



# Landscapes

A VES Land Trust newsletter

Winter 2015

## Save the date: 9th annual Oyster Roast

**April 9, 2016, 4 p.m.**  
**Hills Farm, Greenbush, Va.**  
**Tim and Susie Brown**

Indulge on oysters, clams, wine, beer, spirits, dinner, and dessert while enjoying beautiful views on Hills Farm, a Virginia Eastern Shore (VES) Land Trust held conservation easement. Bid on one of a kind auction items and take your chances in our raffle! Tickets will be available in early 2016. Contact us today to become a sponsor.



**Hills Farm, photo from Virginia's Eastern Shore, Ralph T. Whitelaw**

Hills farm is 632-acres on Hunting Creek. Tim and Susie Brown donated the farm as VES Land Trust's first conservation easement in 2003. The property

encompasses 250 acres of wetlands, 220 acres of forestland, and 60 acres of farmland. The historic home's oldest section dates to 1697 with additions in 1768 and 1856. Hills Farm is adjacent to 133 acres known as Richardson Tract and donated by the Browns earlier in 2015.

## Great Outdoor Provision Co. holds Land Trust Day 2015

The VES Land Trust would like to extend a special thank you to the Great Outdoor Provision Co. and all their staff at the Virginia Beach location for recognizing us on Land Trust Day 2015 with a gift of \$1000. For the past 25 years, Great Outdoor

Provision Co. has set aside Land Trust Day to "highlight the vital work that land trusts perform alongside landowners to help conserve and maintain lands and waterways cherished by the broader community such as those along Virginia's Eastern Shore," wrote Chuck Millsaps, President, in a letter to the VES Land Trust. We are honored to be included this year.

## Protected Landscapes An art and conservation exhibit

Nancy West is a petite woman with a gentle demeanor. She chose to set up her easel and paints at the end of the long, worn dock at Cedar Grove on Whites Creek. It was mid-morning and already hot, but she had made progress painting the marsh and looked prepared for summer temperatures in her wide brimmed hat and shorts. Nancy chatted away as she painted and positioned her easel for an action photograph: *"It is such a privilege to explore these special places and to attempt to capture their unique beauty for others to see."*



**Nancy West painting at Cedar Grove on Whites Creek**

Protected Landscapes is a new initiative by the VES Land Trust. The event began in early February, 2015 when the VES land Trust invited eight local



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**Artists right to left: Carole Böggeman Peirson, Thelma J. Peterson, Willie Crockett, Daniel P. Turner Thomas, Nancy West, Cameron McIntyre, Jack Richardson, Marty Burgess**

artists to paint on VES Land Trust held conservation easements. Easement donors welcomed local artists to their homes, farms, and sanctuaries throughout the following eight months. The event culminated with an art exhibit opening on Oct. 24, 2015 at the Barrier Islands Center in Machipongo, Va.

The exhibit is on display until November 24th. It brings conservation to the public through visual art, presenting protected spaces to a larger audience. The exhibit provides viewers with an intimate experience of 16 VES Land Trust protected properties through the eyes of local artists. It features 29 original plein air and studio paintings in watercolor, acrylic, and oil.

## Fall field trip roundup

### Eastern Shore Birding and Wildlife Festival



**Festivalgoers look for shorebirds at Seaview Farm**

For the first time, VES Land Trust teamed up with the Eastern Shore Birding and Wildlife Festival (Oct. 9-11). VES Land Trust hosted a conservation hike on Seaview Farm, one of its seaside easements

near Eastville. Twenty beginner to seasoned birders joined staff on a walk through an historic cemetery from the late 1800s, a beautiful marsh flat edging Thorofare Bay, and the woods lining Taylor Creek. Participants were excited to visit a new location. The shorebirds and unique property were a big hit, but a quiet patch of woods by the house offered the most active sightings.

### Second grade field day at Brownsville Preserve



**A second grade class plays red light, green light**

This fall, VES Land Trust and The Nature Conservancy's Virginia Coast Reserve at Brownsville welcomed four second-grade classes from Kiptopeke to the preserve. Each class took a scavenger hunt walk on the preserve's nature trail through upland and lowland to the marsh, learned about life on the barrier islands, matched pictures and fossils of marine life, and looked for insects. "There's nothing like getting these kids out in the woods and watching them explore nature. Their inquisitive spirit keeps us all excited and ready to see what's around the next bend!" exclaimed Margaret Van Clief, Outreach and Education Coordinator with TNC.

### Stream and buffer walk

As the pale morning light filtered through the trees, participants from CBF's VoiCES class loosely circled Bill Portlock, Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) Senior Educator and scientist. VES Land Trust and CBF led a hike along a protected stream that drains to Jacobus Creek. The stream passes through the woods on Jacobus Farm, a VES Land Trust held conservation easement. Bill explained several different water quality tests then set participants loose to complete them. A few kneeled



### Exploring a bayside perennial stream

in the soft soil to collect samples. The group peered through gadgets measuring salinity, temperature, dissolved oxygen, and turbidity. Participants then walked through the woods past crawdad castles and hopped a ride to the point where they explored Jacobus Creek. "I loved the walk. It was really interesting to participate in some analysis of the stream water," commented Martina Coker.

