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Clarke County Easement News

WINTER

2024

Tupper Dorsey & Family Honored with 10th Wingate Mackay-Smith Award “They live and breathe the concept of preserving Clarke County resources.”



Tupper and Wendy Dorsey (center) accept the 10th Wingate Mackay-Smith Land Conservation Award from Clarke County Easement Specialist Alison Teetor (far left) and Winkie Mackay-Smith (far right) at February award luncheon.

For the past 10 years, the Clarke County Conservation Easement Authority members have gathered with area leaders annually to spotlight an individual or organization who has been vital to the county’s success as one of Virginia’s best at protecting land through easements.

In February, a special gathering at Millwood Country Club honored the 2023 recipient of the Wingate Mackay-Smith Land Conservation Award – Tupper Dorsey and Family – and took time to celebrate those honored throughout the decade of awards. (See article at right.)

With the Dorsey family, the selection was easy. “This is a family that lives and breathes the concept of preserving Clarke County resources,” said George Ohrstrom II, vice chair of the Authority. “With 732 acres in conservation easement, the Dorseys have incorporated natural resource conservation into their businesses and their lifestyle.”

Tupper is the president of a thriving Clarke County wholesale nursery, Moore & Dorsey Inc. His wife, Wendy, owns Yellow House Natives, a prosperous native plant sales business.

“This family works the land throughout the year, respecting the value that open space brings to Clarke County,” Ohrstrom continued.

The Dorseys also support the community by providing trees for such areas as the county’s bike path. To make it a family affair, their

two children are involved – one now works with the family business and they both were summer interns with the Easement Authority.

In introducing the Dorseys as the 2023 award winners, Ohrstrom added: “Thank you, Tupper and Wendy, for your approach to land conservation, your business philosophy, and your love of the

land. You’ve helped move Clarke County’s conservation easement program forward, preserving and protecting our natural resources forever... But I have to say one of the most impressive traits of this honoree is the family’s mindset: That the combined strength of the county’s easement community genuinely makes the difference.”

As Tupper and Wendy accepted the Wingate Mackay-Smith Land Conservation Award, they thanked the Easement Authority and county leaders for their land-conservation focus. And Tupper issued a friendly warning: “It’s going to take even more work because development pressure is coming from everywhere.”

The goal of the Wingate Mackay-Smith Land Conservation Award is to honor individuals, groups, or organizations for outstanding contributions to protect our open spaces in Clarke County, to build awareness of the need for land conservation in Clarke County, and to showcase the positive role that conservation easements play in preserving the natural, scenic, cultural, and historic resources of the county.

“Development pressure is coming from everywhere.”

– Tupper Dorsey

A Milestone Year | Spotighting a Decade of Land Conservation Award Winners

Celebrating the tenth year of the Wingate Mackay-Smith Land Conservation Award, the Easement Authority invited previous winners to join the special luncheon.

“All of these individuals and groups have played incredibly important roles in land conservation in the county – and for many different reasons,” explained George Ohrstrom II, vice chair of the Authority. “They have been and many still are conservation easement leaders in our community, helping to forge the path for others and dispel the myths that often surround easements.”

Lorien Lemmon, the County’s Conservation Planner and liaison to the Easement Authority, read the list of honorees, several of whom were at the event.

- **2014: Wingate “Winkie” Mackay-Smith.** Or, as often noted, the “Queen” of conservation easements in Clarke County. Winkie helped found the Easement Authority, negotiated the first easement at Greenway Court, and still works diligently to identify and educate landowners. These reasons and more are why this award was named after her.
- **2015: Holy Cross Abbey.** The Holy Cross Abbey community has now placed nearly 1,200 acres of riverside land in easement. Beginning in 2009, Holy Cross was courageous in taking this step because the idea of easements wasn’t “mainstream” then, but the decision-makers believed in preserving the land and are exemplary stewards.
- **2016: Sliding-Scale Zoning Pioneers – Pete Dunning, Bob Lee, Bob Mitchell, and Margaret Maizel.** What can be said about this quartet of forward thinkers? The group’s initiative, research, hard work, and courage paved the way for sliding-scale zoning in Clarke County beginning in 1980.
- **2017: Melvin Kohn.** In 2007, Dr. Kohn, a sociology professor at Johns Hopkins University, placed in easement his beloved 50-acre mountain property in northeastern Clarke County. In 2014, he donated the property and its cabin to the county for recreational use. He passed in 2021. Today, the county partners with the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, which oversees the property.
- **2018: Joe and Denise Sipe.** The Sipes are a wonderful example of how a couple used their easement

land as part of their livelihood. Sipe Christmas Tree Farm in White Post was a not-to-miss holiday destination for many residents until it recently closed. The Sipes placed their 177 acres in easement in 2007.

- **2019: J. Michael Hobert.** As a district supervisor from 1999 to 2015, Hobert was instrumental in establishing the Easement Authority. And as a local attorney, he became an educator about conservation easements in the community and an ambassador for the cause.
- **2020: Cool Spring Battlefield.** With 195 acres in easement, Cool Spring Battlefield with the American Battlefield Trust and Shenandoah University were honored for protecting their open space and allowing the historic area to be a welcoming place for residents during the pandemic.
- **2021: Charles “Chuck” Johnston.** As a former Clarke County planning director, Johnston designed the county’s Conservation Easement Purchase Program that the Board of Supervisors created by Ordinance in 2002. He did the research, established the criteria, wrote the code – all the critical details that make the program work today.
- **2022: Prue Anderson.** As a behind-the-scenes volunteer extraordinaire, Anderson for many years monitored easement properties, placed easement signs, made phone calls, and did whatever it took logistically to move the easement mission forward.
- **2023: Tupper Dorsey & Family.** (See article at left.)



The celebration of land conservation includes many of the previous winners of the Wingate Mackay-Smith Land Conservation Award. Above (from left, seated): J. Michael Hobert (2019), Winkie Mackay-Smith (2014), and Prue Anderson (2022); (standing) Robert Mitchell and G. Robert Lee (2016), Brother John Blaschik and Father James Orthmann of Holy Cross Abbey (2015), and Tupper and Wendy Dorsey (2023).

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

Another Year of Enthusiasm for Easements in 2023

More than 25% of Clarke County land protected forever!

Closing out 2023, the Clarke County Conservation Easement Authority continued its important work preserving county property, with **153.77 additional acres placed under easement and five dwelling unit rights (DURs) retired.**

Conservation easements remain a popular land-conservation tool in our county. See the chart at right for the number of acres currently held by our Conservation Easement Authority and all its conservation partners – for an impressive 25% of county land.

Thank you to all who have been a part of this success story!

EASEMENT HOLDER	TOTAL ACRES
Clarke County Conservation Easement Authority	9,520
Appalachian Trail Conservancy	69
Department of Historic Resources	1,915
Department of Forestry	235
Lord Fairfax Soil and Water Conservation District	19
Land Trust of Virginia	207
National Park Service	241
Old Dominion Land Conservancy	47
Potomac Appalachian Trail Conservancy	194
Piedmont Environmental Council	404
Virginia Outdoors Foundation	15,845
TOTAL	28,695

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Together, we can protect Clarke County's open spaces.)

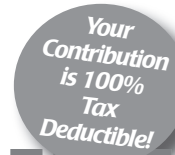
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Clarke County Conservation Easement Authority

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