

# Rappahannock Views


*Newsletter of the  
Rappahannock County Conservation Alliance*


Volume 2, Issue 1


July 2000

## RCCA Task Forces Pursue Projects, Needs Volunteers

RCCA has a vision—that our beloved Rappahannock County will be scenic and rural in the year 2020, as it is today. To pursue that vision, the RCCA board has divided its members into three task forces, which are now pursuing projects to achieve the following goals:

 *To support open space conservation*—Bob Dennis, Doug Ginsburg, Gary Light, and Chris Parrish

 *To support land use and building practices compatible with the comprehensive plan*—Don Audette, Hal Hunter, Hildy Teegen, and Mitzie Young

 *To support a strong local economy compatible with a scenic rural community*—Chris Bird, Bayard Catron, Cliff Miller, and Sharon Pierce

Our dream will not come true without effort. It can be realized only with the dedication and commitment of many people in all segments of our community, working in many different ways. We need the talents and energy of many of our neighbors to achieve these ambitious goals. If you are interested in participating in our projects, or just have ideas or comments to share about our goals, please call, write, or e-mail us, or contact any board member. (See the following page for contact information.)

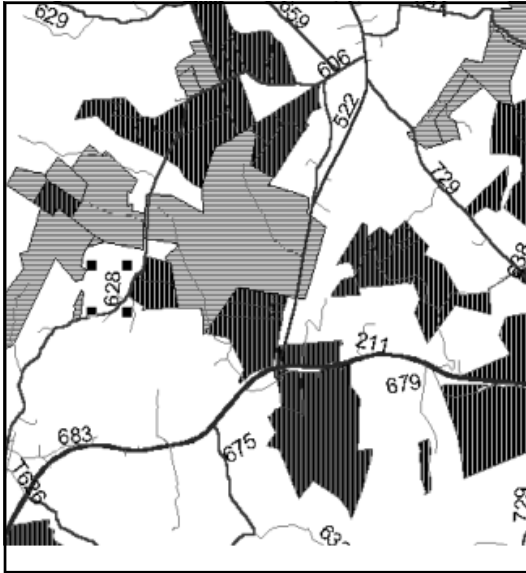
If you're not already a member, we hope you will join us. We look forward to working with you.

### OFFICIALS EXPLAIN CONSERVATION RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM AT LOCAL MEETING

RCCA board member Cliff Miller recently organized and hosted an informational meeting on the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program. State and federal officials described this program for subsidizing riparian (waterway) buffers by paying farmers a portion of the costs of reforesting stream and riverbanks, fencing, and providing an alternative water source for livestock. Several local farmers are applying to participate in this program, which will help improve water quality in the county.



# RCCA Maps County



Map showing conservation easements (in gray) and agricultural and forestal districts (in black) in a portion of the county

Beverly Hunter of the Piedmont Research Institute in Amissville is creating detailed computer-generated maps of Rappahannock County for RCCA that will illustrate land characteristics and land use patterns, and help county officials and citizen groups plan for the future. The system that manipulates the geographic data and creates the maps is called a Geographic Information System, or GIS. The maps are based on information drawn from county records and other sources by Hal Hunter. Preliminary maps showing land use taxation,

conservation easements, and agricultural and forestal districts in the county will be exhibited at the RCCA booth at the 4th of July celebration in the town of Washington. Final maps will also show scenic roads and rivers, topography, forest cover, soil types, zoning, elevations, and other types of information.

*Rappahannock Views* is published by the Rappahannock County Conservation Alliance.



*...ensuring that Rappahannock County remains a scenic, rural community*

#### *Board of Directors*

BAYARD CATRON, President  
GARY LIGHT, Vice President  
DOUG GINSBURG, Secretary  
CLIFF MILLER, Treasurer  
DON AUDETTE  
CHRIS BIRD  
BOB DENNIS  
HAL HUNTER  
CHRIS PARRISH  
SHARON PIERCE  
HILDY TEEGEN  
MITZIE YOUNG

*Editor: Pam Owen*

For information on RCCA, contact us through one of the following:

Address: P.O. Box 116  
Sperryville, VA 22740

Phone: 540-987-8177

Fax: 540-987-8178

E-mail: [rcca@free-1.com](mailto:rcca@free-1.com)

## *RCCA and RLEP Develop Building Practices Resource Guide*

A major goal of RCCA is to support land use and building practices compatible with a scenic rural community. RCCA has teamed up with the Rappahannock League for Environmental Protection (RLEP) to develop a resource manual for promoting responsible land use and building practices in Rappahannock County. Led by Hildy Teegen (RCCA) and Marc Malik (RLEP), preliminary meetings have involved realtors, builders, architects, and members of the Planning Commission and the Board of Zoning Appeals as well as others with personal or professional interests in this goal.

The project team is actively soliciting participation from all county residents on a wide range of topics, including site selection and choice of building materials, preservation of historic homes and structures, light-


ing, private road construction and maintenance, landscaping and screening, and efficient building design. The team invites input and content on these or other topics related to the general theme of land use and building in our scenic, rural community.

