



Foundation Places 1,060 Acres Under Protective Easement

The Thomas Jefferson Foundation has acted to preserve in perpetuity as open space approximately 1,060 acres that were once part of Jefferson's Monticello plantation.



The protected acreage includes land along the Rivanna River.

A conservation easement placing the land under the protection of the Virginia Outdoors Foundation, a state agency, was signed in December 2004, and the easement was recorded with all relevant state and local agencies and offices.

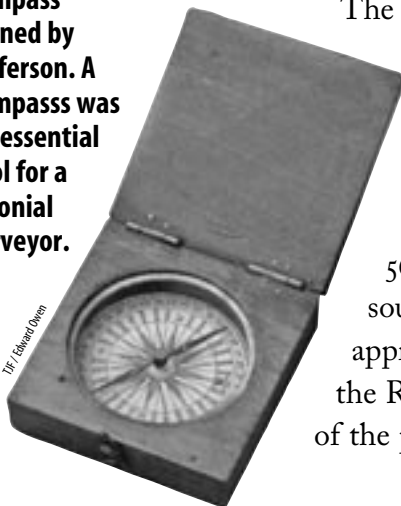
The agreement prohibits for all time the division or subdivision of the property and strictly limits what activities can take place on the land.

The Thomas Jefferson Foundation has now placed nearly 1,300 acres – more than half of the 2,300 acres it owns – under protective easements.

“Our Jeffersonian stewardship must be forward-looking, and this conservation easement will protect a vital part of Jefferson's legacy for the enjoyment and inspiration of future generations,” said President Daniel P. Jordan.

The land placed under the conservation easement includes approximately 418 acres of the Home Farm tract adjacent to the Monticello mountain, the 560-acre Tufton property southeast of Monticello, and approximately 80 acres along the Rivanna River. The majority of the protected land can be seen

A pocket-sized compass owned by Jefferson. A compass was an essential tool for a colonial surveyor.



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Monticello



Conservation Easement

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from the Monticello mountaintop, and portions of it are visible from many locations in Charlottesville and Albemarle County and stretches of Interstate 64, u.s. 250, and three state highways.

“We’re not only maintaining the integrity of Jefferson’s viewshed but also the cultural environment,” G. Robert Lee, executive director of the Virginia Outdoors Foundation, told *The Daily Progress* of Charlottesville.

All of the newly protected acres were part of a land grant patented by Peter Jefferson in the 1730s and 1740s. Peter Jefferson died in 1757; his eldest son, Thomas Jefferson, inherited the lands in 1764, when he turned 21, and later incorporated them into his Monticello plantation.

Today, the Home Farm tract and riverside parcels are mostly forested. They are not accessible by public road and do not have any permanent structures. They do, however, contain archaeological artifacts and traces of Jefferson’s plantation farms, roadways, canals, mills, and other historical landscape features.

The Tufton property, which includes both forest and pasture land, has vehicle access via Milton Road (Route 732). It has some permanent structures, including the offices and greenhouses of the Thomas Jefferson Center for Historic Plants and an 1849 house that is home to Monticello’s Department of Development and Public Affairs. Operations at these facilities will continue under the terms of the easement.



The general principle of the agreement, which by law cannot be terminated, is to prevent any use or activity that “would materially diminish or impair the conservation values protected by the easement.”

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Jefferson used this telescopic theodolite to survey his lands.



Conservation Easement

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In addition to prohibiting for all time the division or subdivision of the property, the conservation easement forbids the display of any commercial signs and the accumulation of trash, refuse, or junk. There are also specific limits on commercial, industrial, and agricultural activities; timber harvesting; grading, blasting, and earth removal; the alteration of existing structures; the construction of new permanent or temporary structures; and the building or improvement of roads, bridges, and utility lines.

Monticello retains certain property rights under the agreement. In addition to the continuation of Foundation operations and activities at Tufton, these include the ability to erect signs for historical interpretation and way-finding; to install interpretive hiking and walking trails; to re-create one or more of Jefferson's "Quarter Farms" with agricultural fields, slave dwellings, and related buildings; to restore Jefferson-era roads; to establish and operate a farm winery at Tufton; and to conduct "historical, cultural, recreational, scenic, or scientific use or activity that is in furtherance of the [Foundation's] mission of preservation of Monticello and its environs and education."

The Foundation also retains the right to sell, lease, or otherwise convey the land. In the event of any transfer of ownership, however, the terms of the easement would remain in force.

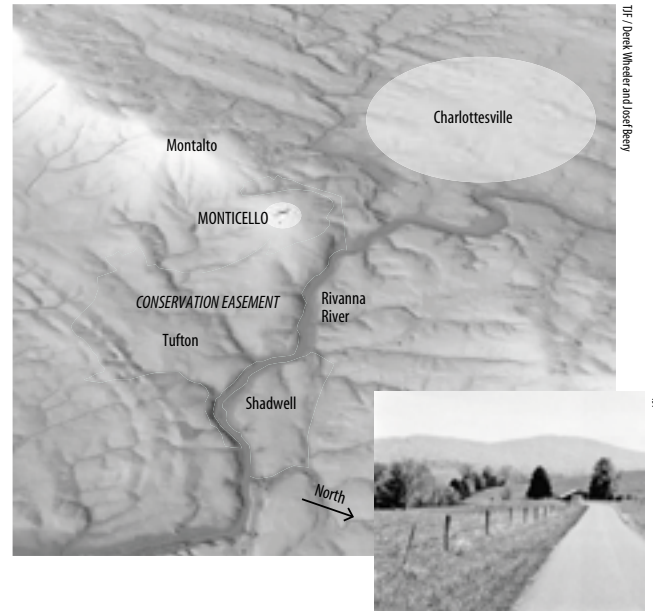
Any use or activity not specifically listed in the agreement is subject to the approval of the Virginia Outdoors Foundation.

"Jefferson's legacy is not only in his ideas and ideals but also in the land that he held dear," said Kat Imhoff, the Thomas Jefferson Foundation's vice president for planning and facilities, who worked on the conservation easement. "The Foundation's decision to not subdivide or develop this property saves the setting of Monticello for visitors and local residents alike. We hope other landowners will consider using easements to preserve the landscapes they cherish."



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Above, topographic map identifying the land placed under easement. Right, a view of the now-protected Tufton property.



Conservation Easement

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The Virginia Outdoors Foundation was created by the General Assembly in 1966 to “promote the preservation of open space lands and to encourage private gifts of money, securities, land or other property to preserve the natural, scenic, historic, open-space and recreational areas of the Commonwealth.”

In 2004, more than 41,000 acres were placed under the protection of the Virginia Outdoors Foundation, including approximately 4,400 acres in Albemarle County. The vof now holds conservation easements on more than 288,000 acres in 87 jurisdictions throughout the state. It also owns approximately 3,500 acres and one historic site.

The Thomas Jefferson Foundation first used an easement to preserve land in 2000, when it placed approximately 215 acres of the Shadwell Estate, the site of Jefferson’s birthplace, under the protection of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.

Under the terms of that historic preservation easement, the Shadwell land will remain undivided and be “maintained, preserved, and protected” in its present

undeveloped state, although the agreement does allow for archaeological excavation, the reconstruction of documented historic buildings, and the construction of buildings necessary for use of the property as a historic attraction.



Monticello archaeologists mapping a section of the Home Farm tract.



A surveyor’s chain used to measure distances at Monticello.

COMMENTS? newsletter@monticello.org