### Backyard Habitat: Mushrooms of the Eastern Shore



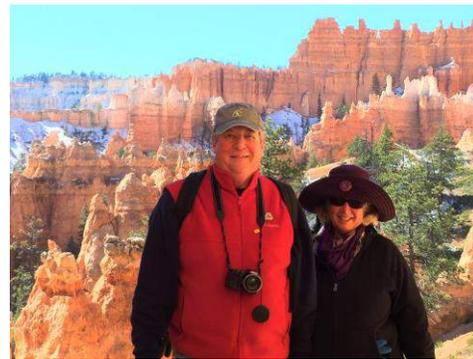
### Participants view a mushroom specimen

Mushrooms are unique and mysterious organisms. A small group of about 15 gathered around Tony Picardi's dining table to hear him and Stewart Lundy discuss identifying and cultivating fungi. Tony, a master naturalist, introduced the different families and recognizable features such as cap shape. He also warned that many mushrooms found wild are deadly poisonous. Stewart, owner and operator of Perennial Roots Farm, explored the world of fungi through literature before showing how he cultivates them on the farm. The group

spent time in the field classifying specimens and looking at cultivation techniques.

### VES Land Trust welcomes new board member, Carl Nordstrom

Carl Nordstrom, a New Jersey native, and his wife, Linda, fell in love with the Eastern Shore of Virginia in 2006. For three years, they commuted on weekends to renovate their home and gardens outside of Exmore. In 2009, Carl moved down permanently and Linda followed in 2011.



Carl and his wife, Linda

Carl received his B.S. in Landscape Architecture from Rutgers University and a Masters of Government Administration from the

University of Pennsylvania. He worked for 27 years preserving valuable natural resources for the New Jersey Division of Parks and Forestry and a local municipality. For seven years following his retirement, Carl was the Executive Director of the New Jersey Nursery and Landscape Association. Throughout his 34 years of employment, Carl had the opportunity to interact with all levels of government and numerous non-profit organizations as well as serve on their Boards of Directors.

His hobbies include boating, fishing, gardening and antique automobiles. Carl has been a valued volunteer with the VES Land Trust for years. His career and volunteer work show that he truly believes what he says, *"One of the most important tasks each of us has during our brief stay here on earth is to protect the rich and diverse wonders of the world for future generations to come."* Please join us in officially welcoming Carl to the Board.

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Fall field trip roundup

Welcome new board member

## **Help keep our records up to date.**

Please notify us at [veslt@verizon.net](mailto:veslt@verizon.net) or 757-442-5885 if you have a new mailing address, e-mail or phone number.

To support our work, please send donations to: VES Land Trust, P.O. Box 1114, Exmore, VA 23350, or online at [www.veslt.org](http://www.veslt.org). Call us 757- 442-5885



for instructions on making gifts of stock.

*VES Land Trust seeks to conserve rural lands, which will best preserve the farms, forests, fisheries and heritage of Virginia's Eastern Shore for the benefit of future generations.*

**VES Land Trust  
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Exmore, VA 23350**

Tita deGavre grew up on an island off the southern coast of England near Chichester. A self-proclaimed country girl, she remembers hearing people say, "If you can see the smoke from your neighbor's chimney, you're getting too close." The rural Eastern Shore of Virginia with its historic homes and waterfront suited her. She first fell in love with the Maryland Eastern Shore while her late husband, Colonel deGavre, was stationed in Washington D.C. Not having any luck finding an affordable home on the water, an acquaintance suggested Mrs. deGavre look further south across the Maryland and Virginia line. "Nobody'd ever heard of it. In those days, it wasn't even on some of the maps," Mrs. deGavre exclaimed.

Col. and Mrs. deGavre bought land on Deep Creek in 1952. The couple was attracted to the property because of its historic home, "Ohio." "I just love the



Restored 18<sup>th</sup> century house, Ohio, on Deep Creek Plantation

house," beamed Mrs. deGavre. The oldest section of the home was built in 1755. A wing was added in 1812. "It was a wreck when we bought it," remarked Mrs. deGavre, "and together we restored it, made it into a home." One of the reasons they purchased the property was because the 18th century home actually had a new roof and basic plumbing. Nevertheless, at least one of the rooms

had no floors and was full of hay. Little by little, the house came to life through the couple's hard work and ingenuity. Mrs. deGavre taught herself to wallpaper and reminisced that her husband, "turned out to be a marvelous carpenter."

Mrs. deGavre and her sons, Timothy and David, donated

a conservation easement on Deep Creek Plantation in 2004 to the Virginia Eastern Shore Land Trust. Deep Creek Plantation is 63 acres with 1500 feet of waterfront along Deep Creek. In addition to the historic home, the property boasts pristine marsh, forest, and farmland. Mrs. deGavre donated the conservation easement because, *"I really love it. I want to preserve it for the future generations. More of America is becoming paved over and I'm a country girl. I want it to stay country."*

For Mrs. deGavre, the historic home remains her passion. However, she was also a masterful gardener and is an avid bird watcher. "My garden was my life at one time," Mrs. deGavre recalled. She grew both ornamentals and vegetables. In the past, she had as many as 72 different roses. To plan her garden, Mrs. deGavre would lay out the pattern with string then head upstairs and view it from above. Col. and Mrs. deGavre also raised chickens, ducks, geese, and peacocks. The Colonel was a waterfowl carver and shared her passion for birds. Mrs. deGavre, now 101, watches the birds through the window across from her chair. "If I come back in another life, I'd like to be a bird."



Tita deGavre