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Partnerships for Protection: Northern Virginia Conservation Trust and Crest of Alexandria host a Conservation Celebration

Alexandria, VA— Despite the winter chill, local residents of the Crest of Alexandria community came out to celebrate the conservation of Piney Run’s natural habitat and scenic landscapes. This parcel of land, located within the Crest of Alexandria residential community, is nearly 20 acres of forests, meadows, and trails. Throughout the trail loop, there are HOA-managed recreational opportunities such as exercise equipment, a pickleball court, and a gazebo. The easement ensures the balance between recreation, nature, and development.

“it’s music to our ears that you can meld conservation and development in a way that is sustainable. This easement is a great example of that. The Partnerships that we pulled together and that everyone involved worked on are how this work gets done” said NVCT Executive Director Alan Rowsome.

Conservation and development often don’t work well together. However, this new conservation agreement exemplifies how development can sustainably exist alongside environmental preservation when community leaders come together. “An easement is a piece of paper that transfers a bundle of rights from one group of people to another, but in this case, it’s much more than that. It is all of us coming together to preserve very precious assets: the land, the waterways, and the animals that inhabit them,” said Elm Street Communities developer Jack Perkins, the site developer who envisioned the senior community. Others who joined in the celebratory event included Crest of Alexandria Home Owners Association President Lucinda Audey and Fairfax County Board Supervisor Rodney Lusk.

“This project is an excellent example of collaboration between property developers, homeowners' associations, and local conservation organizations to preserve the natural beauty of Fairfax County. It presents a unique opportunity to connect privately owned trails with land in the Fairfax County Park Authority system. I believe strongly in the benefits of outdoor recreation opportunities, which contribute to healthier, more resilient communities.” said Springfield District Supervisor Rodney Lusk.

Residents have already recognized the value of this parcel of land and have been stewarding it long before it was protected. “Weed Warriors” worked to remove invasive plants from the area, and many of those volunteers were present at the celebration. Other work that has been accomplished on the nature preserve include restoration of a meadow and other forested areas.

Festivities were wrapped up when NVCT affixed its sign to the entrance post of the trail, and attendees took a celebratory hike of the property. A downy woodpecker and eastern bluebird made guest appearances along the way, to everyone’s delight. We are grateful for the opportunity to work with Fairfax County residents and elected officials once again to protect the most important places across the county. Piney Run is NVCT’s 61st preserved property in Fairfax, which collectively adds nearly 1,000 acres of protected nature to the county!

About Northern Virginia Conservation Trust

The Northern Virginia Conservation Trust was founded in 1994 and is a regional non-profit land trust that works to preserve the land and natural resources of Northern Virginia. Located in Annandale, Virginia, we have protected close to 9,000 acres of land that serves 3 million residents in Northern Virginia. We work with landowners to keep their land thriving and abundant with life, both for them and the nearby nature of Northern Virginia. We strive to make these conservation opportunities and knowledge accessible to all community members by promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in everything we do.

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