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For Nursery Owner Tupper Dorsey, the Strength of the County's Easement Community Makes the Difference

"It's easier to resist the pressure of outside growth."

When Tupper Dorsey was young, around six years old, his family moved from Berryville to Winchester. The Dorseys were in the apple business. Tupper didn't pay much attention to production at the time, he says, but now he appreciates the perseverance and savvy it takes to work the land and grow together.

"As I got older, my perspective changed," he recalls. "If you farm, you always appreciate your land, but you look around and see all this growth. Now I say thank goodness Clarke County leaders had the foresight to implement sliding scale zoning."

Today, all 732 acres of Dorsey's Clarke County property are preserved by conservation easement. Between 2013 and 2016, he protected parcels ranging in size from 57 to 287 acres. Over that time, he also retired 18 dwelling unit rights, or DURs.

Moore & Dorsey Nursery was founded in 1929 by Ralph N. Dorsey, Tupper's grandfather, and E. Blackburn Moore, a Virginia state representative for 35 years and speaker of the House of Delegates for 18 of those years.

Tupper is now president of Moore & Dorsey, based in Berryville on Sipe Hollow Lane. This spring, the business is bustling with activity. Rows of young trees stretch across the rolling landscape; some are tagged with colorful ribbons for special clientele. The firm sells all its trees wholesale, balled and burlapped and destined primarily for landscapers working east of Clarke County toward Washington, DC, says Dorsey. The inventory includes such varieties as maple, oak, cherry, elm, and dogwood,



Wendy and Tupper Dorsey get ready for a day's work at the Moore & Dorsey Nursery in Berryville. Their sprawling tree farm is behind them.

as well as turf grass and grain. "There's increasingly a push for native materials," Dorsey notes. "We're even growing hackberry now."

Given his years of working in concert with the land, Dorsey believes in the easement philosophy.

"The fear with easements is you'll give up flexibility and property value," he explains. "But in my mind you don't give up the value you think you might. Look a

few years down the road. With all the growth around us, the land supply is dwindling. Open space has value now and will continue to increase in value. And

Nursery owner Tupper Dorsey tags a tree for delivery to a client.



for people who farm, it's also the kind of value that isn't counted in dollars and cents. We appreciate the open space in Clarke County – it's a beautiful place."

Dorsey's wife, Wendy, agrees: "This is the kind of place we want to have. And it's not just us. Lots of people are doing this."

The strength in numbers makes Clarke County different from other counties, says Dorsey. With 25 percent of the county's land in easement, landowners with easements are a powerful community. "When there's a strong group of people protecting their land with easements, like there is in Clarke County, it's

easier for people to resist the pressure of outside growth and developers," he explains.

As for the easement application, Dorsey says, "I actually enjoyed the process. It's a well-run system. I can't think of anything that was a problem for us. The Easement Authority is trying to make it work for landowners."

"We appreciate the open space in Clarke County – it's a beautiful place."

Not only are Tupper and Wendy Dorsey immersed in land conservation. Both their daughter and son interned during separate summers with the Easement Authority. Sophie is now a teacher, and David will soon finish college and return to the area to help manage the farm.

Ever community-minded, Moore & Dorsey Nursery recently provided trees to plant along Berryville's bike path on West Main Street, as well as trees to serve as a buffer between Milton Valley Cemetery and the Clarke County Business Park.

Quarterly newsletter published by the Clarke County Conservation Easement Authority dedicated to preserving properties with natural, cultural or scenic resources worthy of protection

Clarke County's Easement Successes Featured on PEC Tour

Can you track the path of a raindrop that falls in Clarke County to the open waters of the Chesapeake Bay? If you were part of the environmental curriculum at Boyce-based Powhatan School, you would be able to. On a recent tour of Clarke County easement properties hosted by the Piedmont Environmental Council, Powhatan instructor Robin Coutts shared this teaching tidbit with the group of PEC board members as the visitors learned of the conservation initiatives at the school.

Powhatan School was one of three easement properties, along with Long



Powhatan Head of School Jay Briar and instructor Robin Coutts share conservation curriculum with the Piedmont Environmental Council board.

Branch Historic House and Farm and Clermont Farm, on PEC's mid-March tour.

According to Hallie Harriman, who is PEC's Potomac Watershed field representative and the coordinator of the tour, the participants were part of PEC's larger 40-member board of directors, representing the Council's nine regional counties (Albemarle, Clarke, Loudoun, Fauquier, Madison, Orange, Greene, Rappahannock, and Culpeper).

"The purpose of the tour was two-fold," Harriman explained. "First, we want to provide our more southern board members an opportunity to explore and engage with their northern counterparts and, second, we want to highlight the variety of partnerships

that have made land conservation so successful in Clarke."

Harriman noted each stop on the tour featured a property held by a different easement holder. The easement at Long Branch is held by the Virginia Outdoors Foundation; at Powhatan School, the Clarke County Conservation Easement Authority; and at Clermont Farm, the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. This was the first visit of the PEC board to Clarke County for a tour and its quarterly meeting.

"The conservation success in Clarke County simply would not be possible without the Clarke County Conservation Easement Authority," added Harriman, "not to mention the many county residents and elected officials who have supported and continue to support the program. The Piedmont Environmental Council is so inspired by our partnership and very much looks forward to future team efforts in protecting the natural resources, rural economy, history, and beauty of Clarke."

Clarke County Conservation Easement Authority member George Ohrstrom II is currently co-chair of PEC, representing Clarke County.



Piedmont Environmental Council board members toured the Crocker Conservancy at Powhatan School.

Last Call for Summer Intern Applications!

Each summer, the Conservation Easement Authority hires one to two interns to assist with easement property recordkeeping. The Authority is accepting resumes until early May for this summer's internships.

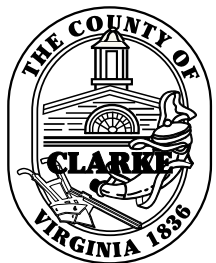
Candidates should be currently enrolled in college, about to enter college, or recently graduated with a major in environmental science or a related field. Excellent writing and

communications skills, ability to read maps, and familiarity with the county's geography and roads are pluses.

Interns will travel throughout the county, visit easement properties, and record any changes that may affect compliance. The work schedule is flexible, typically at least 16 hours per week during the hours of 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. A \$1,000 stipend will be provided. Interns must supply their own

transportation with travel costs reimbursed.

If you know someone who may be a good fit, please submit a resume to Alison Teetor at ateetor@clarkecounty.gov or call **540-955-5177** for more information.



Clarke County Conservation Easement Authority

101 Chalmers Court
Berryville, VA 22611

Spring 2023

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