

Madison-Morgan Conservancy

Newsletter
Winter, 2020-2021

Protecting Farms, Forests, and Front Porches for Future Generations

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Letter from the Immediate Past President

Still in the Game

As I reread my letter in the last Conservancy newsletter, I was struck by the phrase “still in the game.” It came after my plea to you to renew your membership dues or to join the Conservancy. At the time, we knew that financial support from members was the only thing that would keep the Conservancy afloat during the pandemic.

And you did it. You kept us in the game. In fact, our membership grew to over 550 members, and membership dues funded almost half our annual expenses. You made it possible for us to shift from our traditional in-person programming and income-producing events to focusing on the revolving fund, the Junior Conservancy, technical assistance to landowners, and adopting our new strategic plan.

So, to recap what you made possible last year, I'd like to start with the proactive work our Endangered Properties Revolving Fund has been doing. Three projects are in the works, all of which should revolve our capital invested when the projects are complete. In the end, the results should be 1) 165 acres of permanently protected farm and forestland, 2) 18 acres of greenspace permanently protected linking the school campus to Horse Branch Trail, and 3) a historic cotton seed house saved from blight and restored into a functioning real estate asset in downtown Madison.

The Seedhouse project has garnered some attention from near and far. Not only have we heard from a lot of you who are so glad the building will be fixed up, but the City of Madison has even supported the project through their Façade Grant program. The 1772 Foundation has also expressed interest in using this project as a pilot project to develop a new Sustainable Technology Revolving Fund and has awarded the Conservancy a grant to fund the EarthCraft certification process. We are emboldened by all the

support and are looking forward to making this historic cotton seed shamble into an energy and water efficient commercial space for future Madisonians.

Back to the land. More land was permanently protected by private landowners last year: 316 acres of farm, forest, wildlife habitat, scenic views, and water resources were protected by two conservation easements donated by two separate landowners. This brings Morgan County's total of permanently protected land to over 5,100 acres. If you are interested in exploring a conservation easement on your land, please contact our staff at info@mmcGeorgia.org. Our goal is to reach 7,500 acres by 2025.

My grandson, Seager, is a member of the Junior Conservancy and has been learning all sorts of things: how to clean headstones in the cemetery, how historic rehabilitation is more sustainable and can be more profitable than greenfield development, how conservation subdivisions are designed to protect the land's conservation values, and more. Despite their new normal, the Junior Conservancy students seem to be having their best year yet.



Speaking of conservation subdivisions, you are probably aware of the subdivision moratorium in Morgan County. The Commissioners and planning staff are working to revise the county development regulations so that future development is better and more sustainable than some of the development we've seen recently. Specifically, they are trying to disincentivize the rampant road-front subdivision of large lots into the smallest possible lots – the result being house after house after house along our once beautiful country roads (a development pattern we taxpayers will eventually subsidize). There is simply a better way to grow, and we applaud the Commissioners and planning staff for their efforts. We will continue to keep an eye on this going forward.

President's Letter Continued...

As I roll off as President and welcome Robert Trulock back into this role, I want to say thank you to all of you who support this important work. On the whole, Morgan County is beautiful, environmentally healthy, agriculturally productive, and a very desirable place to live. I thank all of you who are working to keep it that way. Here's to giving it to future generations better than we found it.

Sincerely,

Lowry W. Hunt, Jr.

