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ALL PROFILES WRITTEN BY FRANK MCINTOSH

MAYNARD FOSBERG

CHATTAHOOCHEE VALLEY LAND TRUST CONSERVATION EASEMENT DONOR

Not every land trust has donors from Moscow, but Georgia Land Trust affiliate, the Chattahoochee Valley Land Trust, achieved that distinction in 2008. We still haven't quite penetrated the Iron Curtain; this Moscow is in Idaho, and home to the University of Idaho, where donor Dr. Maynard Fosberg is a Professor of Soil Sciences, specializing in soils development and classification.

Growing up in California, Dr. Fosberg probably didn't envision himself marrying a Georgia Peach. However, while stationed in Thomasville, Ga. in World War II, he met Margaret Williams and found himself married into the Peach State.

Margaret (who Maynard says is more Iron Magnolia than Georgia Peach) grew up on a Heard County farm that her parents, Newt and May Williams, purchased in 1910. The home she and her siblings were raised in and from which they worked the land in cotton and other cultivation alongside sharecroppers, still stands and is occupied by one of Margaret's nieces. "Four generations of my family were raised here in Heard County, dating back to the early 1800s," Margaret says. "All are buried at the Mt. Zion Church cemetery in Glenn, Ga. This land is very important to the family legacy."

When Dr. Fosberg discusses the land that comprises the old farm and the 121-acre conservation easement in Heard County, Ga., the soil scientist comes forward and you get a sense of how difficult cultivating the farm must have been. "They're typical sub-tropic soils—deeply weathered ultisols. They're iron rich, which gives them their deep red color. It's classic red clay. It's highly erosive and the topsoil is gone. At this point we're working the subsoil."

The land now lends itself more to timber, and most of the property is in pine. Fosberg, who did graduate work in forestry at the University of Wisconsin, manages his own stands and feels very strongly about the right way to manage timber.



Maynard Fosberg

The conservation easement does not allow clear cutting. Any taking of trees on the property is by selective thinning, with the removal of diseased trees allowed and the harvest of mature, healthy trees limited to those above a minimum diameter.

In addition to timberlands, the property also has a Special Natural area along the property's southern boundary that features streams and a whitewater creek. The conservation easement preserves these areas inviolate.

Fosberg says he and six siblings (among them renowned botanist, F. Raymond Fosberg) “were taught as children by our mother about preserving the environment and are just naturally oriented toward the environment and conservation” and “always wanted to learn the names of everything.”

He adds, “Having property that preserves unique habitat and land is a special responsibility. I believe in preserving as much open land as possible—keeping some of it out of houses. What’s going to happen in a hundred years or a thousand? We need to protect land now. What happens when I’m gone? Our daughter, Stephanie, and son, Mark, want it to stay the same but what about after them?”

Dr. Fosberg reports that his daughter said the easement “is the best thing that ever happened,” so at least for another generation the Williams family legacy will have the guiding hand of the family, in addition to the protection of the conservation easement.

Dr. Fosberg’s dedication to land protection is not limited to Georgia. He also donated an easement on 25 acres in Moscow, Idaho. “It’s a little farm that preserves space for birds and other critters,” he says. “It was about the first easement donated to the Palouse Area Land Trust.”