

Hunting Habitat Conservation Award
Sponsored by
The Masters of Foxhounds Association

Entry Form

Nominated Awardees:

Farmington Hunt and Mr. John H. (J.B.) Birdsall

Location of Entry: Farmington Hunt Club, P. O. Box 5562 Charlottesville, VA 22906

Joint Masters: Carol Easter, 434-984-1212

Joy Crompton, 434-293-4467

A. Burks "Bok" Summers, 434-823-1460

W. Patrick Butterfield, 434-823-5698

Board of Directors:

Reynolds Cowles, DVM, President; Mark Thompson, Vice President;

James Bourie, Treasurer; Patricia Boden, Secretary;

Kenneth Chapman, Ken Elias, Elizabeth H. Sutton, Debbie Wright, Jennifer

Campbell, Chris Middleton, DVM, Kevin Fletcher, Liz King

Contact: Elizabeth H. Sutton, 434-974-1089, bethhsutton@gmail.com

or Carol Easter, MFH, 434-984-1212, springhavenfarm@comcast.net

The Farmington Hunt and Mr. John “J.B.” Birdsall, III Nominated Awardees

The Farmington Hunt Club

The Farmington Hunt has been a community institution in Albemarle County, Virginia since its establishment in 1929. Before that date, and prior to World War I members of the Albemarle Hunt Club hunted approximately the same territory that is still being hunted by the Farmington Hunt Club today, with recent expansion into southern Albemarle and neighboring Greene and Fluvanna Counties. Farmington Hunt Club members are predominantly local residents and landowners who are keenly aware of the importance of land conservation.

Mr. John “J.B.” Birdsall is a long time foxhunter, married to Mary Scott Birdsall, a Charlottesville native whose father Evernghim Blake owned Schelford Farm, their home, situated at the heart of the Farmington Hunt territory. The third generation of their family continues to be active in the Farmington Hunt field today.

Since the Birdsalls moved back to Virginia in 1987, J.B. has been the principal driving force in establishing a culture of land conservation and habitat preservation within the Farmington Hunt. The result of that cultural partnership is a success story that is unmatched in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The Farmington Hunt and J. B. Birdsall

One-Page Summary

- More than 65,000 acres of land in the Farmington Hunt territory are protected by conservation easements, half of which are owned by Farmington Hunt subscribers and their families.
- Thirteen Farmington Hunt members have served or are currently serving on conservancy boards, county planning commissions, boards of county supervisors, and other county agencies established for conservation purposes.
- Twenty-three fixtures for hunt meets are protected by conservation easements.
- Two Farmington hunt members, including Birdsall, currently serve on the board of the nationally acclaimed Piedmont Environmental Council, Virginia's leading conservancy. J.B. has been a long time supporter of the Nature Conservancy. Two Farmington members currently serve on the Albemarle County Acquisition of Easement program committee, and one other serves as local director of the Virginia Outdoors Foundation.
- Birdsall has been involved in land conservation at the federal level and supporter of the Land Trust Alliance.
- Albemarle County ranks second for all counties in the commonwealth for the percentage of land in conservation easement.
- Birdsall has been a tireless advocate for land conservation in Albemarle County through generous and persistent efforts to assist the PEC and other conservation groups in working with landowners.
- Birdsall has led by example: various members of his family control ten large farms in Albemarle County- a total of 1,500 acres-of their own land, but more importantly, they have encouraged friends, neighbors, and landowners in the region to follow their leadership resulting in the protection of untold thousands of additional acres.
- The Farmington Hunt encourages conservation in education of student members by offering introductory clinics, student hunts, junior meets, and numerous events designed to promote increase of the junior membership. The annual junior meet covers property owned by the Birdsalls. Leaders of the Skyline Pony Club and the "Hoof and Woof" 4 H club are FHC members.

The Farmington Hunt and J. B. Birdsall

Narrative Description

The Farmington Hunt Club has been a prominent community institution in Albemarle County, Virginia since its establishment in 1929. Masters, officers, directors and most voting members of the hunt have their principal residences within the Hunt's registered hunting territory or in the nearby Charlottesville area. All hunting decisions are made in the best interest of the community. The territory of the Farmington Hunt encompasses 14 square miles, including the northwestern section of the county, southeastern Albemarle along the Hardware and James Rivers near Scottsville and the area of Greene and Fluvanna Counties bordering Albemarle south of route 33.