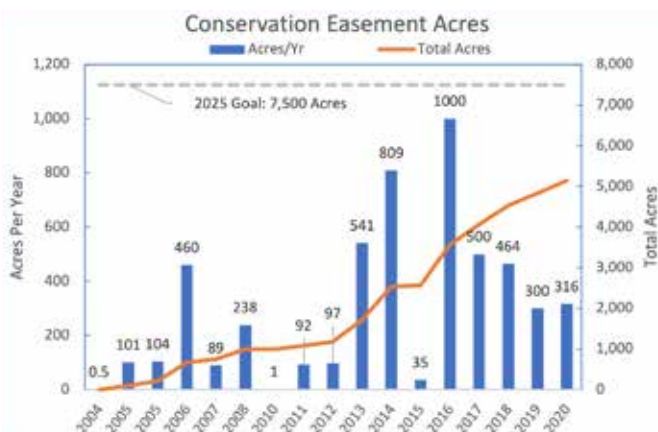
Whitey Hunt
Founding President

Technical Assistance

Morgan County Conservation Easements in 2020

In December 2020, 316 acres of farm, forest, wildlife habitat, scenic views, and water resources were protected by two conservation easements donated by two separate landowners. Private land conservation is an effective way to protect important conservation values for the public good. Much of Morgan County's permanently protected private land includes the best farming soils, working forests, bottomland hardwood forests, critical wildlife habitat, and miles and miles of streams and stream corridors. Landowners voluntarily gave up development rights to permanently protect this land and, in return, will receive an income tax deduction. Though that tax deduction won't make up for the value given away, the landowners find value in the permanent protection of the land for future generations. We thank all the conservation easement donors in Morgan County – they are protecting our public resources and perpetuating that culture of conservation that benefits us all.

If you are interested in exploring a conservation easement on your land, please contact Conservancy staff at info@mmcGeorgia.org. Our goal is to reach 7,500 acres by 2025.



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.

Resource Protection

Your Endangered Properties Revolving Fund at Work



The Endangered Properties Revolving Fund has been in full swing for the last year. Three projects are underway, all of which should revolve the capital invested back into the Revolving Fund at project completion:

• High Shoals Conservation Easement

- **Project:** permanently protect 165 acres of farm and forestland near High Shoals.
- **The Land:** prime ag soils, open pasture, and working timber along the ridges of crystal-clear Bramble Creek meandering through a beautiful and healthy bottomland hardwood forest. Wildlife populations abound: turkey, deer, hawks, pileated woodpeckers, and song birds are spotted regularly. It's quiet, serene, and close to a rapidly developing area, Oconee County.
- **The Tool:** a 148-acre conservation easement will protect the conservation values, and future generations will forever benefit from the ecosystem services provided by this land (clean air, clean water, wildlife habitat, agricultural production, timber production). Three building envelopes within the larger 165 acres will be reserved for future and existing development.

• Horse Branch Trail TDRs

- **Project:** permanently protect 18 acres of greenspace serving as a critical link between the school campus and Horse Branch Trail.
- **The Land:** sensitive wetlands, bottomland hardwood forest, developable land along the ridges of Horse Branch meandering through the City of Madison. Horse Branch Trail is planned through this land, and these 18 acres are a critical link between that trail and the school campus.
- **The Tool:** transferable development rights will be created from this sending area by executing a conservation easement on the 18 acres.

• The Seedhouse rehabilitation

- **Project:** save the c. 1899 cotton seed house from demolition.
- **The Property:** constructed by M.L. Richter as a cotton seed house, the building was adapted over time into a rental house, then the Prior's Kiddie Playschool, and then Helen's Beauty Shop. Stripped of most of its materials, the property has been vacant and blighted for ten years.
- **The Tool:** Private developers were not attending to the need to invest in the property, so the Revolving Fund purchased the building, will rehabilitate it, own it for five years, and then sell it to recoup its investment.

Forest Carbon Credits

A Reallocation of Investment Capital Worldwide

Larry Fink is Founder, Chairman, and Chief Executive Officer of BlackRock, the firm trusted to manage more money than any other investment company in the world.

Mr. Fink reported in his 2021 letter to his clients (<https://www.blackrock.com/corporate/investor-relations/larry-fink-ceo-letter>) that he is seeing a fundamental reallocation of capital towards sustainable assets. He wrote, "In 2020, we began to see this shift take shape. From January to November 2020, investors in mutual funds and ETFs globally invested \$288 billion in sustainable products, a 96% increase over the whole of 2019. I believe that this is the beginning of a long but rapidly accelerating transition – one that will unfold over many years and reshape asset prices of every type. We know that climate risk is investment risk. But we also believe the climate transition presents a historic investment opportunity."

