



# MADISON-MORGAN CONSERVANCY

Educating, Preserving, Conserving Morgan County

## NEWSLETTER AND ANNUAL REPORT SUMMER, 2009

### MAKE NO LITTLE PLANS

“Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men’s blood.” Daniel Burnham, Architect and Director of Works of the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago, said this and meant it. He, with the help of multitudes, was able to build the White City and create an environment in which the Ferris Wheel, Cracker Jacks, Shredded Wheat, and Pabst Blue Ribbon were invented and introduced to the world for the first time. And they did this all in less than three years. These were not little plans!

Planning the Greenprint Ramble is not as elaborate a task as planning the World’s Fair, but for this conservancy, it seems almost insurmountable. Recording the stories of long time residents, discovering the history of agriculture in the county, researching the unique architectural history of both the cities and the county along the proposed route, learning the politics of days gone by... and that’s just for the bus tour. The supper requires finding producers in Morgan County of meats, vegetables, dairy, and eggs; asking them to grow food and to raise livestock for a supper scheduled months away; organizing the collection and cooking of that fresh and nutritious local food; and hosting 200 of you at one of Morgan County’s most important historic sites... I’m tired just writing about it! For once, fundraising is the least of our worries, although that too is a key part of the Ramble planning.

The task is worth our every effort. The supper is a “culinary delight” made wholly of Morgan County food and supports and markets our local farmers, and the experience of getting out into Morgan County, hearing the stories of those who shaped our land and built our cities, gives us an appreciation for the place we live. We are rich with natural, agricultural, and historic resources—resources which should be used wisely and for the benefit of current and future generations. But how do we insure that wise use of our resources? Not with little plans.

We have a solid foundation of planning here in Morgan County: we have adopted the state’s first county-wide Greenprint, completed a Cost of Community Services Study, and conducted an American Farmland Trust Study. We understand our baseline of resources and costs of development. The only thing we don’t know is what the future holds.

Let’s be prepared for that future. Let’s educate ourselves on all the options for responsible planning, land conservation, and sustainable development. The bulldozers are quieted, and it is time to plan for the day they restart their engines.

The Conservancy has great plans for the next year. We will activate our Transfer of Development Rights Committee, hold the Bicentennial Ramble, and in March of 2010 celebrate our 10th anniversary! Plan to be with us—renew your membership or join for the first time. Support our mission of providing education and sustaining our quality of life and of protecting greenspace, farmland, timberland, and historic sites. Join us in supporting our agricultural industry by choosing to eat local food. All these things will make us healthier and happier and protect our built and natural environments for future generations—no little plans indeed.

Sincerely,

Mary McCauley, President

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*Cedar Lane Farm, circa 1830: site of the 2009 Ramble Supper, listed on the National Register of Historic Places.*

## ARE YOU READY TO RAMBLE?

**SAVE THE DATE: SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2009**

A jaunt through the countryside accompanied by great stories told by long-time Morgan County residents and supper at a significant historic resource, the Greenprint Ramble is the Madison-Morgan Conservancy's signature event occurring only once every two years.

This year our 44-mile tour takes place in northwest Morgan County and includes a tour of Bostwick (the cotton gin and the Susie Agnes Hotel) and the Nolan Store Crossroads and will conclude with a supper at Cedar Lane Farm made wholly of Morgan County ingredients.

As an outgrowth of our mission, the Greenprint Ramble is a contextual learning experience designed to capture the imaginations of riders while we "go back" through Morgan County's past.

**"A fascinating tour of the resources listed on the Greenprint and a culinary delight, the Ramble is not to be missed!"  
said Elizabeth Branch, co-chair of the event.**

The oral histories and relaxed Ramble through the county will expose you to many significant natural, agricultural, and historic resources listed on the Greenprint.

The supper will be made wholly of Morgan County ingredients from many of the farms seen during the Ramble. Produce, dairy, and meats raised right here in Morgan County will be fresh from farm to table! What better way to celebrate the fruits of our land and of the labor of Morgan County farmers.

