



CITIZENS FOR
FAUQUIER COUNTY

PROTECTING FAUQUIER'S FUTURE™

Preserving the Past, Safeguarding the Future

2024 Highlights

WWW.CITIZENSFORFAUQUIER.ORG

We've Come A Long Way!

Kevin Ramundo, CFFC President

CFFC is building significantly upon its ability to protect Fauquier County from the serious threats to our rural heritage that have emerged in recent years. In 2024, we achieved, if not surpassed, all of our goals and accomplished things we could only have imagined were possible.

Much of CFFC efforts have been to mitigate the proliferation of data centers across the county and the electrical transmission lines they require. In neighboring counties, data centers occupy tens of millions of square feet; consume as much electricity as small countries; require huge amounts of water; and intrude on many communities with unending noise, monstrous buildings and towering power lines.

Data centers represent the greatest challenge to Fauquier's rural traditions and our mission of protecting open space, supporting agriculture and preserving historical resources. While our efforts to stop the Amazon data center in Warrenton through legal action get most of the attention, our efforts are countywide (see p. 3). In Warrenton, we've been able to prevent the construction of Amazon's data center for what will be three years through March, 2026 (p. 5.)

CFFC has also weighed in on other important land use applications including utility-scale solar facilities, and large-scale mixed-use developments (See p. 6). It's important to know that CFFC is not against all development, but if the proposed development goes against comprehensive plans or zoning regulations, you can expect CFFC to become involved.

The current challenges are very different than when the development threats simply involved a misplaced winery or event



center. Fortunately, CFFC anticipated this change and has been gearing up ever since.

Since 2022 we have added eleven new board members making a strong board even stronger. We have been able to raise very significant funds from both existing and new donors to cover our expenses, especially legal costs. Since our all-volunteer board can no longer do everything we now need to do, we added our first employee last Fall and hope to hire an executive director this year. We have also held major events for the first time to educate and excite our community about our incredible county and have become active in Richmond where decisions are being made that affect land-use in our county especially data centers and utility-scale solar facilities. None of this would have been possible without the hard work of our Board of Directors and the incredible support from our many members.

Looking ahead, we believe that development pressures will remain at a high level as surrounding counties continue to get built out and developers want to cover our landscape with data centers, houses and solar panels. Your financial support remains critical, so please take this opportunity to make a contribution at citizensforfauquier.org, or by using the enclosed envelope. Let's preserve our treasured county for future generations.

2024 AT-A GLANCE

JANUARY - MARCH

CFFC announces that four new persons joined its Board of Directors in the second half of 2023: Steve Dahllof, Sophie Langenberg, Jean Perin and Ali Zarabi.

CFFC holds its annual meeting and ratifies the election of three existing board members: Les Cheek, Mary Root and Yak Lubowsky and the four newer board members mentioned above.

Board members Kevin Ramundo and Dave Gibson participated in Conservation Lobby Days in Richmond and met with various members of the Virginia General Assembly on data center issues.

Board member Mary Page speaks before the Fauquier Planning Commission to argue for increased public review of large facilities in Vint Hill including data centers.

APRIL - JUNE

CFFC celebrates Earth Day with its Adopt-A-Highway road clean up in Remington and partners with Moo-Thru Ice Cream to raise donations.

Community meeting held in Bealeton concerning proposed data centers in Catlett and Remington. Board member, Lori Keenan McGuinness spoke on behalf of CFFC.

The Virginia Court of Appeals sides with CFFC in its Virginia Freedom of Information Act litigation against the Town of Warrenton.

JULY - SEPTEMBER

CFFC hosts the premier showing of a Hope Porter film about the effort she led to prevent 10,000 homes from being built at North Wales and a discussion with Hope, Kay Hayes, and Sue Scheer on conservation in Fauquier.

Along with many others, CFFC speaks at Warrenton Town Council meeting against the Warrenton Town Village project because it violated zoning regulations and the town's comprehensive plan.

Partnering with other conservation organizations, CFFC joins the Remington Fall Festival to educate the public about the data center threat to this historic town.

CFFC holds its first annual Celebrate Fauquier event at Highland School on the occasion of Hope Porter's 100th birthday.

OCTOBER - DECEMBER

Marshall District Supervisor, Regan Washer, speaks to the CFFC board on the importance of the county's Purchase of Development Rights program and his opposition to rezoning for data centers.

Bob Lee, who served for many years as Fauquier County Administrator and Planning Commission member, is elected to the board to preside over the Land Use Committee beginning in January, 2025.

Ann Mudge Backer honored as the 2024 recipient of the Kitty P. Smith Conservation Award.

Job One for CFFC: Minimizing Data Center Expansion

Lori Keenan McGuinness, CFFC Board Member

We've all seen how data centers have taken over large portions of Loudoun, Prince William and, soon Culpeper counties. At CFFC, we are committed to avoiding the same fate in Fauquier. It's not that we oppose all data centers. We just believe that there are sufficient areas in our county already zoned for these facilities and that's where they belong.