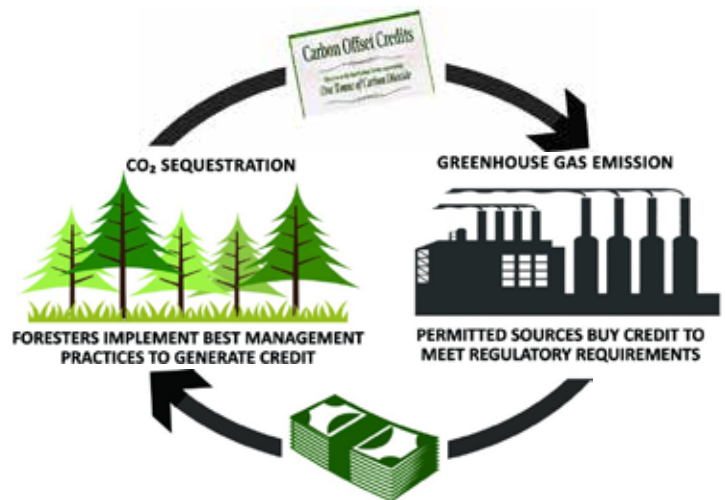
One of those investment opportunities is carbon credits. Spurred by the U.S. Clean Air Act of 1990 (the world's first cap and trade program credited for substantially reducing emissions of sulfur dioxide from coal-fired power plants, the cause of the notorious "acid rain" of the 1980s), the U.S. carbon credit market has been voluntary since inception and remains so with few exceptions.

Carbon credits are big business. In 2019 \$45 billion were raised globally in carbon pricing revenues. Remarkably, forestry carbon credits made up 42% of all carbon credits issued in the last five years. You're probably wishing you owned a forest right about now. Some of you do: Georgia has more privately owned timberland than any other state in the nation.

Here's how forest carbon credits work: because forests and forest products have the capacity to store carbon, businesses that emit carbon can "offset" the amount of carbon they produce by buying carbon credits from forest landowners. Some businesses are participating in this voluntary carbon market not as an altruistic act but in preparation for a mandatory carbon market, which they believe will be upon us soon.

The GA Forestry Commission is committed to informing landowners about carbon credits and has created the GA Carbon Sequestration Registry. Here in Morgan County, 64% of our 224,000 acres are forested and sequestering carbon. If you own some of that forested land and would like to learn more about carbon credits, contact Devon Dartnell, GA Forestry Commission, 706-614-0795.

To learn more, check out GA Forestry Commission's website: <https://gatrees.org/forest-management-conservation/carbon-sequestration/>



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.

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 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 Members



Zack Sittler was born and raised in Historic Cooperstown, a quaint rural town in upstate, NY. Early in his childhood he developed an appreciation and enthusiasm for historic preservation, conservation, and the importance of small rural communities. After working in the trades and traveling throughout New Zealand, Europe, and Southeast Asia, he attended The College of the Redwoods in Northern California, with a focus on furniture and cabinetmaking. After working in New York alongside well-known furniture designer Richard Wrightman, he obtained a BFA in Design from Champlain College in Burlington, Vermont. Zack and his wife Aleah moved to Madison in 2018, where he launched Heartwood Custom Builders, LLC. A well-traveled, bi-lingual, talented craftsman, focused on historic preservation and restoration, finish/trim carpentry, and custom construction, Zack is a licensed contractor and Heartwood Custom Builders specializes in historic restoration/preservation, renovations/remodels, and custom homes. He is passionate about accurately preserving history, showing technological advancements in construction, providing that knowledge to this community, and, most importantly, aiming to provide the best service available. Zack enjoys fly fishing, playing in the yard with his daughter and Dalmatian, Zoe, gardening, and weekend trips to the Mountains with his family.

Nancy Greene was born in Melbourne Florida, and was a resident of Atlanta for 45 years. Nancy moved to the Rutledge area in 2013 to restore a house she and her husband Lane bought from Felton Jenkins in 2006. After serving as the Executive Director of Historic Oakland Cemetery for four years in the 1980s, Nancy went to work as a paralegal for a general practitioner in Atlanta. Before she retired in 2013, she enjoyed being a docent at the Wrens Nest, the Joel Chandler Harris House. Nancy continues her interest in historic preservation by serving on the Board of Morgan County Landmarks and the Conservancy. This is her second time serving on the Conservancy's board; during her first board term she served as the Vice-President. After joining the Conservancy in 2013, Nancy became an integral part of the 2014 Greenprint Ramble Supper Committee.



