



MADISON-MORGAN CONSERVANCY

Creating a Culture of Conservation

NEWSLETTER
WINTER, 2011-2012

THE “BEST PART OF THE SOUTH” INDEED

Yes. We actually live in the “best part of the South.” The Greenprint Ramble proved it.

And what a spectacular Ramble it was. The enlightening 45-mile guided tour through Bethany, Buckhead, Kingston and Swords was followed by a reception at historic Willow Oak Farm and then supper 1.5 miles into the wildlife refuge at the edge of Sugar Creek – a truly splendid place. The Carter Family, the local farmers, the many sponsors, the cooks, and the volunteers made it happen. We thank you all, and you should be proud of accomplishing the “best Ramble yet.”

The Ramble helped to show the importance to our community of the growing local food movement, which is continuing to present economic opportunities to our farmers. The Conservancy is working to bring more revenue to our local farmers by assisting in the marketing of their local products through our Farm to Market Alliance. Think FARMeander (see page 4), which is expanding to Morgan, Newton, and Walton Counties in 2012.

In addition to the Ramble, in October, Morgan County was host to a bicycle farm tour, book signing by Hugh Acheson (chef of 5&10, Empire State South, and The National), and a book reading and signing by Tamar Adler (chef of Farm 255). On our border there was a Secret Supper at Burge Organic Farm. And if that wasn't enough, in November the Bostwick Cotton Gin Festival was host to more people than ever before. It was a great year for the growing agritourism and local food movements.

Tax credits are something else we're trying to bring to landowners in Morgan County. On January 1, 2012, the GA State Tax Credit for conservation will become transferable. This “transferability” means that landowners who donate conservation easements and receive their tax credits (up to \$250,000 in dollar-for-dollar credits for individuals from their GA State Income Tax) will be able to sell that credit. This makes conservation easements viable for low-mid income landowners in addition to those high-income landowners who can use the tax deductions. We have over 1,100 acres in conservation easements now in Morgan County, and this transferable state tax credit will help this number grow.

This is my last year with the Conservancy, and I am proud to have worked with such an outstanding board and staff. Our goal is to create a culture of conservation in Morgan County, which we believe benefits us all by supporting property values, by providing a desirable quality of life for existing and future residents, and by protecting our natural resources and agricultural industry. It is my pleasure to introduce the officers of the board who will be continuing this work in 2012: Robert Trulock, *President*; Carolyn Ainslie, *Vice President*; Betsy Morehouse, *Secretary*; and Chris Brandon, *Secretary*.

On behalf of all of us at the Conservancy, I thank you for your continued support of our mission. It is timely and important and would not be accomplished without you, our members and friends. We hope to see you on March 24, 2012, for our membership supper.

Sincerely,

Right: Ramble supper site at the edge of Sugar Creek at Willow Oak Farm.



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THE NOT-SO-BORING FACTS ABOUT CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

Let's face it—conservation easements are complex and time consuming, but they are good for the world and they can save landowners LOTS of money. Here are the facts:

Voluntarily donating a conservation easement **DOES**:

- Provide significant tax incentives (some of which can be sold for real cash money in 2012) to private landowners who can then invest even more into their businesses and land (or pay for college, or go on vacation)
- Give landowners an option for realizing economic return from their property for conservation rather than development (and in this economy, that's a GREAT thing)
- Save the government money by keeping protected land in the private landowners' hands, on the tax rolls, and by not requiring government ownership or management of land
- Protect Morgan County's natural, agricultural, and/or historic resources, benefiting the public
- Support the agricultural and tourism industries (Morgan County's two largest industries)
- Contribute to a balanced tax digest by securing land that pays more in taxes than it receives in services

Voluntarily donating a conservation easement **DOES NOT**:

- Cost the government for protecting the community's critical resources
- Take land off the tax rolls
- Require government expenditures in ownership or management of land
- Restrict land use beyond the wishes of the landowner, i.e. landowners can still farm and manage timber (or do other things) provided they craft their easement to allow such activities.

