

## Suzanne Wescoat: Visionary Conservation Leader



Suzanne joined the land trust board on her retirement from elected office in 2009, as she had always promised. She served as our Treasurer and in April, she and Jack hosted a successful oyster roast, our annual fundraiser, at The Glebe.

Last year Suzanne worked with President Tim Brown, Executive Director Peter Henderson and Megan Gallagher, former executive director, to secure national accreditation for the land trust. She served as the workgroup's editor/proofreader, scrutinizing several hundred pages of documents and forms that went into the successful application.

On behalf of everyone at VES Land Trust, we join the Wescoat family and the Eastern Shore community in mourning the loss of this extraordinary conservation leader. It was an honor to know and work with such a remarkable steward of the Shore's priceless natural, historic and cultural resources.

When VES Land Trust was just getting started and at key points in succeeding years, Suzanne Wescoat served a critical role in our development and success.

In 2002 Shore residents, worried about the loss of working farms and forests, historic resources and wildlife habitat, had been talking for nearly 20 years about the need to establish a local land trust. Suzanne took the initiative to invite interested people to her home to help make the vision a reality.

Starting with about 30 conservation-minded residents, Suzanne hosted meetings that evolved into a core group of potential board members. When it was time to recruit a strong leader, she convinced Lucius J Kellam, III, who had not yet worked on conservation issues, to step up as the first chairman of VES Land Trust. It was a truly inspired choice.

Suzanne did not join the land trust board in 2003, as she was serving on the Northampton Board of Supervisors. However in 2004, she encouraged husband Jack Wescoat and daughter Chappell W. Barber to donate a conservation easement, the second accepted by the land trust, on Sunshine Farm.

In 2008 Suzanne and her son John led the extended Wescoat family in donating a conservation easement on Cherry Grove Farm, Savages Neck. And in 2009, Suzanne and her family donated a third conservation easement on The Glebe Farm.



### Land Trust Earns National Accreditation

Virginia Eastern Shore (VES) Land Trust was awarded national accreditation in February, one of just 135 (of 1,667) land trusts throughout the country to earn approval from the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance.

“Accredited land trusts meet national quality standards for protecting important natural places and working lands forever,” said Commission Executive Director Tammara Van Ryn.

“The accreditation seal lets the public know that the accredited land trust has undergone an extensive, external review of the governance and management of its organization, and the systems and policies it uses to protect land,” she added.



*Nottingham Farm near Franktown*

## **Northampton County Buys Second Farm Easement**

Northampton County protected a second working farm through its two-year-old Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Program, with the acquisition in May of a conservation easement on Nottingham Farm near Franktown.

Cousins Butch and Add Nottingham of Nassawadox agreed to preserve the 172-acre property in a deal that combined both the sale and donation of housing and other development rights to the county and the Virginia Outdoors Foundation (VOF).

The Nottingham's conservation easement permits traditional land uses – like farming, forestry, hunting and fishing – but prohibits subdivision or lots sales. “I am very happy,” said Add Nottingham, “This farm would have ended up covered in houses in the future, and I am glad it will remain a working farm.”

Nottingham Farm qualified for the county's PDR program due to its outstanding natural resources and proximity to a block of protected land. The farm contains 145 acres of prime agricultural soils, nearly 16 acres of forest and 1,800 feet of buffer on a perennial stream, which supports wildlife and migratory bird habitat.

Nottingham Farm is close to two others protected by conservation easements, 240-acre Happy Union and 157-acre Locust Grove, for a total of 569 acres protected between Franktown and Wardtown.

The Nottinghams donated 25 percent of the value of the development rights to VOF and the county. Northampton County contributed under eight percent of the value, using a portion of annual

revenue from the Transient Occupancy Tax imposed on visitors to local hotels, motels and campgrounds.

The remaining cost of the conservation easement was secured through grants from the U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program, the VOF Open Space Lands Preservation Trust Fund and the state agricultural agency's Farmland Preservation Office.

Peter Stith, the PDR Program Administrator in the County's Department of Planning and Zoning, coordinated the easement acquisition, with guidance from the Board of Supervisors and an appointed committee of farmers, conservationists and public servants. “The purchase of a conservation easement with multiple funding sources can make for an extremely complex and challenging real estate transaction. Peter Stith did a yeoman's job in meeting the requirements of the four funding agencies involved in this acquisition and coordinating all of the paperwork necessary to bring this transaction to closure,” said PDR committee member Dave Harris.

