A NEW DAY FOR CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

2010 was different, wasn’t it? We had a white Christmas in Madison for the first time since 1881, and there was no estate tax for the first time since 1916. Unfortunately, we also had a reduced federal tax incentive for conservation easements, which slowed the pace of land conservation across the country.

Since there were fewer landowners interested in using conservation easements due to that reduced tax incentive, in 2010 we changed it up a bit and put our efforts toward prioritizing our future conservation easement work – getting to know the land and the conservation values present in Morgan County.

We are proud to announce the completion of that Conservation Easement Mapping and Prioritization project. Thanks to the participation from so many of you and to the funding from the National Trust for Historic Preservation and Willow Oak Farm, we were able to complete this project through a contract with the City of Madison’s Planning Department and GIS personnel. Now that we know the most critical lands to protect, we are well equipped to work with those landowners who want to voluntarily protect the conservation values of their land permanently.

And just in time, too! Congress voted in December to extend the enhanced tax incentives for two more years. So we’re back in the game with a plan, with a favorable tax incentive, and with a multitude of special places to protect. 2011 is sure to be a good year for conservation easements!

2010 also proved fruitful for the Conservancy in a number of other ways. We’ve worked to increase our membership and we’ve broadened our efforts with several exciting projects. In addition to hosting four educational forums, we photo-documented the Greenprint resources and created a calendar highlighting conservation easements in Morgan County. Also, our efforts to help get the area’s locally produced agricultural products to market were boosted by two significant endeavors this fall: Madison Locally Grown is up and running thanks to Betsy Garrard; and our newly launched Farm to Market Alliance will soon produce FARMeander (see page 4), a map designed to promote agritourism and the local food movement in and around Morgan County.

Keep your calendars open for some exciting events in 2011. Next year is shaping up to be a busy year for the Conservancy beginning with a luncheon for Watershed Donors in January at Hundred Acre Farm. In the spring we’ll host our membership supper, a conservation easement workshop, as well as a horse race party. And don’t forget to mark your calendars for the next Greenprint Ramble this fall 2011!

We are so grateful for your membership and contributions to the Conservancy’s work. Thank you for your continued and growing support. We look forward to seeing you often in 2011.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Branch
President

Ramble Recon Begins!
What do you know about Buckhead?

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P.O. Box 752, Madison, GA 30650, 706-342-9252, www.mmcGeorgia.org, info@mmcGeorgia.org
CONSERVATION EASEMENT MAPPING AND PRIORITIZATION PROJECT COMPLETED

Thanks to all of you who contributed to our Conservation Easement Mapping and Prioritization (CEMAP) project! It is complete and will be posted on our website by the end of January.

Through a grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s Johanna Favrot Fund for Historic Preservation and a matching grant from Willow Oak Farm through the Carter Family Fund of the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta’s Morgan Fund, the Conservancy is working to prioritize the next five years of our work in promoting the use of conservation easements to protect important historic landscapes in Morgan County.

Please see our website for more info: www.mmcgeorgia.org.

“Nature is infinitely complex and beautiful.”
- Unknown

CONSERVATION EASEMENT CALENDAR

Clockwise from Top Left: Hundred Acre Farm, Wayside Farm, Goose Creek Farm. Photo by Scott Finsthwait.

What does a conservation easement look like? Well they all look different, of course. See for yourself the 1,012 beautiful acres of land permanently protected in Morgan County. Farmland, water resources, viewsheds, and historic sites are among the resources protected by conservation easements in Morgan County.

Photographer Scott Finsthwait captured the essence of Morgan County’s natural, agricultural, and historic resources in these photographs and donated his work to benefit the Conservancy. Intern Margaret Dubose designed the calendar this summer as part of her internship.

Calendars are for sale for $15. Sales help support the Conservancy’s mission.

TAX INCENTIVES EXTENDED FOR CONSERVATION

Congress just renewed a tax incentive for private landowners—especially working family farmers and ranchers—who protect their land with a voluntary conservation agreement. The incentive has helped the Madison-Morgan Conservancy work with willing landowners in our community to conserve 1,012 acres of productive agricultural lands, natural areas, and historic sites between 2004 and 2009.

Conservation-minded landowners now have until December 31, 2011 to take advantage of a significant tax deduction for donating a voluntary conservation agreement to permanently protect important natural, agricultural, or historic resources on their land. When landowners donate a conservation easement, they maintain ownership and management of their land and can sell or pass the land on to their heirs, while foregoing future development rights.

The enhanced incentive applies to a landowner’s federal income tax and is active until December 31, 2011. The incentive:

- Allows donors of conservation easements to deduct up to 50% of their Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) in the year of the donation, and they can carry forward that deduction for 15 additional years (for a total of 16 years).
- Allows farmers and ranchers to deduct up to 100% of their AGI in the year of the donation, and they can carry forward that deduction for 15 additional years (for a total of 16 years).