Keywords: Voluntary; Cost Effective; Public Benefit; Private Landowner Benefit; Good for Morgan County's economy; **Good for everyone who drinks water, breathes air, or pays taxes in Morgan County.**

GEORGIA'S CONSERVATION TAX CREDIT BECOMES TRANSFERABLE—GOOD FOR FARMING FAMILIES AND FARMLAND PRESERVATION

Georgia is the 5th state in the nation to allow transferability of the conservation state income tax credit. In April, 2011, the General Assembly passed H.B. 346, which allows recipients of these tax credits to sell or otherwise transfer the credits as of January 1, 2012. Here are the facts:

- Donors of conservation easements are eligible for a state income tax credit of up to \$250,000, \$500,000, or \$1,000,000, depending on ownership structure.
- Donors have 11 years to use their credit.
- The credit is: 25% of the value of the conservation easement, which is determined by an appraisal.
- Donors can sell their credit to anyone who needs a reduction in their GA State Income Tax liability.
- Tax credit sales in Colorado return 80 cents on the dollar for sellers, and a similar price is expected in Georgia.

This transferability makes donating conservation easements viable for low to mid-income families who want to protect their land but who cannot necessarily benefit from income tax deductions.

Of course this State Income Tax Credit is complemented by the **FEDERAL INCOME TAX DEDUCTION:** On December 31, 2011, the enhanced income tax deduction ends and reverts back to its previous level.

Before January 1, 2012

- Landowners can deduct 50% of Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) for up to 16 years.
- Farmers can deduct 100% of AGI for up to 16 years.

After January 1, 2012

- Landowners can deduct 30% of AGI for up to 6 years.
- Farmers can deduct 50% of AGI for up to 6 years.

ARE CONSERVATION EASEMENTS RIGHT FOR YOU? CALL US—WE'LL HELP YOU FIGURE IT OUT.

MORE LAND PROTECTED IN MORGAN COUNTY IN 2011

Families like the Beauchamps voluntarily donate conservation easements to protect their land in a way that is tailored to the conservation values on their property and to their family's needs. For instance, the most recent easements executed at Goose Creek Farm protect wildlife habitat and water quality on 92 acres. Now over 300 acres of the farm are protected, leaving much of the farm available for their significant cattle operation. Yes, the critters will benefit from those easements, but the Beauchamp's cattle business will benefit, too, when they reinvest into their farm what they saved on their taxes (see info above on tax incentives for donating conservation easements).

- To date, conservation easements protect over 1,100 acres in Morgan County and approximately 47 million acres nationwide.
- In 2009, 175,679 acres were protected in Georgia through various means, 82% of which (42,284 acres) were protected by conservation easements, reflecting a 24% increase from the year prior.



THE BEST RAMBLE YET—SIMPLY SPECTACULAR

THANK YOU to everyone who helped make the 2011 Green-print Ramble happen!

The Ramble is a unique way to celebrate Morgan County's heritage, and it has become a favorite event for many of you. That pleases us to no end. Because the Ramble is not a fundraiser and, in fact, costs more than it brings in, we are especially grateful for those of you who support the event financially. The **sponsors** of the Ramble make it possible to research, plan, and execute this massive undertaking, and we would like for you to know who they are:

