

Madison-Morgan Conservancy

Newsletter
Summer, 2014

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Letter from the President

Making Waves

As you know, this conservancy likes to be that quiet influence in the background providing support to individuals and larger organizations who can use our expertise. This approach is working, and we have a lot to show for it.

For instance, the City of Madison adopted a transferable development rights (TDR) ordinance in May, thanks in part to the assistance of the Conservancy in drafting the ordinance. The TDR program will allow both pro-development and pro-greenspace proponents to meet their goals. This complex and sophisticated land use tool is used throughout the country, but only in a few communities in Georgia, and Madison is now one of them.

In addition to our work with the City, we assisted the County in applying for a USDA grant. This year the USDA is providing grants for communities to scale up local and regional food systems and strengthen their economies – definitely right up our alley. The County was awarded \$80,000 of the \$99,000 they applied for, and will work towards using that grant to construct the farmers market portion of the Heritage Farm Market project – a public-private partnership between the County and Kelly Products Inc.

Like you, the Conservancy values smart business. TDR and public-private partnerships are smart business. And while our rural crossroads, historic towns, agrarian landscapes, forests, rivers, and lakes aren't listed on anyone's ledger, they are powerful assets to our economy, not to mention our quality of life. We believe keeping those things around for a while (is forever too long?) is smart business. It creates an environment that brings good business to our county – the film industry, the Georgia Zoo and Safari Park, the Heritage Farm Market, industrial expansions and relocations – we expect more of this type of business to arrive here because of the sense of place and quality of life here.

So, how do we keep it? We (all of us) need to find a balance between growth and preservation and work hard to protect the most valuable assets while creating healthy communities. Of course, we're a conservancy, so our expertise lies in the "protection" side of that equation. So, we will continue to provide technical assistance to landowners who want to permanently protect their properties through donating conservation easements. We will continue to educate ourselves, our elected/appointed officials, our members, and the general public



Letter from the President, continued

Making Waves... ...continued...

about conservation and development issues. We will continue to support our agricultural industry. It's been working so far.

The Conservancy membership is the main reason it's been working. Check out our membership list – it includes 27 new members since the last newsletter in January. We're growing, and we hope you will encourage your friends and families to join, if they are not already members. Your membership supports us financially, but it also strengthens our voice – a unified voice for balanced growth that protects and cherishes our critical natural, agricultural, and historic resources.



Thanks to your support, the GREAT success of Derby Day, and our many grantors, the Conservancy is thriving. We look forward to seeing you at the Conservation Easement Workshop in August or at the Greenprint Ramble in October. We hope you're ready to Ramble! We are.

Sincerely,

Robert Trulock, President

Building an Environmental Ethic for the Future

Boys & Girls Club Partnership Launched

A partnership with the Morgan County Boys & Girls Club was launched in April! In an effort to foster an environmental ethic in Morgan County's youth, the Conservancy will host a few events to expose the B&GC kids to local natural resources, farms, and historic places.



The first outing was to Walton Mill where the kids fished after a tour of the historic mill property. The second was to Goose Creek Farm where they fed Mollie the cow after a tour of the conservation easements and cattle farm.

We look forward to the next venture to Malcom's Crossroads. And we thank the landowners who are making these outings possible!

Conservation Easements

Pharr Easement Protects Sugar Creek & Hardwoods

Diane and Will Pharr have done us all a favor: they have safeguarded 100 acres of oak-hickory forest, 81 acres of working forest, and 1.5 miles of Blue Line streams, including about a mile of Sugar Creek, by donating a conservation easement on 227 acres in Morgan County.

But they've done something else, too. Of all the easement donors who applied for the Georgia Conservation Tax

Credit under the new rules (effective January 2014), the Pharrs were the first to be approved by the State Properties Commission. A big deal!

The federal deduction (30% of AGI for 6 years) and the state tax credit (up to \$250,000 with 10 year carryforward) are the financial incentives that convince otherwise hesitant landowners to give away land value by restricting their development potential through the easement process. The economic benefits are important, and the Conservancy is advocating diligently.

