



YEARS OF PROTECTING  
WHAT YOU LOVE

CACAPON & LOST  
RIVERS LAND TRUST

# News from the Watershed

November 2020

Protecting the forests, farms, rural heritage and water quality of the Cacapon and Lost Rivers Watershed

## SEE INSIDE:

2020  
Highlights



The Legacy  
Fund Gets a  
Boost



Species  
of Greatest  
Conservation  
Need



## Interested in protecting your land?

Conservation easements are flexible tools that meet the needs of landowners and protect land forever. Working in partnership with landowners, the Cacapon and Lost Rivers Land Trust listens carefully and ensures the goals of landowners are supported and the conservation values of the land are protected. Conservation easements offer peace of mind and through donated easements, tax deduction benefits. For more information contact Jennifer at [jennifer@cacapon.org](mailto:jennifer@cacapon.org).

Despite this year's challenges brought on by the pandemic, the Cacapon and Lost Rivers Land Trust made a lot of progress in our mission to protect the forests, farms, wildlife, and water quality of the Cacapon watershed. On page 2 and 3, you'll find highlights from the year. A bright spot in 2020 was the selection of the Land Trust's first Executive Director, Nancy Ailes, as a West Virginia Wonder Woman. I'm sure you'll enjoy reading excerpts from an inspiring conversation I recently had with Nancy (see below).

We move into the new year with an unswerving commitment to protect what we all love about the Cacapon and Lost Rivers watershed. Our work would not be possible without the generous support of people like you. On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff, thank you.

Wishing you safe and joy-filled holidays,

Jennifer  
Executive Director



## It's About People

Nancy Ailes, the first Executive Director of the Cacapon and Lost Rivers Land Trust, was selected as a 2020 West Virginia Wonder Woman by *West Virginia Living Magazine*. Jennifer recently talked with Nancy about her work in the watershed.

**Jennifer:** *The creator of West Virginia Wonder Woman said those selected are the "ultimate role models." As a role model, what would you say to young people interested in conservation and land protection?*

**Nancy:** Anyone interested in the conservation field needs to know that 95% of this work is about people. You need to build relationships with people first –then you can talk about the environment. It's important to be authentic and a good listener. You also need to understand how your particular work fits into the big picture. You have to reach beyond the area you care about and know that it is a part of a larger landscape. Every landscape is bigger than the landscape you're hugging.

**Jennifer:** *You are 8th generation in Hampshire County. How have your generational roots impacted your work?*

**Nancy:** Our family's land, now in a conservation easement, was part of the original Lord Fairfax land grants. It's humbling. And yet, you don't have to be raised here to know that this area is unique and deserves to be protected. Here in our watershed everyone has their own story. We all love things differently. It doesn't mean the newcomer doesn't love the land as much as someone who has been here for generations. Their story isn't less compassionate, it's just different.

*Continued to page 4*





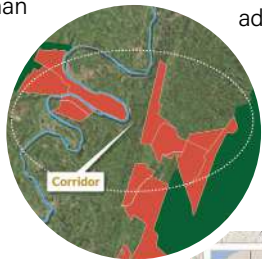
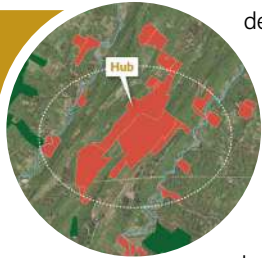
# 2020 Highlights: Protecting What You Love



