



# MADISON-MORGAN CONSERVANCY

Creating a Culture of Conservation

## NEWSLETTER AND ANNUAL REPORT SUMMER, 2010

### THANKFUL FOR OUR COMMUNITY

We've had a great start to 2010, accomplishing a tremendous amount in the first six months with the addition of our first ever full-time Executive Director, Christine McCauley. Our constant presence in the community has allowed us to focus full-time on our mission to provide education on conservation matters and to facilitate the preservation of Morgan County's natural, agricultural, and historic resources. Additionally, we have experienced strong organizational growth through our focus on the organization's programs, fundraising, and management.

Already this year we have held a number of educational forums, reviewed two proposed developments through our Development Review Committee, written a lengthy and thorough document detailing the environmental and planning issues associated with the proposed landfill, grown our membership by over 50 new members, and launched our Farm to Market Alliance (F2MA).

So, we enter the second half of the year with enthusiasm and momentum. After being honored by the Historic Preservation Commission with an award for Excellence for our 2009 Greenprint Ramble, we have begun preparation for the next Greenprint Ramble (to be held Sept. 2011). We are also working to bring you a photo-documented Greenprint Resources Guide, two more educational forums this year, and a F2MA project that will support our local agricultural industry by embracing the burgeoning local food movement.

The next few months also holds an exciting new project to assess and map the conservation values of lands in Morgan County and the inclination of landowners to protect their properties with conservation easements. This assessment and mapping will result in a prioritization of the Conservancy's conservation easement program for the next three to five years. Thanks to the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Johanna Favrot Fund and Willow Oak Farm, the project is fully funded and should be completed by October, 2010.

We are thankful for so much this summer, not the least of which is the recent decision by the Board of Commissioners to deny the rezoning application for a landfill just 1.5 miles from the City of Madison. The efforts of many in our community have paid off with three unanimous decisions from regional and local officials to deny that rezoning request. We'd like to give thanks to many members of our community including David Land, Ralph Blanchard, the Citizens to Preserve Morgan County, and our own Development Review Committee, who came together to support the opposition to the regional landfill application. This process has been a wonderful example of how a community determines its own future.

We are so grateful to our Watershed Donors and members who make it all possible, from our educational forums to the development review process to promoting conservation easements to the inventorying our resources. Thank you all for your constant support and dedication to protecting the natural, agricultural, and historic resources in Morgan County.

In this newsletter you will find information on our five programs: 1) Conservation Easements, 2) Educational Forums, 3) Development Review, 4) Resource Inventory, and 5) Farm to Market Alliance. If you would like to contact us about any of our programs, please do not hesitate to do so. Your input is valuable to us as we continue to grow the Conservancy.

Sincerely,  
Elizabeth Branch, President

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Christine McCauley



*Barracks Building of the CCC Camp at Hard Labor Creek State Park in need of preservation.*

**NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARDS  
CONSERVANCY A PRESERVATION GRANT FROM THE JOHANNA  
FAVROT FUND TO BE MATCHED LOCALLY BY WILLOW OAK FARM**

The Madison-Morgan Conservancy has been awarded a grant by the National Trust for Historic Preservation from its Johanna Favrot Fund for Historic Preservation to promote the use of conservation/preservation easements to protect important historic landscapes in Morgan County. The seed grant funds will be matched locally by Willow Oak Farm through the Carter Family Fund of the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta's Morgan Fund.



*Wayside Farm.  
Photo by Scott Finsthwait.*

Conservation Easements are designed by a landowner to protect the conservation values of their land (natural habitat, environmental quality, agricultural resources, historic resources, recreational opportunities, among other values). This type of easement is an interest in real property held by a land trust, but the landowner continues to own and manage his land.



*Goose Creek Farm.  
Photo by Scott Finsthwait.*

Donating a permanent conservation easement to a land trust results in federal and state income tax incentives as well as estate planning incentives for the landowner and does not require public access to the property.

An economical method of permanently protecting a community's critical resources, protecting private land with conservation easements costs about a third of traditional fee simple acquisition, and since the land remains in the hands of the landowners, there is no cost to the local government for acquisition or management of the land.

As Georgia's first county-wide conservancy, the Madison-Morgan Conservancy has helped protect over 1,000 acres through conservation easements since 2004.

Thanks to the Johanna Favrot Fund and Willow Oak Farm, this project is fully funded and should be completed by October, 2010. We are also grateful to the City of Madison's Planning Department who will assist in the GIS and Mapping portion of the project.



