

# Madison-Morgan Conservancy

Newsletter  
Summer, 2020

Protecting Farms, Forests, and Front Porches for Future Generations

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## Letter from the President

# Is This Sustainable?

In the age of COVID-19, everyone, from corporations to moms and dads, are asking this question: is our financial model sustainable in a crisis? Non-profits are asking the same question, and for the Conservancy, thankfully, we find that our model is sustainable. For now, at least. And here's why.

First, we have a diverse slate of programming: even though we are unable to gather for our traditional educational forums, we are hard at work on the Endangered Properties Revolving Fund, the Working Farms Fund, landowner technical assistance for conservation easements, and this year we are conducting our strategic planning for 2021-2025. Second, we have relatively low overhead, a conservative financial strategy, and a diverse source of funding. Finally, the board and staff are invested and committed and continue to work through the existing committee structure to accomplish great things. All in all, we are an agile organization; agility has, for twenty years, proven very beneficial.

However, the Conservancy is not escaping unscathed from this pandemic: our executive director voluntarily reduced her pay, our program coordinator has been furloughed until December, and the organization will run a deficit at the end of the year projected to be \$45,000.

Despite a replenished and growing reserve, the organization cannot and will not continue in this same model for more than three years. We are hopeful that the world will normalize, bringing back our workshops, grants, and Derby Day. We cannot wait to bring back Derby Day.

Therefore, this year, look forward to more land being permanently protected by conservation easements, for an announcement about our next Endangered Properties Revolving Fund project, and for something we're calling Madison-Morgan Meander – a new take on FARMeander to include cycling-friendly routes through Morgan County focused on local history with

an emphasis on black history, mid-century architecture, film/tv sites, farms, and historic churches and schools. As we all spend more and more time outside, we hope you will join us in getting to know the farms, forests, and front porches along the back roads in Morgan County that make this place unique. We truly believe you'll be even more inclined to protect them once you know them once you get to know them.

We are looking ahead, too, to what this pandemic will mean for land use in Morgan County. The real estate market seems to be relatively stable, and we will take a good hard look at how population migration may change the face of our rural county. The Development Review Committee will be on alert, and we hope you will keep us in the loop about the changing landscape near you. Smart, managed growth can benefit this community, but rampant, haphazard growth certainly will not. We will strive to work together with neighbors, developers, and local governments to make sure what comes to Morgan County is best for current and future generations.

Cheers to a long row to hoe. We're still here, reminding you that although we may be distanced, we are not disconnected. Stay in touch, and

please pay your membership dues or join the Conservancy as a member to support our work now and in the future. Annual membership dues will keep us in the game. And if you find yourself in a position to make an extra gift this year to the Conservancy, we can use it, and you can be assured it will be put to good use.

Sincerely,

Whitey Hunt  
President



## Resource Protection

# Masterpiece on Main



*"IFACS testing cleaning methods for original frescoed ceiling"*

Oh, to be so beautiful again...

In May, the Conservancy and the Foster-Thomason-Minnix House team (owner David Minnix, architect Joe Smith, and contractor David Peter) met virtually to discuss the rehabilitation plans for the Masterpiece on Main. Given extenuating circumstances, which include ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic, the first Preservation Agreement milestone (replacing the roof by June 30, 2020) appeared to be unrealistic, and we wanted to understand more fully the scope of work the Minnix Team was undertaking.

An in-depth presentation revealed an even more significant scope of work than first expected. Rehabilitation work is projected to begin in Q1 of 2021 and will include a nine-month construction schedule. The project will be completed well within the three-year timeline required by the Preservation Agreement and will include:

- New roof: evidence of an original slate roof exists, and they are considering returning the roof to its original design
- Interior gutters: the current roof replaced the slate roof in the early 1900s and was designed to cover over the internal gutter system, which they intend to restore
- Replacing the burned rear addition with a compatible new addition: these plans have been approved by Madison's Historic Preservation Commission and will allow for the addition of bathrooms on the second story without altering the upstairs floorplan
- Replacing/refinishing interior plaster: not required by the preservation agreement but a design decision that will continue the historic integrity of the interior
- Cleaning and restoring interior details: International Fine Art Conservation Studios (IFACS) was hired to determine the best cleaning methods for the frescoed and stenciled ceilings in the front two rooms and for the "grotto paper," all of which will be retained/restored

Thankfully, the stabilization efforts undertaken by the Conservancy are still holding up, and the house is dry and safe. We are beyond pleased that around every turn, the Minnix team is making excellent design decisions that will preserve this architectural masterpiece.