## 2020-2025 STRATEGIC PLAN: 8,000 MORE ACRES

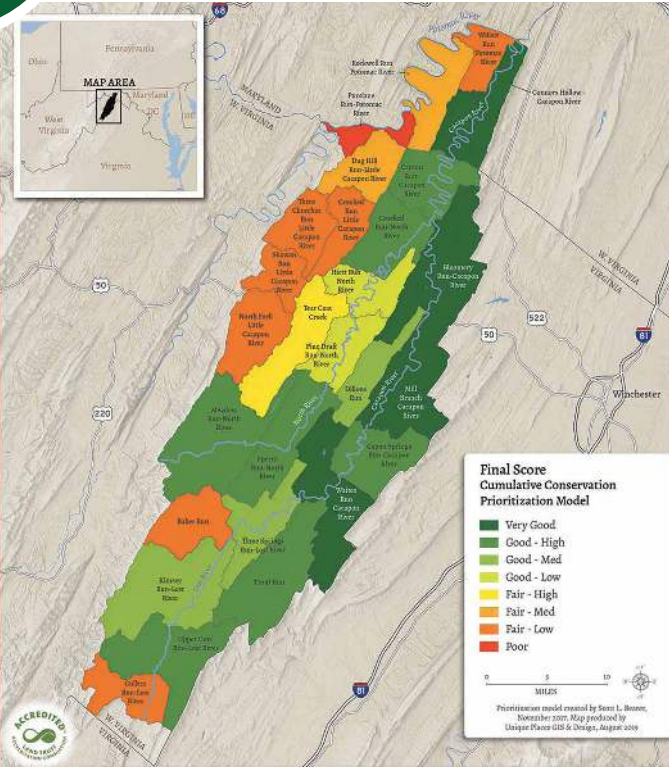
The Cacapon and Lost Rivers watershed is rich in natural resources — forests, productive farmland, rivers, springs, wetlands, and wildlife. This natural capital is important to the economic vitality of our local communities and the ecological health of the watershed we are committed to protecting. By conserving land for farming, forestry, wildlife, and water quality, the Cacapon and Lost Rivers Land Trust helps protect the economic infrastructure and rural traditions of this watershed. And our success in land protection here has significant impact on the health of the Chesapeake Bay. The Cacapon watershed remains one of the most ecologically beneficial tributaries to the Potomac River and the Bay.

In 2020, the Land Trust updated our strategic plan and reaffirmed the commitment to expand our hubs and corridor strategy first developed more than a decade ago. Hubs and corridors are about connectivity — connecting publicly protected lands with privately protected lands. Connectivity is critical to protecting clean water, wildlife, and healthy ecosystems. Our Geographic Information Systems (GIS) prioritization model that identifies high conservation areas was also updated in 2020, and together with our hubs and corridors strategy, led us to set a new five-year goal of protecting an additional 8,000 acres.



■ **Cacapon & Lost River Land Trust Conservation Easement**  
■ **Other Protected Lands**

### CLRLT Conservation Prioritization Model



## 30 YEARS OF LAND PROTECTION

2020 marked the 30th anniversary of the Cacapon and Lost Rivers Land Trust. We had many events planned, culminating in a community celebration to honor the 53 easement holders who have permanently protected more than 14,000 acres of land. Unfortunately, all these events were postponed because of the pandemic. However, throughout the year, we continued to move forward with several key initiatives highlighted below.

## INCREASING FINANCIAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR LANDOWNERS

The Cacapon and Lost Rivers Land Trust signed a Memorandum of Understanding with The Nature Conservancy (TNC), to open up opportunities for forest owners, of at least 2,000 acres, to receive financial benefits from carbon offsets. Healthy forests offer multiple benefits, including clean water, wildlife habitat and carbon storage. The Working Woodlands program protects private, nonindustrial working forests with conservation easements while assisting landowners with sustainable timber management and providing a new income stream for landowners by selling carbon credits generated by their forested land. We are excited about our partnership with TNC and the prospect of protecting more land that will also generate additional income to Cacapon watershed landowners.



## RESTORING NATIVE BROOK TROUT

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation will support an expansion of native brook trout restoration in the Cacapon watershed through our partnership with Trout Unlimited (TU). For more than a decade, TU has improved hundreds of miles of brook trout habitat here. Our watershed is the eastern most stronghold for native brook trout and this partnership builds on years of TU expertise. In recognition of TU's leadership, the CLRLT's Board of Directors selected TU as the 2020 Cacapon Conservation Champion. We have much to look forward to in our ongoing partnership to improve brook trout habitat and permanently protect lands important to restoration efforts.



## LAUNCHING THE CACAPON WATERSHED COLLABORATIVE

We received the good news this year that the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation will also support our efforts to launch the Cacapon Watershed Collaborative. For decades, the Land Trust has worked with local partners to protect the ecological and economic vitality of the watershed. Working with our county Farm Protection Boards, other local nonprofits, and our partners in state and federal agencies, we will continue to foster collaboration and mutual success in the watershed for the benefit of our local communities. This grant will also help us reach more landowners to learn what matters most to them and how the Collaborative can more effectively work on their behalf. We look forward to sharing more news about this important work in 2021.



## The Privilege of Protecting

This year, John Gavitt's beloved 437-acre North River Retreat was sold and proceeds were donated to the Cacapon and Lost Rivers Land Trust and the Potomac Conservancy; the co-holders of the conservation easement placed on his land 20 years ago. John told the new owners that they now "have the privilege of protecting and enjoying this wonderful land."

