



West Virginia Division of Forestry
www.wvforestry.com
Joe Manchin III, Governor
Randy Dye, Director/State Forester

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Leslie Fitzwater, Public Information Specialist (304) 558-2003 ext. 342,
Leslie.C.Fitzwater@wv.gov

Contact: Randy Dye, State Forester, (304) 558-2788, C.Randy.Dye@wv.gov

West Virginia's first Forest Legacy property purchased
764-acre tract in Hampshire County will remain a working forest

CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Gov. Joe Manchin and State Forester Randy Dye today signed a contract officially purchasing development rights for the state's first Forest Legacy property.

“This first transaction is important to the future of West Virginia's scenic and productive forestland and I thank everyone for working together to make it possible,” Gov. Manchin said. “This is a significant step toward ensuring the sustainability of our state's forests.”

The Forest Legacy Program is a partnership between West Virginia and the USDA Forest Service that identifies and helps conserve important forestlands from conversion to nonforest uses. The program purchases conservation easements, or development rights, on properties, still allowing the landowners to continue owning and managing the land as working forests. These easements ensure that the land will not be developed, but remain forested forever.

State Forester Dye said that these easements are permanent. “Once in place, the contract cannot be changed or terminated. The easement remains with the property, even if the land is purchased by a new owner,” he said. “These working forests continue to be managed and provide forest products, wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, scenic beauty and clean water.”

- More -

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Farmington (304) 825-6983
Beckley (304) 256-6775
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West Virginia's first Forest Legacy project is a conservation easement on property owned by Dr. and Mrs. Timothy Stewart of Romney. The Stewart property is located in Hampshire County, on the western side of the Trough, along the South Branch of the Potomac River. The property contains 764 acres of productive forestland that the Stewarts manage for timber, wildlife and aesthetic values.

Dye said that Dr. and Mrs. Stewart care deeply about their land and personally donated the required 25 percent matching funds to cover the project's costs.

"Maintaining the property as a working forest not only helps protect water quality in the South Branch, as well as the Chesapeake Bay, but also the view for canoeists and anglers who come from all over the world to visit the Trough," he said.

Dye said that the project's success is due to many people's hard work and dedication. He echoed the governor's sentiments thanking all the parties that were involved in the effort, including his own staff, Dr. and Mrs. Stewart, the USDA Forest Service, the West Virginia Stewardship Committee and the Forest Legacy Subcommittee.

For more information about the Forest Legacy Program, visit the Division of Forestry's Web site at www.wvforestry.com.

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