

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**SCENIC VIRGINIA HONORS 2010 SCENIC AWARD WINNERS**  
*Event at the Virginia State Capitol honors project at the Capitol*

*Richmond, Va.* Scenic Virginia honored its 2010 Scenic Award winners recently at a gala reception and ceremony at the Virginia State Capitol in Richmond. The Honorable and Mrs. William J. Howell, along with the Board of Scenic Virginia, served as Hosts for the event. Honorary co-hosts were the Honorable Bruce F. Jamerson, Clerk of the House of Delegates, and the Honorable Susan Clarke Schaar, Clerk of the Senate of Virginia, who together preside over Thomas Jefferson's historic structure.

In her opening remarks, president Jane Sale Henley noted that "Scenic Virginia's mission is to promote our Commonwealth's scenic qualities in a way that makes you recognize and appreciate their value. We want you to 'think scenic' when you look out the window and see a beautiful view, and we want you to 'act scenic' when you make decisions about your life and community."

The 2010 Scenic Award winners are as follows:

**SCENIC HERO**

The Nature Conservancy - Virginia Chapter [**statewide organization**]

**SCENIC VIEWSHED PRESERVATION**

*The Carter Family Easements* [**Albemarle County**]

Carter Family Members & Piedmont Environmental Council

**SCENIC WATER CORRIDOR PRESERVATION**

*Scenic Rivers Easement Program* [**Eastern Shore**]

Virginia Eastern Shore Land Trust

**CREATIVE SCENIC ENHANCEMENT**

*Greening the Virginia State Capitol* [**Richmond**]

The Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation, the Virginia Department of General Services, and the City of Richmond

**SCENIC TOURISM**

*75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Blue Ridge Parkway* [**numerous locations along the BRP**]

Blue Ridge Parkway 75, Inc.

**ANTI-LITTER PROGRAM**

*Volunteer Sign Removal Program* [**Chesterfield County**]

Chesterfield County Planning Department and community volunteers

**SCENIC TREES PROGRAM**

*Project Plant It!* [**Prince William Co., City of Richmond, and Chesterfield Co.**]

Dominion & Arbor Day Foundation.

[Additional information about each individual Award winner follows. **NOTE: Photos are available of both the winning projects and the winners' participation at the 2010 Scenic Awards Ceremony at the Virginia State Capitol.**]

#### **SCENIC HERO**

##### ***The Nature Conservancy in Virginia***

In 1960 a small group of conservation-minded individuals met in the City of Richmond to form the Virginia Chapter of The Nature Conservancy. Celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2010, The Nature Conservancy in Virginia is now part of a global organization with offices in all 50 states and more than 30 countries.

Since its founding, The Nature Conservancy in Virginia has helped protect over 300,000 acres of private and public land in the Commonwealth, including:

- In 1961, Wildcat Mountain, located in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, became the Conservancy's first preserve in Virginia. Visitors to Wildcat experience an outstanding variety of plant and animal communities, including 186 species of birds.
- In 1973, the Nature Conservancy brokered the nation's first major corporate donation of conservation land, helping establish Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge through Union Camp's gift of nearly 50,000 acres.
- Since 1999, The Nature Conservancy in Virginia has worked to protect the northernmost old-growth pine savannas in the Eastern United States at Piney Grove Preserve in Sussex County, which harbors the last remaining population of red-cockaded woodpeckers in Virginia.
- For 20 years now, The Nature Conservancy has protected Southwest Virginia's Clinch River, considered America's most important river for rare and imperiled freshwater animals.
- In 2002, The Nature Conservancy in Virginia made history with the acquisition of Warm Springs Mountain Preserve — at the time the Conservancy's single largest land purchase in Virginia. The extraordinary diversity of habitats and species led the Conservancy to target Warm Springs Mountain as the focal point of its work in the Allegheny Highlands. More recently, conservation planners have identified the entirety of the surrounding Central Appalachians — running from Virginia north to Pennsylvania — as one of the Conservancy's top global priorities.
- On the Eastern Shore, The Nature Conservancy's tireless efforts to protect lands and waters have resulted in the longest expanse of coastal wilderness remaining on the eastern seaboard of the United States.
- Most recently has been The Nature Conservancy's work at Dragon Run, which is located in three counties in the Middle Peninsula (Essex, King & Queen and Middlesex) and which spans a collective area of 21 square miles and more than 20,000 acres in size. Dubbed the "second most ecologically important watershed in the Chesapeake Bay" by the Smithsonian Institution, Dragon Run protects intact and working forests, Bald cypress swamps, and the

water quality of the Chesapeake Bay. The project includes a 13,350-acre conservation easement (TNC's largest to date) and 6,500 acres acquired by VDOF (facilitated by The Nature Conservancy). The project maintains the integrity of the largest unfragmented forest in the lower Chesapeake Bay.

