

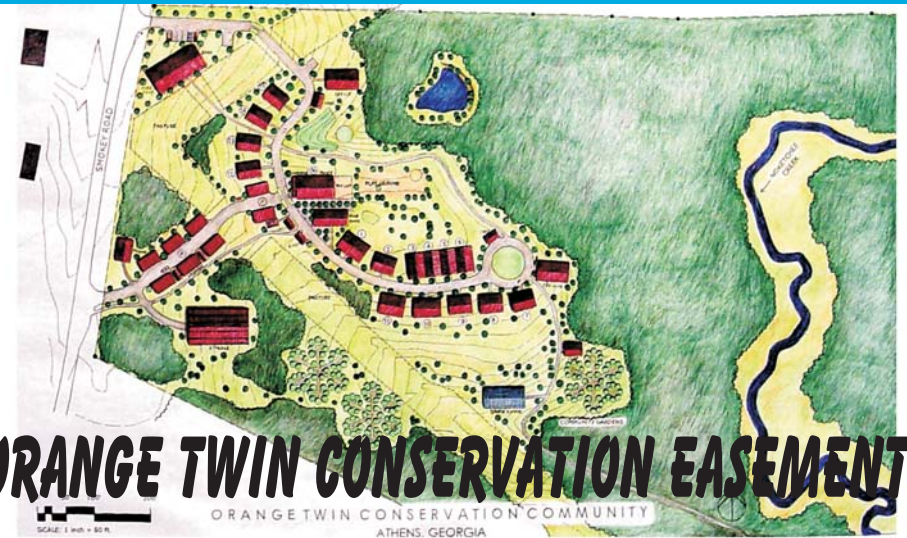
Oconee River Land Trust Newsletter

The Oconee River Land Trust: Preserving Land Forever in the Oconee River Basin

Fall 2008

Spirit of the Land 2008

This year's Spirit of the Land, the annual joint fundraiser by Oconee River Land Trust and Athens Land Trust, was another festive gathering, with excellent food, wine, music, and art. Over 150 people attended and were able to view the beautiful art exhibit (curated by Rene Shoemaker), as well as bid on the many high quality silent auction items. Thanks to these supporters/attendees, as well as our many event sponsors, Spirit of the Land raised critical funds for both ORLT's and ALT's conservation work. Conservation work is the heart of our mission and this event provides a solid financial foundation for our work. ORLT is very grateful to those who helped us, whether it was by attending or by setting up tables!



101 acres of forest in Clarke County are now permanently protected, thanks to the far-sightedness of the Orange Twin Conservation Community. The easement-protected area lies in the center of a planned development, protecting two creeks which flow into Sandy Creek, and a forest of poplar, beech, oak, hemlock, maple and pine. OTCC intends to keep this land a natural reserve, with opportunities for walking, nature observation, and a small area for progressive agriculture. Protecting almost 75% of their land is integral to their vision of a community. For Nancy Carter, a member of Orange Twin, "The members of the Orange Twin Conservation Community share a vision of creating a sustainable community which encourages diversity and respects and preserves nature. Putting 100 acres of our most beautiful forest in a conservation easement is central to our purpose and I think it is fitting that before we build our community we set aside the best to be preserved for all to enjoy."

The members of the Orange Twin Conservation Community are: David and Cassie Bryant, Laura Carter, Lief Carter and Marilyn Vickers, Nancy Carter, Stephen Carter and Kelly Miller, Madelaine Cooke, John D'Azzo, Barbara Denvir, Blair and Betsy Dorminey, Laura Glenn and John Fernandez, Theo Hilton, Heather McIntosh, Ben Meyer, Charles and Amy Pannell, John Prechtel, Margo and Art Rosenbaum, Rev. Ryan and Polly Seawright, David Shakin, Deanna Varagona, Don Young and Jean Anderson, Bruce Wong, Starr Wright, and Kevin and Maria Yates.

