LAND SAVERS

JUNE 2026
VOL. 30
ISSUE 3

BLUE RIDGE LAND CONSERVANCY
www.brlcva.org

CENTRAL VIRGINIA LAND CONSERVANCY
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SOUTHERN VIRGINIA LAND CONSERVANCY
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Laura Lemon, Patty Lemon, Steve Lemon, Allison Lemon and Aidan Burke.

> ***I've been counsel to the Conservancy and other easement holders. I've been counsel to landowners. And then this past December, I put an easement on part of my farm in Botetourt. At this point, I've seen it from all three sides. My overarching feeling about this work is that each landowner is unique and each parcel of land is unique. You cannot commoditize this work. It simply is, unique."***
>
> —STEPHEN LEMON

Protecting the Mountains Called Home

BY EMILY BENDER

When asked why he believes in land conservation, Stephen Lemon's response is "They're not making any more of it. We live in a beautiful part of the world, and we're blessed by that. That beauty can be ruined in a generation." After being a leader in the conservation community for over 30 years as legal counsel to many landowners, a BRLC and Virginia's United Land Trust board member, and past counsel to BRLC, it is no surprise that conservation is a priority to Stephen, his wife Patty and their two daughters. We were honored when the Lemons donated a conservation easement to the Blue Ridge Land Conservancy to protect their Botetourt County farm at the end of 2025.

This scenic corner of Botetourt County hosts working farmland, a beautifully restored 1860s farmhouse and forested trails for hiking across the farm. This easement is adjacent to a property with a Virginia Outdoors Foundation easement creating an expanded corridor of protected lands for us all to enjoy as we drive along Route 11.

The staff at BRLC are always grateful to have thoughtful supporters of land conservation, like the Lemons, but it is especially rewarding to work with folks who see the work we do from every angle. We fully agree with Steve's sentiment when he says: "These mountains are home to me. I care deeply about this particular part of the world and God's beauty in it."

Because of his hard work, many farms and forests, now including his family's, will be protected forever.

We protect the lands and waters you love, forever.

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

One problem with being someone who fancies himself a decent writer is the muse. The Muses were ancient Greek goddesses who inspired creators of poetry, song and dance. Depending on the direction this column takes every other month, I might have been visited by Thalia (the Muse of light verse and comedy, says Wikipedia), Melpomene (tragedy), Clio (history), or even Urania (astronomy and astrology).

And sometimes no Muse will appear. Or, perhaps they take the form of others. I received my weekly e-mail this morning from David Allen, a fundraising consultant in Asheville, NC who specializes in fundraising for land trusts. This week he reminded us to get out—get outside, that is, and not to forget the why behind the what that we do. And that leads me to one of my favorite authors, the esteemed Edward Abbey. Ed closed his treasured work *The Monkey Wrench Gang* with the following charge, a copy of which I've kept posted near my desk for many years:

> "One final paragraph of advice: do not burn yourselves out. Be as I am - a reluctant enthusiast....a part-time crusader, a half-hearted fanatic. Save the other half of yourselves and your lives for pleasure and adventure. It is not enough to fight for the land; it is even more important to enjoy it. While you can. While it's still here. So get out there and hunt and fish and mess around with your friends, ramble out yonder and explore the forests, climb the mountains, bag the peaks, run the rivers, breathe deep of that yet sweet and lucid air, sit quietly for a while and contemplate the precious stillness, the lovely, mysterious, and awesome space. Enjoy yourselves, keep your brain in your head and your head firmly attached to the body, the body active and alive, and I promise you this much; I promise you this one sweet victory over our enemies, over those desk-bound men and women with their hearts in a safe deposit box, and their eyes hypnotized by desk calculators. I promise you this; You will outlive the bastards."
>
> —EDWARD ABBEY

Get out. See you next newsletter.

David Perry
Executive Director

REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

SOUTHERN VIRGINIA LAND CONSERVANCY

BY CHRIS HOLDREN

I certainly hope everyone has taken the chance to get outdoors and enjoy the beautiful weather we have had lately, as undoubtedly the temps will begin to rise, and summer will be in full swing before you know it. We have used every opportunity to get out here in southern Virginia as well to meet potential new easement donors, while also catching up on monitoring visits with current easement donors. We also hosted our first-ever "Wild & Scenic" film festival at Averett University. Our festival patrons enjoyed a fun night of short films about the outdoors and conservation; a lucky few walked away with several door prizes they could use on their next outdoor adventure. I look forward to sharing with you some exciting events and interesting easements in the coming months. Everyone, stay safe and hydrated this summer!

