



# Virginia Land Conservation & Greenways Conference

## April 28-30, 2025

### The Virginian, 712 Church Street, Lynchburg

## Monday, April 28, 2025

11:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.	Field Trips
1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Registration Open
5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.	Social Hour, Eleanor Rose Madison Room
6:30 p.m.	Dinner – Networking Dinners or dinner on your own - Our Virginia Outdoors, Stewardship Workgroup, & Additional Networking Options

## Tuesday, April 29, 2025

7:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.	Registration Open			
8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.	Continental breakfast provided			
8:30 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.	Virginia's United Land Trusts Business Meeting, The Grand Ballroom State Trails Advisory Committee Meeting, Eleanor Rose Room **These meetings are held simultaneously and open to all.			
11:15 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.	Networking Break			
11:45 a.m. – 1:15 p.m.	Lunch keynote, The Grand Ballroom <i>Supporting Sovereignty &amp; Relationships in Conservation</i>			
1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.	<b>Communications &amp; Engagement</b>	<b>Trails, Greenways, and Blueways</b>	<b>Funding &amp; Land Management</b>	<b>Land Trust Fundamentals</b>
	<i>Jane Randolph Jefferson</i> <b>Session A1</b> Not Just Protected: Landowner Outreach Opportunities for Land Restoration  <b>Session A2</b> Exploring Options for Habitat Improvement on Conserved Lands	<i>Eleanor Rose Madison</i> <b>Session B1</b> Development of a Statewide System of Trails  <b>Session B2</b> Connecting Two City Parks via the Peaks-to-Creeks Trail	<i>Mary Ball Washington</i> <b>Session C1</b> Expanding Access in New National Heritage Areas  <b>Session C2</b> Market Forces for Good - Carbon, Nutrient, Stream and Wetland Credits	<i>Grand Ballroom</i> <b>Session D</b> Appraisal 101
1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.	Student Session, Executive Ballroom			
3:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.	Networking break, refreshments provided			

Tuesday, April 29 3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.	<i>Jane Randolph Jefferson</i> <b>Session E1</b> Comprehensive Planning To Stay Rural  <b>Session E2</b> Leveraging Grants for Public Access	<i>Eleanor Rose Madison</i> <b>Session F1</b> Pathways to Access: Planning for Citywide Trails  <b>Session F2</b> Creative Trail Funding Strategies for Municipalities and Non-Profits	<i>Mary Ball Washington</i> <b>Session G</b> Understanding the Impacts of HB 206 Regulations - Opportunities for Engaging with Solar Developers	<i>Grand Ballroom</i> <b>Session H</b> Practical Solutions for Title Examination and Land Conservation
6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	Evening reception, Aviary, 400 Grove Street, Lynchburg			

## Wednesday, April 30, 2025

7:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	Registration open			
7:30 a.m. – 8:15 a.m.	Continental breakfast provided for all conference attendees			
8:30 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.	Keynote, The Grand Ballroom <i>Thomas Mitchell, Heirs Property, Boston College Law School, Director of the Initiative on Land, Housing &amp; Property Rights</i>			
9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.	<b>Communications &amp; Engagement</b>	<b>Trails, Greenways, and Blueways</b>	<b>Funding &amp; Land Management</b>	<b>Land Trust Fundamentals</b>
	<i>Jesse Janet Wilson</i> <b>Session I</b> Increasing Public Land Access in Rural Communities	<i>Eleanor Rose Madison</i> <b>Session J</b> How to Kick Start a Trails Program	<i>Mary Ball Washington</i> <b>Session K</b> Virginia Wildlife Action Plan: An Opportunity for Partnering in Conservation	<i>Grand Ballroom</i> <b>Session L</b> Heirs Property discussion with Thomas Mitchell
10:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	Networking Break, refreshments provided			
11:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.	<i>Jesse Janet Wilson</i> <b>Session M</b> Protecting Cultural Resources & Building Conservation Partnerships: Tools & Approaches	<i>Eleanor Rose Madison</i> <b>Session N1</b> Developing a One Way Downhill Mountain Bike Trail System  <b>Session N2</b> Expanding the Loop: How a Festival Made a Better Trail	<i>Mary Ball Washington</i> <b>Session O</b> Future Forests: How the Department of Forestry Can Help Make Them A Reality	<i>Grand Ballroom</i> <b>Session P</b> Succession Planning & Land Transfer: Tools and Resources for the Land Conservation Community
12:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.	Lunch keynote and closing remarks, The Grand Ballroom <i>Outdoor Recreation Panel: Senators Luther Cifers and Mark Peake</i>			