(Article continued on last page)

The Allen Conservation Easement

By Walt Cook

In the previous newsletter, I described the Boulder Springs Conservation Easement which protects a large part of a newly developed neighborhood from development, essentially providing less development and more trees. This newsletter's featured Conservation Easement is a different type of success story: land has been protected from development in a location that is doomed, one might say, to be swallowed by the ever-spreading sprawl creeping east from Atlanta.

Dr. David Allen and his family have placed a conservation easement on a majority of their Limousin cattle farm in Social Circle, in Walton County. This easement protects the rural character of the view from Hightower Street, also known as the Social Circle Jersey Road. As one drives east from the town, the roadside pastures - one for cattle, one for horses - allow views of the forest along Naked Creek as it flows toward the Alcovy River. The creek itself is fenced to safeguard its water quality as it flows through the 123.75 acre easement.

The forest behind the pastures and creek is also protected, meaning that over several human lifetimes, it will return to a condition approaching its primeval state. Thus, it is important to remind ourselves that the benefits of conservation easements are not only for us, the present, living generation, but also for all future generations who will also enjoy the beauty and tranquility of an undisturbed natural environment.

Meanwhile, back in the present, Dr Allen and his family will continue to enjoy their farm, which includes an excellent hayfield, in addition to the woods and pastures. And, as the surrounding land becomes filled with homes and businesses, his farm will be like an island of life as it once was. For those of us who have been here a long time, and have seen the unrelenting transformation from fields and forest to streets and strip malls, the Allen Conservation Easement will be a representative remnant of what the Georgia Piedmont once was - a truly beautiful part of our Earth.

ACCREDITATION: ORLT Seeks Public Input

ORLT is seeking accreditation from the Land Trust Accreditation Commission. This is a national program that recognizes land trusts that meet national quality standards for permanently protecting vital natural areas and working lands, thus producing strong and sound easements. Public input is an important part of this process and a public comment period is now open.

The Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance, is conducting an extensive review of each applicant's policies and programs. According to ORLT chair, Dan Hope, "The Oconee River Land Trust has always adhered to the LTA Standards and Practices. This new accreditation program is a significant next step which provides local and national oversight to ensure ORLT continues to operate according to recognized best management practices and conservation values."

The Commission invites public input and accepts signed, written comments on ORLT's pending applications. Comments must relate to how ORLT complies with national quality standards. These standards address the ethical and technical operation of a land trust. For the full list of standards see:

www.landtrustaccreditation.org/getting-accepted/2008-indicator-practices.

To learn more about the accreditation program and to submit a comment, visit www.landtrustaccreditation.org. Comments may also be faxed or mailed to the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, Attn: Public Comments, 112 Spring St., Suite 204, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866. Fax number 518-587-3183. Comments on ORLT's application should be submitted by December 29, 2008.

ONLINE MEMBERSHIP

If you haven't already, don't forget to renew your Membership so we can continue working to protect our region's green areas. Use the form in the newsletter or renew on line at orlt.com

Get to Know your Board Members

We have such an interesting and hardworking board that we wanted all of our supporters to know about them. Here is the latest installment of five brief biographies of current board members. We hope you enjoy reading about them as much as we enjoy having them on our board. For the entire board's biographies, please go to our website at: www.orlt.com

Chris Canalos works as a geographic information systems specialist with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources and assists the Department in land conservation efforts. His graduate work includes entomology, forestry and geography. He is a former member of the Oconee Rivers Greenway Commission and lives in northwest Clarke County with his wife, Rhonda Crumley, and their five dogs.

Bob Carson is President of Carson Advisory, Inc., an S.E.C. Registered Investment Advisor. Carson is Branch manager for Raymond James Financial Services, Inc. And is Treasurer of Family Counseling, Inc., a local 501C3. Carson is also an incoming board member to the The Georgia Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (GACCRRRA). Carson is a Vanderbilt graduate and longtime Athenian.