**Join us in exploring the Bounty of Morgan County!**

## GREENPRINT RAMBLE OBJECTIVES:

- To provide an opportunity for residents and visitors of Morgan County to venture out into the rural and historically agrarian landscape for an educational and fun exploration of our countryside, history, and natural and cultural resources.
- To bring awareness to Morgan County's Greenprint – a map of the natural, historic and cultural resources of Morgan County accompanied by goals and objectives guiding the protection of those resources, and the first county-wide Greenprint in the state.
- To raise awareness about the diverse resources in Morgan County and to promote the stewardship of those resources.
- To promote Morgan County's thriving agricultural industry, its quality of life, and its history.

## SPONSOR THE GREENPRINT RAMBLE

The Conservancy invites you to sponsor the 2009 Greenprint Ramble. Your underwriting of the event will allow the Conservancy to fund the bus tour and supper, and you will be supporting Morgan County's agricultural industry by assisting in the acquisition of local food from our local farmers.

See the levels of sponsorship to the right and choose the level that is right for you. As a sponsor, you will be guaranteed seats at the Ramble Tour and Supper.

**Sponsorships are available until September 13, 2009.**

## GREENPRINT RAMBLE TICKETS ON SALE

- For Conservancy Members: September 14th
- For Non-Members: October 7

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

If you would like to volunteer for the Ramble, please contact Co-chairs Elizabeth Branch (404-983-4296 or elizabeth@branchtimberlands.com) or Emily Buck (706-424-5713 or em1ly@me.com). See page 7 for a list of volunteer opportunities.

## GREENPRINT RAMBLE SPONSORSHIP LEVELS

- Cedar Lane Farm Rambler ..... \$2,500**  
Banner at Greenprint Ramble functions with your name or logo  
8 tickets to the Sponsor Party  
Designated Table for 8 for Ramble Dinner, 8 bus tickets  
Recognized in the invitation, newsletter, ads, and other publications  
Memorialized in the Greenprint Ramble Tour Guide
- Woodland Garden Patron ..... \$1,000**  
6 tickets to the Sponsor Party  
6 dinner tickets, 6 bus tickets  
Recognized in the invitation, newsletter, ads, and other publications  
Memorialized in the Greenprint Ramble Tour Guide
- Boxwood Garden Patron ..... \$500**  
4 tickets to Sponsor Party  
4 dinner tickets, 4 bus tickets  
Recognized in the invitation and newsletter  
Memorialized in the Greenprint Ramble Tour Guide
- Plantation Plain Sponsor ..... \$200**  
**(Available For Conservancy Members Only)**  
2 tickets to Sponsor Party  
2 dinner tickets, 2 bus tickets  
Recognized in the invitation and newsletter  
Memorialized in the Greenprint Ramble Tour Guide

## CONSERVATION EASEMENT COCKTAIL PARTY



On April 19th, Morgan County donors of conservation easements sponsored a cocktail party at Hundred Acre Farm. Katherine Eddins, Executive Director of the Georgia Land Trust, joined us to provide information on conservation easements and their tax incentives.

Host Ellis Johnson, owner of Hundred Acre Farm, led a tour of the conservation easement he donated to the GA Land Trust, describing the conservation values he protected and detailing the rights he reserved. Through the conservation easement, Mr. Johnson encumbered 87 acres in order to protect wildlife habitat; a special natural area including wetlands, bottomland hardwoods, and riparian areas; and significant geological and geomorphologic features. The conservation easement allows forestry and agricultural practices and permits the construction of two residential dwellings on two-acre lots.

*Above: We owe a debt of gratitude to Wes Holt (farm manager of Hundred Acre Farm and of his family's own Sunflower Farm) for leading the way in organizing this event and for grilling all the chickens!*

*"A true conservationist is a man who knows that the world is not given by his fathers but borrowed from his children."  
- Audobon*



*Left: McCauley conservation easement.*



*Left: Beauchamp conservation easement*



*Above: Rather conservation easement.  
Right: Hundred Acre Farm conservation easement.*



## CONSERVATION EASEMENT TAX INCENTIVES TO SUNSET AT END OF 2009

In 2008, four landowners permanently protected approximately 250 acres, preserving a variety of conservation values including natural areas, wildlife habitat, wetlands, farmland, and historic sites. In return for their charitable donations of these conservation easements to a land trust, Morgan County landowners have received significant tax incentives.

