

NEWS

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION PROTECTS FORESTED WETLAND Nottoway River Conservation Easement Aided by Enviva Forest Conservation Fund

U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities, Greenville, SC
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Southampton, Va. – A new conservation easement on 130 acres of forested wetland will help protect more than one mile of frontage on the Nottoway River, a State Scenic River. The Nottoway River is a major source of drinking water for the citizens of the Hampton Roads region. The property is in the Albemarle Sound watershed and the mature cypress-tupelo swamp conserved as a result of this project will provide habitat for migratory waterfowl, songbirds and other wildlife. The project was completed with financial assistance from an Enviva Forest Conservation Fund grant.

“The Nottoway River and surrounding swamplands and timberlands are tantamount to sacred for me,” said Richard Railey, the landowner who placed the easement on his property. “I spend my life in and around the Nottoway River. As a child, I swam in it, fished in it and hunted around it. I loved placing an easement on this property. Perhaps what I’ve enjoyed and appreciated so much in my life will now be available for future generations. There are few things that I have done in my life that have given me greater satisfaction than completing this conservation easement,” he continued.

“This easement is emblematic of the important role played by the Enviva Forest Conservation Fund,” said Carlton Owen, President and CEO of the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities, which administers the program. “Private landowners may want to generate income from their forests, but sometimes those forests provide such great natural and societal value both to the landowner and the greater public that the owner would prefer not to harvest timber, convert to another use, or sell the property to generate needed cash. In cases like these, a conservation easement is a win-win. The forest owner receives needed income and the forest is protected in perpetuity from conversion. Flexible funding from the Enviva Forest Conservation Fund helps conservation agencies and nonprofits make this approach possible.”

The easement, which covers nearly 130 acres of mature cypress-tupelo swamps with trees that are predominantly 80 years of age or older, combines with an earlier Department of Conservation (DCR) easement to conserve 358 acres and four miles of riverfront in Southampton County, Virginia. There are three public boating access points located near the project tracts. The permanent protection of mature cypress/tupelo swamp forest aids the recovery efforts for river herring and alewife, native fish species that rely on floodplain forest for their spawning and nursery habitat. The terms of the conservation easement will eliminate all timber harvesting in the wetlands as well as any subdivision and development rights.

“Conservation easements like these are a vital resource for landowners who wish to protect ecologically sensitive areas,” said Clyde Cristman, Director of the Virginia DCR. “With help from the Enviva Forest Conservation Fund, we are able to further protect key properties along the Nottoway River and ensure Virginians have access to their ecological benefits and scenic resources for years to come.”

The Enviva Forest Conservation Fund has completed two years of a planned ten-year program that focuses on wetland forests in southeastern Virginia and northeastern North Carolina. To date, seven awards have been funded that will lead to protection of about 10,000 acres of wetland forests.

About the Enviva Forest Conservation Fund

The Enviva Forest Conservation Fund is a \$5 million, 10-year program established by Enviva Holdings, LP in December 2015 to permanently protect environmentally sensitive bottomland and wetland forests. Administered by the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities, the Fund awards grants annually to nonprofit organizations and government agencies for conservation projects in North Carolina and Virginia.

For more information on the Enviva Forest Conservation Fund visit www.envivaforestfund.org.

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The **U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities** (the Endowment) is a not-for-profit public charity working collaboratively with partners in the public and private sectors to advance systemic, transformative, and sustainable change for the health and vitality of the nation’s working forests and forest-reliant communities – www.usendowment.org

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