Mr. John "J.B." Birdsall began riding and foxhunting when he met his wife, Mary Scott while a student at the University of Virginia. They married in 1966, moved to his native Florida where they had a family, then moved back to Charlottesville in 1987 and "started back hunting". He purchased a large farm adjoining Schelford, the farm known as "Percy Wood" in '79, placed 600 acres in conservation easement in '84, joined the PEC board in '87 and started actively promoting conservation in our neighborhood along with FHC members Forbes and Sherry Reback. Birdsall has also been an active supporter of The Nature Conservancy and was instrumental in their creation of their "Piedmont Program".

For the past 26 years, Mr. Birdsall has been a driving force in establishing the culture of land conservation and habitat preservation within the Farmington Hunt. The result of that cultural partnership is a success story that rivals any in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

1. More than 65,000 acres of land in the Farmington Hunt territory are protected by conservation easement. (see Exhibit#1) It is an impressive fact that almost half of that is owned by present and past FHC members, their families and affiliated entities such as family controlled trusts. Moreover, there are other FHC members who own or control land under easement not only in our hunt territory, but beyond in neighboring Greene and Fluvanna Counties. There are non-resident members who both own and control property, or support conservation agencies in other states including Georgia, Montana and South Carolina and Michigan. Albemarle is a relatively large county in the Commonwealth, and it ranks second in land conservation with 17 percent of the land under conservation easement. (Only Fauquier County has a greater percentage under easement). This is largely attributable to one individual, a conservation activist in the form of a soft-spoken businessman named John "J. B." Birdsall.
2. Two Farmington Hunt members, including Birdsall, serve on the board of Directors of the PEC, the leading conservancy in Virginia and in the vanguard of land use production nationwide.

The PEC was formed in 1972 to protect and promote the Piedmont region's rural economy, natural resources, history and beauty. The Piedmont region includes Clarke, Albemarle, Orange, Madison, Greene, Culpeper, Fauquier, Loudon and Rappahannock Counties.

According to PEC administrator, Rex Linville,

“It is difficult to adequately and accurately quantify the impact that the Birdsalls have had on land conservation within the Farmington Hunt Territory. Their affiliation with the Piedmont Environmental Council goes back to at least the early 1980's and throughout that time they have been staunch advocates for private voluntary land conservation through the use of conservation easements. A conservation easement is a voluntary tool where a landowner is entering into a permanent agreement to protect the open space, agricultural, timber, and natural resource values associated with their land. The land that is protected with a conservation easement will continue to be available for future generations to produce food and fiber, to shelter wildlife, to provide clean air and water, to offer opportunities for recreation and hunting, and to maintain scenic views.

Within the Farmington Hunt Territory there are now approximately 65,000 acres of permanently protected land. Many of these projects would have never happened without the gentle and persistent efforts of the Birdsalls.

- They have personally protected over 1,500 acres of their own land but more importantly, they have encouraged countless friends, neighbors, and landowners in the region to follow their leadership example resulting in the protection of untold 1000's of additional acres. (see exhibit#1a)
- They have been consistent supporters of land conservation groups that work within the Farmington Hunt Territory like the Piedmont Environmental Council and The Nature Conservancy.
- They have even been involved in land conservation at the Federal Level and supporters of the Land Trust Alliance. Many people are probably not aware that J.B. has worked diligently to actually create federal legislation that provides significant estate tax benefits for landowners and farmers who protect their land. It is hard to imagine how many acres this incentive has protected but I can tell you from talking with colleagues around the nation that it is significant.
- Early on and way ahead of the curve, the Birdsalls supported the creation of the Piedmont Environmental Council's Geographic Information System which makes maps like the one attached. This computerized mapping system also makes it possible for us to strategically target our land conservation efforts accurately quantify our success.
- On a personal level since starting with PEC 6 years ago J.B. has consistently and generously offered me his time and expertise in working with landowners in the region. The land conservation success that PEC and the

community have been able to achieve would not have been possible without his efforts.”