*Vason Farm.  
Photo by Scott Finsthwait.*

**CONSERVATION EASEMENT CALENDAR**



*Hundred Acre Farm.  
Photo by Scott Finsthwait.*

Thanks to the very generous donation of photographs from Scott Finsthwait and of time from intern Margaret DuBose, we will be publishing our second calendar by the end of the year. Each month will detail a conservation easement. As you explore the conservation values of these lands through photographs, you can cherish the fact that these properties are permanently protected.

**EASE ON DOWN THE ROAD  
A SONG ABOUT CONSERVATION EASEMENTS**

LYRICS BY: Mary McCauley  
PERFORMED BY: Conservancy Board of Directors,  
Advisory Board, and Special Guests, March 20, 2010  
MUSIC PLAYED BY: John Tonge

Ease on down, Ease on down the road.  
Come on, Ease on down, Ease on down the road.  
Don't you carry nothin' that might be a load,  
Come on, Ease on down Ease on down the road.

Conservation Easements have great potential;  
One great tool that is so essential,  
To preserving our vistas, farm land and streams,  
Our history and culture, our children's dreams.

Ease on down, Ease on down the road.  
Come on, Ease on down, Ease on down the road.  
Love the smell of sweet grass just mowed,  
Come on, Ease on down Ease on down the road.

Conservation Easements the IRS founded.  
Use this tool that keeps us grounded.  
Choose it, don't lose it, for future generations,  
And encourage your neighbor's participation.

Ease on down, ease on down the road.  
Come on, Ease on down, Ease on down the road.  
Love the buck hightailing up the road,  
Come on, Ease on down Ease on down the road.

All aboard this Preservation Train.  
Yes, we'll help you travel the Main,  
All the way home, you can say...  
"Preservation with a tax break comin' my way!"

Ease on down, Ease on down the road.  
Come on, Ease on down, Ease on down the road.  
Just love the sunset on a Morgan County road,  
Come on, Ease on down Ease on down, the road.

Your passion for the mission is the root of our cause,  
And yes, we know, you're not burning bras,  
But safeguard you have, this land to be saved,  
Steadfast and true, you've been for a decade!

Ease on down, Ease on down the road.  
Come on, Ease on down, Ease on down the road.  
Don't elect nobody who might be a load,  
Come on, Ease on down Ease on down the road.

A new day ahead, we restate the mission:  
Education, preservation! Crank your transmission!  
For one more decade and one great reason:  
Land for our children, lasting season to season.

Come on and Ease on down, Ease on down the road.  
Come on, Ease on down, Ease on down the road.  
**Thank YOU** for lifting the heavy load!  
Come on, Ease on down Ease on down the road.

## EDUCATIONAL FORUMS

### 10th Anniversary Celebration and Membership Supper

115 members joined us at Ginny and Dan Rather's barn at Malcom's Crossroads on March 20th to celebrate the Conservancy's 10th Anniversary. Jill Johnson, Director of the GA Conservation Voters, discussed state-wide water issues. Members feasted on homemade chili made from locally raised beef from the Verner Farms, Innisfail Farm, and Tewksbury Farm as well as chili made from local venison. The evening ended with an unrehearsed production of "Ease on Down the Road," a song about conservation easements (lyrics on p.2).



### Land Talks: The Future is Farming

Approximately 50 people attended Land Talks on May 20th to hear guest speakers discuss the emerging economic markets created by the local food movement and resulting opportunities being created in this region of Georgia. Guest speakers included Jeff Dorfman (UGA Ag Economics), Craig Page (founder of PLACE), Alice Rolls (GA Organics), Bobby Smith (UGA Cooperative Extension, Morgan County), Chuck Anglin (Morgan County Tax Assessor), Cory Mosser (Burge Organics), and Mort Ewing (Newton County Commissioner). The event was held at beautiful Hard Labor Creek State park.

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 pressure from rapidly expanding Metropolitan Atlanta.

# SAVE THE DATE

## CONSERVATION EASEMENT WORKSHOP

September 23, 2010 (tentative date)

Featured Speakers: Katherine Eddins, GA Land Trust  
Kristina Sorensen, GA DNR, State Tax Credit Division  
Time and Location to be Announced

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION V. SUSTAINABILITY: THE NEXT GREAT DEBATE

Thursday, October 14, 2010

Featured Speaker: Mark McDonald, GA Trust for Historic Preservation  
Time and Location to be Announced

## BUY LOCAL: IT'S GOOD FOR EVERYONE

CJ Orchards (now open), Sunflower Farm Festival (July 3-4), Greendale Farm (now open),  
Johnston Dairy (now open), Tewksbury Farm (deliveries available/open by appt.)