- ❑ **Willow Oak Farm**—Hosts of this year's Ramble and significant supporters of the Conservancy's land conservation efforts. Thank you Carter Family for this amazing gift!
- ❑ **Bank of Madison**—Sponsored the first Ramble (2007) and every subsequent Ramble and has had faith in this event from the beginning. Thank you Charles Haney and the Bank of Madison Board of Directors for believing in us!
- ❑ **Ginger and Harry Beverly**—Wonderful supporters of the Conservancy for many years and cool people.
- ❑ **Hall Smith Office**—Colleen Hall co-chaired the first Ramble (2007) and has designed all three Ramble Tour Guides.
- ❑ **Mary and Bob McCauley**—Mary and Bob are Charter Members of the Conservancy. Mary served as President from 2005-2009 and has helped organize every Ramble.
- ❑ **Morgan Stanley Smith Barney**—Through employee Robert Trulock, Morgan Stanley has been a strong supporter of the Conservancy for many years.
- ❑ **Goose Creek Farm**—The Beauchamp Family's cattle farm in Morgan County. Janet and Bob Beauchamp are Charter Members of the Conservancy, and Mr. Beauchamp currently serves as President.
- ❑ **Jim Boyd & Associates**—Sponsored the 2007 and 2011 Rambles. Thank you Jim Boyd and staff for your support!
- ❑ **Sweet Water Brewing Company**—Simply the best beer out there. Sweet Water has sponsored every Ramble and the last five Membership Suppers. Thank you Dan Rather!
- ❑ **Chestnut Preserve Sponsors:** Carolyn and Andy Ainslie, Emily and David Buck, Rita and Lane Dennard, Flossie and David Dodge, Rena and George Holt, Virginia Payne and Clarence Foreman, Debora and Jon Hunter, Sue Johnson, Lambert Farm Operations, Victoria Mooney, Diane and William Pharr, Jane Symmes, Verner Farms, Ann Marie and Frank Walsh.

Thanks to the **farmers**, we ate! They planned the menu months ago, planted in preparation of feeding 230 people, and harvested all that fresh food (some the day of the supper): Bee Factory, Rob Bennett, Burge Organic Farm, Buttercup Farm, Greendale Farm, Hundred Acre Farm, Johnston Dairy Farm, Lambert Farms, Plow Point Farm, Sunflower Farm, Tagyerit Farm, Tewksbury Farm, Tinker Farm, Verner Farms.

We would also like to thank the entire **Ramble Committee**, co-chaired by Emily Buck and Ken Kocher: Carolyn Ainslie, Julie Davie, Colleen Hall, Christine McCauley, Mary McCauley, Ashley Nichols, Jennifer Palmer, and Becky Sherwood. And we give special thanks to **Mr. Woody Williams (recipient of the Conservancy's Legacy Award)** for organizing and protecting Morgan County's legacy in the Morgan County Archives.



SAVE THE DATE

MEMBERSHIP SUPPER
Saturday, March 24, 2012
6:00 p.m. at Ginny and Dan Rather's Barn

MADISON'S ON-LINE FARMERS MARKET

www.madison.locallygrown.net.

It's just so EASY!

Fresh cheese, sausage, steaks, veggies, eggs, and even Holiday gifts and décor, all at your fingertips.

Sign up with Madison Locally Grown and make your orders weekly online. Order what you want by Tuesday; it will all be harvested and/or assembled Wednesday morning, and will be ready for you to pick up in Madison on Wednesday afternoon. Easy as pie and there's nothing fresher!

And here's where all that delicious food comes from:

FARMeander Farms

Greendale Farm
Hundred Acre Farm
Tagyerit Farm
Tewksbury Farms
Sunflower Farm

Other Farms:

Bee Factory	JP Farms
Buttercup Farm	Lisa's Lovely Layers
Danina Farm	M&M Garden
Darby Farms	Ryan Acres
Double B Farm	Sammy's Chickens
Flower Mill Cupcakes	Straight From the Backyard
Florence Farms	Tink's Grass Fed Beef
Front Field Farm	Vickers Farm
Hostess in a Hurry	

FARMeander EXPANDS TO MORGAN, NEWTON, AND WALTON COUNTIES

We'll be FARMeandering through Morgan, Newton, and Walton Counties in 2012. Now covering an expanded area, the newest version of FARMeander will be out in February, 2012.



FARMeander displays for all to see the agricultural powerhouse that is our tri-county area. One look at this map, and there can be no arguing that we reside within a bountiful breadbasket primed to become the center of Georgia's local food movement. This movement is more than a fad, and its importance cannot be overlooked: the promotion of small to medium sized working farms supports the family, the community, local economies, and the natural environment.

Did you know?

- \$16 billion of \$20 billion of food bought in GA comes from out of state.
- \$7 billion projected to be spent on local food in 2011 in US.
- \$10/week spent per household per week on local food could contribute \$1.9 billion to local economies.

