

# Profiting from Preservation



## A Story Worth Telling...





# Introduction

The Virginia Piedmont Heritage Area<sup>1</sup> is a state-designated Heritage Area, covering Loudoun, Fauquier, Clarke, Prince William, and Warren counties, with several regional nicknames – Northern Virginia, the Northern Piedmont, and the lower Shenandoah Valley. The landscape is strikingly beautiful with its rolling hills, river systems, mountain ranges, original byways, historic villages, and landmarks. The Heritage Area has seen centuries of important American history that is still readily accessible to residents and visitors today.

These five counties are home to 225 listings on the National Register of Historic Places (Loudoun - 91; Fauquier - 66; Clarke - 39; Warren - 23; and Prince William - 62) and ten of Virginia's 120 National Historic Landmarks and districts.<sup>2</sup>

The historic character of the Heritage Area has significantly contributed to its growth trends, outpacing those in the surrounding Washington, D.C. Metropolitan area. The Virginia Piedmont Heritage Area Association has undertaken this study to demonstrate that the value of preserving the longstanding open space landscape and historic structures through adaptive reuse, far exceeds the financial benefit of high-density dwellings and residential amenities. The tax base, quality of life, property values, and the environment all benefit from historic preservation and land conservation.

Early trading and buffalo migration routes,<sup>3</sup> along with waterways, brought travelers in significant numbers to the Virginia Piedmont Heritage Area in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century and settlements were soon established. The founding of Washington, D.C. attracted more residents to the area and we continue to see related suburban expansion today. Throughout much of its history, the Virginia Piedmont Heritage Area has seen unparalleled preservation efforts despite its proximity to the Nation's Capital and subsequent housing pressure.

There are many preservation, conservation, and historic organizations in the Heritage Area with established records of leadership, including the Piedmont Environmental Council, the Land Trust of Virginia, the Virginia Outdoors Foundation, NOVA Parks, Clarke County Historical Association, the Journey Through Hallowed Ground, the Goose Creek Association, Civil War Trails, the Afro-American Historical Association of Fauquier County, Loudoun Preservation Society, the Fauquier Heritage and Preservation Foundation, the Willisville Preservation Foundation, the Fauquier Historical Society, the Friends of Thomas Balch Library, and the Virginia Piedmont Heritage Area Association. The combined efforts of these organizations, supportive landowners, local governments, and park authorities have produced a robust Heritage Tourism industry in the Virginia Piedmont Heritage Area today. It is with eternal gratitude to each of these preservation and conservation organizations that the Virginia Piedmont Heritage Area Association dedicates this Profiting from Preservation study.

Heritage Tourism has proven to be very profitable in the Heritage Area, contending with outlet malls, adventure centers, and modern amenities which also bring in tourism revenue. This study focuses on quantifiable data from tourism and preservation practices. The impact of visiting Main Street communities where historic structures have been adaptively reused can be examined through historic preservation tax benefits and tourism spending. The historic villages throughout our five counties also greatly contribute to the overall visitor experience, but this study relies on county and state tourism data and historic site visitation records.

The data in this report illustrates the positive economic contributions made by the conservation of open space, preservation of historic structures, agriculture, agritourism, and Heritage Tourism in the Virginia Piedmont Heritage Area. This report focuses on the economic benefits to entrepreneurs, local governments, and the citizens of the region, as well as the benefits that preservation make to quality of life. It also recognizes the exhilarating effect that preservation has on the spirit of those who partake in all that the region offers.

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1 Formerly the Mosby Heritage Area Association

2 Dodona Manor/George C. Marshall's Home, Balls Bluff Battlefield and National Cemetery, General William "Billy" Mitchell's Home, Waterford Historic District, Oak Hill/President James Monroe's Home, and Oatlands in Loudoun. Greenway Court and Saratoga in Clarke. Thunderbird Archaeological District and Cedar Creek Battlefield and Belle Grove Plantation (straddling Frederick County as well) in Warren. Current as of 2020.

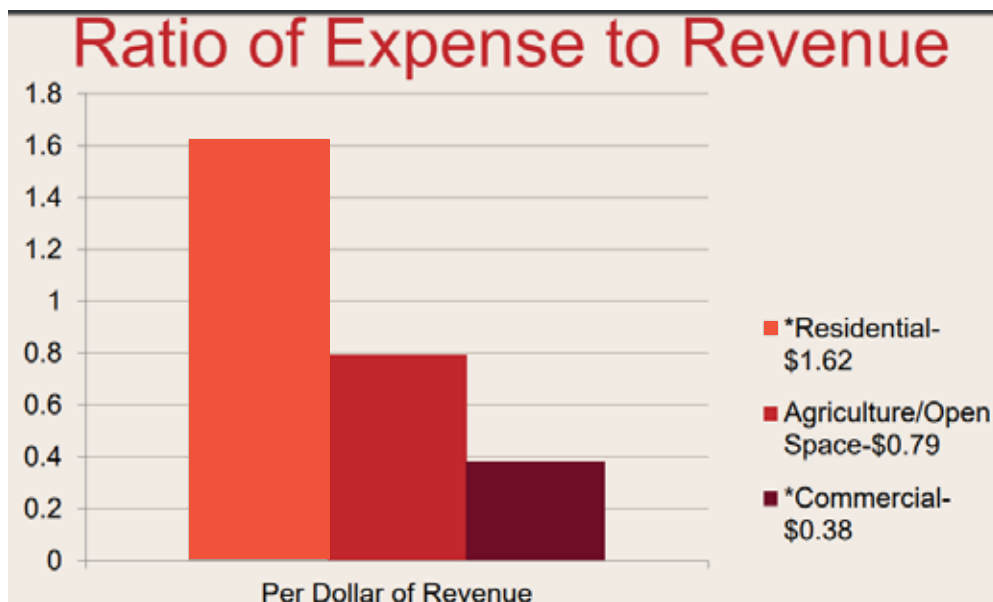
3 The Old Carolina Road, the turnpike era roads, and the Thoroughfare Gap route.