## VOTERS UNDERSTAND THAT IT PAYS TO SAVE

Partially Reprinted from Trust for Public Land's *Land & People*, Spring/Summer 2010

The Trust for Public Land (TPL) recently released two studies showing that states realize significant economic benefits from conservation: 1) in New Jersey, for every dollar invested in land conservation, the state gains ten dollars in economic benefits from ecosystem services, such as water purification, waste treatment, and flood mitigation; natural goods such as fish and farm products; and spending on recreation; 2) in Colorado, every dollar invested in conservation easements returned six dollars in benefits.

Even in prosperous times, conservation too often is thought of as an expense rather than an investment. But research by TPL and outside experts has consistently demonstrated that creating parks and conserving open space can pay handsome economic dividends.

- Parks and open space often increase the value of nearby properties, along with property tax revenue.
- Parks and open space attract businesses and trained employees in search of a high quality of life.
- Parks and open space attract tourists and boost recreation spending.
- Parks and open space reduce obesity and health care costs by supporting exercise and recreation.
- Working lands, such as farms and forests, usually contribute more money to a community than the cost of the services they require.
- Conserved open space helps safeguard drinking water, clean the air, and prevent flooding—services provided much more expensively by other means.

For more information on the economic benefits of parks and open space—including the recent publications *The Economic Benefits of Land Conservation*, *Conservation: An Investment that Pays*, and *Measuring the Economic Value of a City Park System*—go to [www.tpl.org/benefits](http://www.tpl.org/benefits).

**MADISON-MORGAN CONSERVANCY  
ANNUAL REPORT 2009**

<b>Balance brought forward from 2008</b>	<b>\$9,870.00</b>
<b>Income</b>	
Membership Dues	\$17,755.00
Grant Awards	\$52,500.00
Contributions	\$19,928.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$90,183.00</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	
Advertising	\$625.00
Continuing Education	\$500.00
Accounting Services	\$1,200.00
Office Supplies	\$672.00
Postage and Delivery	\$667.00
Printing and Reproduction	\$2,707.00
Program Expenses	\$17,948.00
Services Contracted	\$13,494.00
Utilities	\$676.00
Other	\$645.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$39,134.00</b>
<b>Balance as of December 31, 2009</b>	<b>\$60,919.00</b>

**LANDFILL UPDATE**

On Monday, June 28, the Morgan County Board of Commissioners voted unanimously to deny a rezoning application to rezone 518 acres from Agricultural Residential (AR) to Industrial (I-2) in order to develop a landfill on their property. This decision came on the heels of two other unanimous decisions supporting that denial, first from the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission who decided that the project was “not in the best interest of the region and therefore of the state” and second from the Morgan County Planning Commission who delivered their recommendation to deny the application “in the strongest possible terms.”

The Conservancy along with a host of others worked diligently to research the issues and provide information to appointed and elected officials and to residents. For their time and effort, we give great thanks to the Citizens to Preserve Morgan County, the City of Madison, the Madison Greenspace Commission, the Madison Historic Preservation Commission, the Madison-Morgan County Chamber of Commerce, both the Democratic and Republican parties, Jeff Dorfman (UGA AG Economics) garden clubs, business owners, and individuals who worked so diligently to advocate for a wise use of our resources.

Mostly we thank our Morgan County Board of Commissioners Chairman, Mack Bohlen, Andy Ainslie, Sammy Cathey, Donald Harris, and Ellen Warren for their dedication to study the issues and for making wise decisions.

**INTRODUCING THE WATERSHED DONORS**

WATERSHED: 1) AN AREA OR REGION DRAINED BY A RIVER, RIVER SYSTEM, OR OTHER BODY OF WATER; 2) AN EVENT OR PERIOD MARKING A TURNING POINT IN A COURSE OF ACTION OR STATE OF AFFAIRS.

As Georgia’s first county-wide conservancy, our work to protect our special places consists of promoting the use of conservation easements, hosting educational forums, reviewing development plans proposed to the county and municipalities, inventorying resources, and most recently promoting a Farm to Market Alliance. Our foundation, history, expertise, and passion have led us to the frontline of these issues, requiring us to dedicate ourselves more fully to our work.