Our whole community wins when thoughtful landowners conserve their land this way, protecting wildlife habitat, clean drinking water, scenic landscapes, recreational spaces, and productive agricultural lands. It’s a win, win, win, for the landowner, for the community and for the local government.

Impact in Morgan County? Goose Creek Farm, named after Goose Creek which runs through the back of the farm, has a significant stand of bottomland hardwoods, pasture, and timberland. Janet and Bob Beauchamp have worked for years to protect their farm with conservation easements. Through three separate easements, they have protected the conservation value on 210 acres of this beautiful agrarian landscape.

The surprising result? The economic benefit (federal and state income tax incentives) allowed them to purchase adjacent property to expand their farm.

Impact Nationally? Conservation easements protect about a million acres per year. Private land conservation has become an important tool nationally for protecting our watersheds, farms, forests, and historic landscapes; and in this economy private land conservation is the most viable conservation tool, given the financial state of our local, state, and federal governments.

MORGAN COUNTY CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

1,012 acres conserved to protect:
998 acres of agricultural land
11 acres of historic sites
3 acres of viewsheds

Support the Madison-Morgan Conservancy’s efforts to protect land for future generations by donating today.
**Historic Preservation and Sustainability: The Next Great Debate**

Approximately 80 people from across the state joined us in November at the Madison-Morgan Cultural Center for a delightful evening co-hosted by the Conservancy, Morgan County Landmarks Society, Madison’s Historic Preservation Commission, and the Cultural Center. **Christine Lambert** told us the story of saving the Madison Graded School building and creating the Cultural Center, as she told it 34 years ago when she and many others were knee-deep in the effort. Her sentiments were echoed by **Mark McDonald**, President of the GA Trust for Historic Preservation, in his discussion about the sustainability of our historic built environment.

**Farm/Estate Transition and Conservation Easement Workshop**

In September 50 people from across the state gathered to learn how conservation easements play a role in farm/estate transition planning – transferring assets while retaining as much value as possible. **Katherine Eddins** and **Justin Park** of the GA Land Trust were joined by **Allen Olson**, Attorney at Law, and **Kristina Sorensen** of the Georgia Land Conservation Program and DNR to present information on conservation easements and estate planning tools. The workshop was funded in part by a grant from USDA Risk Management Agency through the Rolling Hills RC&D.

**Crop Mob—Tewksbury Farms**


“The impossible happened: we went to a mob and didn’t do a lick of weeding (except, of course, the few weedaholics who just couldn’t help themselves). Instead, we covered fields with straw for winter, picked and bagged some ruby-red field corn, and…oh, you know…built a greenhouse or two.

Two, actually. Maybe we didn’t COMPLETELY finish them, but we got the structure up and ready for Farmer Tate and had a heck of a good time in the process! Mr. Tewksbury (Tate’s dad) brought Lou and Sue, their gorgeous and enormous horses, down to the field so we could watch some old-school plowing, and we loved meeting all of the Morgan County locals who came out to help.”

“Once we were done working, we headed up the road to meet some fantastic animals, have a cold one, stuff our faces and listen to awesome music. Seriously, does it get much better than that? The generosity at this mob was really amazing; **Plow Point Farms** donated and smoked delicious pastured Poulet Rouge chickens, **Suzi Cooker Catering** made amazing sides and desserts (I had no idea slaw could be that good!), the **Madison-Morgan Conservancy** graciously donated 4 cases of much needed refreshment. And, to top it all off, the **Bearfoot Hookers** played an awesome set that kept our toes tapping (and perhaps inspired one or two of us to lead an impromptu hoedown by the lunch tables). The weather was finally starting to cool down a bit and hinted at a Fall we never thought would come. And my oh my did we get our five minutes of sweaty fame! There were no less than four groups doing media pieces on the event including the Morgan County Citizen, Athens ezine BLVD, Ramsey Yount, and CNN!”

**GA Trust Clean Up**

The Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation purchased a house at 399 W. Jefferson Street to save it from demolition, and has been working to clean it up, stabilize it, and market it to a conservation buyer. The GA Trust will sell the property with a preservation easement protecting the structure in perpetuity. On Sunday, December 5th, approximately 15 people worked to clean the property inside and out and secure it. The next week a new roof was put on the house to keep it dry. Thanks to **Joe Smith** and **Ken Kocher** for organizing the workday, and thanks to **Richard Simpson** and **Morgan County Landmarks** for arranging for the GA Trust’s Revolving Fund to save the structure.