CENTRAL VIRGINIA LAND CONSERVANCY

BY CHARLES C. LACY, JR.

Central Virginia Land Conservancy has a rich history in the area – our 25th year anniversary is just two short years away! Having only held conservation easements since 2019, our portfolio of 39 conservation easements and over 8,000 acres of land is a reason to be proud.

What is even more exciting than our past, is what we see on the horizon. We have eight conservation easement projects in active development and have the potential to conserve almost 2,000 acres this year. Those numbers would make for a record year.

Our portfolio of easements is in great shape. We are in full-on "spring monitoring" mode, and our annual stewardship goal is more than 30% complete across all the Land Savers United regions.

In addition to our work in the field, we are striving to build our support and notoriety in the greater Lynchburg area. One of the best ways to show people what we do is to get out in the field and see for yourself. Please reach out to Charles Lacy at clacy@cvalc.org if you'd like a tour of an easement property or would like to see the fruits of our labor firsthand. We'd love to get you outside.

BLUE RIDGE LAND CONSERVANCY

BY EMILY BENDER

The BRLC staff were honored to have their gear recommendations featured in this summer's gear guide from VA MTNS Outdoor Collective. For wherever your summer takes you, from fly fishing to volunteering with the land conservancy, this guide has suggestions to help make your experience a step ahead!

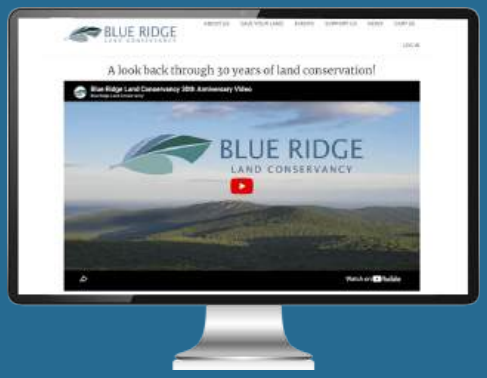
As a friend of the land conservancy, we have two additional recommendations for you.

Kacie Amstutz recommends the GeoPress Water Filter from GRAYL. This water filter is the perfect set up for day hikes and backpacking trips and offers an all-in-one set up! Available at REI.

Emily Bender recommends a good pair of wool socks from Darn Tough. They are the perfect accessory to keep your feet dry during a long day in the field in any season! Paired with a lifetime warranty, these socks can't be beat. Available locally at Roanoke Mountain Adventures and Mast General Store.

To review the full guide and gear up for your next adventure visit vamtns.org or scan the QR code below.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT...



We are excited to share our 30th anniversary video that highlights the hard work and fun stories of the land conservancy. If you missed it, or want to watch it again, the full video is available on the front page of our website or just scan here.

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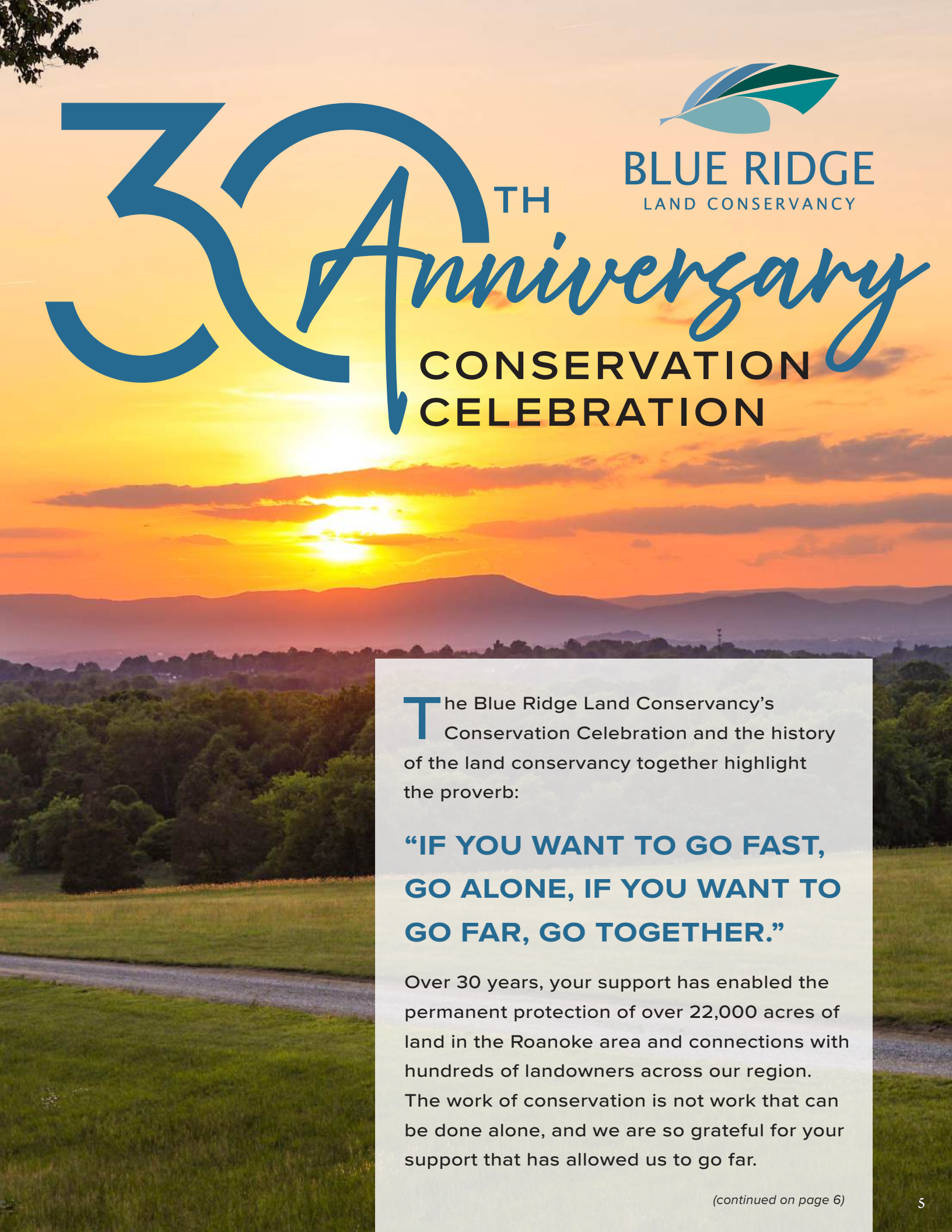