# The Value of Open Space

Preservation and conservation are symbiotic. While preserving historic town centers and buildings is crucial to the interpretation of history, conserving open space and farmland for agriculture is equally important. Our viewsheds draw tourists and the original landscape provides living historic context to this authentic farming region. Furthermore, the preservation of historically important land is one of the four “conservation purposes” recognized by the IRS to qualify for a conservation easement.<sup>1</sup>

The value of land protected by easement is immeasurable. It boosts tourism by preserving our pristine scenic vistas, conserves our natural and historic resources, and enriches quality of life. A study conducted in 2013 by the Loudoun County Rural Economic Development Council found that for every dollar generated for the county by farmland and open space, only 73- 79¢ in services are paid out from the County.<sup>2</sup> A study by the Loudoun Economic Development Council, “Unpacking the Commercial Tax Base,” found that for every tax dollar that residential properties generate, the county spends \$1.62 in services.<sup>3</sup> The bottom line is that it costs Loudoun County and its taxpayers more than **triple** when open space is developed into subdivisions.



In Warren County, the 2013 the Growth Management and Land Use Policy also confirms the negative fiscal impact of residential development:

“Providing public services and facilities for suburban sprawl,” the County said, “is extremely inefficient.”<sup>4</sup>

\*Source: Loudoun EDC-“Unpacking the Commercial Tax Base”; Agriculture/Open Space is a subset contained within the Residential and Commercial Costs<sup>5</sup>

1 (See 26 CFR 1.170A-14, Qualified Conservation Contributions.)

2 Loudoun County Board of Supervisors, Economic Development Committee, Information Item, presented on April 15, 2013. [www.loudoun.gov](http://www.loudoun.gov)

3 Loudoun County Board of Supervisors, Economic Development Committee, “Net Cost of Community Services” presentation, April 15, 2013.

4 Warren County, Comprehensive Plan, Chapter 4, Page 4-16; [https://www.warrencountyva.net/phocadownload/CompPlan/cp\\_landuse.pdf](https://www.warrencountyva.net/phocadownload/CompPlan/cp_landuse.pdf)

5 Farmland-A Net Positive for Loudoun County’s Budget: Net Cost of Community Services Economic Development Committee, Presentation by Loudoun County’s Rural Economic Development Committee, April 15, 2013

*“You can’t just take from a community—you have to give back to it by putting nutrients back in the ground in order to have future growth. That’s why we invest in land and place it into conservation easement. This preserves the beauty, native species, and history of our region. I’ve done this with land on Stumptown Road and Route 15, the historic Middleburg Training Center, and several other farms near Loudoun’s villages.*

*Conserving land also provides space for agriculture like we’ve done with the JK Community Farm, a nonprofit 150-acre farm we started in Purcellville that grows and donates 100 percent of its organic crops and livestock to local food banks.*

*Protecting land and the environment for future generations is one of my proudest achievements.”*

**-Charles Kuhn, Owner, JK Moving**

## Cost Savings for County Government

According to the 2019 “Hooked on Growth” study conducted by the Loudoun County Preservation and Conservation Coalition for the county’s 2040 Comprehensive Plan, Loudoun’s population growth rate was about 5% per year between 2000-2019, which is more than three times the greater Washington, D.C. regional rate. School enrollment also tripled during that time period. <sup>6</sup>

As the following charts show, the Capital Intensity Factor - net cost to the county - of single-family detached dwellings is significantly larger in suburbs such as Ashburn, Potomac, and Sterling than it is in rural areas in western Loudoun (what the county refers to as “Route 7 West”). <sup>7</sup>

### ADOPTED CAPITAL INTENSITY FACTOR - ASHBURN, POTOMAC, STERLING

#### STANDARD

Housing Unit Type	Population per Housing Unit	County Cost Per Capita	County CIF	Child/Unit	School Cost per Child	School CIF	Total CIF
SFD	3.78	\$ 4,701.75	\$ 17,772.60	1.07	\$ 27,833.33	\$ 29,781.67	\$ 47,554.27
SFA	3.09	\$ 4,701.75	\$ 14,528.40	0.69	\$ 27,833.33	\$ 19,205.00	\$ 33,733.40
MF	1.97	\$ 4,701.75	\$ 9,262.44	0.23	\$ 27,833.33	\$ 6,401.67	\$ 15,664.11
MF Stacked	2.42	\$ 4,701.75	\$ 11,378.23	0.49	\$ 27,833.33	\$ 13,638.33	\$ 25,016.56

### ADOPTED CAPITAL INTENSITY FACTOR – ROUTE 7 WEST

#### STANDARD

Housing Unit Type	Population per Housing Unit	County Cost Per Capita	County CIF	Child/Unit	School Cost Per Child	School CIF	Total CIF
SFD	3.78	\$ 1,928.88	\$ 7,291.18	1.07	\$ 24,448.72	\$ 26,160.13	\$ 33,451.31
SFA	3.09	\$ 1,928.88	\$ 5,960.25	0.69	\$ 24,448.72	\$ 16,869.62	\$ 22,829.87
MF	1.97	\$ 1,928.88	\$ 3,799.90	0.23	\$ 24,448.72	\$ 5,623.21	\$ 9,423.11
MF Stacked	2.42	\$ 1,928.88	\$ 4,667.90	0.49	\$ 24,448.72	\$ 11,979.87	\$ 16,647.77

