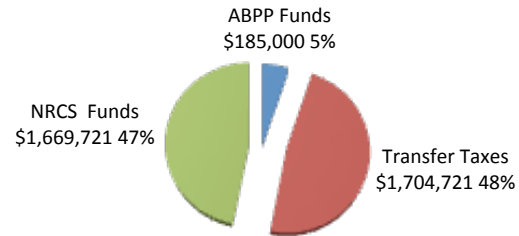


## How We Funded Fiscal Year 2012 Easements

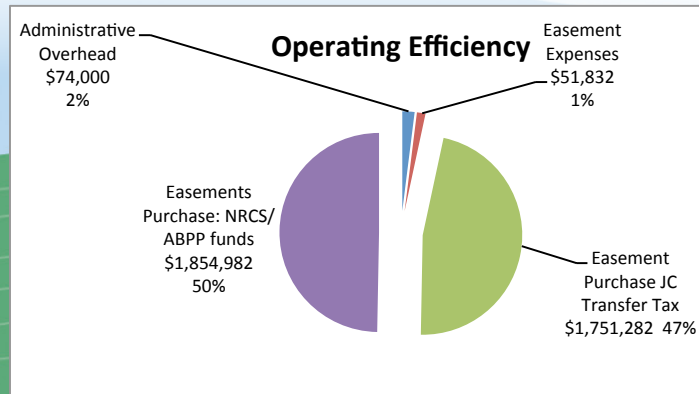
The Board's FY 2012 easements were funded through three sources:

1) Jefferson County real estate transfer tax; 2) Matching funding from the USDA/National Resource Conservation Service, and 3) matching funds from NPS/ABPP. In 2012, we paid farmers \$3,559,941. Of that, \$1,704,721 came from transfer taxes, \$1,669,721 from NRCS, and \$185,000 from NPS/ABPP.

### Funding Sources for FY12 Easements



The chart Operating Efficiency shows that of the total program costs, administrative overhead composed one percent and easement expenses two percent.



## Our Partners

The Jefferson County Farmland Protection Board could not accomplish the considerable work of completing easements without its many partners and supporters. The Board appreciates the collegial and professional support of the staff and volunteers of the following organizations:

- The Jefferson County Development Authority
- The Jefferson County Prosecuting Attorney's Office
- The Jefferson County Planning and Zoning Office
- The Jefferson County GIS Office
- The many other County employees who have assisted us
- Our conservation partners: the Land Trust of the Eastern Panhandle, The Potomac Conservancy, The Nature Conservancy, National Park Service/American Battlefield Protection Program, Civil War Preservation Trust, Berkeley County Farmland Protection Board.



Jefferson County Farmland Protection Board

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Cover Photo Credit: Shepherd Ogden

# The Jefferson County Farmland Protection Board ANNUAL REPORT



This report is for the period of July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012.

## Who We Are

Established by the Jefferson County Commission in 2000, the Jefferson County Farmland Protection Board (Board) protects important farmland throughout the County by accepting donations of conservation easements and through purchases of conservation easements from willing sellers.

As dictated by the West Virginia Voluntary Farmland Protection Act, The Board is composed of seven county residents appointed by the County Commission, each serving without compensation. Each is a voting member, except for the Jefferson County Commissioner, who serves in a non-voting, advisory capacity.

## Farmland Protection Board Members FY 2012

- One County Commissioner (non-voting) – Mrs. Frances Morgan
- The Executive Director of the County Development Authority – Mr. John Reisenweber
- One farmer who is a member of the county Farm Bureau – Mr. Bob Henshaw
- One farmer who is a member of the Soil Conservation District – Mr. Nick Kercheval
- One farmer at large – Mr. Chris Lotze
- Two county residents who are not members of any of the above organizations – Mr. Peter Fricke, and Ms. Elizabeth D. McDonald, Board President

Elizabeth Wheeler, the Board Administrator, supports the work of purchasing and accepting donated conservation easements.

## Why We Protect Farmland

A strategy for protecting farmland in our rural areas is vital to the future of the agricultural industry, because the loss of land resources will have an adverse effect on all farm-related businesses. For agriculture to remain viable there must be a critical mass of farms to sustain the infrastructure (suppliers of machinery, crop inputs and fuel, veterinarians, repair services, etc.). Each time a farm is sold for

non-agricultural uses, the viability of every other agricultural operation in Jefferson County is threatened.

Agricultural land is a non-renewable resource. The simplest way to secure productive farmland for future use in Jefferson County is to protect it with a Deed of Conservation Easement.

## What is an Easement?

A Deed of Conservation Easement is a flexible legal tool that enables landowners to permanently protect the natural, agricultural, scenic and historic values of all or part of their property from development and subdivision. Property owners retain full use and ownership of the land. Because an easement is perpetual, it is transferred with the property when it is sold, thereby protecting it forever.

The Jefferson County Farmland Protection Board negotiates with eligible property owners to place a conservation easement on properties that qualify for consideration under the terms established by the Jefferson County Commission-approved farmland protection program.

## Funding Sources

Funding for the Jefferson County Farmland Protection Board was established under a state law passed in 2002 that allows West Virginia counties to levy a transfer tax on real estate transactions to purchase agricultural development rights from willing landowners. The local share of easement funding is generated through Jefferson County real estate transfer tax and private donations.

The County's revenue is matched by funding from several partners, including the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, (USDA/NRCS), the National

Park Service/American Battlefield Protection Program (NPS/ABPP), The Nature Conservancy, and other private sources.

## Accomplishments in Fiscal Year 2012

In FY 2012, the Board purchased agricultural easements on 870 acres on seven farms in Jefferson County. Through partnership with the USDA/NRCS, and NPS/ABPP, farmers received an average of \$4,092 per acre for development rights. On average, farmers donated about 22 percent of the appraised easement value, thus stretching the Board's limited dollars further. To date, the Board has protected 3,479 acres on 36 farms. Another 472 acres on three farms are funded and in process.