Last spring, we invited you to become Watershed Donors in order to support the Conservancy in its attempt to manage a full-time organization. This Watershed Donor funding is designed to match our Waterfall Foundation Grant and to strengthen our organization from within. We are pleased to announce our Watershed Donors:

WILLOW OAK FARM	MARY & BOB MCCAULEY
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BRANCH TIMBERLANDS	ANN MARIE & FRANK WALSH
ALICE & ART DOMBY	ELLEN WARREN

In order to **become a Watershed Donor**, please either contact us or simply renew your membership at either the Daniel Morgan Society Level or the Benefactor Level. As a Watershed Donor, you can elect to be recognized in our publications and during our Annual Membership Supper or to be anonymous in your contributions. All Watershed Donors will of course receive regular membership rewards (receiving our semi-annual newsletter, early registration to the Greenprint Ramble, and invitations to events). Additionally, you will have the satisfaction of knowing that you are substantially supporting conservation locally and regionally and that you are promoting the wise use of our natural, agricultural, and historic resources.

**CONSERVATION AND INDUSTRY [NOTES]**

Industrial land pays more in taxes than it receives in services. So does agricultural land, even when enrolled in Conservation Use (CUVA).

Permanently protected land increases adjacent property values by 11%-18%, thus increasing property tax revenues for the county.

Land conservation contributes to quality of life by protecting environmental quality, scenic views, agricultural industries, recreational opportunities, and cultural heritage.

According to researcher John Crompton, “quality of life is not only important in relocation, expansion, or initiation decision, it is also important in employee retention and has an economic bottom line... If a community commits to a long-term, comprehensive plan to protect [its quality of life], it is likely to have an advantage over other places when recruiting and retaining business.”

Environment is ranked as the most important amenity in attracting small businesses—more than housing, cost of living, and good schools.

Small businesses employ about half of all private sector employees, pay more than 45% of all U.S. private payroll, have generated 60%-80% of net new jobs annually over the last decade, and hire 40% of high-tech workers.

## ANNOUNCING THE NEW GREENPRINT RESOURCES GUIDE

The Madison-Morgan Conservancy's goal in creating the Greenprint Resources Guide was to illustrate and describe the resources listed in the Morgan County Greenprint (2004) and those listed in the City of Madison's Greenprint (2009) and to provide a visual description of the values that the Greenprints and Comprehensive Plan intend to protect. The Greenprint Guide will be posted on our website by the end of August for anyone who would like to explore Morgan County's resources.

Stephanie Goodrich, the Conservancy's intern during the summer of 2010, diligently photo-documented and researched the Preservation Opportunities listed in both Greenprints. The process included gathering historic photos, researching the history of the resources, way finding, and photo-documenting the great variety of resources. "As a student of Historic Preservation, it has been invaluable for me to learn, first hand, what a Greenprint can do for a community. Seeing the resources and opportunities that Morgan County has been striving to preserve and create will, no doubt, be a guiding light in my future career," said Ms. Goodrich.

The Conservancy owes great thanks to Stephanie Goodrich, Morgan County Planning and Zoning, City of Madison Planning and Zoning, Morgan County Archives, landowners who gave us access to their properties, and the Board Members of the Madison-Morgan Conservancy who made this project possible.

## HARD LABOR CREEK STATE PARK, CCC CAMP

First came the boll weevil, then the Depression. By the 1930s the landscape of Morgan County was dominated by treeless eroding pastures, sharecropper houses, farmsteads, and a few groves of pecan and oak trees. How in the world, then, did such a landscape become a National Park?

Hard Labor Creek State Park was a National Park between 1936 and 1948. In an attempt to illustrate how land reclaimed from poor agricultural practices could be used for recreation, FDR's Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) set up camp between Rutledge and Fairplay.

Home to the last standing CCC Camp in the state, HLCSP boasts 5,804 acres (the second largest State Park in GA); swimming, hiking, and horse trails; an observatory; a slew of wonderful cabins as well as primitive camping sites; and one of the most pristine golf courses in the state. The old Ponder Grist Mill is the focus of the golf course, and you can see remnants of the mill as you cross a CCC bridge over Hard Labor Creek at Lake Brantley on Fairplay Road. A wonderfully historic and dramatic landscape that needs your support.

The entire park is listed on the National Register for Historic Places. But the CCC Camp is in peril. Friends of the Park (a non-profit dedicated to supporting HLCSP) has raised \$100k to fix up a few of the remaining buildings, but they are looking for other help. If you are interested in donating your time and/or treasure and have carpentry skills, roofing skills, structural engineering expertise, or just want to help with general labor, please contact Daniel Hill, Park Manager at 706-557-3001.