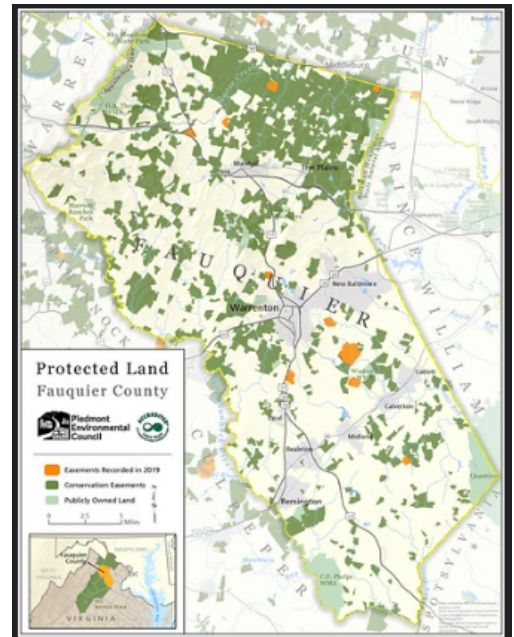
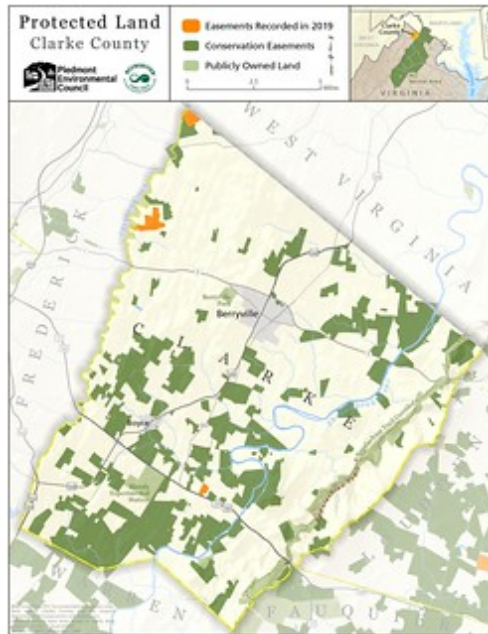
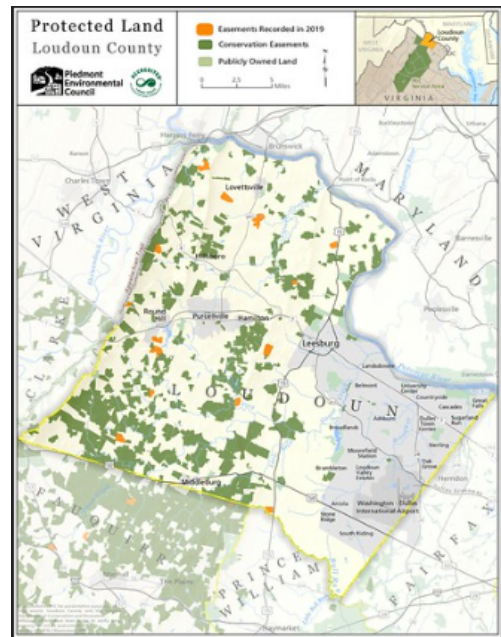
Subdividing land into residential developments creates a deep strain on the county financially, as well as in terms of traffic and infrastructure. New suburban development comes at the expense of natural and heritage resources, county funds, and quality of life.

<sup>6</sup> “Break the Hooked on Growth Cycle” by Jim Hanna, of the Loudoun County Preservation and Conservation Coalition, April 14, 2019.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.loudoun.gov/DocumentCenter/View/55679/Capital-Intensity-Factor?bidId=>, 2018, The Capital Intensity Factor (CIF) is a financial multiplier that helps determine future costs of development in the county and is used by the Planning Commission and the Planning and Zoning Department in all proffer negotiations.

# Benefits for Landowners

The Piedmont Environmental Council, which works in three Virginia Piedmont Heritage Area counties, has helped landowners place easements on more than 420,000 acres. The maps shown here, courtesy of the PEC, highlight in green the acreage under easement. There are many reasons landowners place their property under easement, including the legacy gift of preserving the land, financial and tax benefits, and the protection of our environment and wildlife.



Federal and state tax benefits include:

- State income tax benefits, including tax credits under the Virginia Conservation Tax Credit Program (which are transferrable and may be sold)
- Federal income tax deductions
- State and federal estate tax benefits
- Lower local property taxes

The Land Trust of Virginia, an accredited holder of conservation easements, is active in all five counties of the Heritage Area and has protected over 21,000 acres in Virginia. “Putting a property into conservation easement – creating its permanent protection – can reap benefits for the landowner,” said Sally Price, Executive Director of the Land Trust of Virginia. “Through the Virginia Conservation Tax Credit Program, the landowner may be eligible for a generous state tax benefit, receiving tax credits for the donation of a conservation easement, which may be transferred or sold. The federal government also considers a donation of an easement to be tax deductible. Plus, a landowner’s estate taxes may be reduced, as will local property taxes. All this is to say, in addition to protecting land for sound environmental reasons, there are also some significant financial advantages to doing it as well.”



In 2015, Fauquier County reached a major milestone when it became the first county in Virginia to protect 100,000 acres with conservation easements.<sup>8</sup> In Fauquier County, approximately 296,000 acres ~ 71 percent of the entire county ~ has some type of protection from non-agricultural development in the form of one or more preservation programs including reduced Land Use taxes.<sup>9</sup>

Clarke County’s zoning provides many protections against uncontrollable growth. The County Conservation Easement Authority criteria includes “quality farmland; land that provides open space and rural character; environmentally sensitive areas important to water quality, plant life, and wildlife; historic resources; natural and scenic resources; land that supports tourism; and land with water resources.”<sup>10</sup>

In January 2020, the Clarke Conservation Easement Authority (CEA) stated that a total of 26,860 (23% of the total land area) in Clarke County is in permanent conservation easement held by the CEA and other organizations.<sup>11</sup>

Not all counties have placed equal emphasis on open space protection, leaving it entirely up to landowners to voluntarily place their property into conservation easement. In 2019, VPHA established a fund to help families take this important step of land stewardship. The Bondi Family Land Conservation and Battlefield Preservation Fund assists with landowner conservation easement transaction costs on properties located within the Unison Battlefield Study Area. The Land Trust of Virginia’s Deborah Whittier Fitts Battlefield Stewardship Fund also provides financial assistance to landowners with battlefield property. In 2019, Loudoun County’s Board of Supervisors initiated a financial assistance program for landowners meeting certain criteria who place their land under easement.<sup>12</sup> Loudoun County currently has 72,000 acres protected by conservation easement.

## Benefits for the Environment:

The preservation of open space is also critical for the health of the environment. The Virginia Piedmont Heritage Area includes the Potomac and the Shenandoah Rivers, two major contributors to the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, one of the nation’s most important drainage basins.<sup>13</sup> Loudoun County was known as the “Breadbasket of the Revolution” and contains the most valuable prime agricultural soils in the state of Virginia.