Robert Trulock grew up on the family farm in Climax, GA, where they raised timber and peanuts. He attended Berry College for two years and earned a Bachelor of Science in Agronomy from the University of Georgia. Immediately after graduation Robert worked with Dow Chemical in Memphis, but his passion for investing soon drew him to Dean Witter in Atlanta and then to Morgan Stanley. He earned the Morgan Stanley Smith Barney prestigious Wealth Advisor designation in 2003, the title of Senior Portfolio Manager in 2009, and is currently a member of Morgan Stanley Smith Barney's Masters Club. Robert's civic and service interests have allowed him to serve as President of the Atlanta Farmers Club, Buckhead Fifty Club, Madison Kiwanis Club as well as past chair of the Madison-Morgan Cultural Center and vice chair of the Morgan County Planning Commission. He currently serves as President of the Madison-Morgan Conservancy, Chairman of the Madison Planning Commission and is involved with the Madison Greenspace Commission. Robert has been married to Anne Lambert of Madison since 1983, and they have three wonderful children. He still enjoys quail, turkey, duck, and dove hunts on the family farm, 700 acres of which are permanently protected by a conservation easement.

Conservancy Adopts New Strategic Plan 2021-2025

Strategic planning is only one part of a larger ongoing planning process but is a significant element of sound organizational management. Typical of most planning processes, the Conservancy's most recent strategic planning process was designed to assess the organization's past performance and determine the goals and implementation plan for the next five years. Previous strategic plans were adopted in 2007, 2011, 2015, and 2017.

In February 2020, the Conservancy Board began its strategic planning process. Due to COVID-19, in-person meetings were not feasible, so it was decided that our working committees would meet virtually over eight months. During that time, the organization also 1) collected and analyzed data, 2) disseminated a digital survey to members, stakeholders, and the general public, and 3) held personal phone interviews with key stakeholders. This process provided the public the opportunity to help define the strategic direction of the organization and provided the Conservancy a way to engage the community in a meaningful way during a time when so many felt isolated and disconnected. Find our new strategic plan on our home page, www.mmcGeorgia.org.



From Airplane Hangars to Bald Eagles

Can we say the Junior Conservancy is soaring? Maybe not literally. But the Junior Conservancy program is growing and improving each year. This year, even with their new normal (masks, outside, socially distanced, rain or shine), the Junior Conservancy students seem to be having their best year yet and are learning to set their sights high. Here's what they've done and learned so far this year:

- **September, Wayside Icebreaker** – a social time to get to know the incoming JC Board members, hosted each year at Dan Rather's Wayside Farm at Lake Malcom.
- **October, Kenwood Conservation Subdivision Field Trip** – Rick Porter hosted the JC in his airplane hangar and toured the students through the conservation subdivision explaining how the sustainable development practices worked: swales instead of curb and gutter for groundwater recharge, lot arrangement designed to control flooding, permanent protection of 290 acres for wildlife habitat, etc.
- **November, Cemetery Cleanup Service Project** – Madison's Cemetery Commission taught the JC students how to clean headstones and were grateful for the significant progress they made on the Joshua Hill family plots.
- **December, Madison Historic Rehabilitation Tour** – Preston Snyder toured the JC students through two of his projects explaining rehabilitation vs. greenfield development, construction management, even return on investment of real estate development projects. Then they walked over to the Conservancy's Seedhouse revolving fund project to learn about the history of the building and about how green building technology will be employed to make the rehabilitated structure energy and water efficient.
- **January, Hard Labor Creek State Park CCC Camp Field Trip** – Park Ranger David Guzman gave the JC students a behind-the-scenes tour through what remains of the CCC Camp, noting the accomplishments of the "CCC Boys" and life at the camp in the 1930s. They even spotted Bald Eagles in a tree by at the edge of Lake Rutledge.

Four more JC meetings remain this year, which will include a tour of the African American Museum, a field trip to Charlie Elliott, possibly a stormwater experiment at the Seedhouse, and a field trip to Hundred Acre Farm to hike and explore Sugar Creek Church (saved and relocated by the Conservancy and the Johnsons in 2016).



