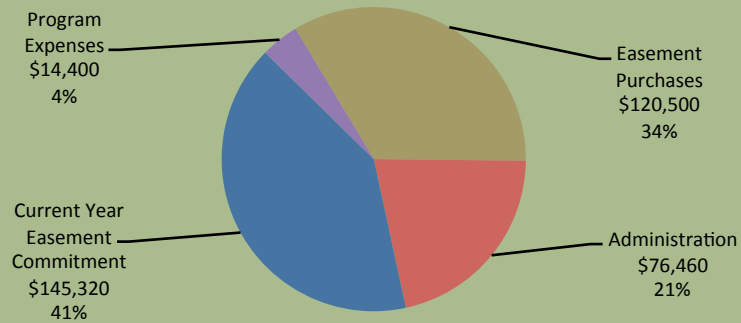


How We Funded Fiscal Year 2014 Easements

In 2014, the Board paid one landowner \$241,000 for an easement on 60.23 acres through two sources: 1) Jefferson County real estate transfer tax (\$120,500), and 2) matching funding from the USDA/National Resource Conservation Service (\$120,500). The landowner received \$4,000 per acre for the development rights.

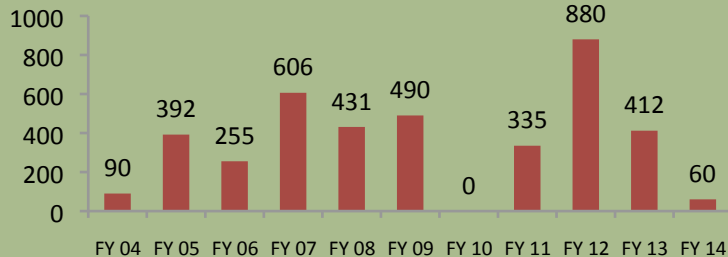
FY 14 Expenses



2014 Funding Sources



Acres Protected



■ 3,952 Acres on 39 Farms Protected Through June 30, 2014

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:

Our conservation partners, including the USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Service, NPS/American Battlefield Protection Program, Land Trust of the Eastern Panhandle, The Potomac Conservancy, The Nature Conservancy, Civil War Preservation Trust, the Berkeley County Farmland Protection Board and the West Virginia Agricultural Lands Protection Authority
 The Jefferson County Development Authority
 The Jefferson County GIS Office
 The Jefferson County Planning and Zoning Office
 The Jefferson County Prosecuting Attorney's Office
 The many other County employees who have assisted us during FY 2014.

The Jefferson County Farmland Protection Board ANNUAL REPORT



Jefferson County Farmland Protection Board

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Cover Photo: John C. Funkhouser

This report is for the period of July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014.

“Agriculture is an integral and viable part of the County’s economy, landscape, natural resources, and sense of community.”

—Jefferson County Commission 2000

Who We Are The mission of the Jefferson County Farmland Protection Board is to protect productive farmland for future generations in order to maintain the long-term viability of agriculture in Jefferson County.

Established by the Jefferson County Commission in 2000, the Jefferson County Farmland Protection Board (Board) protects important farmland throughout the County by purchasing conservation easements from willing sellers and accepting donations of conservation easements. We collaborate with partner organizations to provide effective stewardship of the easements to ensure the long-term protection of farmland.

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 2014

One County Commissioner (non-voting) **Jane Tabb**

Executive Director, Jefferson County Development Authority

John Reisenweber

One farmer, a member of the county Farm Bureau **Russ Quinn**

One farmer, a member of the Soil Conservation District **Nick Kercheval**

One farmer at large **David Ober**

Two county residents who are not members of any of the above organizations **Robert Glenn** and **Elizabeth D. McDonald, Board President**

Board Administrator **Elizabeth Wheeler.**

Why We Protect Farmland

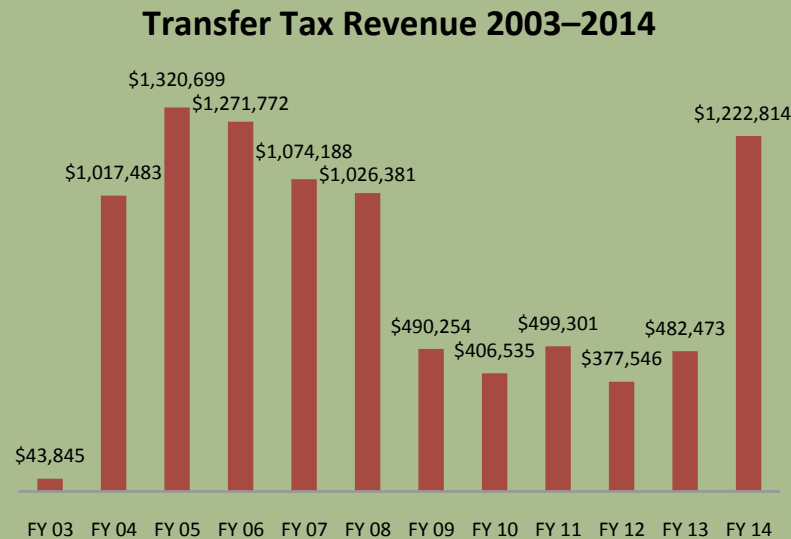
Agricultural land is a non-renewable resource. A strategy for protecting farmland in our rural areas is vital to the future of the agricultural community. Agriculture supports jobs and the farming infrastructure (finance, machinery dealers, crop inputs, veterinarians, services, etc.) A vibrant farming economy supports tourism and benefits consumers and neighbors who value local food and the rural way of life. Each time a farm is sold for non-agricultural uses, the viability of every other agricultural operation in Jefferson County is diminished.

The Farmland Protection Program was created to provide an effective and lasting method to secure productive farmland for future use in Jefferson County.

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 Board negotiates with eligible landowners 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 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 fund the purchase of 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 the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, (USDA/NRCS), the National Park Service/American Battlefield Protection Program (NPS/ABPP), private sources, and donations of easement value.

Accomplishments in Fiscal Year 2014 In FY 2014, the Board purchased agricultural easements on 60.23 acres on one farm in Jefferson County through partnership with the USDA/NRCS. To date, the Board has protected 3,951 acres on 39 farms. Currently, another 509 acres on three farms are in the easement process.

The Board continues to carry out its strategic plan developed in 2013 with extensive community input to guide its work. The Board’s strategic direction includes five elements:

- 1 The Farmland Protection Board must establish a more deliberate plan of action that places a priority on productive soils and an effective scale of conservation.
- 2 The Board must make itself known better among the landowners and farmers it serves, as well as among the diverse communities and organizations that benefit from its conservation efforts.
- 3 With responsibility today for 39 farms and nearly 4,000 acres of land, the Board must invest more time in managing its stewardship responsibilities.
- 4 The Board needs to develop additional financial resources to protect agricultural land.
- 5 The farmland protection program will continue to operate under the highest professional, legal and ethical standards. Our operations, project selection, transactions and stewardship activities must conform to accepted best practices in land conservation.

The Board takes a conservative approach to finances and program management. FY 14 administrative and personnel costs totaled \$76,460 or 21% of total expenses. Easement costs, including legal and professional fees totaled \$14,400 or 4% of total easement costs. Net of income over expenditures is \$997,568. In compliance with State law, the Board’s books are audited by external auditors and reviewed by the State Auditor’s Office annually. The audits passed successfully in FY-2013 and in all previous years.