*“Loudoun County and the Piedmont region have an incredibly rich agricultural history. By preserving our farmland we are ensuring that agriculture remains part of our future. Throughout the past year, the importance of a strong, local food supply as a part of rural and urban communities has been more evident than ever.”*

**-Dana Melby, Community Farm Manager,  
The Piedmont Environmental Council**



<sup>8</sup> Survey, “Opinions on and Use of Land Preservation Tax Credits Among Landowners who Have Donated Easements to the Virginia Outdoors Foundation,” [www.virginiaoutdoorsfoundation.org](http://www.virginiaoutdoorsfoundation.org)

<sup>9</sup> Fauquier County Comprehensive Plan, Chapter 8: Rural Land Use Plan, Page 13.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.clarkecounty.gov/government/boards-commissions/conservation-easement-authority>

<sup>11</sup> Courtesy of Alison Teetor, Natural Resources Planner, Clarke County.

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.loudoun.gov/5131/Conservation-Easement-Assistance-Program>

<sup>13</sup> Additionally, the American Battlefield Trust lists 113 major Civil War battlefields in the watershed.



## Attracting Visitors:

Another emerging trend is ecotourism, participating in outdoor recreational activities in natural settings that support conservation and wildlife. Visitors flock to the Heritage Area to hike our rolling hills and paddle our scenic rivers.

According to a 2018 report by the Outdoor Foundation, people predominantly look to outdoor activity for exercise.<sup>14</sup> Those looking to improve their step count often hike Sky Meadows State Park in Fauquier County or the Appalachian Trail.

The Appalachian Trail (AT), a 2,100 mile footpath following the crest of the Appalachian Mountain chain, is a national treasure and it passes through four Heritage Area's counties. The AT is locally managed by the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) works to preserve the entire trail corridor which is essential to enhancing the AT experience.<sup>15</sup> In 2021, the AT will celebrate its one hundredth anniversary; and in 2025, the ATC will mark one hundred years of stewardship.

Warren County has 500 miles of trails, 101 of which are on the AT.<sup>16</sup> Warren County also participates in the Appalachian Trail's Mural Trail, a program that brings hikers and tourists into towns that abut the hiking trail like Front Royal.<sup>17</sup> Front Royal is the northern point of the Shenandoah National Park and is considered the "Canoe Capital of Virginia." This combination~ river sports and leisure, adjoining a historic town, surrounded by a National Park and a national hiking system – is unique and extraordinary.

The rural and small town feel of the Virginia Piedmont Heritage Area has proven to be a strong attraction for new residents. They move to the area to raise young families, escape congested sprawl, and experience nature and history in their daily lives. The Virginia Piedmont Heritage Area Association and other nonprofits work tirelessly to remind new residents that sprawl could continue its westward expansion and that they need to join the effort to protect the beautiful landscape that brought them here in the first place.

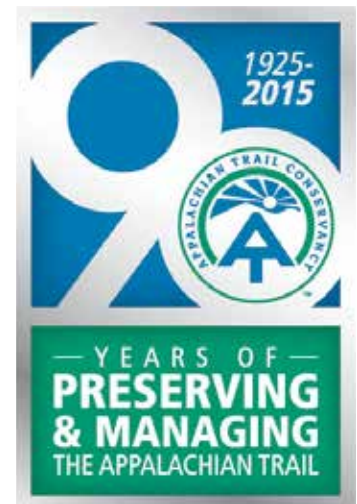
*Many land trusts, conservation organizations, and county agencies accept and hold conservation easements in the Virginia Piedmont Heritage Area. The most active are the Virginia Outdoors Foundation, Land Trust of Virginia (an accredited land trust), Piedmont Environmental Council (an accredited land trust) Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Old Dominion Land Conservancy, the Clark County Easement Authority, and Fauquier County.*

<sup>14</sup> [www.outdoorfoundation.org](http://www.outdoorfoundation.org) , "2018 Outdoor Participation Report," page 1.

<sup>15</sup> <https://appalachiantrail.org/home/about-us/history>

<sup>16</sup> Discover Front Royal Virginia, "In the Know!" Newsletters, October 2019.

<sup>17</sup> [www.muraltrail.com](http://www.muraltrail.com)





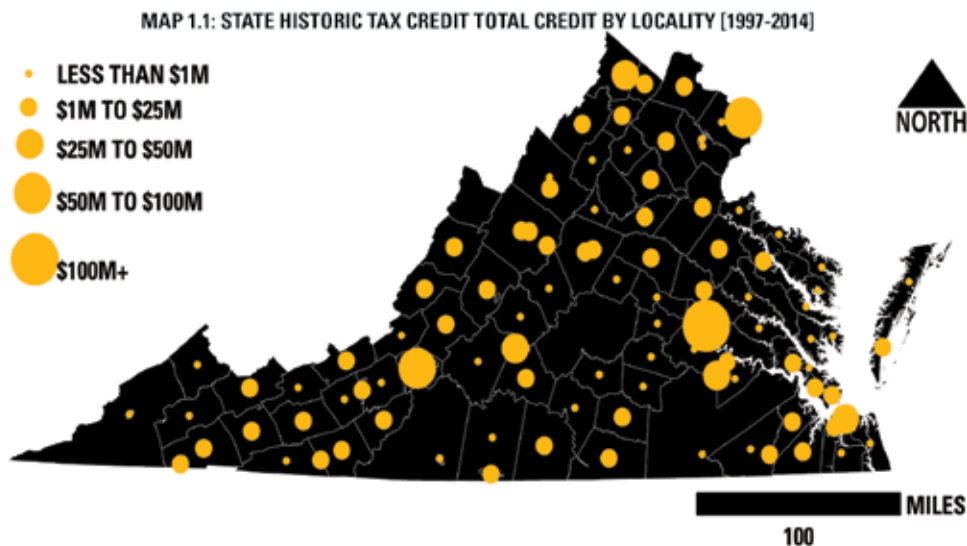
# Renovation Rewards

## The Cost Benefit of Saving Historic Structures

Preservation Virginia and the Home Builders Association commissioned a 2014 study by the accounting firm Baker Tilly to determine the economic benefits of the Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit (HRTC) program in 21 projects in Virginia.