**ORIGIN OF 4-H**

Did you know 4-H began right over the county line in Newton County? No wonder we have such a rich history in agricultural education! In 1904 George Claude Adams, the Newton County school superintendent, created a "Corn Club" to engage youth in new farming technologies and to expand their interest in agriculture beyond cotton. Out of that club grew more and more clubs: corn, chicken, and cotton clubs for boys, and tomato, garden, and canning clubs for girls. Ten years later, the Smith-Lever Act (1914) created the cooperative extension service and designated 4-H as its youth program. Today 4-H is a national organization with approximately 198,000 members, grade five through twelve.

The first use of the term "4-H Club" in a federal document appeared in 1918 in a bulletin written by Gertrude L. Warren. By 1924, wider usage of the name "4-H" was adopted. The first emblem design was a three-leaf clover, introduced by O.H. Benson c. 1907. The three H’s signified Head, Heart and Hands. A fourth leaf was added in 1908, and in 1911 Benson referred to the 4 H’s as "Head, Heart, Hands, and Hustle.” Hustle later became Health.

The 4-H Pledge: "I pledge my head to clearer thinking, my heart to greater loyalty, my hands to larger service, and my health to better living . . . for my club, my community, my country and my world."

*Rock Eagle in Eatonton is the largest 4-H center in the nation.*
Farm to Market Alliance Receives Grant

The Conservancy’s intent in promoting agriculture in Morgan County through the Farm to Market Alliance is to keep farmers farming in order to retain the agrarian landscapes that are key to Morgan County’s quality of life.

The Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Program at the University of Georgia has awarded the Conservancy a grant to partially fund its Farm to Market Alliance which includes the FARMeander project and educational forums.

Thanks to all who have supported this effort! We look forward to expanding the Farm to Market Alliance in 2011.

FARMeander Coming Soon

Yum! That’s what people say when they eat Jim Markley’s peaches, or Christel Green’s cheese and meats, or Tate Tewksbury’s vegetables.

Fun! That’s what people say when they get to the Holt Family’s Sunflower Festival.

Ahhhh... That’s what people say when they are relaxing for the weekend in the rocking chairs on the porch of Hundred Acre Farm overlooking the cows in the pasture and the chickens pecking in the dirt.

Markley, Green, Tewksbury, Holt and the Conservancy have been working since May to produce FARMeander: a map designed to promote agritourism in Morgan County and to brand this area as the breadbasket of Atlanta. FARMeander is designed to bring people from all over the state to Morgan County to visit the farms, farm festivals and farm lodging. FARMeander will be distributed throughout the state via welcome centers, chambers of commerce, farmers markets, and restaurants who source their food from this area.

Look for FARMeander soon—we’ll let you know when you can pick up your own copy at the Chamber of Commerce. Of course, you’ll be able to download it from our new website, too!

Thank you to all who are participating:

- Bostwick Cotton Gin Festival
- Brady Inn
- Burge Organics
- Crystal Organics
- CJ Orchards
- EquiFest
- Greendale Farm
- Jack’s Creek Farm
- Johnston Dairy
- Lambert Farms
- Madison-Morgan CVB
- MadisonFest
- Southern Cross Ranch
- Spence Blueberries
- Sunflower Farm Festival
- Tagyerit Farm
- Tewksbury Farms
- The Farmhouse Inn at Hundred Acre Farm
- Verner Farms

Farm to School Spreading Steadily

Partially Reprinted from GA Organics Newsletter, Fall 2010

Farm to school activity in Georgia is increasing faster than ever. Here are the latest developments:

In addition to the Atlanta Public School system, Newton County, Gwinnett County, City of Decatur and Cobb County are now all featuring a Local Produce of the Month. Tift and Douglas counties are also implementing elements of farm to school initiatives.

Interim State Education Superintendent Brad Bryant made a surprise appearance at the City Schools of Decatur cafeteria to greet the cafeteria staff and noted the vital role that they play in serving healthy meals to our students so that they can learn to the best of their ability at school.

The Atlanta Public Schools (APS) Farm to School Taskforce, co-chaired by Khaatim S. El, APS School Board Representative, and John Bare, Vice President of the Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation, was launched this summer. The goal of this task force is to help assess and document the need for Farm to School activities in Atlanta Public Schools, as well as to provide recommendations for supporting and growing this initiative.

Madison Locally Grown Up and Running

Well, it’s finally here! Thanks to Betsy Garrard for putting together Madison Locally Grown, a website through which you can order fresh local food. Pick up is on Wednesdays 3:30pm – 6pm at Godfrey’s Warehouse in Madison (in the depot by Town Park). Order by 7pm Tuesday, and your order will be freshly picked Wednesday morning and delivered for you to pick up that afternoon. Visit the website for more details: http://madison.locallygrown.net/welcome
Ramble Recon: Buckhead

What do you know about Buckhead? We want you to tell us.

The next Greenprint Ramble will focus on the area in and around Buckhead. The real Buckhead, that is. If you would like to assist in gathering histories, historic photos, etc., please let us know! We will begin our research in January 2011 and could use your help. Call or email us anytime, 706-342-9252, info@mmcgeorgia.org.