The donation of a conservation easement is considered a charitable donation by the IRS, provided the easement meets certain criteria. Therefore, when donating a conservation easement, the landowner receives an income tax deduction for that charitable donation from both the State and Federal governments, and in Georgia, landowners can receive an additional tax credit for their donation.

Currently a landowner may **deduct up to 50% of his Adjusted Gross Income (AGI)** in the year of the donation, and if the charitable donation exceeds that deduction, he may **carry forward that deduction for up to 15 consecutive years. Farmers can deduct up to 100% of their AGI in the year of the donation and can carry forward that deduction for up to 15 additional consecutive years.**

These **tax incentives are scheduled to sunset at the end of 2009**, reverting back to their 2005 levels: deducting 30% (instead of 50%) of AGI for a total of 6 years (instead of 16 years), and farmers deducting 50% (instead of 100%) of AGI for a total of 6 years (instead of 16 years). If you are interested in discussing conservation easements for your property, please contact us before November, 2009.

## CONSERVATION EASEMENTS PROTECT ALMOST 1,000 ACRES IN MORGAN COUNTY

What a year for land conservation in Morgan County! Four landowners saw fit to permanently protect a total of approximately 250 acres in 2008 in order to protect a variety of conservation values, including but not limited to natural areas, wildlife habitat, wetlands, farmland, and historic sites. This brings the total amount of permanently protected land by private landowners to almost 1,000 acres in Morgan County!

A conservation easement is a legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust or government agency that permanently restricts use of the land in order to protect the land's conservation values. It allows the landowner to continue to own and use the land and to sell it or pass it on to heirs. When a landowner encumbers his or her land with a conservation easement, the landowner gives up some of the rights associated with the land, usually development rights. Future owners are bound by the terms of the conservation easement, and a land trust ensures compliance with the terms of the easement through yearly monitoring.

Conservation easements offer great flexibility to landowners. For example:

- ❑ Ellis Johnson of Hundred Acre Farm encumbered 87 acres in order to protect wildlife habitat; a special natural area including wetlands, bottomland hardwoods, and riparian areas; and significant geological and geomorphological features. The conservation easement allows forestry and agricultural practices and permits the construction of two residential dwellings on two acre lots.
- ❑ Ginny and Dan Rather encumbered 93 acres of farmland to protect a significant amount of agricultural land and the viewshed along the highest point in Morgan County on Fairplay Road. The conservation easement reserves one 5 acre home site, on which they or future landowners can build a single family residential dwelling.
- ❑ Janet and Bob Beauchamp encumbered 50 acres of farmland in 2008 adjacent to the 82 acres they encumbered in 2007 in order to protect a historic home site of an 1890 farmhouse, associated farmland, a significant stand of bottomland hardwoods, and a portion of Goose Creek and its associated wetlands. The two conservation easements reserve one 3 acre home site on the 132 acres, on which they or future landowners can build a single family dwelling.
- ❑ Mary and Bob McCauley encumbered 10 acres of land to protect the historic development pattern and the historic structures of the circa 1830 Sunnyside Plantation. The Conservation easement allows the reconstruction of structures existing on the property during the stated period of significance (1830—1910).

Unlike land under the Conservation Use Valuation Assessment (CUVA) 10-year time restriction, these 237 acres under conservation easement are protected forever and will be maintained in substantially their present state for future generations.

### MADISON COMPLETES ITS GREENPRINT!

In February, the City of Madison completed a Greenprint, in order to update the Morgan County Greenprint with information specific to the City of Madison!

The Greenprint Addendum process included assessing existing conditions specific to Madison (hydrology, tree canopy, topography, agricultural land use, historic landmarks, conservation lands, park service areas, utilities, parcel size, existing land use, future land use, and current zoning), analyzing collected data, collecting significant stakeholder input, and creating goals and objectives for the protection of identified resources.

The collected input overwhelmingly suggests that citizens are pleased with Madison's greenspace and park facilities with 82% of survey respondents rating the quality of Madison's parks as good or excellent. Additionally, 73% of survey respondents would support the City in acquiring additional land for greenspace, and 66% of survey respondents want more natural areas protected and more opportunities for passive recreation such as walking and biking trails.

Through analyzing public input and survey responses, 30 individual resources and 38 Historic Landmarks were identified as potential future greenspace opportunities and recreation areas, and the following seven categories of greenspace were identified as important: 1) natural areas/habitat protection, 2) riparian areas, 3) greenspace buffers, 4) agrarian landscapes, 5) potential trails, 6) gateways, and 7) recreation.

