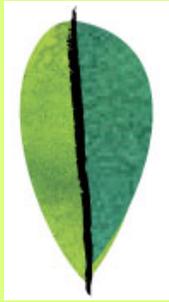


Rolling Ridge Conservancy

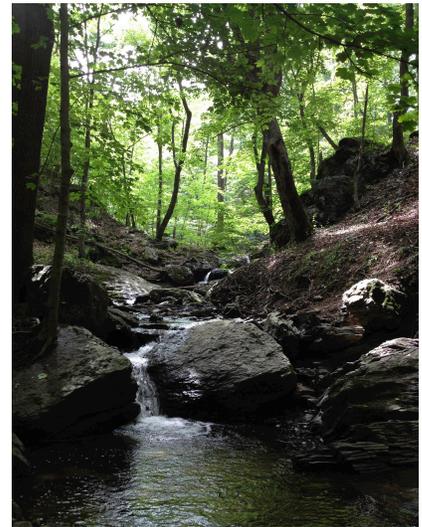


STRATEGIC VISION
2022-2027



OUR MISSION

The Rolling Ridge Conservancy protects, preserves, and nurtures its entrusted wilderness and ensures that human interactions with the land are sustainable, respectful, inspiring, and inclusive now and for generations to come.



STATEMENT OF STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Our goal is to ensure the long-term sustainability and resilience of the Rolling Ridge Conservancy so it can steward, protect, and enhance the forests and streams in balance with the humans who enjoy and seek solace on this sacred land. Over the next five years, we intend to grow our capacity to meet the challenges and opportunities of land conservation, restoration, ecological stewardship, and wilderness experience by building a dynamic infrastructure, a community of engaged supporters and partners, and stronger financial grounding.



HISTORY

THE ROLLING RIDGE CONSERVANCY STEWARDS A GEM

of protected land nestled between the Appalachian Trail on the Blue Ridge to the east and the Shenandoah River to the west. Nearly 1500 acres of land have been preserved since the 1970s, when a generous, forward-thinking Quaker family, the Niles, created a land trust (Rolling Ridge Foundation), and placed the land under conservation in the capable hands of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy.

For over forty years, Rolling Ridge Foundation operated through an all-volunteer Board of Trustees that managed the property and provided access and support to three organizations that offered educational, spiritual, and life affirming programs, camps, and retreats. Conservation in the early years was more often a matter of abiding by the easement, doing no harm, maintaining trails, and ensuring that those who enjoyed the land did so in thoughtful, respectful ways. The Foundation provided a gentle framework for communication among three organizations that participated on the Board and provided financial support for modest administrative needs.

Recognizing that the forest ecosystem endures far more stress from climate change, invasive species, understory and habitat degradation, and loss of biodiversity, the Foundation commissioned a Forest Stewardship Plan for 2015-2025 with the help of a grant from the West Virginia Division of Forestry. A part-time land steward

(cont'd on next page)

was contracted to mobilize volunteers and implement recommendations. To date the Foundation has planted native trees and shrubs, restored native plants along stream banks, built stream crossings, installed water bars along trails, and removed countless invasive species including barberry, oriental bittersweet, ailanthus and others.

In 2019 we began operating as the Rolling Ridge Conservancy, a name that better conveys our mission. In 2021, the land steward took a full-time position in Virginia and one of the partner organizations made the decision to end its work at Rolling Ridge. These changes have provided catalysts for RRC to reflect on the legacy of the past and look to the future thoughtfully and strategically to envision the next three to five years and beyond.

The Board, partner organizations, visitors, and volunteers are dedicated and passionate about this land that we love and that pileated woodpeckers, spotted salamanders, deer, foxes, screech owls, poplars, pawpaws, trillium, butterflies and spiders call Home.

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS





CORE VALUES



STEWARDSHIP

- ◆ We commit ourselves to being good stewards of the land, respecting the wisdom of past generations and cultures and honoring these earthly gifts by protecting and nurturing a healthy, biodiverse ecosystem through responsible forestry practices.



SUSTAINABILITY

- ◆ We seek to protect this wilderness for future generations, building resilience and adaptability into both the ecosystem and the organization responsible for it, working collaboratively, creatively, effectively, and responsibly.



EQUITABLE ACCESS

- ◆ We welcome, encourage, and support all who walk gently on this land, mindful of our interdependence with other living beings in this peaceable wilderness, respectful and accepting of all the nuances of diversity that comprise our common humanity.

MUTUAL FLOURISHING

- ◆ We believe humans and nature can interact in mutually beneficial ways. We commit to balancing the needs of the ecosystem and our wild kin with the needs of the people who live, work, and play here so that our impact is life-giving to all.