Fauquier allows data centers in a portion of Vint Hill and in the Remington Business Park. Since advocates for data centers always point to the revenue they can bring into a county's coffers, it's important to know that data centers in these locations and at the Warrenton Training Center could bring in over \$100 million annually in tax revenues, an amount equal to one quarter of Fauquier's current budget. CFFC believes this amount of tax revenues from a single industry is enough, and does not believe that additional data centers should be

approved for fiscal reasons given the adverse impact on the environment, our open space, our communities and our citizens. We also believe that excessive data center development "crowds out" other types of development that would generate more jobs and economic benefits and improve the quality of life.

While CFFC receives a lot of attention for its efforts (so far successful) to stop Amazon's data center in Warrenton (see p. 5,) our efforts are much broader. We participated in developing the Fauquier's data center policy. We also encouraged the county to require applications for electrical power substations — almost always required for a data center — to be voted upon with public input rather than allowed "by right." And we've been very active in other areas of the county where developers are planning to build data centers.

In Catlett, CFFC supported the efforts of local citizens, and plans for a one million square foot data center there have been withdrawn. In Remington, developers have proposed three new data center complexes involving over 10 buildings and 4.8 million square feet of capacity. These three and the complex already approved in Remington Technology Park would overwhelm this historic town. Those that have not yet been approved would require Comprehensive Plan amendments, rezoning and special exceptions. Our efforts in Remington include organizing citizen meetings and producing educational materials, providing



Dave Gibson, CFFC board member, speaks at Remington community meeting

“While CFFC receives a lot of attention for its efforts (so far successful) to stop Amazon's data center in Warrenton our efforts are much broader.”

detailed comments to county officials, and meeting with them to discuss our position.

As we all know, data centers require immense amounts of electricity, and in northern Virginia, the amount of power these facilities require is comparable to what small countries consume. So CFFC's must be on top of regional plans to provide this power, especially the proposed construction of huge transmission lines that could criss-cross our county's open spaces and farmland. It also requires us to pay attention to decisions being made by our elected officials in Richmond and the State Corporation Commission that has the authority to approve proposed transmission lines and substations. For these and related efforts, CFFC is a member of the Virginia Data Center Reform Coalition and works with other conservation organizations in our area.

The data center threat to Fauquier County will continue and we are in for a long struggle.



Data center opponents from Prince William County share experiences at Remington community meeting

Celebrating Fauquier and Hope Porter

Kevin Ramundo, CFFC President

Last September, Hope Porter, a legendary conservationist and CFFC's founder, celebrated a significant milestone — her 100th birthday. What better opportunity for CFFC to hold its first annual “Celebrate Fauquier” event on September 29th. The event at Highland School was a heartfelt tribute to Hope's decades of dedication to preserving the rural beauty and character of Fauquier County.



Kevin Ramundo thanks Hope for all she has done

HUGH KENNY, PEC

Approximately 150 CFFC members and guests enjoyed the premiere of *Too Big to Ignore*, a short documentary produced by Tom Foster, the founder of Middleburg's DocWeek Film Festival. The film highlighted Porter's pivotal role in preserving the 4,000-acre North Wales estate outside of Warrenton from development, a project that would have marred this beautiful landscape with thousands of homes. CFFC President Kevin Ramundo praised Porter's success in setting Fauquier County on a conservation path that continues to this day, while board member,

Sophie Langenberg, emphasized the need for ongoing conservation efforts in the face of current challenges.

The celebration also featured a musical tribute by local artist Bess Putnam who captivated the audience with her storytelling and music to highlight Fauquier's rich history and rural roots.

Hope, ever humble, reflected on the significance of her birthday, saying, “I had no idea turning 100 was such a big deal!” For the people of Fauquier County, however, Hope's milestone was a moment to celebrate a woman who has profoundly shaped our community.



Tom Foster

Bess Putnam



Hope stands to crowd's applause

HUGH KENNY, PEC

CFFC Litigation Scores Win for Open Government and Against Warrenton Data Center

Pat Ewing, CFFC Board Member

Over the past several years, CFFC has filed two lawsuits regarding Amazon's plans to build a data center in the historic town of Warrenton.

In 2022, CFFC sent Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests to Warrenton officials seeking information about the proposed data center. The town refused to hand over thousands of documents, and after multiple unsuccessful attempts to convince the town to do so, CFFC filed a lawsuit.

In June, 2024, the Court of Appeals of Virginia ruled in CFFC's favor, and the town officials who had withheld the documents decided to appeal the decision to the Virginia Supreme Court (VSC). However, in early 2025, a new town council decided to release the documents and drop the VSC appeal. And in more good news, CFFC has received a prestigious award from the Virginia Coalition for Open Government

for our efforts to advance government accountability and transparency.

Regarding the second lawsuit, CFFC and a group of Warrenton citizens filed to stop Amazon's Warrenton data center in 2023 based on our belief that the town's zoning change and decision to allow the data center was illegal. After months of effort by the town and Amazon to have the case dismissed, and various delay tactics, a judge decided in December 2023 that the suit could go forward and agreed with CFFC's interpretation of the law.