FOOD HUBS - A NEW IDEA FOR SMALL TO MEDIUM-SIZED FARMS

Getting to Scale with Regional Food Hubs

Partially reprinted from USDA Blog. Written by Jim Barham, Food Hub Team Leader, Agricultural Marketing Service, on December 14, 2010 at 3:20 PM

Here at USDA we are looking for ways that we can help build and strengthen regional and local food systems. As we talk to farmers, producers, consumers, processors, retailers, buyers and everyone else involved in regional food system development, we hear more and more about small and mid-sized farmers struggling to get their products to market quickly and efficiently. And more and more we hear that these same producers need access to things like trucks, warehouses, processing space, and storage. These things require capital investment, infrastructure maintenance and dedicated oversight – things that small and mid-sized producers often can't afford or manage themselves.

One answer to help regional producers may be a "food hub."

Our working definition of a food hub is "a centrally located facility with a business management structure facilitating the aggregation, storage, processing, distribution, and/or marketing of locally/regionally produced food products." By actively coordinating these activities along the value chain, food hubs are providing wider access to institutional and retail markets for small to mid-sized producers, and increasing access of fresh healthy food for consumers, including underserved areas and food deserts.

One example is La Montanita in New Mexico, which buys from over 700 local farmers and producers, and warehouses and processes over 1,100 local products that are sold through the La Montanita retail co-op locations and other retail markets across the state.

There's also Appalachian Sustainable Development, which offers technical support, training and marketing support to over 50 local farmers, and aggregates their products for regional distribution across rural Appalachia.

And the Detroit Eastern Market is a food hub, offering warehouse, storage, processing, marketing and retail functions to hundreds of Michigan producers, allowing them to participate in the state's biggest market.

As interest, market demand, and production of local and regional food continue to grow, so will the need for organized infrastructure systems like processing, aggregation, distribution and marketing. Food hubs are one way to get ahead of the curve.



WALLACE GROVE SCHOOL RESTORATION

On March 6, 1871, the Morgan County Board of Education instructed “the School Trustees of the Sub Districts... to establish for the present one school for white and one school for colored children, in their respective districts... and to use every economy in procuring school sites, school houses, and teachers...”

Subsequently, many schools were created for white and black students, and by 1889 there were 34 white schools and 43 black schools. Further research suggests that by the early 20th century there were over 100 black schools in Morgan County, many of which were housed in stand-alone school houses and many of which were housed in churches.



Mrs. Emma Johnson, last teacher to teach at Wallace Grove School with Mrs. Anne Wallace Walker, granddaughter of W.P. Wallace who donated the property to Wallace Grove Baptist Church in 1901.

On November 22, 1901, Mr. W.P. Wallace donated 1.34 acres to the Wallace Grove Baptist Church for school and church purposes. The Board of Education minutes recorded the first students at the Wallace Grove School in the 1902-1903 school year, and classes were held there until 1957, after which the black schools in the county were consolidated into the Bostwick, Planview, and Pearl Street schools. Mrs. Emma Johnson, currently of Madison, was the last teacher of the Wallace Grove School and recently recalled her time at Wallace Grove.

Vacant since 1957, the Wallace Grove school began to decay. Water was infiltrating the building through the hanging chimney (used to pipe the pot belly stove inside), windows were broken or lost, poison ivy was growing up through the clapboards, and buzzards were even nesting in the attic. But, thankfully, the foundation remained solid, much of the historic material survived, and it was in its original location (in situ).

After a bit of research with Mr. Woody in the Morgan County Archives, we discovered that the Wallace Grove School House was one of the last black schools from the turn of the century. After more research and conversations with Elzata Brown, Gerladine Cooper, and members of the Butler Family, we found that Wallace Grove was actually **the last remaining in situ black school from the turn of the century.**



Before

In March 2011, Pastor Tommy Chatman of Wallace Grove Baptist Church began restoring the school house in order to preserve this valuable piece of history. A preservationist at heart, he treated the building with care, preserving as much historic material as possible. For instance, in order to remove the poison ivy and other vegetation growing through the walls, he removed each clapboard and numbered it before putting it back up in its original location. He also had the hanging chimney rebuilt and matched paint colors from evidence found in the building.