## Keynotes:

### Tuesday, April 29, 2025, Lunch

- **Supporting Sovereignty & Relationships in Conservation**, A panel discussion with members of the [Indigenous Conservation Council of the Chesapeake Bay](#). There will also be a breakout session on Wednesday: *Protecting Cultural Resources & Building Conservation Partnerships: Tools & Approaches*.

### Wednesday, April 30, 2025, Morning

- **Thomas Mitchell, Heirs Property**, Boston College Law School, Director of the Initiative on Land, Housing & Property Rights. This year marks five years since Virginia unanimously passed the [Uniform Partition of Heirs Property Act](#) (UPHPA). Thomas Mitchell, a MacArthur Genius Grant Fellow and the principal drafter of the UPHPA will be a keynote speaker followed by breakout session Q&A.

### Wednesday, April 30, 2025, Lunch

- **Outdoor Recreation Panel, with Senators Luther Cifers and Mark Peake**, Senator Peake represents the 8th district which includes Bedford County, Campbell County and Lynchburg City. Senator Peake is Co-Chair of the Outdoor Recreation Caucus. Senator Luther Cifers represents the 10th district which includes Amelia, Appomattox, Buckingham, Cumberland, Fluvanna, Goochland, and Powhatan Counties and parts of Hanover, Louisa, and Prince Edward Counties. Senator Cifers started YakAttack and owns and operates Bonafide Kayaks. This session will be moderated by Katie Conner, Senior Destination Development Manager with the Virginia Tourism Corporation.

## Tuesday, April 29, 2025

### Session A1

#### **Not Just Protected: Landowner Outreach Opportunities for Land Restoration**

More than 4,000,000 acres of land have already been conserved in Virginia - but what happens to that land after it is protected? The Piedmont Environmental Council's habitat restoration programs strengthen land trust-landowner relationships after recordation and open up new pathways for previously unengaged landowners to connect with the conservation community. Learn about how restoration programs galvanize landowners to dive into "Conservation 2.0" and increase the reach of land trusts.

#### **Speakers:**

- October Greenfield, Piedmont Environmental Council, Wildlife Habitat Restoration Coordinator
- Linnea Sherman, Piedmont Environmental Council, Plantings for the Piedmont Coordinator

### Session A2

#### **Exploring Options for Habitat Improvement on Conserved Lands**

Land conservation is important for many reasons, including protecting natural resources, preserving habitats, and minimizing development and fragmentation. However, land conservation does not always ensure healthy ecosystems or native biodiversity...we believe that good stewardship should also facilitate improvement to the environment. Topics to consider include creating bird and pollinator habitat, wetland and riparian buffer restoration, and climate adaptation.

#### **Speakers:**

- Tom Saielli, American Battlefield Trust, Land Stewardship Manager
- Max Hokit, American Battlefield Trust, State and Local Relations Associate

### Session B1

#### **Development of a Statewide System of Trails**

The creation of the State Trails Office presents the Commonwealth with the opportunity to become a national leader in the development of multi-use trails. Through state, regional, and local planning and cooperation the development of a coordinated and contextually-sensitive network of trails can enhance transportation, recreation, health, and quality of

life for communities across Virginia. The Commonwealth's State Trails Plan and Resource Hub will guide the path forward towards achieving this vision.