The report found that the HRTC Program, “...doesn’t just preserve the places that make Virginia unique. In 2014 alone it resulted in \$467 million in economic output; supported 9,960 jobs; and generated \$3.50 for every \$1 invested through the first three years.”<sup>1</sup>

The 21 surveyed qualified rehab projects reported an astounding 353% increase in property tax assessments, providing strong evidence that rehabilitating a historic structure significantly raises the property’s value.<sup>2</sup>



## Adaptive Reuse of Historic Structures

Each of the five counties of the Heritage Area incorporates an Adaptive Reuse policy in their Comprehensive Plan.

Why counties are encouraging Adaptive Reuse:

- To maintain the historic landscape and townscape that link us to the past
- To conserve resources
- To be more environmentally-friendly
- To bring positive economic impact
- To maintain and enhance traditional building skills
- To provide variety and architectural interest



Above, circa 1801 Rector House, VPHA headquarters and site of Mosby’s Rangers formation in 1863

<sup>1</sup> <https://preservationvirginia.org/resources/publications/>

<sup>2</sup> [http://preservationva.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/VA\\_HTC\\_Full\\_Report\\_.pdf](http://preservationva.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/VA_HTC_Full_Report_.pdf)

Warren County’s *Land Use and Growth Management Implementation Plan*, for example, offers the option of “Accessory Apartments,” designed to preserve the character of small-town neighborhoods and provide affordable housing by turning large historic structures into multiple-family units.

Prince William County’s most-recent Community Design Policy encourages developers to “incorporate adaptive reuse of historic structures into new developments, rather than demolition, and provide sufficient land around archaeological and historic sites and structures to preserve the integrity of the site in the historic context.”

Fauquier County’s Preservation Programs and Other Planning Tools section on Adaptive Reuse states, “...there is a need to raise awareness of the role that rehabilitation and adaptive use of historic buildings play in addressing environmental issues and providing sustainable development. There are many opportunities to form partnerships with the environmental community to provide educational programming that supports green building practices and protection of cultural and natural resources.”

## Bringing Vitality Back to Main Streets

The Virginia Main Street Program includes Historic Manassas, Warrenton, and Berryville in the Virginia Piedmont Heritage Area. It is “a preservation-based economic and community development program” that uses what is known as “the Main Street Approach” developed by the National Main Street Center, a subsidiary of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Virginia Main Street also is a Main Street America State Coordinating Program that offers a wide range of “services and assistance to communities interested in revitalizing their historic commercial districts.”<sup>3</sup>

Main Street towns in Virginia and throughout the country have proven to be popular tourist destinations year round, and especially during the holiday season. Shopping Main Street local has become a way in which citizens support small businesses.

### A Business Utilizing Adaptive Reuse and Leading in Green Energy

Catoctin Creek Distilling Company on Purcellville’s Main Street repurposed a former Buick car dealership into a tourist attraction, and installed energy-efficient solar panels. The distillery has been recognized by Loudoun County with green business awards in 2011, 2013, and 2016.

## Spotlight

According to owner and founder, Scott Harris: “Our solar plant offsets about 85 percent of electrical usage in the distillery. This means we are burning less coal and natural gas. On very sunny days, the solar plant generates the equivalent of five households of electricity and actually returns energy to the public grid for others to use.

“At Catoctin Creek, we aim to be as sustainable as we can in our production of exceptional rye whisky. Our production is zero-waste; our grain is organically grown; our bottles are made four hours from the distillery, in Pittsburgh. However, the largest sustainability thing we’ve ever done is recycling a 100-year-old building for our production purposes. Adding solar to this building just took us to the next level and helped us lower our impact while making great spirits!”

Ample studies and resources about the benefits of green building are available from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The National Trust’s Adaptive Reuse work in cities has been termed “ReUrbanism” which the Trust notes is “essential to economic growth and vibrant communities.”<sup>4</sup>

Adaptive Reuse of an entire historic row of commercial businesses in a Main Street Community would create a vibrant attraction for visitors, generate revenue, and preserve its character. Authentic period streetscapes appeal to both tourists and residents.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/virginia-main-street-vms>

<sup>4</sup> <https://forum.savingplaces.org/learn/issues/reurbanism>



## Federal Incentives

Those who restore, reuse, or maintain a historic structure are eligible for a 20 percent federal tax credit for qualifying expenses. Qualifying expenses include windows, doors, ceilings, floors, chimneys, and walls. Renovations must follow the Secretary of Interior’s Rehabilitation of Historic Structures guidelines, which seek to keep a structure true to its era in design, materials, and setting, while allowing for modern convenience.<sup>5</sup>

## Six Things You May Not Know About Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings:

- 1 Reusing a 5,000 sq. foot building saves the carbon consumed by 85 homes in one year. Reusing a 100,000 sq. foot building saves the equivalent of the carbon emitted by 1,600 homes in one year.
- 2 According to the Building and Social Housing Foundation and Empty Homes Agency of England, it takes about 50 to 65 years for a new, energy efficient building to save the amount of embodied energy lost in demolishing an existing building.
- 3 The U.S. Energy Information Administration found that buildings constructed during the early 1900s were more energy efficient than those built from 1950-2000. Why? Many of these older homes were built with non-mechanical, energy-saving features, like deep eaves for shading, cross-ventilating hallways, and operable windows.
- 4 Air infiltration occurs in buildings through many conduits – attics, chimneys, vents, doors, even electrical outlets, but more heat is lost through the roof than any other part of your house. By adding about 3 ½ inches of insulation in your attic, you save more energy than replacing your windows, and the insulation will cost a lot less.
- 5 By simply installing weatherstripping to an existing window, you can increase a window’s energy efficiency by as much as 50%.
- 6 Most vinyl replacement windows only function about 10-15 years. However, they will last forever in a landfill. Replacement windows that contain vinyl or PVC are also toxic to produce and create toxic by-products.