To learn more, visit our website, [www.mmcgeorgia.org](http://www.mmcgeorgia.org).

### LAND TALKS: GREENING DOWNTOWN: GOOD FOR BUSINESS

On Thursday, March 5th, 2009, the Conservancy co-sponsored the **5th Land Talks**. Approximately fifty people joined us to discuss the recent development of greenspace/parkland in three downtown areas: Madison, Monroe, and Covington.

Presenting the economic, social, and environmental benefits of green infrastructure were Monica Callahan (City of Madison), Cheryl Delks (City of Covington), and William Chapman (City of Monroe). They were joined by Jim Durrett (Livable Communities Coalition) and Dan Reuter (Atlanta Regional Commission) who discussed greenspace planning tools and the future growth of this region of Georgia.

**Land Talks** is presented by the Madison-Morgan Conservancy, Smart Growth Newton County, Friends of Walton County, and the Center for Community Preservation and Planning. Our objective is to provide a venue for the continued conversation about the future of this region of Georgia—a region rich in natural, cultural, and agricultural resources and one facing increasing development pressure from rapidly expanding Metropolitan Atlanta.

We thank Monica Callahan especially for taking the time to share with us the lessons learned in Madison and for making a stellar presentation. We also thank the First Baptist Church in Monroe, GA for hosting us; Jim Durrett and Dan Reuter for making the trip from Atlanta to be Land Talks presenters; Cheryl Delks and William Chapman for their presentations; and Russell Bennett and McKay Johnson for assisting in the organization of the event.

## TRANSFERING DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS FOR A STRONGER ECONOMY

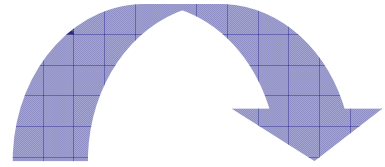
Transfer of Development Rights is a comprehensive planning tool which guides growth from areas worth protecting to areas appropriate for growth.

Development rights are one of the many rights included in the “bundle of rights” of private property ownership. Landowners’ rights include, but are not limited to, the right to subdivide, to mine for minerals, to farm, to let land become fallow or unused, and to build/develop. Each of these rights can be separated from the land, and if there is a market for the rights, they can be sold. For example, landowners often grant oil companies the right to drill for oil on their personal property for a fee, in essence selling their “right to mine” - they can also sell their air rights and their development rights.

Transfer of Development Rights programs traditionally give land-owners the option to sever development rights from “sending areas” in order to protect some valuable resource and then allow for the transfer of those rights to “receiving areas” which are appropriate for growth and near infrastructure. Last July the Morgan County Board of Commissioners hired Jeff Dorfman (UGA) to conduct a cost of community services study for Morgan County which showed the value of this shifting of density. Agricultural land (even in Conservation Use, or CUVA) pays more in taxes than it receives in services – a surplus for the County budget; residential development, on the other hand, pays less in taxes than it receives in services – a deficit for the County budget. The simple reason? More services are required in areas where there are more people—schools, fire and police protection, roads, water and sewer infrastructure, etc.—costing the local government more in service provision.

Planning for population growth can help local governments (and therefore their tax payers) avoid fiscal difficulties. Mr. Dorfman’s data showing that residences pay substantially less in taxes than they receive in County services, unlike farm and forest land, supports the idea that planning to protect your agricultural and natural resources and enhancing the development of our population centers is fiscally wise.

Transfer of Development Rights is one option for counties and municipalities to plan for increasing population growth—an option that is fiscally responsible, that can help protect our natural and agricultural resources, and one that can enhance the built environment in our population centers.



