



PRINCE
WILLIAM
SOIL AND WATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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September 19, 2005

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

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Prince William Soil & Water Conservation District Board of Directors and staff, this letter is in support of the Prince William Conservation Alliance's initiative to preserve Merrimac Farm in Nokesville, Virginia.

Merrimac Farm's natural features-- wetlands, waterways, forests, and meadows-- support diverse plants and wildlife. Conservation of Merrimac's wetlands and waterways supports ongoing efforts to reduce pollution in Cedar Run and the Occoquan Reservoir through the local TMDL and Tributary Strategy endeavors.

Preservation of the farm features and forested areas on Merrimac Farm directly supports state conservation goals. In Northern Virginia's steadily urbanizing environment it's important to conserve significant acreage for healthy plant and wildlife diversity.

The Prince William Soil & Water Conservation District is especially pleased to support the Conservation Alliance in this project because, in addition to evident water quality and wildlife benefits, Merrimac Farm would serve as a site to educate and inspire the local community about conservation in Northern Virginia.

The local community in many ways has become disconnected from the natural environment. They live in urban and suburban settings where meadows have become manicured, nutrient-rich lawns. Tree-lined farm lanes have been replaced with asphalt roads. The sound of buzzing insects and birdcalls are being drowned out by the roar of commuter traffic. Aquatic life that once thrived

Providing grassroots solutions to conserve natural resources



in clear streams is choked with sediment runoff. Merrimac Farm can, as it has in the past, serve as a place for citizens to reconnect to nature.

We envision using Merrimac's features as outdoor classrooms for students and families seeking meaningful watershed experiences, to provide scouts with opportunities for community service and project sites, to help farmers recognize the benefit of buffers, and as a site to facilitate outreach programs for community leaders, planners and developers to demonstrate the importance of wetland and natural resource conservation to a sustainable future for Prince William County and its' residents. This includes improving quality of life, enhancing economic development opportunities and protecting our public drinking water supply.

Prince William Soil & Water Conservation District is a strong supporter of the preservation of Merrimac Farm through the efforts of the Prince William Conservation Alliance and its' partners. We encourage you to carefully consider the costs relative to the benefits provided to the community and approve the proposal presented by the Prince William Conservation Alliance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ronald Burgess".

Ronald Burgess, Chairman
Prince William SWCD

CC: Kim Hosen, Director, Prince William Conservation Alliance
PWSWCD Board of Directors and Staff