




– Madison’s annual celebration  
races forward into lasting  
conservation

– Written by Tia Lynn Ivey

– Photographed by Josiah  
Connelly –

Hailed as one of the top Derby  
Day celebrations in the nation,  
Madison’s annual celebration,  
which serves as the major  
fundraiser for the Madison-  
Morgan Conservancy, is raising  
the stakes this year.

In lieu of its usual preeminent  
party, the Conservancy is



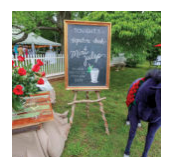
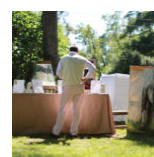
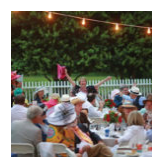
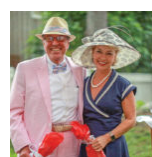
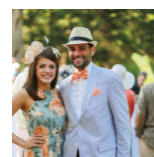
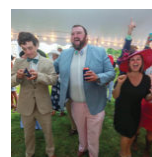
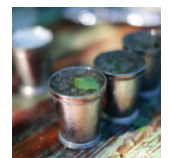
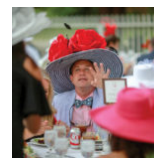
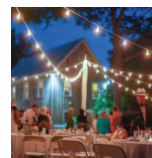
sending two lucky winners to sip mint juleps while donning wide-brimmed hats as they cheer along the packed sidelines during “the most exciting two minutes in sports” this May at the Kentucky Derby.

The all-expense paid weekend getaway to Louisville, Kentucky, will be the grand prize of a 300-ticket raffle drawing this Spring. The proceeds will help launch the Conservancy’s newest endeavor – a \$1.25 million Endangered Properties Revolving Fund program. This source of capital is used to purchase, protect, and then sell critical properties. Funds from the sale are reinvested back into the revolving fund for the next project.

“This year is a different kind of year for the Conservancy, so we are offering a different kind of Derby Day experience,” says Christine McCauley Watts,

director of the  
MCC. “Derby Day will be back  
next year, but this year, we  
needed to ask our donors to  
support the revolving fund and  
thought it would be fitting to do  
that by sending two people to  
experience the  
Kentucky Derby firsthand.”

Each raffle ticket costs \$100 and  
only 300 tickets will be sold. The  
conservancy will draw the  
winning ticket on Friday, April  
13. The winner will have a few  
weeks to plan a weekend  
getaway for two to the Kentucky  
Derby with plenty of time to  
enjoy the ample festivities  
surrounding the world’s most  
famous horse race.





The Kentucky Derby is more than just swift Thoroughbred horses racing toward the finish line in “The Run for the Roses.” Since its creation in 1875, The Kentucky Derby has evolved into an elaborate celebration of southern culture while establishing its own unique traditions to foster an ambiance of rugged elegance. From fireworks to hot air balloon rides, from museums to parades, The Kentucky Derby festival features family-friendly fun for days. The outlandish fashion is another beloved tradition of the Kentucky Derby. Indeed, the hat parade, “part southern tradition, part spectacle,” has become a favorite among Kentucky Derby fans each year as women and young girls show off a myriad of extravagant, fancy hats. The hats’ eye-catching bright colors scattered across the stands

garner the admiration of viewers from across the globe.

“When you sponsor Derby Day this year, you will get multiple chances to win a weekend at Churchill Downs for the real Kentucky Derby,” says Watts. The “Grandstand Rose Deluxe” package includes: three nights lodging, second-floor grandstand seats for both the Kentucky Oaks and the Kentucky Derby, VIP Fast Access and on-site trip directors, charter bus transportation between your hotel and Churchill Downs, a lunch buffet, complimentary beer/wine/soft drinks, and a celebrity Jockey Meet & Greet. Travel expenses to and from Kentucky are not included.