Scenic Virginia honored The Nature Conservancy for being a leader in pioneering conservation science and building partnerships with diverse stakeholders to protect numerous other special places around the Commonwealth.

#### **SCENIC VIEWSHED PRESERVATION**

#### ***Carter Family Easements in Albemarle County* – Carter Family members and Piedmont Environmental Council**

In 2009 members of the Carter family acted together to protect nearly 1,000 acres of land in Albemarle County that has been in their family since 1730. The Carters' ancestors were neighbors to the Jeffersons, with a plantation about seven miles from Monticello.

Ned Carter of Alexandria spearheaded the effort to protect four adjacent parcels belonging to him and three cousins: Brothers Bob, Andrew and John Carter. One parcel includes Bob and Carol Carter's 1792 home, Redlands, which the Virginia Historic Landmarks Register calls "one of the Commonwealth's most important Federal period landmarks." The house was built by Martin Thacker, who also built Monticello. Its plan resembles Thomas Jefferson's unbuilt design for the Virginia governor's mansion.

In late October of 2009, the easement process was threatened when the agency slated to hold the easements indicated that it couldn't complete the projects by year's end. Since conditions vary from year to year, delay jeopardized the agreement. To ensure that the transactions went through in 2009, Piedmont Environmental Council stepped in and agreed to hold the easements until they can be transferred permanently to the Virginia Outdoors Foundation.

The Carter family parcels connect with other conserved lands to form a block of 2,700 protected acres on either side of Route 20, a Virginia Scenic Byway. The properties are located in the Southern Albemarle Rural Historic District, and bring the total amount of protected land in the district to 17,000 acres.

Scenic Virginia used the occasion of the Award to honor the legacy of Bessie Boccock Carter, who had a long-held desire to see her family's land preserved. An active and passionate conservationist, Mrs. Carter was a beloved member of Scenic Virginia until her death in 2008.

#### **SCENIC WATER CORRIDOR PRESERVATION**

#### ***Scenic Rivers Easement Program - Virginia Eastern Shore Land Trust***

Over a seven-year period, the Virginia Eastern Shore Land Trust carried out a campaign of targeted outreach to landowners that resulted in the protection of viewsheds, open space, and natural and historic resources on two complete river systems – Finney Creek & Nickawampus Creek and the Sinnickson Farm corridor, as well as significant protected lands on three other pristine waterways.

In total, 53 miles of scenic rural shoreline – nearly 8,800 acres -- are now protected by conservation easements held by the Virginia Eastern Shore Land Trust and its partners, with 26 of the 30 scenic river corridor easements completed since the organization's founding in

2003. The easements call for the preservation of numerous historic houses, as well as the traditional farm, forest and marsh landscapes viewed from the water on the five river corridors.

Scenic Virginia recognized the Board and staff of the Virginia Eastern Shore Land Trust, their conservation partners and the Eastern Shore landowners whose extraordinary stewardship made the protection of the scenic water corridor viewsheds possible.

#### **CREATIVE SCENIC ENHANCEMENT**

##### **Greening the Virginia State Capitol**

Scenic Virginia has long been an advocate for beautification, as well as a champion for a healthy James River. The organization honored the “Greening the Virginia State Capitol” project for touching on both passions.

Capitol Square is “going green” and changing how storm water runoff is managed on the Capitol grounds, on adjacent City streets, and in nearby alleys. The end result is that the amount of polluted water going into the James will be greatly decreased.

The selected low-impact development practices will beautify surroundings as they reduce the amount of impervious surface on and nearby Capitol Square. These practices include rain gardens, attractive porous brick pavers, enhanced green streets, and rainwater harvesting. Captured storm water will be used to irrigate Capitol Square’s grass and plants during the spring and summer months.

The project is a partnership among Virginia’s Department of Conservation and Recreation, the Virginia Department of General Services, and the City of Richmond. Grant funding was provided by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, with professional engineering and design expertise from Civil & Environmental Services and BioForm.

#### **SCENIC TOURISM**

##### ***Blue Ridge Parkway 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary – Blue Ridge Parkway 75, Inc.***

The most visited of all 391 units of the National Park Service system, the Blue Ridge Parkway is a 469-mile scenic byway connecting Shenandoah National Park in Virginia with Great Smoky Mountains National Park in North Carolina and Tennessee.

