



PIEDMONT ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL

nominated by Lowell Smith

For more than five decades the Piedmont Environmental Council (PEC) has assiduously labored to fulfill Benton MacKaye's expansive vision of an Appalachian Mountain Corridor of rural communities living in natural harmony with their bucolic landscape. Now the Appalachian Trail Landscape Partnership has designated MacKaye's vision of a hundred years ago as the AT Landscape of today. This AT Landscape forms the viewsapes that we so much enjoy, and, yes, cherish, when we emerge, from time to time, from the "green tunnel."

PEC has made land preservation its priority on a landscape scale. It accomplishes this ambitious undertaking by means of its promotion at the local level of smart growth which results from thoughtful planning that leads to the protection of rural landscapes and their resources for the benefit of all.

Looking to the future, PEC is currently working on its Southern Shenandoah Borderlands project which would create a large, connected conservation corridor contiguous with the eastern boundary of SNP to support stream protection, climate resiliency, and biodiversity, thus expanding the SNP landscape to include intact its adjacent foothills.

In the not-so-recent past, PEC raised the funds required to purchase the land next to Sky Meadow SP, south of Ashby Gap, upon which the ANST is now re-routed. PATC benefitted directly by an improved ANST alignment, and the public in perpetuity can enjoy this enticing landscape closely connected with the state park lands.

The public interest in general, and the hiking public in particular, are deeply indebted to the Piedmont Environmental Council's decades of achieving landscape scale conservation which ensures clean water, enhances wildlife protection, and expands the public's access to nature.