According to Watts, 100 percent of the funds raised through the Kentucky Derby raffle will go toward the Revolving Fund to be used for saving endangered properties in Morgan County.



“In Morgan County, the Endangered Properties Revolving Fund is uniquely designed to protect historic structures and undeveloped land. The Conservancy will acquire properties that include both structures and land (through donation, purchase, or option agreements), market/sell those properties to conservation buyers, and reinvest the proceeds into the revolving fund for the next project.”

Purchasing a raffle ticket also buys you an invitation to personally tour endangered properties acquired by the Conservancy. The Conservancy has identified 15 endangered properties throughout Morgan County in need of preservation and stabilization. The Conservancy studied the revolving fund model used by other non-profits across the country but added their own twist to it by

incorporating greenspace into the mix.


“As far as we can tell, no one else is doing that,” says Watts. “We are taking a nationwide trend and making it our own.”

According to the Conservancy, the Endangered Properties Revolving Fund is the next logical step in the organization’s growth.

“The ability to do so will increase the organization’s capacity to protect critical natural, agricultural and historic resources – a key component of the Conservancy’s mission,” explains Watts.

The Conservancy has its eye on a particular historic home in Madison, as its first endangered property project.

“The Conservancy may be able to protect one of Madison’s most important historic houses and

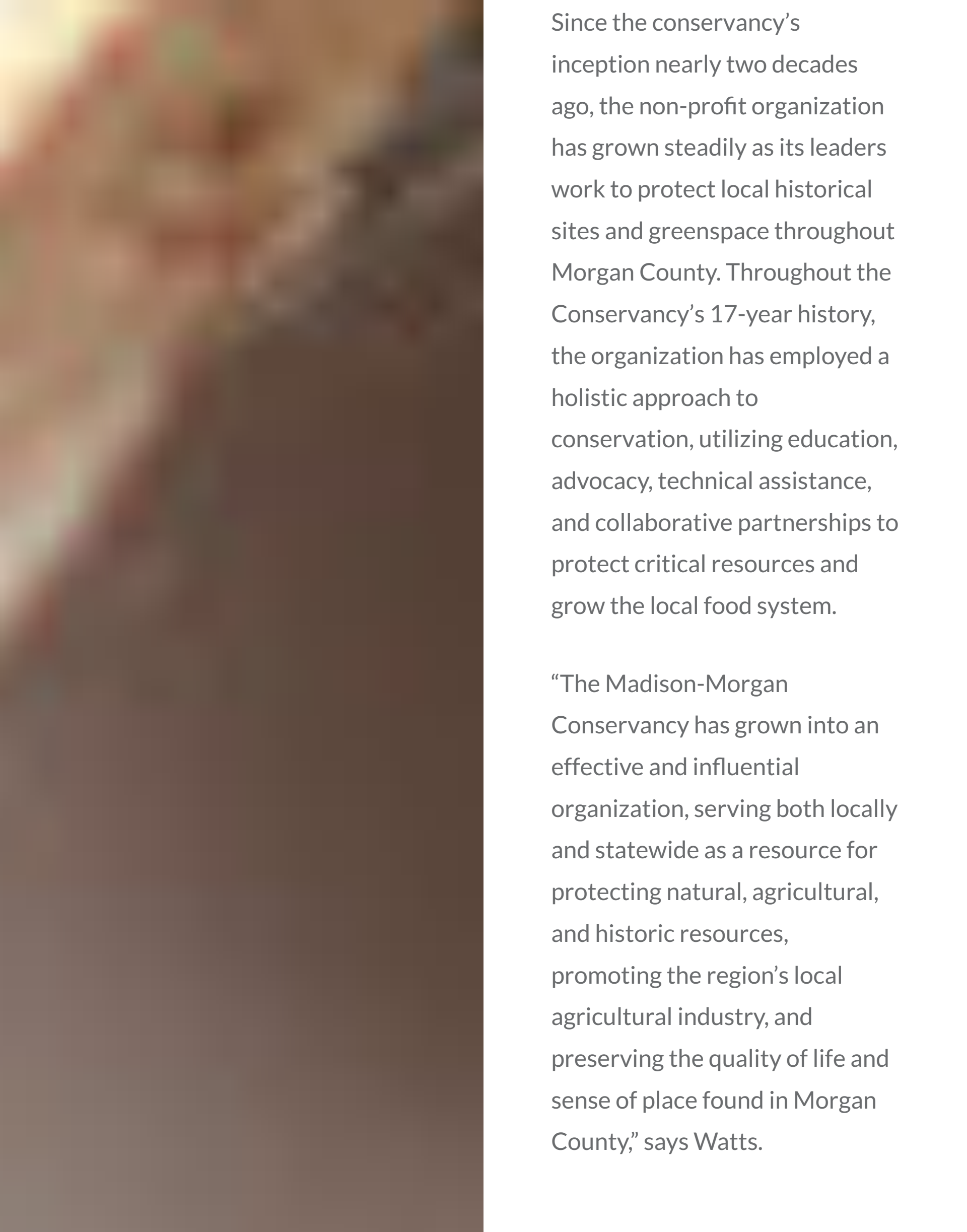


one of the city's last remaining urban greenspaces," says Watts. "If the property is lost in the meantime, the Conservancy will work on one of the other 14 properties on its Endangered Properties list.

The Conservancy is well on its way of reaching its financial goals, but still needs the public's help in raising the rest of the money by August 2019.

"Thanks to a \$500,000 matching grant from the Watson-Brown Foundation, we are well on our way to reaching our goal of having a \$1,250,000 Endangered Properties Revolving Fund," notes Watts. "So, every dollar you spend on Derby Day Raffle tickets will be matched dollar for dollar and it will be used over and over (revolving from project to project), making this one of the most sound investments you can make in Morgan County's future."