WILDERNESS EDUCATION

- ◆ We see outdoor education as an opportunity to connect with wilderness, to experience the healing powers of the forest, to teach and learn both scientific and spiritual ways of understanding and to practice respectful interactions with nature. We support opportunities to give the next generation of land stewards a place to develop the wisdom and skills to sustain earth's gifts far into the future.



PRIORITIES + OBJECTIVES:

Immediate and Ongoing Steps taken over the next 3-5 years in Service of our Mission and Strategic Direction



CONSERVATION: PROTECT AND PRESERVE THE LAND

- **Acquire 100 acres of adjacent land** to maintain integrity of property boundaries and trails, increase protected land, and build a buffer against encroaching development.
- **Renew, revise, and update the Conservation Easement** with the ATC to consolidate protections, strengthen defensibility, and reflect partner organization transitions.
- **Develop a landscape resilience hub**, connecting with adjacent neighbors and networking with local conservation efforts.



STEWARDSHIP: NURTURE A THRIVING, RESILIENT, DIVERSE ECOSYSTEM, ENHANCE THE CAPACITY OF THE LAND TO SEQUESTER CARBON, AND SUPPORT WATERSHED HEALTH

- **Contract with a full-time land steward** to monitor the health and needs of the forest, soil, waterways, and wildlife; coordinate and mobilize volunteers to implement conservation practices and tasks; maintain trails and boundaries; monitor land for safety and respectful use; and work with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, (ATC), and Clark County to monitor Easements.
- **Implement selective, honorable, timber harvesting practices** to diversify forest species, improve wildlife habitat, and build resilience.
- **Create a Land Stewardship Guide** for partner organizations and residents on the land.



RESPECTFUL USE: PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES TO ENJOY RRC LAND WHILE ENSURING BENEFICIAL IMPACT

- **Establish a thriving hub for experiential learning** with particular emphasis on wilderness education and commitment to youth.
- **Support programs and organizations** on the land that provide opportunities to teach and learn how to be kin with nature.
- **Evaluate existing trail system** to ensure that no trails cross vulnerable wilderness and create new trails where appropriate.
- **Build opportunities for collaboration** between partner organizations on the land.



OUTREACH AND COMMUNICATION: CULTIVATE RELATIONSHIPS

- **Redesign the website** and develop regular communication strategies to reach out to the wider community, cultivate relationships with visitors, volunteers, and donors.
- **Establish Friends of RRC network** to build a strong, engaged community of support and volunteerism.
- **Communicate effectively with visitors** through updated trail maps, interpretive signage, information about the land including rules and expectations.
- **Host workshops, demonstrations, and educational events** on topics such as regenerative forestry, WV ecology, wildlife habitat, and best stewardship practices.



DYNAMIC GOVERNANCE: BUILD OUR CAPACITY TO FULFILL OUR MISSION

- **Evaluate personnel needs** and Board officer transitions to increase the capacity of the Board to do its work effectively.
- **Create a development plan** to cultivate ongoing funding through annual giving, grant writing, and creative fundraising events.
- **Review and update partner organization agreements.**
- **Establish an RRC office.**
- **Transform RRC from a private foundation to a public charity** to diversify sources of income.



2022 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

- Linda DeGraf** (*Chair*) – RRSR Residential Community, educator, pollinator gardener, WV Master Naturalist
- Kimberly Benson** (*Vice-Chair*) - FWC general manager, scientist, naturalist, climate activist
- Ann Stone** (*Treasurer*) – FWC, retired psychologist, native West Virginian, hiker, tree hugger and dog lover
- Joy Houck Bauer** (*Secretary*) – RRSR Residential Community, educator, mom, writer
- Rob Glenn** – RRSR, real estate lawyer, hiker, former pres. of Jefferson Co. Farmland Protection Board
- Martha Mason Semmes** – FWC, land use planning and historic preservation consultant, hiker
- John Flower** – FWC, China Folk House, educator
- Dick Bell** – At-Large, Quaker, educator, writer
- Gene Lewis** – At-Large, Cool Spring Site Manager, outdoor lover, proud grandfather
- Christian Mollitor** – At-Large, AT hiker, dog dad, yoga teacher, maritime lawyer
- Kristen Saacke Blunk** – RRSR Residential Community, conservationist, Headwaters field liaison, hiker
- Patrick Shunney** – At-Large, Owner of Shunney Timberworks, timber framer, hiker/trail runner



ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT:

Bookkeeper/Accountant - Liz Delmar



Rolling Ridge Conservancy

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