One of the best things about conservation easements is that it gives property owners an option to realize some value from their land without developing it. Some people just don't want to pave over their farms (crazy we know). Another thing: land in conservation easement stays on the tax rolls, as it is still owned by the landowner. And it protects public resources (air, water, habitat, prime ag soils) with private dollars, not government dollars. When you see the Pharrs next, thank them for their donation. We're all going to benefit from it.

Greenprint Ramble

Ramble October 18! Secure your Tickets Now!

Rutledge, Davis Academy, Dixie Hwy, the new dam at Hard Labor Creek, GA's last remaining CCC Camp, a stone smokehouse rehabbed for a bar - you don't want to miss this Ramble! Then a supper made entirely of Morgan County food at the Ainslie's farm on Dixie Hwy! Thank you Bank of Madison and Jim Boyd Associates for being our Lead Sponsors! And thank you Ainslie Family for hosting us!

Secure your tickets by becoming a host or sponsor today! Check our website for details, www.mmcGeorgia.org, or call us, 706-342-9252. Tour tickets will be \$5/person. Supper tickets will be \$100/person. The supper has sold out every time, so plan accordingly!

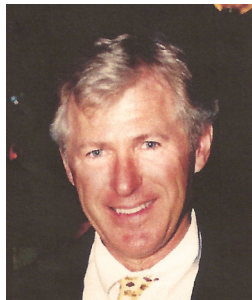
Meet our New Board Members

Each year the Conservancy invites a few people to join the Board of Directors. Led by our Board Development Committee, we court individuals whose expertise is helpful to our organization. In addition to agriculture, historic preservation, natural resources conservation,

our board needs individuals with experience in forestry, accounting, food procurement, real estate development, land use law, event planning, etc. We are fortunate to have enlisted an excellent group to assist us in accomplishing our goals. Meet the recent recruits.

Christel Green

"Cheese making is not part of my past but it is part of my heritage. Growing up in South Africa gave me a strong European influence. I grew up on Sweet Dutch Gouda's, nutty Gruyeres, and earthy Camemberts, so when I decided to start making raw cow's milk cheeses on our own farm just outside of Madison, I knew the flavors I most wanted to achieve. My husband, Russ, and I have four children, and making cheese that is everyday-friendly, wholesome, and natural is high on my priority list. I am self-taught and have enjoyed the journey of creativity and self-discovery over the last four years. Our milk comes from Johnston Dairy here in Morgan County, allowing me to make traditional cheeses with a local southern influence."



Sandy Sanford

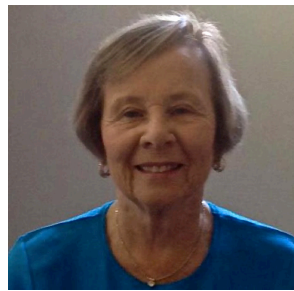
A native of Atlanta, Mr. Sanford's career is in road construction. He is an active board member of the Georgia Highway Contractors Association and is President of Blount Sanford Contracting Company. For the past ten years, he has been heavily involved in the rebuilding and restoration of several houses in Madison and Morgan County.

Phyllis Martin

Phyllis Martin was born and raised in Morgan County and is a 1992 graduate of Morgan County High School. She received her Bachelor of Science in Health Promotion and Education from the University of Georgia in 1996 and her M.Ed. with an emphasis in child nutrition, adult education, and leadership from the University of Georgia in 2005. She has worked as the



School Nutrition Director for Morgan County Schools for eleven years. In addition to serving on the Conservancy Board, she also serves on the board for the Georgia Nutrition Council, Morgan County African American Museum, and is the school coordinator for Morgan County's United Way campaign.