Save the Date

Membership Supper
March 19, 2011, 6 p.m.
Rather Barn at Malcom’s Crossroads

Derby Party
Saturday, May 7, 2011, 5 p.m.
Location to be determined

Greenprint Ramble
Saturday, October 22, 2011; tour 2 p.m., supper 6 p.m.
In and around Buckhead

Greenprint Guides Published

The goal in creating the Greenprint Resources Guide was to illustrate and describe the resources listed in the Morgan County Greenprint (2004) and those listed in the City of Madison’s Greenprint (2009) and to provide a visual description of the values that the Greenprints and Comprehensive Plan intend to protect. The Greenprint Guides are now posted on our website for anyone who would like to explore Morgan County’s resources.

Stephanie Goodrich, the Conservancy’s intern during the summer of 2010, diligently photo-documented and researched the Preservation Opportunities listed in both Greenprints. The process included gathering historic photos, researching the history of the resources, way finding, and photo-documenting the great variety of resources. “As a student of Historic Preservation, it has been invaluable for me to learn, first hand, what a Greenprint can do for a community. Seeing the resources and opportunities that Morgan County has been striving to preserve and create will, no doubt, be a guiding light in my future career,” said Ms. Goodrich.

The Conservancy owes great thanks to Stephanie Goodrich, Morgan County Planning and Zoning, City of Madison Planning and Zoning, Morgan County Archives, landowners who gave us access to their properties, and the Members of the Madison-Morgan Conservancy who made this project possible.

If there are places you think are especially important to Morgan County’s quality of life, please contact us about them.

Camp Twin Lakes—Exploring Adding a Farm

By Eric Robbins, Executive Director, Camp Twin Lakes

Camp Twin Lake is a nonprofit dedicated to providing camping opportunities for children and adults with serious illnesses, disabilities and other life challenges. Their original campsite in Rutledge, GA has been serving the greater Georgia community since 1993. In an effort to create a deeper impact on the individuals they serve, Camp Twin Lakes is currently investigating the addition of a farm on 200 acres of land adjacent to their campsite that they purchased 4 years ago from a developer.

Camp Twin Lakes’ main farm objective is to help children learn where their food comes from and to reconnect them with the land, while learning and exploring in fun and engaging experiences. The farm will be designed in order to be accessible to campers with various disabilities and would include programs like planting, harvesting, canning, caring for animals, cooking, and wildlife observation. Current plans for the farm would include growing vegetables and fruits, as well as potentially raising chickens, beef and other farm animals. An additional goal is to ultimately supplement the camp’s food supply and possibly supply to some local restaurants. Recognizing Morgan County’s effort to promote agritourism, a farm store outlet fronting Rutledge–Newborn Road is being considered, where Camp Twin Lakes and local Morgan County farmers could sell their products. The farm would also highlight the history of farming in Morgan County which would also benefit local schools and other groups interested in farming and farm history.

Participating in the planning process from Morgan County are Charles Baldwin of Baldwin Reality, Christine McCauley with the Madison-Morgan Conservancy and Bobby Smith, Morgan County Extension agent. On the Camp Twin Lakes staff, Morgan county residents include Dan Mathews, David McAdams, Rick Lanier and Matt Moss.

Camp Twin Lakes hopes to launch its first phase of the farm program this spring as it further develops this plan and seeks support for its longer term sustainability.

Morgan County Heritage Website

The Morgan County Resource Preservation Advisory Board launched its new “Morgan County Heritage” website on August 19, 2010. The website features 17 individual community pages and contains hundreds of photos and documents. It also includes clips from 25 oral history interviews, and they will be adding approximately 17 more interviews in the coming months. The website is fully searchable for anyone looking for specific information.

If you would like to share information, photos, stories, etc. of your family and/or community, please contact Tara Cooner at 706-342-4373, or tcooner@morganga.org.

Above: Annie Sue and Betty (Walton?) at Walton Mill in 1942.
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P.O. Box 752, Madison, GA 30650, 706-342-9252, info@mmcgeorgia.org, www.mmcgeorgia.org
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 (Watershed Donor Level)
- Benefactor $1,000 or more (Watershed Donor Level)
- Supporter $500 or more
- Donor $250 or more
- Preservationist $100
- Conservationist $50
- Naturalist $20

I would like to contribute an additional: $_______ 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.

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

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Joseph & Sharon Brogdon
Fred Franklin and Cheryl Delk
Ward & Theresa Dickinson
Margaret DuBose
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Conservancy Members
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GA DNR
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Madison-Morgan Cultural Center
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Robert M. and Lilias Baldwin
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USDA Risk Management Agency
Waterfall Foundation
Willow Oak Farm

“Nature is Mentor and Measure.”
-Unknown

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Winter, 2010—2011