## MADISON'S NEW COMMUNITY GARDEN



Brought to you by the Madison Greenspace Commission...

Madison's new garden—a working green-space to cultivate community gardening and sustainable living practices—has found a new home for 2010.

On College Drive and designed by June Harrell, the garden has individual garden plots (10'x10') available for \$25/year.

Choose a plot (or two!) and garden with your family and friends.

## FARM TO MARKET ALLIANCE (F2MA)

On February 26, 2004, Paul Carlson (Director of The Land Trust for the Little Tennessee) said, "in addition to conservation easements, we must save land through perpetuating rural values and preserving rural land. The key to successful land conservation is farmland protection."

Keep farmers farming. Conservation easements, Conservation Use Valuation Assessment, transfer of development rights, and county-wide planning with a focus on promoting the agricultural industry are all methods traditionally used to keep farmers farming. The Morgan County Board of Commissioners have done an excellent job in supporting the local agricultural industry through most of these traditional methods and has begun to participate in creative new ways to support the emerging local foods movement as yet another way to keep farmers farming.

In February, the Board of Commissioners approved an application by Greendale Farm to develop a farm store on their property. In the Conservancy's letter to the Board of Commissioners in support of the application, we stated, "In addition to being [an appropriate use], this use also shows the burgeoning market of locally grown food. Morgan County is at the epicenter (geographically) of this new market, and we support your efforts to provide avenues through which our farmers can benefit from participating in this market."

The Conservancy's intent in promoting agriculture in Morgan County through the Farm to Market Alliance is to keep farmers farming in order to retain the agrarian landscapes that are key to our quality of life. Although not permanent like conservation easements, this is one form of land conservation integral to the Conservancy's success.

Next on the F2MA agenda is to help create an agritourism map of Morgan County's farms whose operators would like to see increased foot traffic on their farms. Agritourism is a logical industry to promote in Morgan County, given that agriculture is our largest industry followed by tourism. A group has been convened to create the map and website, and requests for proposals will be sent out soon for the graphic design work and website construction. Any assistance our members can provide is welcome.

# MADISON-MORGAN CONSERVANCY

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## ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL CHECK YOUR MAILING LABEL

If you are a Conservancy member, please check your mailing label located on the back page of your newsletter to determine when your annual dues are scheduled to be renewed. The date printed above your name is the date on which you last paid your dues. Please renew your membership dues annually—your financial support is the foundation from which the Conservancy operates. Please consider renewing your dues at a higher level so that we can continue to maintain our programming at our current full-time level.

To renew, please send your check along with the Membership Form below to P.O. Box 752, Madison, GA 30650, or contact us at 706-342-9252 or [info@mmcgeorgia.org](mailto:info@mmcgeorgia.org).

*"There is nothing in which the birds differ more from man than the way in which they can build and yet leave a landscape as it was before."*

- Robert Lynd

## CONSERVANCY RECEIVES HPC AWARD

The Madison Historic Preservation Commission presented the Conservancy with a Preservation Excellence Award for Outstanding Heritage Education for our 2009 Greenprint Ramble Tour and Publication. We were so honored to receive this award and humbled by the praise. The Greenprint Ramble could never be the success it is without the Conservancy's members and volunteers. **This award is for YOU!** Thank you for all you do. Thank you HPC!



Above: Mary McCauley, immediate Past President; Jane Symmes, host of the Ramble; Christine McCauley, Executive Director; Elizabeth Branch, President and RambleCo-Chair; at Town Park.

# MADISON-MORGAN CONSERVANCY

P.O. Box 752, Madison, GA 30650, Phone: 706-342-9252, Email: [mmconservancy@mindspring.com](mailto:mmconservancy@mindspring.com)  
[www.mmcgeorgia.org](http://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 (Watershed Donor Level)  
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Please make check payable to **Madison-Morgan Conservancy**, and send to the address above.

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## THANK YOU

Waterfall Foundation  
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 NE GA Regional Commission  
 Citizens to Preserve Morgan County  
 David Land  
 Ralph Blanchard  
 Jeff Dorfman  
 Smart Growth Newton County  
 Center for Preservation and Planning  
 Friends of Walton County

*"Find your place on the planet, dig in,  
 and take responsibility from there."*

*-Gary Snyder*

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