Jane Cassady has worked for over 15 years in historic preservation assisting local governments and/or property owners with preservation issues. Her experience ranges from preservation planner for 13 Georgia counties, Kentucky CLG coordinator and rural preservation planner, administrator of Kentucky's Survey and National Register programs, Southern Regional Director for Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana, Senior Director of Preservation for the Georgia Trust. She chaired the Athens Historic Preservation Commission twice and consulted with Winter & Co. in the recent Athens Downtown designation and Design guidelines. Cassady manages the Management and Information Unit of the Historic Preservation Division (SHP0) of the Department of Natural Resources.

Walter L. Cook, Jr. is a Forester from Ohio, but he has been a Georgian since 1971. Walt is co-founder of Sandy Creek Nature Center. Walt is also a board member and section maintainer of Benton MacKaye Trail Association. He retired from UGA in 1996. Since then, he designs, builds, maintains, and hikes foot trails in Georgia and South Carolina. He and his wife, Carol, have been married for 51 years. They have five children and fifteen grandchildren.

Larry Dendy is newly retired assistant to the Vice President for Public Affairs at the University of Georgia. A 1965 graduate of UGA's journalism school, he was a Peace Corps volunteer in India and a newspaper reporter and editor in North Carolina and Georgia before joining UGA's public affairs office in 1972. Larry was on the ORLT board of directors from 1994 to 1997 and served as secretary. He rejoined the board in 1999 and is chair of the Membership Committee. Active in a number of local environmental organizations, he is a Board Member and past President of Sandy Creek Nature Center; a board member of Keep Athens-Clarke County Beautiful; a charter member of the Unified Government's Solid Waste Citizen's Advisory Committee; and a past member of the Board of Trustees of The Georgia Conservancy. He is a co-founder of the annual GreenFest celebration and serves on the GreenFest Committee. Larry is also co-founder and chair of the advisory board of the Alec Little Environmental Award and is co-founder and coordinator of the Eugene Odum Environmental Grants.



Board members Hans Neuhauser, Smith Wilson, and John Willis attended the annual national conference for land trusts held by the Land Trust Alliance. This year's Rally was held in Pittsburgh. The board members focused on different issues, including, accreditation, baselines, and monitoring, and legal updates.

In lieu of ORLT's annual Fall Membership Event, ORLT invites its members to attend ORLT's December Board meeting. Date and details will be mailed out later this month.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY



If you like walking outside, and have some extra time, you might consider volunteering with ORLT. ORLT volunteers walk every project that we take. At the beginning of a project, ORLT must document the property's conservation values as well as note the land's present condition. In addition, once the land is protected by a Conservation easement, ORLT must monitor the land once a year. So More walking! Please contact us at 706-552-3138 if you want to learn more.

The Oconee River Land Trust
380 Meigs St., Athens GA 30601



(article continued from front page)

The Orange Twin group would like to name the Conservation area "The John Ryan Seawright Forest". John Seawright, who died several years ago, was one of the group's early members. Orange Twin would welcome contributions to ORLT in John's name in order to memorialize John in this way. These contributions will fund ORLT's stewardship effort for this beautiful area.

ORLT has worked with OTCC for over a year to craft an easement that would protect this wonderful area. According to Dan Hope, ORLT Chair, "Clarke County is one of the most developed in Georgia, so protecting over 100 acres is a very significant act. This easement will provide recreation for people living in the OTCC and benefit everyone in the county by providing habitat for plants and animals and protecting our air and water quality." This is ORLT's 26th conservation easement, bringing the total acreage protected to over 1,900 acres.

Yes! I want to help protect open space and wildlife habitat in our region.
Please enroll me as a member in the Oconee River Land Trust!

Name _____
Address _____
Phone _____ Email _____

Membership Level:

____ Land Saver (\$30)

____ Land Steward (\$50)

____ Land Protector (\$100)

____ Land Conservator (\$500)

____ Trustee of the Land (\$1,000+)

Thank you for your support!

Please cut out and mail this form with your check to:

The Oconee River Land Trust

380 Meigs Street

Athens, GA 30601