

**PROFILES OF CONSERVATION EASEMENT DONORS  
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**ALL PROFILES WRITTEN BY FRANK MCINTOSH**

## **JACK AND LINDA FOUNTAIN**

When Dr. Arthur “Jack” Fountain’s grandfather built his cabin on beautiful rolling land near Reynolds, Ga. in 1904, his pride of place and sense of the value of craftsmanship led him to insist that all the lumber in the cabin be clean. There is not a knot to be found anywhere in the home, which is still impeccably preserved today. Two generations later, Jack and his wife Linda decided to protect the family home place, and they put the 817-acre property into a conservation easement with the Georgia Land Trust.

As with most conservation easements, the Fountains, as donors, retain ownership of their property. This allows them to continue to use the land as they and their family have in the past. The Fountains and future owners of the land can farm it, manage the timber on it, maintain and to some extent upgrade roads and other improvements to the property.

The 817-acre conservation easement in Taylor and Macon counties, Ga. protects the property from future residential and commercial development that would erode its core conservation values and the aspects of the land that the Fountains cherish and wish to see preserved in perpetuity. Donors of easements can achieve tax benefits that are awarded because of the valuable conservation contributions they make.



*Jack, Linda, Jacqueline, Katherine  
and Caroline Fountain with Amber*

The Fountains’ donation ensures that the rich soils that comprise much of their land—more than 300 acres of the property are state or federally recognized productive soils—will remain in productive use and not join other “house farms” that have been appearing in this area. The easement also requires management plans regarding how agriculture and silviculture will be undertaken on the land, helping ensure that these uses don’t incidentally degrade the property’s significant environmental values.

The Fountains’ easement places restrictions that protect from any disturbance the unique hardwood forests and natural areas along the banks of the streams on the property. These Special Natural Areas, running along two tributaries of the Flint River—Horse and Little Vine Creeks—help protect what has been called the most ecologically diverse river east of the Mississippi.

Sherpa Guides says of the river, “Even though the river begins in urban Atlanta and crosses an agricultural landscape, streamside forests, swamps, and unimpeded river flow (flowing more than 200 undammed miles—one of only 40 such rivers in the U.S.) allow natural self-purification to occur. The Flint River and areas adjacent provide habitat for many interesting and unusual plants and animals.” Of

particular interest are some of the odd creatures known as troglobites that shelter in the river's "Blue Holes," including the blind cave salamander and the Dougherty Plain cave crayfish. Some of these creatures' ranges are as small as a single cave or spring.

The protection of the land also helps preserve traditional viewsheds. When asked why he decided to protect his land, Dr. Fountain cited his desire to preserve, "some of the southern self-sustaining farm life as I knew it. It is important for me to be able to pass some of this down to my children. Once the traces of this past era are gone, there is no return."



*The Fountain home place on easement property*

In addition to the family home, this beautifully preserved farmstead also features several historic agricultural structures that folks passing through on picturesque Mangham Road can see and get a sense of the history of the place and the lives that the original settlers lived. The structures include several barns, rustic livestock sheds and a smokehouse.

The scenic property also offers vistas of pine stands, open pastures, peach orchards, wheat and cotton fields and highly valued bottomland forests filled with several varieties of oak, ash, gum and hickory.

Linda reports that their daughters are deeply attached to the family home and all enjoy the family vacations to the property and there is general anticipation for when this again becomes the family's central home place. There are also formative plans to use some of the property for vineyards.

With so much visual beauty, the property holds still other more sublime charms. When asked his favorite thing about the property, Dr. Fountain replied that autumn and spring there "are intoxicating," reflecting on the "overwhelming aroma of all the new flowers" and autumn's "marvelous smells in the woods with the crisp air and the rustle of wildlife."