To all of you Conservancy members and donors to the Endangered Properties Revolving Fund, thank you for making the restoration of this masterpiece possible. An especially big thanks to the Minnixes for their appreciation of this piece of Morgan County's history and their dedication to doing the job right.

Madison-Morgan Conservancy | PO Box 752 | Madison, GA | 30650 | 706-818-8046 | [www.mmcGeorgia.org](http://www.mmcGeorgia.org) | [info@mmcGeorgia.org](mailto:info@mmcGeorgia.org)

## Technical Assistance

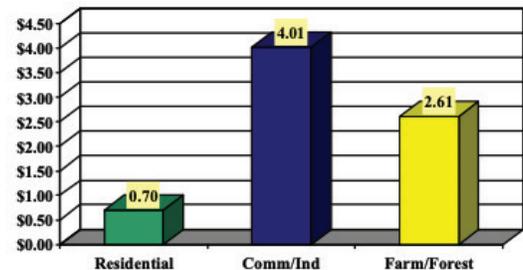
# Working Farms Fund

Did you know...

- The U.S. is home to **10% of the planet's arable soils**—the most of any country.
- From 2001 to 2016, **11 million acres** of agricultural land were paved over, fragmented or converted to other uses in the U.S.
- Georgia is the **5<sup>th</sup> most vulnerable state** in the nation for losing farmland and lost **25% of its farmland** in the last decade
- Cropland **east of Atlanta** is being lost more rapidly than anywhere else in the state
- **50,000 acres of farmland** are projected to change hands in the next 5 years in the 30-county area around Metro Atlanta
- The **local food demand** is growing and was projected to be \$20 billion in 2019

Farmland is being converted to a more intensive use at a rapidly increasing rate in the U.S., and Georgia is seeing more land conversion than most states. Given that Morgan County is situated at the edge of Metro Atlanta, the Conservancy is concerned about farmland conversion for a myriad of reasons: 1) the economic effects on farmers, 2) the effect on our ability to produce a safe, local food supply, 3) the effect on our traffic, scenic views, clean air and water, and general quality of life; and 4) the impact on our municipal budgets. We have studied the real costs of land conversion and know that in Morgan County the cost of community services (roads, schools, fire, police) far exceeds the tax revenue generated from residential development. Commercial land, industrial land, and farmland in Conservation Use Valuation Assessment (CUVA) all provide more in taxes than receive in services. See Figure 2 from Morgan County's Cost of Community Services Study below. As we like to say, "cows don't go to school or to jail."

**Figure 2. Revenues per \$1 of Expenditures by Land Use (County Government Plus County Schools)**



The Conservancy is partnering with the Conservation Fund to protect farmland through their Working Farms Fund. This relatively new program is a sustainable revolving fund that acquires and permanently protects farmland, transitioning ownership to next generation farmers and the farm businesses that will scale our local food system. This self-sustaining model allows dollars to revolve into future farm acquisitions, leverages public funding for long-term conservation outcomes, and amplifies the scope and collective impact of investments in the local food systems.

Would you like to keep your working lands in working hands? Are you transitioning out of farming? Or are you expanding your farming operation? If so, we want you to know about the Working Farms Fund. Please contact us, [info@mmcGeorgia.org](mailto:info@mmcGeorgia.org) or 706-818-8046.

To read more on how development threatens farmland, read this article from the American Farmland Trust: <https://www.agweb.com/article/under-pressure-see-how-development-threatens-farmland>

## Technical Assistance

# Technical Assistance Available to Morgan County Landowners and Homeowners

Do you own a significant historic property? Do you own a working farm that has been in your family for over 100 years? Do you own land with high-quality conservation values? If so, we would like to help you ensure its safe passage to future generations.

There are a number of tools in our tool box that might appeal to you: conservation easements, transferable development rights (TDR), listing on the *National Register of Historic Places* or in the *Georgia Centennial Family Farm Program*, and, of course, if you own a significant property in danger of demolition or subdivision, the Endangered Properties Revolving Fund is available.

If you would like to explore these ideas, the Conservancy staff is here to help (at no cost to Conservancy Members). Contact us, and we will help you determine if your property qualifies, and if it does, we'll help you navigate the process.

## Transferable Development Rights (TDR)



## Technical Assistance

# More about Transferable Development Rights (TDR)

The City of Madison is one of the few places in Georgia that provides landowners an economic benefit for protecting their property. The City has enabled properties that meet certain conservation criteria to be protected through the landowner's voluntary action of selling development rights.

