



News Release

For Immediate Release

September 18, 2018

VDOF Contact: Andrew Fotinos 434-270-4090

Andrew.fotinos@dof.virginia.gov

New River Land Trust: John Eustis 540-951-1704

Virginia Department of Forestry Leads Project Protecting Wildlife Habitat and Water Quality

(Charlottesville, Va.) – The Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF) announced the protection of more than 2,800 acres of forestland fronting the Appalachian Trail near Wind Rock and Mountain Lake in Giles County thanks to a [conservation easement](#) executed by the VDOF and its partners, the USDA Forest Service and the New River Land Trust.

Known as the Little Stony tract, the property is owned by the Dorsey/Purser family, descendants of John B. Laing, who bought the tract in 1909. At 2,833 acres, Little Stony is now the largest easement held by VDOF and exemplifies healthy forest management.

“To honor the family’s commitment to forest management for the past five generations, the VDOF recently recognized the Dorsey/Purser family in its inaugural class of Century Forest landowners,” said State Forester Rob Farrell. “This conservation easement not only protects this beautiful landscape and all of the natural resource values that are present, but it also preserves the land stewardship ethic that this family has demonstrated through their wise management of the forest and other resources. Judge Dorsey and his family’s generosity will benefit generations of Virginians to come. “

“Protection of this incredible property is testament to the Dorsey/Purser family’s conservation ethic and love for their land,” New River Land Trust Executive Director John R. Eustis said.

With the exception of 13 acres, the entire property is forested. It is a mix of mature hardwoods and pines that provide habitat for wildlife; ecosystem services, such as clean air and clean water, and aesthetic beauty. The tract contains nearly twenty miles of streams and tributaries, including eight miles of Little Stony Creek and Pond Drain. The property provides habitat for 12 natural heritage resources, and intersects two conservation sites. The conservation and management of the Little Stony tract also helps safeguard investments by the University of Virginia and National Science Foundation in state-of-the-art ecological monitoring facilities next door at the Mountain Lake Biological Station.

Easement p.2

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy endorsed this project which supports the Conservancy's efforts to protect landscape along the trail corridor. This conservation easement helps ensure the water quality at the Cascades National Recreation Trail and Day Use Area in the Jefferson National Forest and preserves a large block of wildlife habitat adjacent to a federally designated wilderness area.

The conservation easement was made possible through funding from the USDA Forest Service's Forest Legacy Program as well as the generosity of the Dorsey/Purser family, who donated a portion of the value of the easement and gave up the right to develop it.

-end-

The Virginia Department of Forestry protects and develops healthy, sustainable forest resources for Virginians. With nearly 16 million acres of forestland and more than 108,000 Virginians employed in forestry, forest products and related industries, Virginia forests provide an overall economic output of more than \$21 Billion annually.

Headquartered in Charlottesville, the Agency has forestry staff members assigned to every county to provide citizen service and public safety protection across the Commonwealth, which it's been doing now for more than 100 years. VDOF is an equal opportunity provider.

The New River Land Trust works to conserve farms, forests, open spaces and historic places in Virginia's New River region. Since 2002, it has helped more than 256 landowners conserve nearly 56,000 acres of special places for the benefit of current and future generations.

Established in 1925, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy leads the effort to protect, maintain and celebrate the Appalachian Trail. It is part of a unique cooperative-management system, working with numbers of local, state and federal partners to ensure greater protections for the Trail.