Since the conservancy's inception nearly two decades ago, the non-profit organization has grown steadily as its leaders work to protect local historical sites and greenspace throughout Morgan County. Throughout the Conservancy's 17-year history, the organization has employed a holistic approach to conservation, utilizing education, advocacy, technical assistance, and collaborative partnerships to protect critical resources and grow the local food system.

"The Madison-Morgan Conservancy has grown into an effective and influential organization, serving both locally and statewide as a resource for protecting natural, agricultural, and historic resources, promoting the region's local agricultural industry, and preserving the quality of life and sense of place found in Morgan County," says Watts.

The Conservancy has been involved in various efforts including the creation of “FARMeander,” Georgia’s first map-based tour guide to local farms in and around Morgan County, and the Morgan County Greenprint. The organization helped launch a Farm To School program to get more locally-produced foods into local schools and advocated for a regional food hub that became Farmview Market in Madison. The Conservancy has held dozens of educational forums for the local community and also established a Junior Conservancy to acquaint teenagers with conservation issues. The organization played a pivotal role in the historic preservation of Sugar Creek Baptist Church, The Nolan House, The Malcom House, the Wallace Grove School, and a Victorian Era cottage in downtown Madison.

All of the Conservancy's toil has yielded impressive results.

According to the Conservancy, "To date, this work has resulted in the permanent protection of over 3,550 acres through the donation of conservation easements by private landowners; 60+ educational forums...The Conservancy has accomplished its work by building strong partnerships, educating the public and local decision-makers, identifying and documenting threatened resources, and utilizing innovative tools to protect those resources. We do not work in isolation, but rather work collaboratively, with local and statewide non-profit organizations, government agencies, and individual stakeholders."

"The overall 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,” says Watts.

To support the Conservancy’s latest endeavor and win a chance to go to the Kentucky Derby, purchase raffle tickets by calling [\(706\) 818-8046](tel:(706)818-8046).



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# Derby Day tradition

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