The Transferable Development Rights (TDR) program is designed to shift density away from areas worthy of protection toward areas appropriate for development, facilitating preservation of key properties, a no-net-gain in density, and sustainable development.

A win-win-win:

- Landowner benefit: income from selling development rights
- Conservation benefit: permanent protection of openspace, tree canopy, stream corridors, and other conservation values
- Development benefit: incentives for sustainable development (LEED) and no-net-gain in total density but an allowed increase in density only in areas that meet certain development criteria (only in zoning classifications DURA, PRD, and C3 and in addition to other limiting criteria)

If you are a landowner in the City of Madison interested in protecting your property, contact us, and we will assist you in determining if your property qualifies for the TDR program. TDR technical assistance is provided at no cost to Conservancy Members.

Contact us: [info@mmcGeorgia.org](mailto:info@mmcGeorgia.org) or 706-818-8046.

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.

## Meet our New Board Member

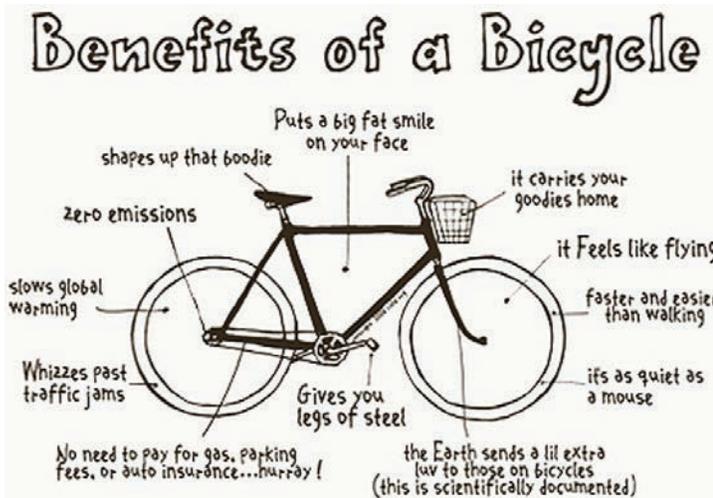


**Anne Horstman**, a native of Savannah, GA retired to Madison in 2014 with her husband, Neil, after living and working in Northern Virginia and in the Washington, DC metropolitan area for 30 years. Anne has a Master of Arts in Historic Preservation from Goucher College in Baltimore, MD. She operated the Victorian District Revolving Fund for Historic Savannah Foundation for 7 years, served as vice-chair of the Historic District Review Board, and also served on numerous cultural and civic boards in Savannah. While living in Alexandria, VA, Anne was on the board of the Historic Alexandria Foundation reviewing applications for the city review committee and oversaw the grants committee for the Foundation. In 1998, Anne and Neil moved to Leesburg, Va. when Anne became Executive Director of the George C. Marshall International Center and oversaw the 7-million-dollar restoration of Marshall's 19th century National and Virginia Historic Landmark home and gardens.

Since moving to Madison, Mrs. Horstman served on the board of Dumbarton House in Washington, DC. This National Historic Landmark is the headquarters of the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America. In addition to the Colonial Dames, Anne is also a member of the Henry Walton chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Anne and Neil joined the Conservancy soon after moving here, were strong supporters from the get-go, and were instrumental in developing the Conservancy's Endangered Properties Revolving Fund. Neil served on the Conservancy Board for two years until his untimely death this February. We are so grateful that Anne will continue to support the Conservancy's work with her expertise in preservation and revolving funds as a board member and by serving on the EPRF Committee.

### Organizational News

## A Fun, Profitable, and Inspiring Bike Raffle



A big thank you goes out to Harris Little (Conservancy Member, Morgan County native, and current Mayor of Carnesville, GA) and his family for donating a Trek mountain bike to the Conservancy this spring. It was perfect timing: beautiful weather, a bike shortage in the U.S., and the Conservancy had just cancelled its only fundraiser of the year. Mayor Little encouraged us to raffle off the bike, and we were happy and grateful to do just that. Thanks to all of you who purchased tickets. \$2,250 was raised to support the mission of the Conservancy. On Friday, May 22nd, from his front porch, on a perfect day for a bike ride, Whitey Hunt drew the winning raffle ticket: Patsy Harris is the new owner of a brand-spanking new Trek X-Caliber 8 Mountain Bike!

