

Clarke County Easement News

PRESERVING: ■ FAMILY FARMS ■ SOIL ■ SCENIC VIEWS ■ RIVERS & STREAMS
■ CULTURAL SITES ■ SCENIC BYWAYS ■ GROUND WATER ■ RURAL CHARACTER



An Evening of Thanks!

Land lovers gather for Easement Authority's annual BBQ Bash

Perfect fall weather. Delectable eats. Great conversation. A shared mission.

When the county's like-minded land conservationists joined once again at the Easement Authority's annual gathering of donors, easement landowners, and friends, the evening was magical. More than 120 guests (a record-setting number by our count) enjoyed the camaraderie and cuisine, plus a rum tasting and local craft beer on tap.

Anne Caldwell Honored at Donor Reception A touching story from a true believer

Anne was honored earlier this year with the Easement Authority's 11th Wingate Mackay-Smith Land Conservation Award for her tireless efforts to protect Clarke County's open spaces. She served on the Planning Commission and other county boards from 2002 to 2022. While Anne was unable to attend the BBQ Bash to accept her award, she passed along this message....



"Thank you, Randy, George, and the other members of the Authority for this award recognizing my modest contributions to the work of the Clarke County Conservation Easement Authority. It is humbling and flattering, and I am very appreciative of this kindness.

As some of you know, shortly after moving to Clarke County in 1995, I resumed my lifelong pursuit of land-use and land-preservation involvement. Of course, there is a back story to this which I have never before shared with anyone. When I was about eleven, our family moved from Levittown, Long Island, to an old family house in Westchester County, New York. An untouched woodland of some 10 to 15 acres bordered the house and instantly became our playground for every free moment. To us, this "pristine, vast wilderness" generated endless exploration, dangerous escapades, all manner of games, camping projects, and unfettered imagination.

All of you know what inevitably came next. The developer arrived. We were devastated but hatched a plan. Under cover of dusk, we persistently removed all the stakes marking future lots and houses – a predictably futile effort. Time passed and the massive oak trees, wildlife, boulders, and supporting woodland cast of trees gave way to cheek-by-jowl, cookie-cutter, suburban housing. As we became full-on teenagers, our family moved away.

Mercifully, all of my subsequent efforts to "manage" development in a constructive and responsible fashion have been more adult. However, the intensity of my original commitment to preservation of precious open space has never subsided. I am grateful to the Authority, its founders, and all of you who have provided me an opportunity to channel – legally – my love of open, undeveloped space to make our small corner of the world a better place. Congratulations and thanks to all of you for your commitment and work in this effort. May it never waver."

– Anne Caldwell, former Clarke County Planning Commission member

Hosting the event again this year, Authority Vice Chairman George Ohrstrom II welcomed the group: "This is the Easement Authority's chance to thank you personally for all your hard work protecting our open spaces. We wouldn't enjoy the beautiful countryside that is Clarke County without your support."

After recognizing Easement Authority members, Board of Supervisors members, and Planning Commission members who attended, Ohrstrom reported the current conservation easement statistics for Clarke County:

- A total of **28,980 acres** in conservation easement
- Of that total, **9,718 acres** are protected directly through the Clarke County Conservation Easement Authority, and **19,262 acres** are with the help of our land-conservation partners (for example, the Virginia Outdoors Foundation, Piedmont Environmental Council, Land Trust of Virginia, and others)
- **315 DURs** retired
- "We now have **26%** of our acreage protected forever by conservation easement. That's a number to celebrate!"

(Continued on back)

Immerse Yourself in Fall's Wonder!