The Northampton County PDR program is voluntary, but landowners must meet certain criteria to be eligible for consideration. At least 50 percent of the tract must contain prime agricultural soils and the property must be located in either an A-1 Agriculture or Conservation zoning district or the Agriculture/Forest Land Use Area.

“The Northampton County PDR Program continues to illustrate how small investments in protecting our rural assets save county taxpayers a lot of money over time,” said Peter N. Henderson, the PDR Committee Chair.

“Completing a second purchase demonstrates that Northampton residents and county supervisors continue to support the preservation of the county's rural nature and farming,” he said.



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## Lucius Kellam & David Turner Lauded

Two land trust leaders were honored for their service to the community at the 2011 Chamber of Commerce Annual Meeting in June at the Eastern Shore Yacht and Country Club.

The Outstanding Citizen of the Year Award was awarded to Lucius J. Kellam III of Belle Haven for his service to the Chesapeake Bay Bridge & Tunnel Commission, VES Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy's Virginia Chapter, the Sentara Nightingale Campaign Cabinet and the Virginia Institute for Marine Science's Council. Lucius served as the land trust's first chairman of the board.

Pam Barefoot, owner of Blue Crab Bay Co., presented the Chamber award saying, "Lucius Kellam is a silent champion, one who looks out for our way of life and the betterment of all residents on Virginia's Eastern Shore, with nothing to gain for himself except the joy of giving."

The Distinguished Service Award was presented to David Turner of Onancock in recognition of and appreciation for outstanding efforts and service to the chamber during the past year. David is a new member of the land trust board.



*Left to right: Lucius Kellam (Outstanding Citizen of the Year Award), Alisa James (Small Business Person of the Year Award), Annie Jones (Chairman's Special Award), Trish Doiron (Chairman's Award), David Turner (Chairman's Distinguished Service Award) and Willie Randall (Outgoing Chair)*

## Clean the Bay Day Group Hauls 700 Pounds of Trash from Morely's Wharf



*Left to right: Kate Stikeleather, Will Grier, and Susan Mastyl*

Eight VES Land Trust volunteers hauled 700 pounds of garbage and debris from Morely's Wharf on June 4th. The 23<sup>rd</sup> annual bay clean up was sponsored by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. This year's Clean the Bay Day engaged over 6,200 volunteers who removed approximately 200,000 pounds of debris from over 500 miles of stream and shoreline along the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.

## Enhanced Conservation Easement Incentives Expire at Year End 2011

Landowners thinking about donating a conservation easement may want to act sooner rather than later. Enhanced federal tax incentives associated with conservation easements are set to expire on December 31, 2011. Whether Congress will extend the enhanced incentive one more time is very much in question.

The incentives apply the value of the donated conservation easement to federal income tax liability by:

- Permitting a conservation easement donor to take a deduction on up to 50 percent of adjusted gross income in 2011.
- Allowing farmers and ranchers to take a deduction on up to 100 percent of their adjusted gross income in 2011.
- Allowing easement donors to apply the deduction on tax returns for up to 16 years.

Contact your accountant, financial advisor or Land Trust Executive Director Peter Henderson for more details, (757)442-5885.



*Hungars Glebe, home of Jack & Suzanne Wescoat*

**Thank You to Everyone Who Made  
Our Fundraiser a Success!**

VES Land Trust hosted its fourth annual fundraiser last April at Hungars Glebe near Machipongo, home of Jack and the late Suzanne Wescoat. Another fantastic affair thanks to the generosity of the Wescoat Family and of all our sponsors, volunteers and committee. Thank you!

*Event Committee:*

*Susie Brown  
Timothy Brown  
Suzanne Henderson  
Carl Nordstrom  
Ashby Taylor  
Mary Walker  
Suzanne Wescoat*

*Sponsors:*

*Accomack County Farm Bureau  
The Honorable and Mrs. Robert S. Bloxom  
Mr. and Mrs. Tim Brown  
Mr. Nicholas J. Covatta, Jr. and Mrs. Robin Rinaca  
Mr. and Mrs. Richard F. Hall, III  
Mr. and Mrs. N. Potter Henderson, Jr.  
Mr. and Mrs. L. Bruce Holland  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Hood  
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L.J. Kellam Construction, LLC  
Mr. Durando Miller  
Mr. Thomas J. O'Connor, III  
Ms. Ellen Papetti and Mr. Dan Arris  
Shore Bank  
Mr. John Small and Ms. Katherine Campbell  
Mr. and Mrs. William Stein  
Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Sweeney  
Mr. and Mrs. John E. Tankard III  
Mr. and Mrs. Jeff Walker*

