



COUNTY OF PRINCE WILLIAM

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Brentsville District

Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation
Attn: Virginia Land Conservation Foundation
203 Governor Street, Suite 326
Richmond, Virginia 23219

September 16, 2005

To whom it may concern:

I am pleased to offer a letter of support for the Prince William Conservation Alliance grant application on behalf of Merrimac Farm. This property, located in central Prince William County, has long been held in some type of land conservation. Prior to the death of Colonel Dean McDowell, the owner, Colonel and Mrs. McDowell, placed the acreage in an Agricultural/Forestal District. In addition, the piece lies within an area designated by the Prince William County Board of Supervisors in 1998, as the "Rural Crescent."

Merrimac Farm is also situated along Cedar Run, in one of the most culturally significant areas of Prince William County. "Brent Town," one of the first settlements in Prince William was established in the vicinity in the late 1600's, by Richard Foote, an original grantee of King Charles II. The Foote family and descendants kept the land in large tracts for farming well into the 19th Century. In the 18th Century, the land which was to become part of Merrimac Farm also was the 3rd Prince William County Seat and the original Court House site is now on Marine Corps property.

The United States Marine Corps has agreed to assist the Prince William Conservation Alliance with 50% of the purchase price for Merrimac Farm and to construct a wetland bank on the site. This proposed partnership with the federal government underscores the value this land conservancy would bring to the taxpayers.

The Marine Corps funds coupled with a grant from the state through the Virginia Lands program will provide citizens with more than 100 acres of contiguous non-tidal wetlands. I have personally walked the property and I can attest to the all-encompassing natural beauty and wild life.

As Supervisor for the Brentsville District, I know that the preservation of Merrimac Farm would be a cultural and environmental resource that citizens from all over the region could enjoy. Your favorable support of this proposal is requested.

Sincerely,

W.S. Wally Covington
Supervisor, Brentsville District