**Speakers:**

- Jakob Helmboldt, Virginia Dept. of Transportation, State Trails Office, State Trails Administrator
- Cassi Patterson, Virginia Dept. of Transportation, State Trails Office, Program Coordinator, Local Assistance Division
- Ross Tepe, Virginia Dept. of Transportation, State Trails Office, Program Manager

**Session B2**

**Connecting Two City Parks via the Peaks-to-Creeks Trail**

Peaks-to-Creeks Trail will provide ADA, bike, and walking access between two of Lynchburg's largest popular Parks. This 1-mile, paved multi-modal trail was envisioned over ten years ago, conceptually designed with several alternative routes, and is now funded by a VDOT grant and in the survey and environmental phases. The design addresses challenges with wetland and creek access, highway crossings, and steep topography.

**Speaker:**

- Susannah Smith, City of Lynchburg Parks and Recreation, Construction Coordinator

**Session C1**

**Expanding Access in New National Heritage areas**

In this session, you will learn about planning underway in the Northern Neck and Southern Maryland for two new national heritage areas. In addition to more access, these designations will help leverage federal, state and private resources to promote heritage tourism, conserve natural landscapes and enhance the local economy.

**Speakers:**

- Jennifer Wampler, Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail, moderator
- Lisa Hull, Northern Neck Planning District Commission, Economic Development and Tourism Coordinator
- Lucille Walker, Southern Maryland National Heritage Area/ Tri-County Council for Southern MD, Executive Director

**Session C2**

**Market Forces for Good - Carbon, Nutrient, Stream and Wetland Credits**

A growing market for natural resource banking is both driving projects that enhance the environment, and create market pressures that push corporations in a sustainable direction. NOVA Parks has worked on projects of all the natural resources banking markets, and continues to engage in these markets. How do these markets differ from a purely regulatory approach? What are the direct and indirect effects of these projects? How do they go beyond a traditional easement, and how can the funds generated by these markets go to support the public good?

**Speaker:**

- Paul Gilbert, NOVA Parks, Executive Director

**Session D**

**Appraisal 101**

**Speaker:**

- Jared L. Schweitzer, MAI, Miller, Long & Associates, Inc.

**Special Session, Student Mentorship Session**

Students attending this session will learn about diverse pathways to enter natural, cultural, and scenic conservation professions by direct interactions with current professionals serving as mentors. The session will follow a 'speed dating' format where students will have a short period of time with each mentor to introduce themselves and their interests and to hear about the work of the mentor. Then, after everyone has met, the session will open into a general networking session where students will be able to talk more specifically with professionals with whom they felt a strong fit of interests.

**Organizers and Mentors:** Led by Kim Woodwell, Alliance for the Shenandoah Valley, Program Director. Participating professionals have diverse backgrounds and a wealth of experience in federal, state, and local agencies and governments, as well as nonprofits.

## **Session E1**

### **Comprehensive Planning To Stay Rural**

The Shenandoah 2045 Comprehensive Plan was created by county staff, 13 dedicated community volunteers, Planning Commission, Board of Supervisors, and the input of over 2,500 residents. The plan ensures the County remains rural by protecting farmland, enhancing public access, and focusing investment in towns, villages, and hamlets. Attendees will learn about the collaborative planning process and explore strategies for advancing conservation, increasing public access, and investing near existing resources so rural character is protected.