BLUE RIDGE
LAND CONSERVANCY

30TH Anniversary CONSERVATION CELEBRATION

The Blue Ridge Land Conservancy's Conservation Celebration and the history of the land conservancy together highlight the proverb:

"IF YOU WANT TO GO FAST, GO ALONE, IF YOU WANT TO GO FAR, GO TOGETHER."

Over 30 years, your support has enabled the permanent protection of over 22,000 acres of land in the Roanoke area and connections with hundreds of landowners across our region. The work of conservation is not work that can be done alone, and we are so grateful for your support that has allowed us to go far.

(continued on page 6)

30th Anniversary Conservation Celebration

(continued from page 5)

We were thrilled to celebrate 30 years of conservation with over 200 of you who joined us on a warm May afternoon at Braeloch on May 17. We enjoyed a message of conservation on both a global and local scale from The Nature Conservancy's Global Chair, Bill Frist, and his wife Tracy, owner and operator of The Farm at Sinking Creek. The story of their work along Sinking Creek was truly inspiring and shows the impact local landowners can have on globally important ecosystems. As we gathered we were able to honor Dr. M. Rupert Cutler, the original executive director of the then Western Virginia Land Trust. Rupert saw the need for conservation of Southwest Virginia and started a group of committed volunteers on a trajectory that lead us to where we are today.

We'd like to extend tremendous thanks to the title sponsors, Building Specialists and John T. Morgan Roofing, the platinum sponsors, Martin, Hopkins, and Lemon P.C. and LAT Dentistry, and all of the many other sponsors who supported this event.

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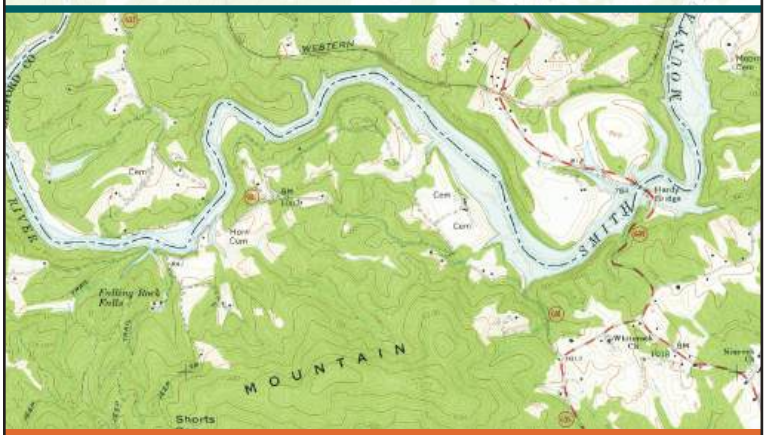

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