### Educational Programming

## Let's Meander

Thanks to a new partnership between the Morgan County Board of Commissioners, the Madison-Morgan CVB, and the Conservancy, with support from the City of Madison, City of Rutledge, and Morgan Medical Center, a grant has been submitted to the GA Dept. of Economic Development for the production of a new tourism product entitled "The Madison-Morgan Meander." This Meander will be a revamped/expanded FARMeander to include themed, cycling-friendly routes through Morgan County that will interpret Morgan County's history, architecture, and culture. The Meander will focus on black history, mid-century architecture, film/tv sites, local food, and historic churches and schools. The Meander will also be suitable for motor vehicle tours. In addition to being a tourism product, the Meander will also be an innovative method of educating residents and visitors about the Morgan County community and will promote the continued protection of our landscapes, history, and rural character."

Want to help? Got a bike? Love mid-century architecture? Or know something about history? Contact us. We are assembling the committee and would love your help. [info@mmcGeorgia.org](mailto:info@mmcGeorgia.org), 706-818-8046. We will also need to match the grant to the tune-up of about \$3,200, so if you'd like to participate in the financial match, we'd love that, too!

**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, forestry, agriculture, and heritage tourism 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.

## Educational Programming

# First Junior Conservancy Scholarship Awarded to Susan Bishop!

For the first time this year, Junior Conservancy seniors were eligible for a college scholarship, and, boy, was it a hard decision to make. Although all the other scholarship applicants were also terrific young people who will be very successful going forward, Susan Bishop exceeded the criteria for the scholarship in every way. The criteria include academic excellence, individual character, leadership potential, accomplishments within the organization, participation, application responses, and letters of recommendation.

Susan was described by the Chair of the Junior Conservancy Committee, Maryann Dartnell, as:

- She is dedicated:
  - She participated in all events enthusiastically. We could always depend on her to be there and to volunteer to help.
  - She has excellent communication skills, consistently and promptly responding to all forms of communication.
- She is authentic:
  - This young lady shares a special way of looking at the world with optimism and an open mind.
  - She is a leader, without even trying to be, always providing fresh ideas.
  - As one of her teachers described, “she has an infectious positive attitude.”
  - Another teacher called her “an original.”
- She puts her heart into her work:
  - She sees what needs to be accomplished and strives for excellence.
  - Her contribution to the final project and her thoughtful essay reflected her hard work ethic.

In her scholarship application Susan wrote about her experience: *"Organizations like the Madison-Morgan Conservancy are important because they strive to preserve the history of a community while enhancing the economy, reducing waste and conserving land, improving aesthetics, and creating a sense of community and identity. I am proud to be a part of the Madison-Morgan Conservancy Junior Board and would recommend this opportunity to others."* Susan's experience with the Junior Conservancy is one we hope to replicate for hundreds of students in the coming years.

Thanks to an anonymous donor, Susan will head to Augusta University in the fall with her \$1,500 scholarship check to study nursing and eventually pursue her dream to become a pediatric nurse practitioner. We honored to be able to present this scholarship to Susan and hope it helps her fulfill her biggest dreams!



## Educational Programming

# A New Year for the Junior Conservancy

We're looking forward to kicking-off another year with the Junior Conservancy this August! We are pleased to welcome the following students for the 2020-2021 school year: Seager Hunt, Jesse Nelson, Ava Rabern, Michel Santos, and Caroline Thomas. Returning members include: Daisy-Jane Buck, Ian Garrett, Lady Kuperberg, James Martin, Maddox Pugmire, and Fritz Williams.

We will miss the four seniors who have moved onto college: Susan Bishop, Lipi Desai, Will Kuperberg, and Valeria Notte. They have served as officers, editors, and public service volunteers. We thank them for their service to Morgan County and for being a part of the Junior Conservancy!

This year, we will focus on experiential learning by getting students out and about around Morgan County. The Junior Conservancy will visit local farms, working forests, and ecological sites, and learn about conserving these special places along the way. The year will culminate with a service project organized by the students to give back to the Morgan County community.

A big thank you to those foundations, individuals, and local businesses who supported the Junior Conservancy last year: Amici, Anonymous, Georgia Power Foundation, Ken Kocher, Morgan Stanley Foundation, Preston Synder, and the Sarah Baldwin Harris and J.D. Harris Foundation. As always, we are extremely grateful for our committed volunteer committee who oversees the Junior Conservancy: Emily Buck, Maryann Dartnell, and Rachel Kinsaul.



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New Members (green)

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# Join or Renew Your Membership Today!