Sources: National Park Service, National Trust for Historic Preservation, Don Rypkemo, U.S. Energy Information Administration.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/rehabilitation.htm>

<sup>6</sup> Fauquier County Comprehensive Plan, Appendix III, Preservation Programs and Other Planning Tools, Page 11

## Holly Heider Chapple Flowers

*A business that incorporates heritage and environmental preservation, Adaptive Reuse, economic viability, and education*

# Spotlight

After successfully running a floral and event design business from her home-based studio for 23 years, Holly Heider Chapple acquired Hope Flower Farm, just two miles from her family home and design studio in the village of Stumptown, Loudoun County, Virginia. She found inspiration and the perfect place to expand her business in its manor house, barns, and flower fields.

Holly Heider Chapple offers floral arranging classes at the farm and uses the circa 1850 manor house as a bed-and-breakfast. The property has a Silo Barn and Bank Barn that are available for event rentals and she grows all of her flowers on the farm to supply her wedding designing and floral arts. Her classes bring participants to an active historic farm where they learn to express themselves using Loudoun's flowers. Holly has made her operation a model of historic preservation and environmental sustainability.

"Our annual festival, Flowerstock," Holly Heider Chapple said, "is a multi-day conference of learning, live-music, and glamping."

Photos courtesy of Holly Heider Chapple Flowers.





# Heritage Tourism

## The Economic Impact of Heritage Tourism:

Heritage Tourism has evolved in the Virginia Piedmont Heritage Area in recent years, mainly due to a significant increase in the number of wineries, vineyards, breweries, and distilleries which have become heritage tourist stops. Heritage Tourism traditionally refers to visiting battlefields, historic sites, and museums, but it has been expanded to include the enjoyment of open space vistas and historic landscapes, which are increasingly rare in Virginia. The National Trust for Historic Preservation defines Heritage Tourism as “traveling to experience the places and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present.”<sup>1</sup>

According to a recent Preservation Virginia report, of the 50 million annual visitors to Virginia, nearly 43 million visit heritage sites.<sup>2</sup> The report also notes that Heritage Tourism generates \$7.7 billion a year in Virginia. Additionally, the study reports that Virginia’s Heritage Tourism industry generates more than \$640 million in state and local taxes and more than \$700 million in federal taxes and supports 105,000 jobs.<sup>3</sup>

The report concludes that Heritage Tourism “appears to serve the region as both an economic engine and as the foundation of a high quality of life.”<sup>4</sup>

The Virginia Tourism Corporation reports each of the five counties in the Virginia Piedmont Heritage Area significantly. Tourism spending contributed nearly \$2 Billion to Loudoun’s economy in 2019.<sup>5</sup>

### Local Economic Impact from Travel:

County	2017 Tax Receipts	2017 Jobs	2018 Tax Receipts	2018 Jobs
Clarke	\$578,449	195	\$585,986	195
Fauquier	\$3,093,715	1,878	\$3,060,407	1,834
Loudoun	\$27,937,774	17,497	\$28,581,924	17,673
Prince William	\$9,192,679	6,590	\$9,411,959	6,662
Warren	\$2,844,355	1,682	\$2,922,849	1,706

Virginia Tourism Corporation, [www.vatc.org/research/economicimpact/](http://www.vatc.org/research/economicimpact/)

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1 National Trust for Historic Preservation: 2010 Cultural Heritage Tourism Fact Sheet, <http://ctmainstreet.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/C-2010-CHT-FactSheet.pdf>

2 *ibid*

3 Preservation Virginia, “Heritage tourism generates nearly \$7.7 billion per year in Virginia, Wilder School study finds,” April 27, 2017

4 Preservation Virginia, 2017, The Economic Impact of Heritage Tourism in Virginia, page 21

5 [https://www.loudountimes.com/entertainment/report-tourism-spending-contributed-nearly-2b-to-loudouns-economy-in-2019/article\\_f94f2514-04d2-11eb-9e86-03ee94407ed7.html?emci=9135426f081a-eb11-96f5-00155d03bda0&emdi=bcdf7e20-1b1a-eb11-96f5-00155d03bda0&ceid=5913871](https://www.loudountimes.com/entertainment/report-tourism-spending-contributed-nearly-2b-to-loudouns-economy-in-2019/article_f94f2514-04d2-11eb-9e86-03ee94407ed7.html?emci=9135426f081a-eb11-96f5-00155d03bda0&emdi=bcdf7e20-1b1a-eb11-96f5-00155d03bda0&ceid=5913871)

6 [https://www.vatc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/NorthernVirginia\\_Region\\_FY2018\\_VAModule.pdf](https://www.vatc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/NorthernVirginia_Region_FY2018_VAModule.pdf)



Open Late Free Concert Series at the National Sporting Library & Museum. Photo Courtesy of NSLM.

Here is a sampling of 2018-2019 visitation data from tourist sites in the Heritage Area.

<b>Clarke County</b>	Visitation:
Cool Spring Battlefield	1,500 in 2019
Blandy Experimental Farm/Arboretum	200,000 in 2019
Long Branch Historic House	2,500 in 2019
Clarke County Historical Association and the Burwell Morgan Mill	3,800 to the Mill in 2019 574 to the Museum in 2019
<b>Fauquier County</b>	
Old Jail Museum	9,250 in 2018 9,500 in 2019
Sky Meadows State Park	186,705 in 2019
Great Meadow	170,000 in 2019
<b>Loudoun County</b>	
Aldie Mill	5,250 in 2018
Balls Bluff Battlefield	15,000 in 2018
Mt. Zion Historical Park	1,525 in 2018
National Sporting Library & Museum	12,024 in 2018
Temple Hall	15,000 in 2018
Oatlands	22,732 in 2018
Morven Park	4,650 in 2018 (Mansion house visitors only)
Rust Manor Sanctuary	4,500 in 2019
Loudoun Museum	6,832 in 2019
Dodona Manor/The Marshall House	4,175 in 2018



<b>Prince William County</b>	
Ben Lomond Historic Site	26,445 in 2018
Brentsville Courthouse	20,256 in 2018
Bristoe Station Battlefield	74,082 in 2018
Lucasville School	405 in 2018
Old Manassas Courthouse	1,009 in 2018
Rippon Lodge Historic Site	14,949 in 2018
Manassas National Battlefield	510,400 in 2019
Prince William Forest Park	339,700 in 2019
<b>Warren County</b>	Visitation
Skyline Drive	Approximately 400,000 in 2019
Virginia Beer Museum	4,000 over four years

A strong component of heritage-based travel is visiting battlefields, of which the Virginia Piedmont Heritage Area has many. The most well-known Civil War engagements were at Manassas, Front Royal, Balls Bluff, Cool Spring, and Berryville. Many lesser known, yet important, battles and skirmishes took place at Bristoe, Buckland Mill, Unison, Waterford, Auburn, Aldie, Middleburg, and Upperville.

