

Shenandoah National Park Trust News Release

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Over 900 acres protected in Page County, VA by Shenandoah National Park Trust, the Commonwealth of Virginia and USFWS through DuPont settlement

The [Shenandoah National Park Trust](#) (the Trust), working alongside the [Commonwealth of Virginia and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#) (USFWS) through the DuPont Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration settlement, acquired over 900 acres of rolling woodlands in Page County, VA.

Greg Yates, chair of the Shenandoah National Park Trust, is pleased to announce that the Trust has acquired this land to be donated to the Shenandoah National Park in the near future.

“The Trust supports many worthy programs for the Park including contiguous land acquisition,” Yates said. “We are excited that this land will be conserved and will always be a resource for the public.”

The Trust acquired parcels from three different landowners which border Shenandoah National Park and include the surrounding flanks and most of Chapman Mountain. A section of the West Branch of Naked Creek, a tributary to the South Fork Shenandoah River that supports brook trout and other headwater fisheries, will be protected through this acquisition. The large acreage of contiguous and relatively undisturbed woodland and forested habitat will provide habitat to black bears, migratory birds, bats (potentially including Indiana Bat and Northern Long-Eared Bat), and other wildlife.

The acreage falls within [ConserveVirginia](#)'s Natural Habitat and Ecosystem Diversity and Agriculture and Forestry categories.

"The Trust's good work to conserve these lands identified in Governor Northam's ConserveVirginia model illustrates targeting limited funding to protect the most valuable landscapes," stated Matthew J. Strickler, Virginia Secretary of Natural Resources. "Protecting lands within the South Fork Shenandoah River watershed through the DuPont settlement will help restore recreational opportunities lost to the legacy of mercury pollution and improve our waterways for future generations to enjoy."

The DuPont settlement provided necessary funding for the acquisition. The Trust purchased these properties with funds awarded from a settlement reached between the Commonwealth of Virginia, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the former E.I. du Pont de Nemours and Company. Criteria for the funds stated they were to be used for "land protection, property acquisition, and recreational and wildlife enhancements – riparian habitat along the South River or South Fork

Shenandoah River.” These properties are located within the watershed of Naked Creek, a tributary to the South Fork Shenandoah River.

"Public lands have immense value for wildlife, forest health, air and water quality, and recreation, as well as for the enjoyment of our future generations and our own peace of mind," said Cindy Schulz, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Virginia field office supervisor. "We're pleased to support the conservation of nearly 900 acres that will soon become part of one of our region's treasured parks."

Shenandoah National Park Trust negotiated with the willing sellers, and the sale was finalized on January 28, 2021. The Trust has placed this land under a conservation easement held by Valley Conservation Council.

“Tanners Ridge will always hold a special place in our hearts,” said James R. Graves, Managing Member of Tanners Ridge Properties LLC. “The partners of Tanners Ridge Properties LLC are extremely proud to have this land included into the enduring legacy of the Shenandoah National Park.”

One of the three property owners, Camille Bradford, stated, "I am happy that my property has been acquired by the Shenandoah National Park Trust and I commend it for undertaking this initiative to preserve its beauty and resources for future generations."

116 acres of the Tanner’s Ridge properties was acquired from Carol Dean Campbell and Connie Dean Kerlin. They wrote, “The Tanner’s Ridge property has been in our family all our lives. It was originally purchased in 1941 by our father, Willian Dean, and his brother Reece. We have been so blessed to own the property. We have enjoyed hunting, fishing, four-wheeling, hiking, morel hunting, and camping on the property with family and friends. The decision to sell was a very difficult one. However, we are happy that it will be preserved as part of the Shenandoah National Park.”

Mr. Graves added, “We feel that this is a landmark conservation achievement for our Page County community and for the Commonwealth of Virginia to have collectively added almost 1,000 additional acres into the core of the Shenandoah National Park. The property is majestic in its natural state with unique flora and fauna, springs and the headwaters of the Naked Creek which is a tributary of the Shenandoah River. Tanners Ridge and Chapman’s Mountain present a one of a kind stunning viewshed to now be shared by all Americans and preserved for the ages.”

The land will ultimately be donated to the [National Park Service](#) (NPS) and become part of the [Shenandoah National Park](#). Once donated, NPS will assess and manage these tracts consistent with NPS management laws and policies.

“Shenandoah National Park is pleased that the Trust has acquired these lands to be donated to the park,” Superintendent Patrick Kenney said. “We appreciate that the sellers willingly sold these lands to the Trust, knowing these lands will conserve valuable habitat and ensure park views are preserved.”

The Shenandoah National Park Trust is an official partner of the National Park Service.

Learn more at: www.snptrust.org