy & Bob Senft
Mr. Jimmy Sidwell
Bobby Smith
Steffen Thomas Museum of Art
Mr. Steve Young

THANK YOU

Bob Beauchamp
Elizabeth Branch
Emily Buck
Burge Plantation
The Caboose
Camilla Dartnell
Church of the Advent
Community Foundation for
Morgan County
Jeanne Dufort

Georgia Land Trust
Rena and George Holt
Hundred Acre Farm, Ellis Johnson
HunkerDowns Fresh Market
Julie Jenkins
Russell Johnston
Katherine Key
Joey Knight
Madison-Morgan Cultural Center

Morgan Stanley
Mary and Bob McCauley
Morgan Stanley
Gay and Roy Morris
Godfrey Newton
Dan and Ginny Rather
SunTrust
Jane Symmes
Vason Family
Ann-Marie and Frank Walsh

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P.O. Box 752
Madison, GA 30650

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