3. Numerous Farmington Hunt members have served in other key leadership positions on the county planning commission, county board of supervisors, and other county agencies and organizations actively promoting land conservation activities. Farmington Hunt members both past and present have been and continue to be active on numerous county, local and regional boards and organizations involved in establishing and promoting land conservation in our area. One member serves as chairman of the ACE(Albemarle County Acquisition of Conservation Easement) program, and is a salaried staff member of the Virginia Outdoors Foundation; yet another currently serves on the ACE, and another landowner serves on the Albemarle County planning commission. Three members formerly served on the County Board of Supervisors. Mr. Birdsall has served in a solidly consistent leadership role, and has inspired those around him to do the same. On a national level, Mr. Birdsall helped change federal tax policy concerning easements. He was instrumental in working with PEC back in the 1990’s on creating (from scratch) a federal estate tax incentive for landowners who had preserved their farm with a conservation easement.
4. Twenty-three Farmington fixtures for hunt meets are preserved by conservation easement. The Farmington Hunt has approximately 30 fixtures listed in its directory as hunt meet locations, with more land adjoining over which the hunt has permission to hunt. Of this, Birdsall either owns, controls or has been influential in the conservation of most of them. Because photos are better than words, we have included some of the most prominent examples of the Farmington Hunt Country that have been saved from rampant development within our area. It is important to point out that some of our land is within less than 5 miles of the nearest shopping center.
5. Mr. Birdsall has been a tireless advocate for land conservation through persistent and gentle and well timed persuasion of landowners and lawmakers, and by assisting in major changes in the tax code. Again to quote Rex Linville of the PEC: “He was directly involved with lobbying (many members of congress – not just from Virginia) and working with PEC staff to make this happen. This resulted in the creation of Section 2031(c) of the IRC which now allows landowners to exclude up to 40% of the value of their property from their taxable estate. This exclusion is capped at \$500,000. J.B. is now the primary sponsors of our and the Land Trust Alliance’s effort to expand this further so that the exclusion is 50% with a \$5,000,000 cap.
6. Mr. Birdsall has led by example: separate branches of his family own a total of over 1,500 acres and 10 parcels of land in the Farmington territory, all of which have been placed under easement. In addition, Birdsall has bought and resold hundreds of acres after placing the property under easement.
7. The Farmington Hunt has an active membership of Juniors, and members of the club hold positions of leadership in the Skyline Pony Club as District Commissioners, and also in the local 4H programs. In addition, the Farmington Hunt encourages participation of student members of the UVA polo club and the UVA Intercollegiate Equestrian team, whose directors are hunting members of Farmington. The Pony Academy, a local riding program focused on cross

country and event riding, participates regularly bringing young riders into the hunt field and educating them about hunting, with emphasis on respect for landowners and land conservation. The annual junior hunt takes place every Thanksgiving weekend, and the meet takes place at Millington Stables, which also has a very active foxhunting oriented riding program and is one of the properties under easement, and adjoining the Birdsall farms. Mr. Birdsall's grandson has begun his riding education and will participate with one of the many choices of educational riding programs in the immediate neighborhood.

Conclusion

Based on all of the above, we are pleased to nominate the Farmington Hunt and hunt member, Mr. John "J.B." Birdsall III for the Hunting Habitat Conservation award.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth H. Sutton, Director, Farmington Hunt
Carol Easter, Joint MFH, Farmington Hunt
September 28, 2010

Notes:

Sources for statistics: Piedmont Environmental Council, Mr. Birdsall
Photos courtesy of Catherine Summers, Elizabeth H. Sutton, Rex Linville



Hunting Habitat Conservation Award

Nominated Awardees: Farmington Hunt and Mr. J. B. Birdsall

Illustration Appendix

Exhibit#1 Geographic Information System map of the Farmington Hunt territory

Exhibit #2 Topo map of Millington area, sample of hunt track, similar to Junior Meet