March 21 - Deadline to apply for the 2021-2022 Junior Conservancy Board

If you or someone you know would like to join the Junior Conservancy next year, please contact us for an application. Eligible students must:

- Reside in Morgan County and be in high school (any high school or home school) or currently in 8th grade (will be a freshman next school year)
- Have an interest in the environment, history, and/or agriculture
- Be in good academic standing
- Have the drive to actively participate in Junior Conservancy meetings, events, and activities
- Commit to ten meetings/field trips/service events on the second Sunday afternoon of each month August through May (some dates will vary from this schedule and will be determined in advance)
- Be curious about the place in which they live and interested in making it better through creative problem solving.

You can learn more about the JC here: <https://mmcgeorgia.org/junior-conservancy/>



Conservancy Members

FEBRUARY 2020 - FEBRUARY 2021

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* Charter Members

Watershed Donors (bolded)

**** Junior Conservancy Members**

New Members (green)

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THERESA & SCOTT PIPPIN	DEBBIE & WAYNE TAMPLIN
KATHY & CHUCK PLUMLEY	JOHANNA & BRYAN TATE
CHERRY & RICK PORTER	KATHY BEESON & GREG TATE
VAN PRICE	JOAN & LARRY TAYLOR

* Charter Members

Watershed Donors (bolded)

**** Junior Conservancy Members**

New Members (green)

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"/> Conservationist - \$50 |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Naturalist - \$25 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I would like to contribute an additional: \$ _____
to the Endangered Properties Revolving Fund. | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> My Company has a matching gift program. Please send me information about matching gifts. | |
| <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: _____

LINDA & DAN THOMAN	JAMIE & PHILIPP VON HANSTEIN
**CAROLINE THOMAS	FRANK WALSH
COURTNEY & TRAVIS THOMAS	LELA & KYLE WARD
*MRS. JOYCE THOMAS	BETTY & JEFF WARD
*MARTHA P. THURMOND	ELLEN WARREN
DEBBIE & DEAN TILLERY, NUART	WATERFALL FOUNDATION
MARY & MIKE TORINO	WATSON-BROWN FOUNDATION
MRS. LYNN WALKER TREADWELL	*CHRISTINE & DAVID WATTS
*ANNE & ROBERT TRULOCK	*KATIE & SCOTT WEBER
SALLY & GRADY TUELL	SUSAN RODRIGUEZ WELCH
DIANNE TUTTLE	CHARLES WELDON
ROBERT M. & LILIAS BALDWIN	GEORGE H. WEST
TURNELL FOUNDATION	TED WESTLAKE
*FIN VASON	*CLARENCE & KATHY WHITESIDE
*KATIE VASON	MR. & MRS. PETER WIBELL
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*SUE ELLEN & ALAN S. VERNER	JAMIE & JAMES WILLIAMS
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BARBARA & THOMAS VERNER	DENISE & WILLIAM WINGATE
JULIE & DAN VICE	LINDA & KARL WOODWORTH
MIMI VICKERS	CHRISTIE & CHARLES WRIGHT
CELIA & PAUL VISSCHER	MARYBETH WYDOCK



MADISON-MORGAN CONSERVANCY

PROTECTING FARMS, FORESTS, AND

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.

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

(706) 818-8046

www.mmcGeorgia.org



Return Service Requested

Winter, 2020-2021

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

Membership

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 and click the "Monthly Giving" button, and fill in the monthly amount you'd like to contribute. Monthly giving is a win-win:

- You can spread your contribution out over 12 months
- 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 did not look at all like what we envisioned, but the Conservancy has been hard at work, and we have good news on the membership front. We reached our goal of 550 members by the end of 2021. Now we are preparing to push toward our stretch goal of reaching 630 members by the end of 2021 (3.5% of Morgan County's 18,000 population). We can make it, and you can help!

We ask that you talk to your neighbors, friends, and family about the valuable service the Conservancy performs for Morgan County, all for free. All our work is supported by private donations and, just this year, a small grant from the State (GA Department of Economic Development granted us \$5,000 for the Madison-Morgan Meander project).

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.

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

- Kyle Davidson, Membership Committee Chair