#### **Speaker:**

- Lemuel Hancock, Shenandoah County, Director of Community Development
- Tyler Hinkle, Senior Planner, EPR PC
- Deborah Keller, Shenandoah County, Planning Commission

## **Session E2**

### **Leveraging Grants for Public Access**

Shenandoah County was able to secure a grant through the Virginia Outdoors Foundation to acquire a property that was a piece of the puzzle to obtaining better access to Seven Bends State Park. In addition, we are applying for another grant through Dupont to install public river access, boat ramps and parking on the newly acquired property providing additional public river access beyond what is offered at the nearby state park. We have also been able to use recycling grant funds to purchase trash receptacles for the property. The use of grants is allowing us to make this property accessible at virtually no cost to the county! We also have a great partnership with DCR and VDOT on this project

#### **Speakers:**

- Jenna French, Shenandoah County, Director of Tourism & Economic Development
- Lemuel Hancock, Shenandoah County, Director of Community Development

## **Session F1**

### **Pathways to Access: Planning for Citywide Trails**

The City of Chesapeake developed its Trails & Connectivity Plan to serve as a guide for the future development of the City's open spaces and trail systems, focusing on connecting open spaces through a network of multi-use paths, greenways, and recreational waterways. In this session, we will discuss how localities can begin planning for access, designing for access, and maintaining access to their parks and natural areas.

#### **Speakers:**

- Kevin Finn, City of Chesapeake, Comprehensive Planning Administrator
- Collin Hodges, Alta Planning + Design, Planning Associate II

## **Session F2**

### **Creative Trail Funding Strategies for Municipalities and NonProfits**

Trails are a popular recreational amenity, a vital part of an active transportation network, and provide a great return on investment. But lack of funding is a challenge. This session explores a variety of strategies to finance trail systems including grants, partnering with local agencies, and gaining public buy-in. This session is for people working in local government and nonprofits.

#### **Speakers:**

- Christy Fisher, City of Suffolk Parks & Recreation, Principal Planner
- Kindra Greene, the Elizabeth River Trail Foundation, Executive Director

## **Session G**

### **Understanding the Impacts of HB 206 Regulations - Opportunities for Engaging with Solar Developers**

Proposed HB 206 regulations may require solar developers to mitigate adverse impacts through the creation of conservation easements or in-lieu fee payments. How can solar developers, localities, and easement organizations work together to create a smooth and efficient process that benefits all parties?

#### **Speakers:**

- Conor O'Donnell, Gentry Locke Attorneys, Land Use Planner for Renewable Energy and Real Estate
- + Panel Discussion

## **Session H**

### **Practical Solutions for Title Issues in Land Conservation**

Protecting land involves identifying and documenting conservation values, negotiating agreements, and structuring funding sources. A major title issue can render these efforts worthless. While obtaining a title search (and sometimes insurance) is part of due diligence, what should be done with the resulting title work? This session provides practical guidance for land conservation practitioners, including attorneys and non-attorneys, who may find title matters mysterious, tedious, complicated, or esoteric. It covers: reviewing title commitments, opinions, or examiner's notes to spot issues; analyzing title issues once identified; and resolving title issues.

#### **Speakers:**

- Kerry Hutcherson, Johnson & Johnson, Attorneys at Law, P.C
- Lauren Seeling, Piedmont Environmental Council, Accounting and Real Estate Transactions Specialist

## **Wednesday, April 30, 2025**

### **Session I**

#### **Increasing Public Land Access in Rural Communities**

Examples from communities who have benefitted from investments in outdoor recreation and public land access in rural communities. 1. Understand how rural communities leverage outdoor recreation/public land access to support economic development. 2. Share best practices, reports, and tools. 3. Learn why funding for these kinds of investments are important to a community.

#### **Speaker:**

- Maribel Castañeda, Our Virginia Outdoors, Coordinator

### **Session J**

#### **How to Kick Start a Trails Program**

Trails planning and development in Prince William County was dormant in 2019. Then the Greater Prince William Trails Coalition got organized. The two keys: building partnerships and having a clear 4-point agenda: plan, fund, build, and maintain trails.