Becky Sherwood

Originally from Moultrie, Georgia, Mrs. Sherwood returned to her home state after living forty years in Virginia. In Virginia, she taught for twenty years and also volunteered with local service organizations. Shortly after moving to Madison in 2007, she and her husband Tom attended the first Greenprint Ramble hosted by the Conservancy and became hooked. She has worked on all of the subsequent Rambles. Becky is also a member of Three Seasons Garden Club and is active with the Episcopal Church of the Advent.

Meet our New Staff

Sean Dunlap, former FARMeander intern with the Conservancy, was hired in June as part-time Communications Coordinator. He will be assisting the Conservancy with various projects and tasks, including the Nolan House National Register nomination, Conservation Easement workshop, and FARMeander. Says Sean, "Working for the Conservancy will provide me with valuable experience and training in finding sustainable solutions to conservation challenges at home and abroad...I am thrilled to be a part of the MMC team!"

Educational Forums

The Madison-Morgan Conservancy hosts the longest running conservation easement workshop in the state. After changes in appraisal requirements by the state for the conservation tax credit, this year's workshop will focus on the role of appraisals in the conservation easement donation process.

10th Annual Conservation Easement Workshop



"The Role of Appraisals in Conservation Easement Tax Credits and Deductions."



August 28th at Burge Plantation, 8:30am-5pm



\$280/person applying for continuing education. \$250/person not applying for continuing education.



Only three conservation easement appraisals have been approved by the State Properties Commission. Meet the appraiser and landowner who were the first to be approved.



6 hrs of continuing education for appraisers, approved by GREAB and AI. Also, 6.5 hrs of CLE for lawyers (applied for).



Presenters include: Katherine Eddins of Georgia Land Trust, Jack Sawyer of Alston & Bird, Carl Schultz of Integra Realty, Stephanie Surles of Howard Moore McDuffie PC, William Parker of Parker Property & Appraisals, and Will Pharr, Morgan County Landowner and Easement Donor.



Cocktail Reception sponsored by Conservation Matters.



Lunch by Chef Andrew Featherstone of Burge Plantation, with Burge Organic Farm produce. DeLISH!

Farm to Market Alliance

Farm to School Project Launched

On May 13th, students in the middle school were served Verner Burgers for lunch!



A partnership among the Madison-Morgan Conservancy, Kelly Products, Inc., and Morgan County Schools, the Farm to School Program is designed to support nutrition and agriculture education and expand markets for local farmers.

Each month a local farmer and farm product will be highlighted in the school cafeterias. Verner Farms in Rutledge GA won the local beef bid for the inaugural meal.

Verner Farms, designated by the State of Georgia as a Centennial Family Farm and listed on FARMeander, is comprised of more than 1000 beautiful acres near Rutledge, GA. Owned and operated by the 4th and 5th generations, Verner Farms sells directly to the public and offers a variety of cuts as well as ground beef and sides of beef, pre-packaged or custom ordered.

Registration opens July 7.

**To register, visit
www.mmcGeorgia.org
or call 706-342-9252**

**or send a check to
PO Box 752,**

Madison, GA 30650

Farm to Market Alliance

Heritage Farm Market Coming to Morgan Co.

Morgan County's two largest industries are agriculture and tourism. And one of the regions most successful agricultural companies, Kelly Products, Inc., is planning to harness the market demand of local food and tourism by developing a heritage farm market.

The location of the proposed site is near the intersection of Interstate 20 and GA Hwy 441, two of Georgia's most traveled roads, giving the development great visibility and easy access.



A public-private partnership between Kelly Products and the Morgan County Board of Commissioners has proven effective. The County has agreed to support the project

with in kind services and by constructing a pole barn for the Farmers Market portion of the larger development.

The Conservancy helped write a grant for the County requesting \$99,000 from USDA for construction of the Farmers Market. USDA has authorized \$80,000 for that purpose!

The Farmers Market will be a central piece of a larger agritourism complex, which will include a specialty grocery, cafe, butcher shop, workshops, and educational classrooms, as well as an aggregation/distribution point for local foods that may eventually serve as a regional food hub. Tourists will be able to shop for specialty foods such as local fruits, vegetables, meats, cheeses, and nuts. A variety of artisan goods will also be offered as well.