Exhibit #3 Fox Ridge Farm, Ridge Road, placed under easement and re-sold 1990

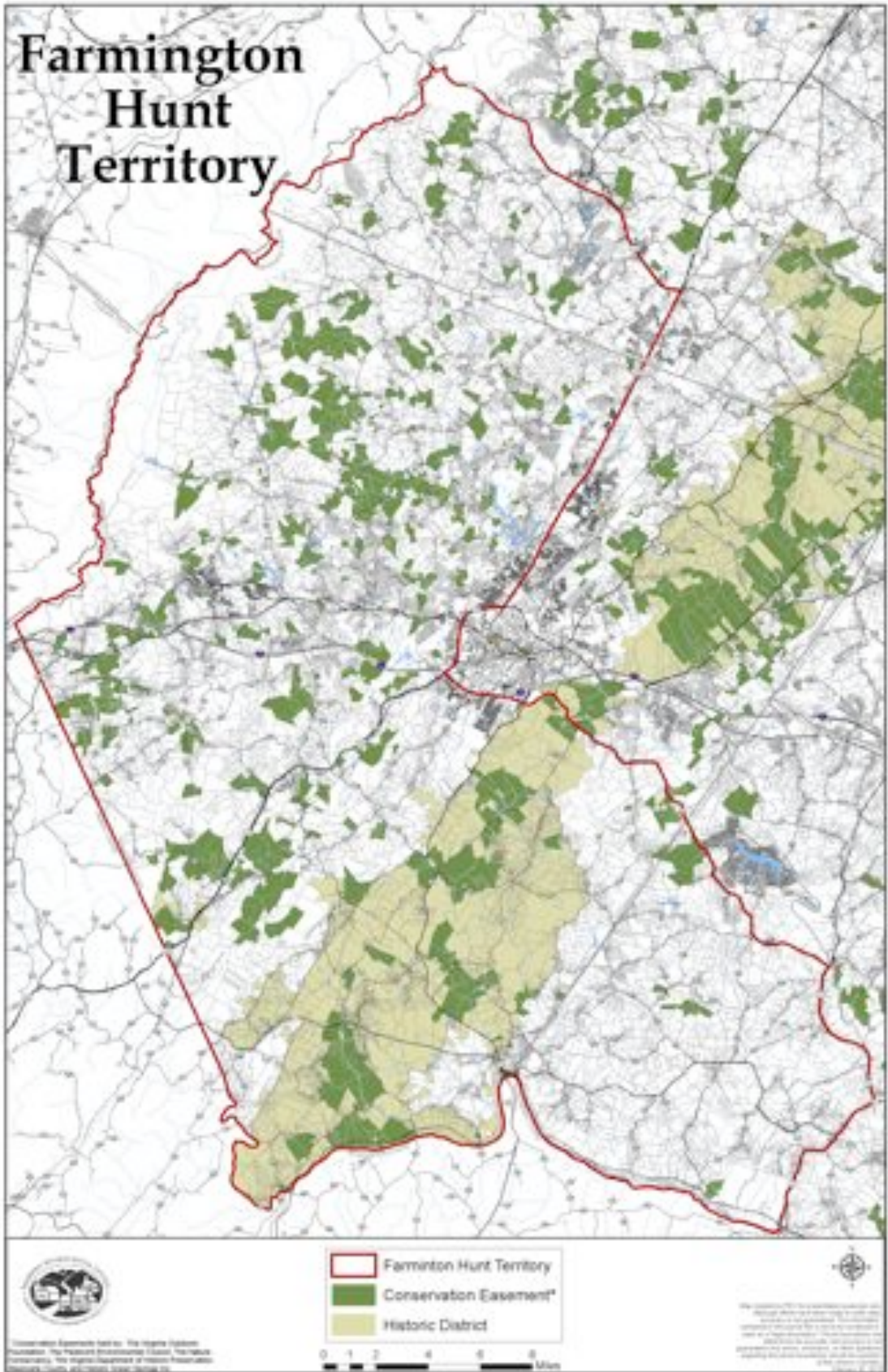
Exhibit #4 Redlands, fixture in the Southern portion of the FHC territory

Exhibit # 5 Hidden Fox, fixture near Free Union

Exhibit# 6 The Barracks, home of the Bishops, Historic property and fixture

Exhibit #7 Whippoorwill Farm, Vere-Nicoll property, habitat for wildlife; Moorman's

Exhibit# 9 J.B. Birdsall and Schelford Farm hunting photos 2010





Exhibit#2 Map of Hunt meet Millington Stables, location of annual Junior Hunt



#3 Fox Ridge Farm, placed under Easement by Birdsall and re-sold in 1990



#4 Redlands, Historic home of the Carter family placed under easement in 2009



Hunt Fixture: Redlands & Carter land: 1000 acres under Conservation easement



#5 Hidden Fox



#6 The Barracks paddocks at Sunset, 9-18-2010



#7 Whippoorwill Farm, the old polo field August, 2010



Deer wading in Moorman's River at Whippoorwill, August 2010



Eagle fishing over Moorman's River at Ward's Run

A screenshot of a Google Maps location card. On the left is a small thumbnail of the eagle photo. The main card has a dark grey background with white text. The title is "eagle-wards-run". Below it is the date and time: "September 10, 2010 9:31:41 AM". There are five small white dots below the time. The location is listed as "Charlottesville". The full address is "Eagel on Moorman's at Ward's Run ,Georgetown Farm". Below the text is a topographic map showing a river system with a red pin marking the location. The map includes labels for "Bennington" and "Cape Hill Rd". The Google logo is in the bottom left, and "Map data ©2010 Google - Terms of Use" is in the bottom right.



J.B. Birdsall at the Junior Hunt 2009



#8 Red Fox running across "Tabby Thompson" field, Schelford Meet, 3-2-2010



Hounds and Staff coming home, Schelford Farm lane to the main driveway 3-2-2010



FHC President Reynolds Cowles, J.B. Birdsall, hunting at Schelford 3-2-2010