Madison-Morgan Conservancy  
 P.O. Box 752, Madison, GA 30650  
 706-818-8046 | www.mmcGeorgia.org | info@mmcGeorgia.org

## Annual Membership Form

Support the Conservancy's mission with your annual membership:

- |                                                                                                                                 |                                                  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Daniel Morgan Society - \$5,000 + (Watershed Donor Level)                                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Supporter - \$500       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sustainer - \$2,500 + (Watershed Donor Level)                                                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Donor - \$250           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor - \$1,000 + (Watershed Donor Level)                                                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Preservationist - \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>I would like to contribute an additional: \$ _____ to the Endangered Properties Revolving Fund.</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> Conservationist - \$50  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> My Company has a matching gift program. Please send me information about matching gifts.               | <input type="checkbox"/> Naturalist - \$25       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Please send me information about including the Madison-Morgan Conservancy in my will.                  |                                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I would like to volunteer.                                                                             |                                                  |

Name(s) as it should appear on the Membership list:

\_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone 1: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Email 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Email 2: \_\_\_\_\_

DEBBIE & DEAN TILLERY, NUART	SUSAN RODRIGUEZ WELCH
SCOTT REED & DAN TOKOS	CHARLES WELDON
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<b>*ANNE &amp; ROBERT TRULOCK</b>	CATHY & STEVE WHITCOMB
SALLY & GRADY TUELL	<b>*CLARENCE &amp; KATHY WHITESIDE</b>
<b>ROBERT M. &amp; LILIAS BALDWIN</b>	MR. & MRS. PETER WIBELL
<b>TURNELL FOUNDATION</b>	SALLY WICKLAND
<b>*FIN VASON</b>	CAROL & EVERETT WILLIAMS
<b>*KATIE VASON</b>	<b>**FRITZ WILLIAMS</b>
<b>*MRS. LEE HARPER &amp; MR. WAYNE VASON</b>	JAMIE & JAMES WILLIAMS
CHERIE VAUGHAN	MR. & MRS. BLANTON WINSHIP
NANCY VAUGHAN	CLARE WOLFE
<b>*SUE ELLEN &amp; ALAN S. VERNER</b>	LINDA & KARL WOODWORTH
BETSY & BILL VERNER	CHRISTIE & CHARLES WRIGHT
JULIE & DAN VICE	CONNIE & WILLIAM ZACHARY
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<b>*CHRISTINE &amp; DAVID WATTS</b>	
<b>*KATIE &amp; SCOTT WEBER</b>	



**MADISON-MORGAN  
CONSERVANCY**

PROTECTING FARMS, FORESTS, AND  
FRONT PORCHES FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

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

(706) 818-8046

[www.mmcGeorgia.org](http://www.mmcGeorgia.org)



Return Service Requested

## Need to Renew? Check Your Mailing Label.

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

### Summer, 2020

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

### Membership

## NEW Monthly Giving!

It's all about cash flow. If you would prefer to give monthly, it's easy to do online. Just go to our website [www.mmcGeorgia.org/membership](http://www.mmcGeorgia.org/membership) and click the "Monthly Giving" button, and fill in the monthly amount you'd like to contribute. Monthly giving is a win-win:

- It may help you support the Conservancy at an even higher level
- Monthly membership income helps the Conservancy budget for the year

**Daniel Morgan Society \$5,000+ | Monthly = \$417**

**Sustainer \$2,500+ | Monthly = \$209**

**Benefactor \$1,000+ | Monthly = \$84**

**Supporter \$500+ | Monthly = \$42**

**Donor \$250+ | Monthly = \$21**



## From the Membership Chair

The Conservancy's 20th Anniversary year does not look at all like what we envisioned, but we have good news on the membership front. As of the writing of this newsletter, the Conservancy is 514 members strong - only 36 members away from our goal of 550 members by October 2020. We can make it, and you can help!

The heart and soul of this organization is its membership. Members shape the vision, advocate for this mission, support the budget, and represent the organization in the county, across the state, and beyond. A strong membership also confirms to our funding partners that our base of support is strong, and that their funding will be put to good use in our community.

As we look back over the 20 years of the Madison-Morgan Conservancy, we are proud of the education, farmer support, land protection, and historic preservation we've accomplished. We see there is so much more to do in the next twenty years and know we can do it with the support of Conservancy members. You can help by renewing your membership annually and by referring a friend or neighbor. Help us reach 550 members by October!

On behalf of all of us here, thank you for supporting the Conservancy.

*- Kyle Davidson, Membership Committee Chair*