*Sponsors continued:*

*Mr. and Mrs. Thomas D.C. Walker  
Mr. and Mrs. A. Thomas Young*

*Auction Item Donors:*

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Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel  
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Billy Crockett  
Buck Doughty, Hog Island Creations  
Captain Potter Henderson  
Susan Henderson  
Captain Hank Jones  
Captain Arthur Leonard  
Kurt Lewin  
Cameron McIntyre  
The Nature Conservancy Virginia Coast Reserve  
Scott Neville Photography  
Carole Peirson  
Terry Thomas  
Turner Sculpture  
Shannon Wescoat  
The Wescoat Family*

*Special Thanks to:*

*Blue Crab Bay Company  
T Lee Byrd - Ice  
Davis Disposal  
Eastern Shore Coastal Roasting Co.  
Susan Henderson - Flowers  
O'Connor and Company and Ocean Cove Seafood  
Our Roasting Crew - Will Brown, Richard Lee and Rick Hubbard  
Broadwater Academy volunteers*



*Will Brown samples an oyster.*

## A Message from the Executive Director

Hello Friends and Colleagues:

Last summer I decided to expand my resume by adding oyster farmer. I haven't decided yet if I have set myself up for failure or not. I invested in an oyster ground lease, ground survey, permits, oyster seed, oyster bags, cages, racks, baskets, gloves and a whole array of odds and ends one must have to get into this business, not to mention about 200 hours from my evenings, weekends and vacation time.

What I have learned about growing oysters is this: "It ain't easy so don't quit your day job."

Oysters grow very rapidly in warm water. A seed oyster may start out the size of a fingernail when you plant it in the summer, and within weeks is about the diameter of a golf ball. Multiply this by 60,000 seed oysters and you are witnessing an incredible increase in biomass. The growth rate during the warm months of the year is truly amazing. By winter, six months after planting seed, you may have some oysters close to market size (three inches long) if you take care of them properly.



*Oyster seed*

It is very rewarding to witness your oysters grow so rapidly and, at the same time, very overwhelming. The amount of labor to keep up with growing oysters makes it seem hardly worth it at first.

The bags, in which the oysters grow, quickly reach weights of 50-plus pounds and become covered in algae, grass, and other strange organisms. This requires constantly cleaning the bags and tumbling the oysters, either inside the bags or with a mechanical tumbler, to "knock the bills off." This propagates new growth and results in a nice, rounded, cup-shaped oyster (like the ones you see in the raw bars).



*Six month old oysters*

Once the winter months come around and water temperatures drop, you can slow down a bit. At this point the biggest threat is ice. Oysters need to be kept under the ice and out of the wind. You may have to move all of your oyster bags to deeper water during the creek-freezing months.

Oyster aquaculture has really taken off on the Shore in the last couple of years. Every time I turn around, another person is growing oysters. As grueling as the work can be, I have enjoyed it mostly and find it rewarding on many levels. I may actually see a profit one day.

Growing oysters also offers another means to teach my kids something about the natural world around them, being self-sufficient, working hard and watching their hard work pay off. But most importantly, it has provided a clear warning "don't quit your day job."

*Patsy N. Henderson*

### HELP KEEP OUR RECORDS UP TO DATE

Please notify us if you have a new mailing address, E-mail or phone number. Send your new info to [veslt@verizon.net](mailto:veslt@verizon.net) or call 757-442-5885.

*To support our work, please send your donation to: VES Land Trust, P.O. Box 1114, Exmore, VA 23350, or On-line at [www.veslt.org](http://www.veslt.org).*

*Call us 757- 442-5885 for instructions on making gifts of stock.*



*VES Land Trust seeks to conserve rural lands which will best preserve the farms, forests, fisheries and heritage of Virginia's Eastern Shore for the benefit of future generations.*

## Land Preservation Workshop October 12 in Onancock

VES Land Trust, the Eastern Shore of Virginia Historical Society and Conservation Partners LLC will host a reception for landowners Wednesday, October 12 at 5:30 p.m. at Ker Place on the tax, estate and other benefits of land conservation and conservation easements. The featured speaker is Taylor Cole, president of Conservation Partners, which provides support services to donors of high-quality conservation easements and purchasers of quality land preservation tax credits.

Ker Place, a National and Virginia Historical Landmark built in 1799-1803 by Agnes and John Ker, is the finest example of Federal architecture on the Eastern Shore. VES Land Trust holds conservation easements on six historic landmark properties. Call our office, 757-442-5885, for reservations for the reception.



*Ker Place, Onancock, VA.*

**VES Land Trust**  
**P.O. Box 1114**  
**Exmore, VA 23350**