



YEARS OF PROTECTING
WHAT YOU LOVE

CACAPON & LOST
RIVERS LAND TRUST



News from the Watershed

June 2021

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

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Protect What You Love

Conservation easements are flexible tools that meet the needs of landowners and protect land forever. Working in partnership with landowners, the Cacapon & 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.

The mountain laurel is in full bloom! Mountain laurel is a symbol of perseverance, and the Cacapon & Lost Rivers Land Trust has persevered for more than 30 years to protect the farms, forests, rural heritage, and water quality of the Cacapon watershed. Perseverance is certainly a trait found in any successful farmer like Steve Slonaker (page 2), and in our partners (see below and page 2) who continue to do the hard work of protecting and restoring what we all love about the Cacapon watershed. In this issue, you'll also read about a hunt club president landing "in a great spot" on our Board to help protect more land, and our summer intern (page 4) who wants to see his children enjoy what he loves about his family land in Connors Hollow. We are working with families all over the watershed to permanently protect their land through voluntary conservation easements. Our success depends on our partnerships with landowners and generous support from people like you. Thank you.

Jennifer
Executive Director



Cacapon Watershed Collaborative Update

The Cacapon Watershed Collaborative (CWC) is bringing partners together to identify shared goals and develop strategies to increase land protection and stewardship in the Cacapon watershed. The CWC Steering Committee recently held its first meeting. "Collectively, Steering Committee members have decades of experience working in the watershed and we're grateful that the CWC will benefit from their expertise," said Jennifer Jones, Executive Director, Cacapon & Lost Rivers Land Trust (CLRLT). Members include Ryan Cooper, Trout Unlimited; Candace DeLong, West Virginia Extension Agency, Hampshire County; Christi Hicks, Natural Resources Conservation Service, (NRCS); Todd Miller, The Nature Conservancy-WV; David Parker, Hampshire County Farm Protection Board; Frank Rodgers, Cacapon Institute; Timothy Reese, Friends of the Cacapon; Becky Royal, NRCS; and CLRLT Board members, Dottie Eddis and Roger Griffis.

The CWC will hold meetings in each of the watershed counties, (Hardy, Hampshire, and Morgan) to hear from people about the opportunities and challenges in the Cacapon watershed. The project will also include hearing directly from landowners, through focus groups and mail surveys, about their interest in land protection and on-the-ground stewardship. "We achieve our mission through strong partnerships with landowners, so we need to learn more from them about ways we can be even more successful in protecting land and the rural character of the watershed," said Jones. If you are interested in participating, please contact Jennifer at jennifer@cacapon.org.



Special Funding for Hardy and Hampshire County Landowners



The Potomac Valley Conservation District (PVCD), in coordination with local USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) field offices, was awarded a special allocation of Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funding earmarked specifically for Hardy and Hampshire counties in the Cacapon watershed. Christi Hicks, NRCS District Conservationist, led the effort to secure funding for "The Cacapon and Lost River Watershed Initiative" by working through the locally led conservation process.

"The Cacapon watershed is the third largest tributary to the Potomac River making it a vital resource for the health and continued conservation of the Chesapeake Bay. The Cacapon River is also a primary source of drinking water. Working directly with landowners to

protect water quality has a direct impact on people," said Christi Hicks. "Water quality also impacts key wildlife and aquatic species. The Cacapon River, for example, is a critical area for native brook trout," noted Ryan Cooper, Trout Unlimited/NRCS Planner.

Through this project, a variety of conservation practices will be implemented to help address land, riparian, and water resource concerns, including stream bank and soil erosion, degradation of riparian and in-stream habitat.

"Thanks to a host of partners who work directly with landowners, dozens of miles of in-stream habitat, restoration of over a mile of eroding stream banks, several acres of riparian habitat, and rotational grazing on more than 20 farms has already been implemented," said Hicks. "An eroding streambank can contribute hundreds of tons of sediment into streams and rivers, causing problems for aquatic life and the loss of valuable farmland. With this special funding, we can do even more to protect land and water quality in the Cacapon watershed," added Hicks.

Continued to page 4

Want Clean Water? Protect Forests First

According to the U.S. Forest Service, the Cacapon watershed rates 91 out of 100 for its importance to protecting water quality. Why? Because this watershed is still more than 80 percent forested.