# MADISON-MORGAN CONSERVANCY

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## MADISON-MORGAN CONSERVANCY ANNUAL REPORT

**Balance Brought Forward 1/1/08**                      **\$11,075.68**

### Revenues

Contributions	\$8,706.17
Contributions - Restricted	\$1,000.00
Membership Dues	\$26,075.00
Grants	\$4,500.00
Other	\$395.00
<i>Total Revenues</i>	<i>\$40,676.17</i>

### Expenses

Salary, Wages and Payroll Taxes	\$29,637.64
Legal and Accounting	\$1,785.00
Advertising	\$664.25
Office Supplies	\$2,188.66
Postage & Delivery	\$1,048.64
Printing and Reproductions	\$2,696.01
Education	\$220.00
Rent, Utilities, etc.	\$0.00
Telephone & Communications	\$783.89
Program Expenses	\$2,834.96
Other	\$22.49
<i>Total Expenses</i>	<i>\$41,881.54</i>

**Balance at end of 2008**                      **\$9,870.31**

## RAMBLE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

If you would like to volunteer for the Ramble, please contact  
Co-chairs Elizabeth Branch (404-983-4296 or  
elizabeth@branchtimberlands.com) or  
Emily Buck (706-424-5713 or emilly@me.com).

### Docents at Cedar Lane Farm House

### Docents for Boxwood and Woodland Gardens

### Wait Staff for Supper

### Serving Staff for Supper

### Cooks

### Registration Table

### Parking Organizers and Flaggers

### Set up and Clean up



*Left: Greenprint Ramble Co-chairs Emily Buck and Elizabeth Branch headed to a "Ramble Recon" meeting at the Conservancy's office in the Vason building in downtown Madison.*

# MADISON-MORGAN CONSERVANCY

## *Educating, Preserving, Conserving Morgan County*

P.O. Box 752, Madison, GA 30650, Phone: 706-342-9252, Email: mmconservancy@mindspring.com  
www.mmcgeorgia.org

## ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FORM

Yes, I would like to support the Madison-Morgan Conservancy by making a tax deductible contribution at the following level:

- Daniel Morgan Society                      \$5,000 or more
- Benefactor                                      \$1,000 or more
- Supporter                                        \$500 or more
- Donor                                              \$250 or more
- Preservationist                                \$100
- Conservationist                                \$50
- Naturalist                                        \$15

- I would like to contribute an additional:
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to the Annual Fund.
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to the Land Acquisition Fund.

- My company has a matching gift program.  
Please contact me to initiate a matching gift.

- I would like to volunteer.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name as it should appear in the newsletter's membership list:  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

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

*Please make check payable to **Madison-Morgan Conservancy**, and send to the address above.*

## THANK YOU

\*Patsy Aldridge  
Atlanta Local Food Initiative  
Bank of Madison  
Bob Beauchamp  
Russell Bennett  
\*Elizabeth Branch  
\*Ashley Braswell  
\*Emily Buck  
Monica Callahan  
William Chapman  
Community Foundation for  
Morgan County  
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\*Julie Davie  
\*Jennifer and Michael Dean of  
HunkerDowns Fresh Market  
Cheryl Delks  
\*Theresa Dickinson  
Jeff Dorfman  
Jim Durrett  
\*Sage Dwyer  
\*Wilma Early  
Lee Epting

Evergreen Forest Products, Inc.  
\*Kelly Freyer  
\*Christy Friesen  
Georgia Land Trust  
Georgia Organics  
\*June Harrell  
\*Wes Holt  
\*Ashley Hunt  
\*Candler Hunt  
\*Marie Jeffrey  
\*Julie Jenkins  
Ellis Johnson of  
Hundred Acre Farm  
McKay Johnson  
\*Russell Johnston  
\*Nancy Kuperberg  
\*Lottie Lewis  
Madison Greenspace Commission  
\*Charlie Mason  
\*Mary and Bob McCauley  
\*Christine McCauley  
Gay and Roy Morris  
\*Buddy Nolan

\*David Nunn  
\*Irene Paul  
\*Ginny and Dan Rather  
Dan Reuter  
\*John Ruark  
\*Marvin & Beebee Ruark  
\*Heather Schlabach  
\*Becky Sherwood  
Richard Simpson  
\*Dana Smith  
Sunflower Farm  
Sweetwater Brewing Company  
\*Jane Symmes  
\*Georgeanna Tamplin  
\*Joyce Thomas  
\*Jon Tonge  
\*Lynn Treadwell  
Vason Family  
\*Ann-Marie and Frank Walsh  
Walton EMC  
\*Marshall "Woody" Williams  
  
**\*Ramble Volunteers**

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MADISON-MORGAN CONSERVANCY  
P.O. Box 752  
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