The Land Trust's Board of Directors earmarked a large portion of John's gift to our Legacy Fund, the organization's endowment. The Legacy Fund helps ensure the long-term viability of the Land Trust.

John speaks to the heart of our work in describing North River Retreat: "The property isn't just woodland and fields that haven't been subdivided into squared-off sites for trailers or suburban homes and lawns. It's a small part of a great watershed that is essential to the health of local communities and to the survival of wild plant and animal species. This sense of place is what it's all about for me and for others who believe so strongly in a particular chunk of earth. It becomes a part of us. We will do everything possible to ensure it will not be harmed."

Thank you, John. Your conservation easement on North River Retreat will ensure "it will not be harmed" and your tremendous generosity will help ensure the Cacapon and Lost Rivers Land Trust will be here to protect it forever.

For more information about the Legacy Fund, contact Jennifer Jones, [jennifer@cacapon.org](mailto:jennifer@cacapon.org)

Support land protection and help protect water, wildlife and the rural experience. [www.cacapon.org/donate](http://www.cacapon.org/donate).





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WHAT YOU LOVE

CACAPON & LOST  
RIVERS LAND TRUST

WWW.CAPACON.ORG  
P.O. Box 58  
Wardensville, WV 26851  
304-856-1188

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## Help Protect What you Love

Please consider a tax-  
deductible contribution to  
help protect what you love  
about the Cacapon and Lost  
Rivers watershed. Go to  
[www.cacapon.org/donate](http://www.cacapon.org/donate)  
or mail your generous  
contribution to  
Cacapon and  
Lost Rivers Land  
Trust, PO Box 58,  
Wardensville,  
WV 26851. Thank you!



## WV Wonder Woman *continued from page 1*

**Jennifer:** *You and your husband George started the Pine Cabin Run Ecological Lab, now the Cacapon Institute, and you built the Cacapon and Lost Rivers Land Trust. Two big organizational successes. What is the secret?*

**Nancy:** No one achieves success without support from others. I was able to do what I loved because of scores of people who were committed to this work too. I was a facilitator — bringing people together to accomplish what none of us could do alone. That's why I'm so excited about the Cacapon Watershed Collaborative because the goal is the same and more can get done if we work together. An organization needs to serve the people and the community — you need to be very attuned to that. You need to build partnerships. You also have to have a real passion for the work. Your heart has to be in it because it is too hard if you don't feel it from your soul. The success of an organization is also about handing over the reins to the next group of leaders knowing they too have their heart in it. That is what happened, and I'm grateful.

**Jennifer:** *Our hubs and corridor land protection strategy developed during your tenure as ED is still used to prioritize our work. Why is this approach so important?*

**Nancy:** We brought together more than 30 stakeholders to develop a science-based approach to land protection. It is hard to describe the impact this had because we were among the first to do it and it brought us national attention. Protecting the ecological integrity of a watershed from beginning to end is more likely with a hubs and corridor strategy — connecting protected parcels to other private and public protected lands. What I loved about my work was that every easement had a larger and larger impact on the health and future of this watershed, especially because we focused on connectivity. Ecosystems need to remain intact and the hubs and corridors strategy is the most direct way to do that. And as you said, the Land Trust is still using this approach to make decisions.

**Jennifer:** *What motivates landowners to permanently protect their land?*

**Nancy:** Love for their land. People would tell me that they didn't want to lose what generations in their family had worked so hard to keep. They wanted to honor those who came before them. People have a commitment to their property, no matter if the land has been in their family for generations, or they are new owners. They want to protect wildlife. They don't want to see houses growing on their land. They want to protect memories. The most gratifying part of working for the Land Trust were the easement closings. People signing easements sobbed. The conservation easement was an avenue to declare the future of their property — even from the grave. They had saved their land. They were maintaining the ecological goods and services assets, and by doing so, contributed to the larger good, that of securing a healthy and permanent future for this watershed.

## Species of Concern in Our Watershed

There are scores of species  
that need our land stewardship  
to survive. Here's just a few:



Allegheny  
River  
Cruiser



Eastern  
Turkey  
Beard  
Plant



Barn Owl



Prairie  
Warbler

## WOW Photo Contest

Go to [www.cacapon.org](http://www.cacapon.org)

PHOTOS: 1st page: Max Ware with North  
River Retreat Trout

George Constanz, Nancy Ailes and Xola  
(photo by Ibi Hinrichs)

4th page: Nancy Ailes and her mother,  
Shirley Parsons