Nearby programs celebrate our natural resources

- **Fri., Nov 7 and Dec 5, Twilight Hikes, Sky Meadows State Park, Delaplane.** An enchanting evening amidst the rolling Blue Ridge Mountains as the world transitions from day to night. 4-6 pm. Free but \$10 parking fee. dcr.virginia.gov/state-parks/sky-meadows
- **Fri., Nov 21, Snow Bird Walk, Blandy Experimental Farm, Boyce.** Guided bird-watching to look for winter residents like purple finches and pine siskins. 8 am. \$8 member/\$12 non-member. blandy.virginia.edu/programs-workshops-walks
- **Sat., Nov 22, Leave Those Leaves. Blandy Experimental Farm, Boyce.** Short talk about insects in leaf litter, then head outdoors to search for creatures in the leaves. 2 pm. \$8 member/\$12 non-member. blandy.virginia.edu/programs-workshops-walks
- **Sat., Nov 22, Fall Wild Edible Plants, Sky Meadows State Park, Delaplane.** Advanced survival workshop to learn about edible and medicinal plants. 10 am-5 pm. \$149. dcr.virginia.gov/state-parks/sky-meadows
- **Sat., Dec 13, The Daughter of Stars: Geminid Meteor Shower Watch Party, Andy Guest/Shenandoah River State Park, Bentonville.** Gather along the river and expect to see as many as 100 meteors per hour! 7-9:00 pm. Free event but \$10 parking fee. dcr.virginia.gov/state-parks/shenandoah-river
- **Anytime. Self-guided tours of Cool Spring Battlefield, Bluemont.** Walk the battlefield using the "Through Their Eyes" augmented-reality app on your phone, providing audio accounts of soldiers' experiences. Open daily dawn to dusk. su.edu/mcwi/touring-the-battle-of-cool-spring

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

An Evening of Thanks *(Continued from front)*

Ohrstrom also spotlighted Anne Caldwell, a former member of Clarke County's Planning Commission, who was named the recipient of the Authority's 11th Wingate Mackay-Smith Land Conservation Award earlier this year. He shared anecdotes from his time working with Caldwell on the Planning Commission. Her community service on county boards and commissions spanned two decades, from 2002 to 2022.

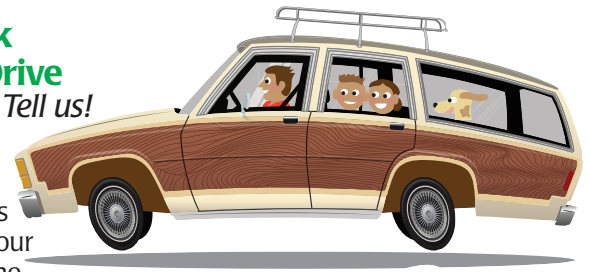
"During that time, Anne was committed to land conservation and became an ambassador for conservation easements," Ohrstrom said. "She always did her homework and shared her well-researched insights. Even today, we benefit from Anne's contributions to Clarke County's planning process. As she once said: 'Easements are one of the few ways to preserve precious pieces of land, especially in Clarke, where the pressure is enormous.... It's an amazing county. Its values and philosophy about land use permeate everything.'"

"We ask all of you here to please continue to be ambassadors, like Anne Caldwell, for land conservation in Clarke County," Ohrstrom concluded. "Tell your neighbors, your relatives, your friends how vital our open spaces are to the character of our community."

Bringing Back the Sunday Drive

Got a favorite? Tell us!

If you're like us, you can recall Sunday afternoons years ago when your family piled into the



station wagon and meandered down back roads, around bends, past streams, and along miles of pastures and wooded acreage, maybe even ending with a stop for ice cream. The simple goal: Take in the beauty of wide open spaces and absorb nature at its seasonal best.

Let's do that again!

We know you know Clarke County is filled with off-the-beaten-path roadways that promise a joyful trip without a destination (sometimes that's the best kind).

So where are your favorite Sunday drives?

Tell us your best wanderings. If we discover some great treks, we'll share them. Email your suggestions to Lorien Lemmon at llemon@clarkecounty.gov.

THANK YOU, DONORS, For Your Generous & Ongoing Support!

(Our most recent donors are included here. Please consider joining this list. Together, we can protect Clarke County's open spaces.)

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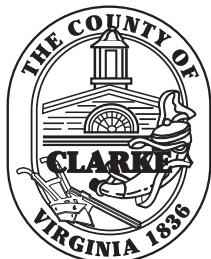
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**Clarke County
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Fall 2025

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