After



After being contacted by the church for assistance, the Conservancy staff worked with Pastor Chatman to secure donations of materials and funds to support the project. The restoration was completed in 179 days, and a restoration celebration was held on Saturday, September 17th.



Thank You Contributors!

Champion Lumber Co., Franklin Restoration, Georgia Metal, Great Estate Landscaping, Indian Creek Baptist Church, Madison-Morgan Conservancy, Madison-Morgan Cultural Center, Morgan County Landmarks, Morgan County Roads and Bridges, Plainview Baptist Church, Ruark Farms, Social Circle Hardware, Sunflower Farm, Thankful Baptist Church.



Above: Pastor Tommy Chatman and his crew during the restoration celebration on September 17, 2011.



Left: Dr. Ralph Bennett and Mr. Alfred Murray.
Right: Mr. “Mac” McMullin.



Thank you Volunteers!

Ricky Boswell, Barry Brown, David Buck, Pastor Tommy Chatman, Deacon Gerald Cooper, Geraldine Cooper, Wes Holt, Rena and George Holt, Nathan Howell, Ken Kocher, Deacons Jesse and Louis Mathis, Christine McCauley, Mary McCauley, Opie Nell and Mac McMullin, Charlie Moore, and Preston Robinson.

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ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL CHECK YOUR MAILING LABEL

If you are a Conservancy member, please check the mailing label on your newsletter. **The date printed above your name is the date on which you last paid your annual membership dues.** Please consider renewing your membership at a higher level, so that we can continue and expand our programming.

MADISON-MORGAN CONSERVANCY

P.O. Box 752, Madison, GA 30650
 706-342-9252, 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)
- Benefactor \$1,000 or more (Watershed Donor Level)
- Supporter \$500 or more
- Donor \$250 or more
- Preservationist \$100
- Conservationist \$50
- Naturalist \$20

- I would like to contribute an additional:
 \$_____ 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.
- Please make check payable to **Madison-Morgan Conservancy**, and send to the address above.

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

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone 1: _____ Phone 2: _____

Email: _____

BECOME A MEMBER OF THE MADISON-MORGAN CONSERVANCY TODAY!

NEW MEMBERS

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 Mack Bohlen
 Scott Campbell
 H.D. & Cheryl Cannington
 Connie & George Cooke
 Ron & Rhonda Erwin
 Sheree & Terry Evans
 Exposition Foundation
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 Gale T. Hurst
 Paulette and Lloyd Long
 Cassandre & Kevin McGowan
 Moonshine Meats
 Ebb & Lois Oakley
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**EXTRA SPECIAL
 THANK YOUS**

Carter Family
Pastor Tommy Chatman
Tate Tewksbury
Luke Wilkins

THANK YOU

Tamar Adler	Mary McCauley
Carolyn Ainslie	Opie Nell & Mac McMullin
Bob Beauchamp & Family	Moonshine Meats / Farm 255
Bee Factory	Morgan County Archives
Rob Bennett	Morgan County Board of Education and Bus Drivers
Mollie Bogle & Gena Bogle	Morgan County Commissioners
Emily & David Buck	Morgan County Roads & Brides
Burge Organic Farm	Morgan County Landmarks
Buttercup Farm	Brady Lowe & Cory Mosser
Geraldine Cooper	Newton County GEG
Maryann & Devon Dartnell	Ashley Nichols
Julie & Jim Davie	Jennifer Palmer
GA Land Trust	Plow Point Farm
Greendale Farm	Becky & Tom Sherwood
Greenprint Ramble Committee,	Bobby Smith
Cooks, Sponsors, & Volunteers	Karen & Greg Strelecki
Colleen Hall / Hall Smith Office	Sunflower Farm
Wes Holt	Tagyerit Farm
Hundred Acre Farm	Tewksbury Farm
Kim Jackson	Tinker Farm
Johnston Dairy Farm	Vason Family
Elizabeth Jones	Verner Farms
Monica & Ken Kocher	Wallace Grove Baptist Church
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Patty Lay	Mr. Woody Williams
Madison Artist Guild	Willow Oak Farm
Madison-Morgan Cultural Center	

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