

Conservation Easements Preserve Franklin County Farms

ROCKY MOUNT - Thanks to the efforts of three Franklin County landowners, more than 550 acres of beautiful Franklin County farmland have been preserved for posterity.

Louise Truman, and Dan and Jean Hodges, all of Hardy, donated conservation easements on their properties to the Western Virginia Land Trust and the Virginia Outdoors Foundation in December. Conservation Partners, LLC, assisted in the recordation of the easements.

Ms. Truman donated a conservation easement on her 227 acre Virginia Century farm on Coopers Cove Road. It contains a half mile of Smith Mountain Lake frontage and historic buildings dating to the 1830's. An upper ridge of the farm is visible from the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Ms. Truman said she donated her easement, which restricts most development on the property, because she "couldn't imagine any more houses going up" in the area.

Mr. and Mrs. Hodges donated an easement on their 325 acre farm on Fieldstone Lane. The farm contains the headwaters of streams that drain into Smith Mountain Lake, as well as active beef cattle and lumber operations.

"It's a fourth generation family farm," said Dan Hodges. "With all of the encroaching development around, my wife and I wanted to see it remain a viable farm for our children and their children. We looked at our options, and the easement was the best thing to ensure that the property remains a family farm."

Conservation easements are tools used by landowners who wish to preserve the natural or rural character of their land forever. The Western Virginia Land Trust, the Virginia Outdoors Foundation, and Conservation Partners, LLC, have worked with landowners to protect thousands of acres of land with conservation easements across the Commonwealth, and more land is being preserved every day.



The Hodges property in Franklin County



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Smith Mountain Lake frontage on Louise Truman's property



A panoramic view of the Truman farm



A grassy pasture on Louise Truman's Franklin County farm