CLRLT is developing a *Healthy Forests, Healthy Source Water* funding program to support efforts with private landowners to protect forest land. "Right now, there is a lot of interest by funders in protecting source water through forest protection. We need to identify forest owners who are interested in voluntary conservation easements to demonstrate that there is not only the need but the interest in protecting source water through forest protection here in the Cacapon watershed," said Jennifer Jones, CLRLT's Executive Director.

If you are a forest owner interested in a conservation easement, please contact the Cacapon & Lost Rivers Land Trust at 304-856-1188 or Jennifer Jones at jennifer@cacapon.org.

If you care about clean water, please support our efforts to protect forest land by donating today at www.cacapon.org/donate.



The Next Generation Takes a Look at Legacy Planning

Until he was five, Ted Ryan lived in downtown Moscow where he ate a lot of blini and borscht. His family then moved to the suburbs of Philadelphia and when Ted was 10, his family bought a place in Connors Hollow — a highly forested area in Morgan County, West Virginia. He describes his experience of the Hollow in this way:

"At first, this place seemed thoroughly foreign. The house is a plain A-frame. The road is not paved. There are no TVs. The Wi-Fi hardly works. Cell phone service is spotty. Much of what we do day-to-day is work to restore, preserve and protect native species and habitat. In most ways Connors Hollow is completely different from my daily life growing up. But over time, my experiences there have helped me develop my strengths and better understand what I value."

For a summer internship, Ted has researched effective legacy planning programs to help CLRLT improve communications about the Cacapon Legacy Fund. The Legacy Fund is an opportunity for people to give a lifetime gift to the Land Trust that will last for generations and support CLRLT land protection efforts. Donations to the Legacy Fund can be direct contributions and/or contributions through wills, trusts and beneficiary designations.

"I thought this was a really good opportunity for me to help others have a lasting impact on the places they love about the Cacapon watershed," said Ted. "Some of our neighbors in the Hollow are my grandparents' age and have been coming here since they were children. I would like to bring my own children here someday. I want them to pick huckleberries, eat pawpaw pudding, collect porcupine quills, hike our trails, and sit on the deck listening to whippoorwills in the evenings. I work to conserve this place and make it better. I want the Land Trust to always be here to protect more land," added Ted.

For more information on the Cacapon Legacy Program, please go to: www.cacapon.org/cacapon-legacy.

LEGACY FUND DONATIONS IN HONOR OF BILL CHESNUTT

Thank you to friends and family who donated to the Legacy Fund in honor of Bill Chesnutt. Bill loved the Cacapon and his memory will live on through our land protection efforts.



I'M AT PEACE HERE



Steve Slonaker will tell you it's hard to put into words what it means to him to be on the land his family has farmed for more than 200 years. "It's home to me. I had a business for 30 years and worked the farm part time. When I was away from the farm, I got homesick for the place," said Slonaker.

And with a sigh of relief he adds, "Best thing for homesickness is to go home, and I'm home. I'm at peace here."

In 2013, the Slonakers but their 330-acre farm into a conservation easement. The property is an important part of a "conservation hub" because it connects with two other properties also protected by CLRLT conservation easements, resulting in a contiguous area of nearly 2,000 acres of protected land. "That's good for people and for wildlife," Slonaker noted. "It's rewarding to have land, but we're not the only ones living on this land. If it's all chopped up the wildlife have to leave. I'm content to share my land with the critters," added Slonaker.

When explaining why he decided on a conservation easement, Slonaker said there were many reasons to protect the land, but the most significant was to ensure the land will continue to be a farm or revert to wildlife. "Knowing it will remain intact and whole forever is why we chose to protect it with a conservation easement," said Slonaker. "I also believe my parents and

grandparents would have supported our decision. I have this land because of their hard work and sacrifices. They loved this land. I didn't want to see houses in our fields or in our woods."

"We all have to help protect our farms. We have to protect our rural character, or we'll lose our identity. We have to preserve our open space or there won't be any and then we'll be in big trouble," warned Slonaker.

The Slonaker property also includes frontage on Dillons Run, an important stream for native brook trout restoration efforts. "I grew up in Dillons Run. I fished it. I swam in it. It's been part of my life for as long as I can remember. We're working with Trout Unlimited to bring back native brook trout. I would really like to see that happen because they are native fish. They should be here."