If you have internet access, please join our Rappahannock Building Practices Intranet. To do so, go to <http://rappbuild.intranets.com>. The registration code is *rccarlep* (all in lower case). This intranet will be used to compile and disseminate the materials gathered from citizen input. We will also make these resources available in print form. Those who wish to participate in this project off-line (not on the computer) should contact Hildy Teegen, 540-987-1168 or [bear@summit.net](mailto:bear@summit.net), for more information.


## Conservation Toolkit Will Help Protect Land, Wildlife, Community

Many tools are available to help ensure that Rappahannock County remains a scenic, rural community. RCCA board member Don Audette is researching conservation tools and writing summaries for their use by interested people and groups in the county.

Four brochures are now available through RCCA—on conservation easements, land use taxation, agricultural and forestal districts, and the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). All four of these tools represent programs for use by individual landowners. Other tools for possible use by citizen groups or county government are also being investigated, such as the following:

 *Scenic Highway or Virginia Byway designation.* Six Rappahannock roadways are already in this program; the most recent addition, just

this year, was Route 522 from the Warren County line to the Culpeper County line. The designation requires approval from the Board of Supervisors and State officials.

 *Designation of part or all of Rappahannock County as a Virginia Rural Historic District.* Twelve such districts are in this program, which is designed to preserve and honor the heritage of certain rural areas. Rural historic districts, by definition, are “collections of sites, buildings, cultural and historic landscapes, and all supporting heritage resources.”

RCCA is also undertaking research on ordinances, zoning regulations, building code guidelines, and other regulatory tools used by other counties and communities that might help ensure that Rappahannock County remains a scenic, rural community. This information will

be documented by RCCA and presented to local government bodies.

For more information on this research effort or on the conservation toolkit, contact Don Audette, 987-9261 or [Mass37th@erols.com](mailto:Mass37th@erols.com).

### RCCA EXPLORES PURCHASE OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS

RCCA is currently exploring the possibility of using “purchase of development rights” (PDRs) in Rappahannock County. A PDR is an arrangement in which a landowner sells, and a conservation organization or a governmental body purchases and retires, the right to develop a piece of property. This mechanism is used by state and local governments around the country, and by private land trusts and conservation groups as well. Anyone interested in this possibility for conserving key properties in Rappahannock County should contact Gary Light at 540-937-3500 or [lmfarm@erols.com](mailto:lmfarm@erols.com).

## RCCA SPONSORS HORSE-LOGGING DEMONSTRATION AT JULY 4 CELEBRATION

The 4th of July celebration in the town of Washington will feature a demonstration of logging with horses, an ecologically sensitive way to extract logs from a living forest. Chris Bird, of Horseshoe Hollow Farm in Rappahannock County, will conduct the demonstration with the help of a beautiful team of Belgian horses owned by Cliff Miller of Mt. Vernon Farm in Sperryville. Chris will also mill the logs on his portable saw mill.

When logs are harvested in this

manner, minimum damage is done to the forest, which is good for it and good for the landowner, since the costs of forest regeneration are greatly reduced. When the logs are finished and used by local woodworkers and builders, the local



economy benefits as well, by multiplying the economic value of our natural resources.

A major goal of RCCA is to support a strong local economy compatible with a scenic, rural community. We believe this is essential to ensure that Rappahannock County remains scenic and rural for the indefinite future. Sustainable forestry is one practice that will help achieve that goal.

For more information about horse logging, and milling and sawing, native hardwoods, contact Chris Bird, 675-3409 or [mjc@shentel.net](mailto:mjc@shentel.net).

# Flint Hill Neighbors Consider Conservation Easements

At a recent brunch hosted by Doug Ginsburg and Hallee Morgan, some 20 Flint Hill landowners gathered to hear RCCA board member Bob Dennis describe the benefits and appropriate use of conservation easements for permanently protecting farmland and other land from unwanted residential or commercial development. Each attendee received a complimentary copy of Stephen Small's *Preserving Family Lands*, the leading book for landowners to learn about the advantages of conservation easements. Virginia landowners may get a state income-tax credit as well as a federal income-tax deduction and property-tax and estate-tax relief.

Due in large part to Bob Dennis's expertise, long-time dedication, and leadership as former president

of the Piedmont Environmental Council, Rappahannock County is among the top five counties in Virginia in percentage of private land permanently protected by conservation easements. Currently, about 50 parcels representing more than 10,000 acres (about 7 percent of privately owned land) are under conservation easement in Rappahannock County. Contrary to what many people think, conservation easements are also often appropriate for smaller landowners, especially when neighbors decide jointly to protect their land in this way.

RCCA is planning more neighborhood gatherings on conservation easements in Laurel Mills, Gid Brown Hollow, and other areas. If you are interested in planning or participating in such an event in

your neighborhood, contact Doug Ginsburg, 540-675-1581 or [dginsburg@cadc.uscourts.gov](mailto:dginsburg@cadc.uscourts.gov). If you're interested in learning more about conservation easements—how they work and the tax advantages they offer—contact Bob Dennis, 540-364-2569 or [flint@citizen.infi.net](mailto:flint@citizen.infi.net).



RCCA  
P.O. Box 116  
Sperryville, VA 22740-0116