

NEWS RELEASE
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An Island in a Sea of Subdivisions

Easement Donor Lauded for Dedication to Cedar Creek Conservation Efforts

LEXINGTON, VA – Potomac Conservancy easement donor Caroline Stalnaker, of Mt. Pleasant Farm, was presented a Governor’s Environmental Excellence Award for individual land conservation during the April 2 Environment Virginia 2008 conference. Mrs. Stalnaker and her two daughters are committed to preserving the farming tradition on their land.

“We are excited about Caroline receiving one of the Governors Environmental Excellence awards and join the state in commending Ms. Stalnaker for her actions and dedication to protecting farmland and water quality in the Cedar Creek watershed and the Shenandoah Valley.”
says Kelly Watkinson, Potomac Conservancy’s Senior Director of Land Protection.

Historic Mount Pleasant Farm, a 106-acre property along Cedar Creek, was permanently protected from future development in 2006, ensuring it will remain available for agriculture for generations to come. Mrs. Stalnaker was concerned about the rapid development around her farm: “It’s rather an Island, in a sense, because the land is the only property south of Route 81 that hasn’t been annexed or developed.”

The protection of Mount Pleasant Farm is important for both water quality and historic resources purposes. The farm has three-fourths of a mile of frontage along Cedar Creek, an ecologically diverse stream of particular importance to the northern Shenandoah Valley. The farm has been used to raise sheep and cows as well as hay. The easement was purchased by Potomac Conservancy and Virginia Outdoors Foundation with funding provided by the United States Department of Agriculture’s Farm and Ranchland Protection Program and the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation.

“We are very concerned about the tremendous amount of development surrounding Caroline’s farm, specifically Island Farm and Shenandoah Greens, and the effect these developments will have on the water quality and scenic beauty of Cedar Creek,” says Kelly Watkinson.

Mrs. Stalnaker has been very interested in educating neighbors and the public about the importance of protecting water quality and farmland in the region. She has opened up her property for numerous studies and monitoring of Cedar Creek including a study by Virginia Tech, monitoring in relation to the fish kills, and sampling for an ecological assessment that was conducted by Shenandoah University in 2004.

Mrs. Stalnaker hopes that her decision to permanently protect her farm will spur others to consider conservation options for their own properties. She states, “I was brought up that you have to do what you know is right, even if you are the only one doing it. It is right that this should be a farm forever....however long forever is!”

About Potomac Conservancy

Since 1993, the Potomac Conservancy has protected the health, beauty, and enjoyment of the Potomac River and its tributaries. Its conservation programs address the goals of improving water quality, protecting the river's scenic integrity, enhancing recreational resources, and building an informed and engaged constituency, using a range of tools, including restoration, permanent protection, advocacy, and citizen education and engagement.

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