**Boyer Nurseries property preserved**

**Adams County Land Conservancy will protect 135 acres, and that's just a start.**

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Norma Calhoun, president of LCAC, Mary Lower, Emma Lower, Will Lower and Sarah Kipp, conservation coordinator for LCAC pose for a photo. Boyer Nurseries & Orchards owners Mary and Will and their daughter, Emma, plan to place about 1,000 acres of the business' property west of Biglerville to the Adams County Land Conservancy to protect it from future development. (THE EVENING SUN -- CRAIG PASKOSKI)

You can stand on the wrap-around veranda of the main building at Boyer Nurseries & Orchards a few miles west of Biglerville and look out at one of the most beautiful views in Adams County, a tree-covered ridge rising up just beyond the rows of fruit trees.

Thanks to a public-private preservation effort announced Friday, many future generations are guaranteed an opportunity to see the same scenic view.

The Land Conservancy of Adams County has added 135 acres of that wooded ridge to its conservation easement program to permanently protect the property. The move not only preserves a slice of Adams County's agricultural history and forest scenery, but helps protect the sensitive headwaters of local waterways that eventually drain into the Potomac River.

Norma Calhoun, president of the Adams County Land Conservancy, noted the property sits at the headwaters of the Marsh, Middle and Conewago creeks, the three primary streams that run through the county

"Water is a challenge for Adams County, especially in the dry years. No major streams or rivers run into Adams County," she told a group of local, state and federal leaders gathered on the veranda Friday morning. "Any property with a connection to Marsh Creek is important to the Land Conservancy. Marsh Creek provides the drinking water for the Borough of Gettysburg."

The preservation was made possible by a $250,000 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency grant administered through the environmental group American

Rivers, and $40,000 in matching funds from the Adams County Green Space Program.

"These lands are part of the high-quality forest in the northern edge of the Potomac Watershed that include Marsh Creek and is adjacent to other protected forest land," said Chris Williams, senior vice president for conservation at American Rivers. "It is adding to a much larger effort."

The Boyer family, which began selling fruit and fruit trees in 1900, has been working with the Land Conservancy for the past couple years on the preservation project, which will eventually include about 1,000 acres there. Emma Lower, a fifth-generation Boyer owner, said the project was an extension of the family's commitment to stewardship of the land.

"We've been building this farm for 113 years and we hope to continue passing this land to the next generations," she said.

"We want to preserve the scenic view of it because we have a lot of people come and patronize our business here and they always comment how beautiful it is back here," said her father, Will Lower. "It is part of our image."

Founded in 1995, the Land Conservancy works with landowners to place perpetual conservation easements on their properties to restrict future development. The organization holds 123 such conservation easements that protect 7,855 acres of historic, agricultural and open and wooded properties throughout the county.

The 135 acres at Boyer is the first phase of easement projects there. Calhoun said the Land Conservancy expects the release soon of Department of Agriculture funds for the preservation of another 255 acres at the nursery. The county has already allocated $160,000 in funds for that portion of the project.

Under the easement program, property owners do not give up ownership of their land, but place a permanent restriction in the deed to prevent future development.

Adams County Commissioner Chairman Randy Phiel said the program, and specifically the 135 acres at Boyer, helps protect the county's heritage and its growing agritourism business.

"We're preserving a wonderful vista and that's great but there is so much more," he said. "Tourism and agriculture are the two largest industries in Adams County so it is part of our economic machine."

**EPA and American Rivers Announce Preservation of 135 Acres of Forestland in Adams County, Pa.**

**BIGLERVILLE, Pa. (April 19, 2013) --**The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and American Rivers today announced that the Land Conservancy of Adams County will permanently preserve 135 acres of forest through a conservation easement on lands owned by Boyer Nurseries and Orchards in Biglerville, Pa.

This land preservation was made possible through a $250,000 EPA grant with matching funds coming from the Adams County Green Space Program.

EPA Regional Administrator Shawn M. Garvin and American Rivers Senior Vice President for Conservation Chris Williams were joined by U.S. Representative Scott Perry, Adams County Commissioners' Chairman Randy Phiel, and Land Conservancy President Norma Calhoun. The announcement was made at the Boyer Nurseries and Orchards.

"EPA is pleased to play a part in the permanent preservation of 135 acres that include the headwaters of Marsh Creek," said EPA Regional Administration Shawn M. Garvin. “Headwater streams trap floodwaters, recharge groundwater supplies, remove pollution, and provide fish and wildlife habitat. This vast network of unknown, unnamed and underappreciated streams, make up the very foundation of our nation’s great rivers.”

Under a cooperative agreement with EPA, American Rivers is implementing the environmental grant program which supports local economies and quality of life improvements in the Potomac Highlands. The program also supports efforts to protect the Highlands' valuable ecosystems, some of which host the most diverse and globally important resources on Earth.

“We congratulate the Land Conservancy of Adams County on their hard work protecting the headwaters of Marsh Creek. The impact of their efforts will reach far and wide, from restoring wildlife to improving Gettysburg’s drinking water supply to reviving the health of the Potomac River downstream,” said Chris Williams, Senior Vice President for Conservation at American Rivers. “We hope this project inspires other communities and can be replicated across the region and the nation.”

The 135 acres in Adams County is located in the Marsh Creek Watershed which drains into the Monocacy River and flows into the Potomac River through the nation's capitol and into the Chesapeake Bay. The region's streams and forests are a rich habitat for fish, wildlife, and plants, many being rare and unique. The appeal of the region's beauty and character makes the Highlands an increasingly popular recreation and tourism destination.

American Rivers is a leading organization working to protect and restore the nation's rivers and streams. Rivers connect us to each other, nature, and future generations. Since 1973, American Rivers has fought to preserve these connections, helping protect and restore more than 150,000 miles of rivers through advocacy efforts, on-the-ground projects, and the annual release of America's Most Endangered Rivers ®. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., American Rivers has offices across the country.

Since 1994, the Land Conservancy of Adams County has worked to preserve land for agricultural, open space, historical, scenic, recreational, wildlife habitat, hydrologic, and ecological purposes. It currently holds 120 easements covering more than 7,000 acres.

Property owners do not give up ownership of their land. A conservation easement, which is permanent, is recorded in the Office of Recorder of Deeds and is attached to the property’s deed so that all future owners will be aware of the conditions of land use when they receive a title report.

For more information on EPA's strategy for restoration and protection of EPA Highlands Action Program, go to[www.epa.gov/reg3esd1/highlands-plan.html](http://www.epa.gov/reg3esd1/highlands-plan.html)

For more information about the grant recipients, go to[www.americanrivers.org/potomachighlands](http://www.americanrivers.org/potomachighlands).