Confederate and Union forces consistently moved within the Virginia Piedmont Heritage Area during the Civil War, resulting in continuous conflicts that extensively impacted the citizenry. Even a drive through the Heritage Area can resemble a battlefield visit. Loudoun and Fauquier’s Route 50, for example, saw many troop movements in June 1863 as J.E.B. Stuart’s cavalry confronted Union troops. Additionally, John Mosby’s Rangers, the 43<sup>rd</sup> Virginia Cavalry, also operated throughout these five counties and regularly faced off against the Federals.

The American Battlefield Trust reports that battlefield tourism is “on the upswing, with an adjusted 21 percent increase in visitors to” National Park Service battlefield parks between 1990 and 2018.

<https://www.battlefields.org/preserve/battlefields-mean-business>



Fauquier County alone has 10,000 acres of historic battlefields, twelve officially named battlefields and – as the occupation of the county changed sixty-seven times during the Civil War – countless skirmish and encampment sites from 1861-65.

The state-designated Virginia Piedmont Heritage Area shares three counties with the Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area, which encompasses a 180-mile stretch from Gettysburg, Pennsylvania to Charlottesville, Virginia.

One of fifty-five National Heritage Areas across the country, JTHG National Heritage Area annually generates \$703 million in economic impact, supports 8,401 jobs, and brings in \$51.1 million in tax revenue.<sup>7</sup>

*“If tourism did not exist, each household would have to pay almost \$200 more in state and local taxes to replace the taxes generated by tourism spending.”*

**–“Discover Front Royal: In the Know!” by Felicia Hart,  
Director, Community Development and Tourism,  
Town of Front Royal, October 2019**



Above, Oak Hill, home of President Monroe, Aldie, VA. By Kenneth L. Garrett

<sup>7</sup> The Economic Impact of National Heritage Areas: A Case Study of the Journey Through Hallowed Ground NHA,” Tripp Umbach, 2015; [www.nps.gov/history/heritageareas/](http://www.nps.gov/history/heritageareas/)



# Agritourism

## Agritourism

The Code of Virginia defines Agritourism as:

*“Any activity carried out on a farm or ranch that allows members of the general public, for recreational, entertainment, or educational purposes, to view or enjoy rural activities, including farming, wineries, ranching, historical, cultural, harvest-your-own activities, or natural activities and attractions.”*<sup>1</sup>

History and heritage are critical components of the overall attraction to agricultural centers. Many visitors are attracted to traditional offerings such as pumpkin patches and hayrides, but farms throughout the Heritage Area increasingly offer newer, more innovative attractions including farm-to-table meals and bed-and-breakfast accommodations in rehabilitated historic structures.

A 2018 study by Visit Loudoun reported that Agritourism’s economic impact in the county was more than \$413 million.<sup>2</sup> The study went on to note that Loudoun’s Agritourism businesses hosted more than one million people that year. Many farms are open as “pick your own” experiences for school groups and adults while others sell artisanal wares, including cheeses, jellies, honey, baked goods, original artwork, and custom-made furniture. Loudoun and Fauquier Counties have also seen rapid growth in recent years of another part of Agritourism, craft beverage operations: wineries, breweries, cideries, distilleries, and vineyards.

Across the state of Virginia some 1,400 establishments fall within the Agritourism sector. In 2015, the economic activity resulting from statewide Agritourism was approximately \$2.2 billion.<sup>3</sup> As the chart below from the 2017 Virginia Agricultural Census shows, Agritourism is a robust presence in each of the five counties in the Heritage Area.

County:	Number of Farms:	Land in Farms (acres):	Estimated Market Value of Land and Buildings (per farm):
Clarke	427	66,641	\$1,099,589
Fauquier	1,154	216,666	\$1,381,646
Loudoun	1,259	121,932	\$950,622
Prince William	304	22,874	\$804,671
Warren	321	38,697	\$909,921

[www.nass.usda.gov/publications](http://www.nass.usda.gov/publications)



1 (Code of Virginia §3.2-6400).

2 “Loudoun County Agritourism Abundance: Industry Nets \$400m.” by Kara Clark Rodriguez, LoudounNow, November 20, 2019.

3 “The Economic and Fiscal Impacts of Agritourism in Virginia,” by Vincent P. Magnini, Ph.D., Virginia Tech Pamplin College of Business, April 2017.

## Equine Industry:

# Spotlight

“Hunt Country” is a loose description that applies to part of every county in the Virginia Piedmont Heritage Area. Most of the area’s equestrian activity is in western Loudoun, Fauquier, and Clarke counties, but Prince William and Warren also have many horse farms and facilities. The Upperville Colt and Horse Show in Fauquier County is the oldest in the country, having been established in 1853. Foxhunting clubs, such as the Piedmont Fox Hounds, Orange County Hounds, Warrenton Hunt, Old Dominion Hounds, Blue Ridge Hunt, Loudoun Hunt, Middleburg Hunt, and Loudoun Fairfax Hunt, have decades - if not over a century - of history, and still hold their meets in the Heritage Area.

Loudoun County has the largest number of horses in the Heritage Area, as well as the most horse shows and competitions in the state. In 2013 the economic impact of the horse business in Loudoun totaled \$180 million.<sup>4</sup> That same year there were 118 equestrian events in the county that attracted tourists and residents alike. Morven Park’s equestrian events alone brought in 44,636 people in 2018.

