



**News Release**

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**Contact: John Magistro, Easement Coordinator, (540) 687-8441**

## **LTV News**

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### **LAND TRUST OF VIRGINIA PROTECTS 239-ACRE PROPERTY IN LUCKETTS**

#### **Lee Family Protects Farm Owned by Family for more than a Century**

Jeremy Lee has no doubt that his grandparents, Yeager and Mary Gum, would be pleased and proud that he has taken steps to permanently protect his third generation family farm near Lucketts.

Working with the Land Trust of Virginia (LTV), Jeremy and his mother, Susan Lee (with the support of her husband Kenneth Lee) have donated a permanent conservation easement on their 239-acre property, thereby voluntarily relinquishing development rights for an approved 47-lot residential subdivision located less than a mile from Lucketts in northern Loudoun County.

The family farm is situated on James Monroe Highway (Route 15) which serves as the primary route through the Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area. The property contains historically significant structures that contribute to the Catoctin Rural Historic District, and one of Loudoun County's oldest known cemeteries, the Oxley family cemetery, which has been cared for by the family since Isaac Dyer and Gertrude Yeager Gum purchased the property more than 100 years ago.

In addition to these historic resources, the property also contains prime agricultural land, nearly one mile of perennial stream channels that flow into Limestone Branch (which is a tributary to the Potomac River), and a globally rare, wetland community known as the Piedmont Upland Depression Swamp. As residential development continues to impact groundwater resources in this portion of the Loudoun County (the area known as the Limestone Overlay District), protection of this unique piece of land takes on added significance to the region.

Gary Fleming, an ecologist for the Virginia Natural Heritage Program, said, "The globally rare wetland community on the property is the only known, intact occurrence occupying rare Piedmont karst features in northern Loudoun County. The unique geological setting and zoological resources identified by the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy and Michael Hayslett of Sweet Briar College make these wetlands even more significant and worthy of conservation and long-term management."

Said LTV Easement Coordinator John Magistro, who worked with the Lee family for many months, “Jeremy was really committed to saving this land. He and his family are to be congratulated for their dedication. This land protects some of the most important natural and cultural conservation values in Loudoun County.”

LTV also worked closely with Joe Coleman and Nicole Hamilton of the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy (LWC) and Michael Kane of the Piedmont Environmental Council (PEC), who strongly supported the preservation of the property and its resources.

Hamilton said, “Congratulations and a heart-felt thank you to the Lee family and LTV for working through this, and protecting the amazing natural values on this property.”

Kane also praised the Lee family, noting the importance of the property to the local community. Kane observed that “as LWC and PEC worked to preserve the wetland habitat over the past year, we received such enthusiastic support from almost every corner of the Lockett’s community, from local civic organizations to elementary school groups. Local residents clearly value the Lee family’s place in the history of the area and their stewardship of the property’s remarkable natural resources. The Lee family’s decision now to conserve the property is a wonderful gift that helps protect what makes the Locketts area a special place.”

The easement includes a provision that gives the landowners an additional incentive if they wish to convey the fee interest underlying the conservation easement on 40 acres of the protected rare wetland habitat to a conservation organization at some point in the future.

Cate Magennis Wyatt, Founder and President of the Journey Through Hallowed Ground Partnership, also congratulated the Lees and LTV for protecting a key stretch of Route 15, the Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Scenic Byway in the heart of the National Heritage Area. Wyatt said, “On behalf of each of our 350 partnering organizations I extend profound appreciation to the Lee Family for this remarkably generous act. This easement, which honors their family’s untold contributions to the community, will serve as a gift to generations to come. The Land Trust of Virginia has, once again, facilitated a magnificent easement for the betterment of all Loudoun citizens.”

**About the Land Trust of Virginia:** Based in Middleburg, Virginia, the Land Trust of Virginia is a private, non-profit organization that exists solely to assist private citizens in Virginia protect open space lands and unique natural and historic resources on their properties through conservation easements. Currently, the Land Trust of Virginia (LTV) holds and stewards 121 easements protecting more than 12,000 acres of land in Loudoun, Fauquier, and surrounding counties. LTV specializes in working directly with private landowners to design easements that protect open space, forests, water quality, biodiversity, and historic values, while ensuring that farming, forestry, and other compatible uses can continue.

For more information, contact John Magistro, LTV Easement Coordinator, by phone at (540) 687-8441 or by email at [john@landtrustva.org](mailto:john@landtrustva.org), or visit [www.landtrustva.org](http://www.landtrustva.org).



The Gum Brothers farm on Route 15 near Lucketts is now protected forever by a Land Trust of Virginia conservation easement.



Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy members visiting a vernal pool in the Piedmont Upland Depression Swamp wetlands community.

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