Keith Kelly says of the project, "This is no small undertaking, but our company is passionate about this venture and we believe it will be a great asset for local farmers and local and regional consumers."

The Conservancy agrees! Stay tuned.

Development Review

A Zoo? Yes. And a Safari Park, too!

There is yet another agritourism project coming to Morgan County! The Georgia Zoo and Safari Park will be a 395-acre zoo and safari park, which will include animal exhibits and botanical gardens themed to represent the environments and cultures of five continents.

Developing "with the land," founders Bill Killmer and Mike Vaden aim to retain the tree cover, protect the wetlands, and plant buffers to protect the public vistas. The Conservancy's Development Review Committee reviewed early plans for the project and commented favorably to the Morgan County Planning Commission during the rezoning request.



Photo Courtesy of MMerry Waldroup

Development Review

Madison's Transferable Development Rights

On May 2, 2014, the City of Madison adopted a Transferable Development Rights (TDR) Ordinance to facilitate both sustainable development and resource preservation in part of the city's Urban Renewal Area. The Mayor and Council voted unanimously to adopt this innovative tool. The program is voluntary and available for landowners within the West Washington Gateway (and a few outside that area) that meet certain criteria.

TDR programs combine strategic planning and financial incentives to more effectively manage growth and conserve land. By designating "receiving areas" well suited for higher density near parks, commercial zones, and transportation, and "sending areas" prioritized for protection of environmental, historic, or agricultural resources, this advanced planning technique allows both pro-growth and pro-greenspace proponents to achieve their goals.

The Conservancy helped draft the ordinance, and we are very pleased that Madison has adopted this sophisticated and effective tool!

Conservancy Members

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Watershed Donors (bolded)

** FARMeander Members

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Annual Membership Supper - March 29, 2014

Harvest of the Heart Garden - Where's the Beef?

We thank Jewel Hatcher and Deb Foster for speaking at our membership supper about their new USDA-certified cannery in Madison. Where's the beef? They're raffling a side of beef donated by George Cooke of Moonshine Meats and Goose Creek Farm. \$5/ticket. Call 706-752-0204.



Members Ramble First!

Become a Member Today!

Madison-Morgan Conservancy

P.O. Box 752, Madison, GA 30650 | 706-342-9252 | www.mmcGeorgia.org | info@mmcGeorgia.org

Annual Membership Form

Support the Conservancy's mission with your annual membership:

- ☐ Daniel Morgan Society _____ \$5,000 + (Watershed Donor Level)
- ☐ Benefactor _____ \$1,000 + (Watershed Donor Level)
- ☐ Supporter _____ \$500
- ☐ Donor _____ \$250
- ☐ Preservationist _____ \$100
- ☐ Conservationist _____ \$50
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Name(s) as it should appear on the Membership list:

Address:

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone 1: _____ Phone 2: _____

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Derby Day Fundraiser

Derby Day: A Great Success!

The Conservancy sincerely thanks those of you who made Derby Day the greatest one yet! The Beauchamp Family, Sponsors, Hosts, Auction Donors, Melissa Martin and the Derby Committee, Morgan County High School Volunteers, and all the other Volunteers - you have our deepest gratitude.

Check out the great photos by Joe Cardwell and Terry Massey on our Facebook page (Like us if you haven't already). And mark Saturday, May 2, 2015, on your calendars. We'll be getting down and derby again - details to come!



New Members

Welcome to our New Members

Theresa and Dean Bishop

Rebecca Bonas

Rick Boulis

Clay Bryant

Ann-Marie and Russel
Carlson

Miryn and Kyle Davidson

Susan Draeger

Mike Garrett

Nancy Greene

Harvest of the Heart
Garden

Christie and Christopher
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Wahlen

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.



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

Return Service Requested

Summer, 2014

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