The two annual Gold Cup races at Great Meadow, located near The Plains in Fauquier County, attracted 95,000 attendees in 2019 and an additional 20,000 people attended its Twilight Polo events. In 2015, Great Meadow’s statewide economic impact was some \$6.4 million.<sup>5</sup> An earlier agricultural study found that the annual economic impact of the equine industry in Fauquier was in the vicinity of \$47.4 million.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> “The Economic Contribution of the Horse Industry in Loudoun County.” By Terance J. Rephann, Ph.D., Center for Economic and Policy Studies, Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, University of Virginia, October 30, 2015.

<sup>5</sup> “The Economic Impact of Great Meadow in Northern Virginia MSA and Virginia,” Prepared for Virginia Tourism Corporation by Chmura Economics and Analytics, November 6, 2017.

<sup>6</sup> “Agriculture in Fauquier County: Characteristics, Trends, and Economic Impacts.” By Terance J. Rephann, Ph.D., Weldon Cooper Center for Public Policy, University of Virginia, May 2014.







### Craft Beverage Industry:

# Spotlight

In 2014, wine tourism’s economic impact in Fauquier County was \$4.3 million.<sup>7</sup> In Loudoun County, in 2018 the entire craft beverage industry’s economic impact was near \$413 million<sup>8</sup> and it provides more than 4,000 full-time jobs.<sup>9</sup> According to the Virginia Wine Marketing Office, in 2015 some 2.2 million people visited the state’s wineries and vineyards, spending approximately \$188 million.

Aside from the economic benefits, wineries and other craft beverage industries support the Heritage Area by preserving open space viewsheds and some have become key partners in the drive to protect our landscape with conservation easements.

County	Wineries	Breweries	Distilleries	Cideries or Meaderies
Clarke	3			
Loudoun	44	24	2	6
Fauquier	25	8		1
Prince William	6	14	2	
Warren	1	2		

Current as of February 2020

<sup>7</sup> “Terance J. Rephann, “Agriculture in Fauquier County: Characteristics, Trends, and Economic Impacts,” Weldon Cooper Center for Public Policy, University of Virginia, May 2014.

<sup>8</sup> “Loudoun County Agritourism Abundance: Industry Nets \$400m,” by Kara Clark Rodriguez, LoudounNow, November 20, 2019.

<sup>9</sup> From Visit Loudoun.



# Weddings

## Something Old is Something New

The Virginia Piedmont Heritage Area has become a very popular destination for elegant weddings in the country, featuring farm-to-table food, historic buildings, and the natural beauty of the landscape. Wedding venues include large properties such as Oatlands, Rust Manor, and Morven Park, along with mills, barns, old schools, and tasting rooms. Counties and their citizens benefit greatly from this growing segment of the Agritourism industry because weddings bring visitors and significant economic value to the Heritage Area. The adaptively reused structures help maintain the historic rural fabric of the area and provide a buffer against residential development.

According to a 2016 Loudoun County economic impact study, 71 percent of the weddings held in the county are hosted by families that live elsewhere. Loudoun has fifty-five wedding venues, each holding an average of forty-two weddings or large events a year. The average cost of each event is more than \$40,000, and brings in an average of 126 guests, 90 percent of whom stay at a county hotel, lodge, or bed-and-breakfast and spend money throughout their trip. The overall combined economic impact of the wedding industry in 2016 was \$118 million and accounts for some \$7 million in tax revenues.<sup>1</sup>

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1 George Washington University, Economic Impact of Weddings in Loudoun County, 2017, Findings By: Lisa Delpy Neirrotti, Ph.D , [www.visitloudoun.org](http://www.visitloudoun.org)







Rippon Lodge Historic Site, courtesy of Prince William County Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism.



Blandy State Arboretum, by Katie Proudman





# Conclusion

*“The true story of your area is the one worth telling. The story of the authentic contributions previous generations have made to the history and culture of where you live is the one that will interest visitors.”<sup>1</sup>*

– Fauquier County Comprehensive Plan

This report has established that preservation, conservation, restoration, tourism, open space, and agriculture all provide substantial benefits to our communities. Preservation generates millions of dollars of economic value and is responsible for many new jobs and local businesses which in turn, produce millions of dollars in local tax revenues at very little public cost.

Preservation has proven to be an important component of economic growth. The challenge is to seek new ways to strengthen and support preservation as a profitable segment of the region’s economy and we believe this report contributes to that goal.

## In summary:

- Protecting our historic, cultural, and natural resources is of paramount value, and warrants the time, effort, and money required to ensure their preservation. These resources define the unique character of our special communities that attract residents and tourists.
- Saving historic structures through Adaptive Reuse, whether for housing or for small businesses on Main Street, is cost-effective, environmentally responsible, and contributes to the attractiveness of a community by preserving authenticity and charm.
- Contrary to what many assume, turning open space into subdivisions to house more taxpayers is actually three times more expensive for the county than preserving existing open space. Counties need to carefully plan residential expansion in locations that are appropriate and have adequate infrastructure.
- Conservation easements and county programs that permanently protect our open space universally benefit residents, tourists, and county coffers.
- Agritourism plays an important role in historic land preservation and it should be encouraged within the Heritage Area in locations that are determined to be appropriate.
- Tourists are attracted to authentic experiences that connect them with natural historic landscapes that have provided beauty and tranquility for generations. As daily dependence on technology increases, travel is becoming the predominant “disconnect to connect” opportunity with loved ones.<sup>2</sup>
- The public seeks responsible sustainability in products and experiences, as well as travel settings that portray a high quality of life.

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<sup>1</sup> Fauquier County, Comprehensive Plan, Appendix III, “Preservation Programs and Other Planning Tools.” Page 8

<sup>2</sup> “Travel Trends: Shaping VTC Marketing.” Virginia Tourism Corporation, 7<https://www.vatc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Travel-Trends-Shaping-VTC-Marketing.pdf>





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Our mission is to educate and advocate for the preservation of the extraordinary historical landscape and culture of the Northern Virginia Piedmont and Lower Shenandoah Valley for future generations.

The Virginia Piedmont Heritage Area is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization and all donations are tax-deductible to the extent provided by law.

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