Recalling some of his favorite childhood memories in Hampshire County, Slonaker talked about John Wilson, who worked for his Dad. "In the summertime, on a rainy day, John would go fishing on the Cacapon River and he'd take me. We spent lots of hours on the river at Capon Bridge. And, I did a lot of praying for rain," remembers Slonaker.

You can learn more about the Slonaker Family Farm and other Cacapon Valley families, in *Listening to the Land* at www.cacapon.org/store.

Support land protection and help protect water, wildlife and the rural experience. www.cacapon.org/donate.



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RIVERS LAND TRUST
WWW.CACAPON.ORG
P.O. Box 58
Wardensville, WV 26851
304-856-1188

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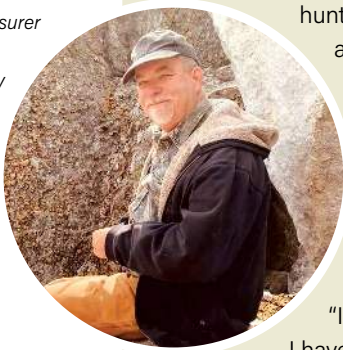
Please consider a tax-deductible contribution to help protect what you love about the Cacapon & Lost Rivers watershed. Go to www.cacapon.org/donate or mail your generous contribution to Cacapon & Lost Rivers Land Trust, PO Box 58, Wardensville, WV 26851. Thank you!



President of Millbrook Sportsmen Club Joins Board of Directors

The Cacapon & Lost Rivers Land Trust welcomed its newest member, Todd Carlisle, at a recent Board meeting.

Carlisle is the president of Millbrook Sportsmen Club, Inc., a 1,400-acre hunt club in Capon Bridge which is permanently protected by a conservation easement co-held by the Cacapon & Lost Rivers Land Trust and the Potomac Conservancy. Carlisle enjoys spending most weekends with family members at the club, which was originally purchased by his grandparents. The old family homestead built in the 1800s, where his grandmother was raised, is adjacent to the property.



"I have a special appreciation for hunt clubs and believe I have landed in a great spot to assist in conserving more land in the watershed," said Carlisle. "Easements are the best way to protect recreation areas for hunters and other outdoor enthusiasts. There are more than 10,000 acres in the watershed owned by hunt clubs. If all these hunt clubs put easements on their properties, that would make a huge difference in protecting what we all enjoy and want future generations to enjoy," he added.

Todd resides in Berryville, Virginia with his wife, Lynette, and daughter Lily. Together, Lynette and Todd raised five children, including three girls and two boys. Lily is the youngest, a high school freshman who often joins her father and two brothers, Zach, and Logan, during hunting season at Millbrook.

A self-described "IT geek", Carlisle leads a team of 20 engineers for BAE Systems. He has served as a commissioner for both Clarke County's Planning Commission and the Historic Preservation Commission.

Special Funding *continued from page 2.*

Eligible EQIP participants can receive financial reimbursement for implementing conservation measures. Applications are taken continuously but interested parties should contact their local USDA NRCS office soon to apply for 2022 funding. "We received a total of \$650,000 for this Initiative and hope to fund at least 30 projects," noted Sarah Taylor-Goldizen, NRCS District Conservationist for Hardy County. Applications will be rated on the level of improvements achieved. For more information on this opportunity in Hampshire County please contact Christi Hicks at Christi.Hicks@usda.gov or 304-822-3020, Ext. 101 or in Hardy County, Sarah Taylor-Goldizen at Sarah.Taylorgoldizen@usda.gov or 304-530-2826, Ext. 106.

Species of Concern in Our Watershed

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



Northern Bobwhite



Splendid Clubtail



Yellow Breasted Chat



Sundial Lupine

WOW Photo Contest

Go to www.cacapon.org

PHOTOS: Page 1: J. Matthew Monroe & Associates, LLC; Tom Cogil; Christine Pentino; Tom Cogil
Page 2: Tom Cogil; NRCS-WV; J. Matthew Monroe & Associates, LLC
Page 3: Christine Pentino; Greg Chesnutt
Page 4: Lynette Carlisle; Vicki DeLoach