

Protecting Our Natural Resources and Landscapes through Conservation Agreements

-Geordie Newman
Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage

Under what circumstances might a landowner enter into a Conservation Agreement for their property? Each property is unique. Each landowner's circumstances and goals differ. To properly match conservation strategies with individual properties and landowner circumstances requires a thorough understanding of conservation tools. Some conservation agreements provide tax deductions for landowners. Others pay for easements. It is critical for the landowner to determine their goal for the future of the property. Easements are typically permanent or donated "in perpetuity". The owner maintains ownership of the property. Depending on the agreement terms, development rights may be restricted to varying degrees.

Harriett Crosby recognized a very special place in Frederick County that she wanted to protect for future generations of wildlife as well as people. Although the forested property is only twelve acres, a pristine 30-foot waterfall is located there. Harriett decided to donate a permanent easement on the property to the Catocin Land Trust. As a result of the conservation easement, this ecologically significant area of Frederick County will be permanently protected for future generations.

When asked about the property and waterfall, Harriett said, "It is more than beautiful, it is sacred, a place where people can come to restore their sanity, to connect with the powerful flow of water and remember what is really important in their lives, to open their hearts to the beauty of nature and to protect whatever parts of God's creation we feel responsible for."

Conservation agreements are a great way to protect the natural resources and rural heritage of Frederick County for future generations. The County has several conservation options that may be used to protect farms, forests and other landscapes. The Catocin Land Trust meets with interested landowners to review conservation alternatives. The Trust works with each owner to structure an agreement that best achieves the owner's desires for the land.

For additional information on conservation easements and possibilities for your land, contact Geordie Newman by email at newmans914@yahoo.com or by phone at 410.310.6270.