Groundbreaking for the Blue Ridge Parkway took place in 1935. In the intervening 75 years, the Parkway has become a beloved destination for its recreational opportunities, as habitat for diverse species of flora and fauna, for its access to America’s cultural heritage, as an icon of American progress and ingenuity, and as a gateway to the charming communities along it.

In celebrating the banner year with a great deal of fanfare, Blue Ridge Parkway 75, Inc. engaged local communities and the nation in its efforts to sustain a healthy Parkway for future generations. The organization highlighted the Parkway by showcasing its history and Appalachian culture, spotlighting its spectacular scenic views, celebrating its recreational activities, and by enticing travelers to the region to celebrate this national treasure and its neighboring communities.

At the ceremony, Blue Ridge Parkway Supervisor Phil Francis of Asheville, North Carolina urged citizens to stay vigilant. The Blue Ridge Parkway is an American icon, he noted, but it is also a fragile resource with a lean budget, aging infrastructure, and tough environmental issues that include air pollution, encroachment, inappropriate development, and invasive species.

Project partners include the Virginia Tourism Corporation, Blue Ridge Parkway Association, Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation, FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge Parkway, National Council for the Traditional Arts, Blue Ridge National Heritage Area, Conservation Trust for North Carolina, Eastern National, North Carolina Department of Commerce – Division of Tourism, Roanoke County, Southern Highland Craft Guild, Virginia Tourism Corporation

#### **ANTI-LITTER PROGRAM**

##### ***Volunteer Sign Removal Program - Chesterfield County***

Scenic Virginia recognized Chesterfield County for implementing and supporting a sign removal program that allows County residents to play a part in keeping Chesterfield beautiful.

Several years ago, despite the fact that Chesterfield County had a strong sign ordinance, County staff and individual citizens started noticing a proliferation of illegal “bandit” signs along roadways and on utility poles. State law clearly prohibits advertising within the limits of any highway, which includes the roadway, shoulders, median strips and approximately five feet adjacent to the pavement. Penalties for posting these illegal signs didn’t reduce the behavior, despite the fact that businesses could be subject to injunction actions to prevent their continued placement of illegal signs.

Four years ago, Chesterfield resident Dick Page – fed up with the visual assaults -- came up with the idea for a volunteer sign removal program. A year later, he secured the County’s approval; and a volunteer program developed within the County’s Planning Department that immediately started beautifying Chesterfield roads.

Since 2007, the program has led to the removal of more than 28,000 illegal signs. Equally impressive, local offenders have learned that the volunteer sign removal squad will remove any illegal signs quickly, completely negating their advertising value. As a result, there have been fewer and fewer illegal signs along Chesterfield’s roadsides.

Over the summer the program received an achievement award from the National Association of Counties. Scenic Virginia plans to work with Chesterfield County to promote the program to other localities within the Commonwealth.

#### **SCENIC TREES PROGRAM**

##### ***Project Plant It! – Dominion and the Arbor Day Foundation***

Project Plant It! is a partnership among Dominion, the Arbor Day Foundation and elementary schools and community groups in regions served by the company. Each year, this program teaches thousands of students and community members about the value of trees in our ecosystem and how to recognize and care for trees. Project Plant It! enhances the classroom learning experience and increases comprehension of subject matter to meet state learning standards by providing a hands-on experience for each child.

Program participants learn about the value of trees, including how they help to moderate climates, improve air quality, absorb carbon, harbor wildlife, prevent soil erosion and reduce heating and cooling costs. In celebration of Arbor Day, students and community members experience the fun of planting trees with their family and friends.

At Arbor Day in Prince William County, students from Belmont Elementary read poems and stories, and planted seedlings at their school. Marines from nearby Quantico Marine Corps Base assisted students in the tree planting event.

In the City of Richmond at John B. Cary Elementary School and Linwood Holton Elementary School, and in Chesterfield County at Grange Hall Elementary School, third-graders participated in Arbor Day ceremonies that featured songs and poems about trees, as well as demonstrations from Dominion foresters.

Project Plant It! is an educational -- and fun -- program that instructs our next generation about the importance of caring for our planet. Program materials are available online at [www.projectplantit.com](http://www.projectplantit.com).

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Established in 1998, Scenic Virginia is the only statewide nonprofit organization dedicated solely to preserving, protecting and enhancing the scenic beauty of the Commonwealth, with a particular focus on the preservation of significant viewsheds. For more information or to obtain digital images of any project, please contact Executive Director Leighton Powell at (804) 363-9453 or [email@scenicvirginia.org](mailto:email@scenicvirginia.org).

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**Scenic Water Corridor Preservation:** *Scenic Rivers Easement Program*

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**Creative Scenic Enhancement:** *Greening the Virginia State Capitol*

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