



Loudoun County, Virginia

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NEWS RELEASE

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Loudoun County Launches Conservation Easement Assistance Program

To help protect historic, cultural and environmental resources, qualified Loudoun County landowners can now apply for financial assistance to place their land under conservation easement.

A conservation easement is a voluntary, legal agreement that permanently limits uses of the land in order to protect its conservation values.

Landowners interested in the possibility of placing their land under a conservation easement should contact a land trust to begin the process. If the land trust agrees, the land trust will apply on behalf of the landowner. For calendar year 2019, the county has established a fund of \$150,000 to launch the new conservation easement assistance program.

The program will help with the upfront costs of placing land under conservation easement, including the costs of stewardship, attorney's services, land appraisal and survey fees, and processing and document fees. Funding for half of these costs or \$15,000, whichever is less, will be provided to land trusts working with landowners who qualify.

Landowners must have a household income of 100% Area Median Income or lower (currently \$117,200), and the land to be placed under conservation easement must be located in Loudoun County and meet the following requirements:

- The property must be capable of being subdivided (with the exception of parcels in the Agricultural and Forestal District Program);
- The proposed use of the property as permanent open space should conform with the policies in Loudoun County's Comprehensive Plan;
- The property must not currently be under conservation easement or otherwise restricted from development, except parcels under the Land Use Assessment program or enrolled in the Agricultural and Forestal District program.

The county will make an online application available for one month twice a year: March 1 and September 1. Half of the \$150,000 funding will be reserved for each application process. Should the March application process not use the entire \$75,000, the remaining funds will roll to the September application process. If one or both sessions have more applications than funding, the County will weigh the applications against each other based on the number of development rights relinquished and the historic/cultural resources preserved. Those with the highest scores will be awarded as funding is available.

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Landowners should consult a land trust to see if their land is eligible for a conservation easement. Since easements are generally granted in perpetuity, an outside party must be responsible for the monitoring and maintenance of the easement. If the land is eligible and the land trust agrees, the land trust will apply on the landowners' behalf and will "hold" the easement for current and future property owners.

For more information about conservation easements in Loudoun County, visit www.loudoun.gov/conservationeasements or email conservationeasements@loudoun.gov.

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