#### **Speakers:**

- Janet Bartnik, Prince William County Department of Parks and Recreation, Deputy Director
- Liz Cronauer, Prince William Trails and Blueways Council
- Charlie Grymes, Greater Prince William Trails Coalition

### **Session K**

#### **Virginia Wildlife Action Plan: An Opportunity for Partnering in Conservation**

This presentation will explore the draft revision of the state's Wildlife Action Plan developed by the Department of Wildlife Resources in coordination with a large number of stakeholders and tribal partners. It will highlight the collaborative effort required to update the plan and the importance of stakeholders and partners for implementation.

#### **Speaker:**

- Jeff Trollinger, Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources, Assistant Chief of Aquatic Wildlife Resources and Wildlife Action Plan Coordinator

### **Session L**

#### **Heirs Property discussion with Thomas Mitchell**

Follow up to the keynote address, join this discussion about Heirs property.

#### **Speakers:**

- Thomas Mitchell, Boston College Law School, Director of the Initiative on Land, Housing & Property Rights
- Moderated by Stephen W. Lemon, Martin, Hopkins & Lemon, PC

### **Session M**

#### **Protecting Cultural Resources & Building Conservation Partnerships: Tools & Approaches**

#### **Speakers:**

- Melissa Ann Ehrenreich, Indigenous Conservation Council of the Chesapeake Bay, Executive Director

- Mike Kane, Piedmont Environmental Council, Director of Conservation
- John Pierce, Monacan Indian Nation, Environmental Program Manager
- Desiree Shelley, Indigenous Conservation Council of the Chesapeake Bay, Indigenous Knowledge and GIS Specialist

## **Session N1**

### **Developing a One Way Downhill Mountain Bike Trail System**

The City of Charlottesville acquired the 150 acre Heyward Forest Tract just outside the City limits. Working with the Charlottesville Area Mountain Bike Club, a new system of one-way downhill bike trails has been planned and built to allow for safer and more technical bike experience for all skill levels.

#### **Speaker:**

Chris Gensic, City of Charlottesville Parks and Recreation, Parks & Trail Planner

## **Session N2**

### **Expanding the Loop: How a Festival Made a Better Trail**

The Loop de Ville has transformed from an informal friendly hike to a communitywide celebration of the outdoors. This effort has increased awareness of Charlottesville's marquee loop trail but it has also resulted in a trail that is better-maintained, more accessible, and better fulfills its mission. The collaborative approach to planning and executing the event provides an interesting case study. The session will include discussion so attendees can learn from one another.

#### **Speakers:**

- Chris Gensic, City of Charlottesville Parks and Recreation, Parks & Trail Planner
- Peter Krebs, Piedmont Environmental Council, Albemarle County / Charlottesville Community Advocacy Manager
- Tommy Safranek, Rivanna Trails Foundation, Board Member

## **Session O**

### **Good Forest Management: Good for Easements and Landowners**

The Department of Forestry provides assistance to forest landowners in many ways including planning, preparing for timber harvesting, and cost-share to assist with performing forestry practices. All are oriented towards helping the landowner improve their forest and keeping their working forest working.

#### **Speakers:**

- Lori Chamberlin, Virginia Department of Forestry, Forest Health Program Manager
- Joe Rossetti, Virginia Department of Forestry, Hardwood Initiative Coordinator

## **Session P**

### **Land Transfer & Succession: Exploring the Basics and the Role of Land Trusts**

Virginia is experiencing the largest intergenerational transfer of land in its history, significantly increasing the risk of our rural landscape's conversion to development. This session will provide an overview of the concepts of land transfer and succession planning, and how conservation easements and other tools can help facilitate land transfer to the next generation. We'll focus on the role of land trusts in disseminating tools and resources to landowners and provide case studies of successful projects and organizational partnerships.

#### **Speakers:**

- Kim Biasioli, Piedmont Environmental Council, Conservation Program Manager Albemarle & Greene Counties
- Rachel Henley, Virginia Farm Bureau, Working Lands & State Advocacy Specialist
- Jen Perkins, American Farmland Trust, Mid-Atlantic Farmland Programs Manager