Fast forward to early 2025, when the circuit court ordered that work on the data center could not begin until March, 2026 when a trial is now scheduled. So CFFC's legal efforts will have prevented any construction on the data center for three years and we're hopeful in our ultimate success. Meanwhile our legal work continues

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and we wait to see what the new town council will do after announcing its desire to stop the data center and possibly withdraw from the lawsuit.

We want to thank our board for its tireless efforts to support the litigation and our members whose generosity has allowed us to cover CFFC's significant legal costs so far. We hope we can count on continued support.

From left to right: Yak Lubowsky, CFFC board member; Michael Brady with Whiteford, Taylor, and Preston; Amy Trotto, CFFC board member; and Kevin Ramundo, CFFC president

Warrenton Village Center Approved But Not Forgotten

Dave Gibson,
CFFC Board Member

Despite CFFC's best efforts, the Warrenton Town Council last Fall approved the Warrenton Village Center project — a multi-story, high-density development that would tower over Highland School and nearby buildings. For months, CFFC rallied members, penned formal objections, and spoke out at public hearings, emphasizing that the project violates the spirit of Warrenton's small-town character and the town's own comprehensive plan and zoning. From its



staggering 386 residential units crammed onto fewer than ten acres, to the slew of waivers that all but obliterated reasonable setbacks and buffer zones, this plan came down to shoehorning a big-city development into a historic community.

In our review of the project, we flagged multiple issues: the dubious traffic study that somehow predicts fewer than 200 added rush-hour vehicles; the lack of any meaningful solutions for Oak Springs Drive congestion; and, the threat of pushing our water and sewer capacities to the brink. Yet the former Town Council rubber-stamped the proposal,

brushing aside the extraordinary number of waivers requested by the developer and citizens objections. We believe Warrenton residents deserve better than a project that sets dangerous precedents and saddles taxpayers with potential infrastructure costs.

But here's the silver lining: With a new Town Council at the helm, there's a possibility that this outsized plan could be revisited. If so, CFFC stands ready to support another look with important analysis and facts.

Kitty P. Smith Award

Sophie Langenberg,
CFFC Board Member

On October 27th, CFFC celebrated its 2024 Kitty P. Smith Award recipient, Ann Mudge Backer, at Hopefield, the historic home of our founder, Hope Porter.

The award is given annually to honor outstanding conservationists who have contributed throughout their lifetime to preserving Fauquier's rural landscape, historical resources and agricultural economy. Backer was joined at the event by local officials, fellow conservationists and her many friends.

Backer, of Smitten Farm in The Plains, has worn many hats throughout her life: ardent conservationist, lawyer, and renowned breeder of thoroughbred racehorses.

After graduating from New York Law School, Ann worked as a public defender at Legal Aid in Manhattan. As President

of the William M. Backer Foundation she has directed resources from the foundation to Citizens for Fauquier County, the Piedmont Environmental Council, the Bull Run Mountain Conservancy, Goose Creek Association, the Clifton Institute, the Orange County Hunt Conservation Foundation and other area conservation groups.



SOPHIE LANGENBERG



Folks gather at Hopefield to recognize Ann Mudge Backer

SOPHIE LANGENBERG

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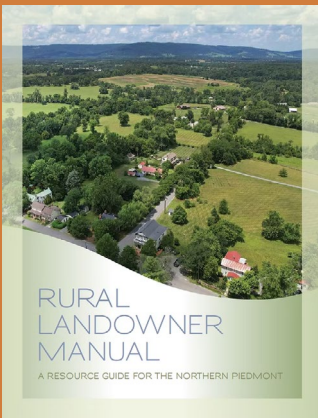
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*As of May, 2025.

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RURAL LANDOWNER MANUAL

In late 2023, CFCC and seven other area conservation groups collaborated to produce the Rural Landowner Manual: A Resource Guide for the Northern Piedmont. The publication includes a list of experts, programs and opportunities to assist landowners, with practical advice on navigating the complexities of rural property stewardship.

In July, a second publication about financial incentives for protecting and enhancing properties was produced to highlight best management practices, how to engage in the rural economy, and opportunities to participate in various conservation easement programs.

Through these publications, available online and via print, CFCC hopes to better educate landowners throughout Fauquier County about the intrinsic value of our rural heritage and how to benefit the most from property ownership based on one's own personal interests. By providing critical land use expertise, CFCC is proud to have worked on this project and will continue to share the "RLM" through educational events.



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Please Join Us

Please support Fauquier County's oldest conservation nonprofit dedicated to preserving the county's rural character. CFFC is a strong advocate for open space, historic preservation and a healthy agricultural economy. We track every land use rezoning or special exception and are quick to engage when inappropriate development threatens to bring Northern Virginia sprawl to Fauquier.

Fauquier County is under tremendous pressure to grow as regional population soars and residents flee neighboring, built-out counties. Help protect Fauquier's future by joining CFFC, a 501 (c) (3) tax-exempt organization. Visit citizensforfauquier.org and become involved.

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