



The Connector Trail Between Grelen & Montpelier Receives the "Virginia Treasures" Award April 19, 2016

Part of a nine-mile trail system with old-growth forests, meadows & tree rows, the Grelen to Montpelier Trail links Grelen Nursery, a 25-year-old working tree nursery in Orange County, to historic James Madison's Montpelier. On April 19, the Trail was officially designated as a "Virginia Treasure" by the Office of the Governor for being an outstanding recreational asset open to the public in the Commonwealth.

Virginia First Lady, Dorothy McAuliffe, and Department of Natural Resources Secretary, Molly Ward, presented the award to Dan and Leslie Gregg, Co-owners of Grelen Nursery, Kat Imhoff, President and CEO of James Madison's Montpelier and Chris Miller, President of The Piedmont Environmental Council.

Developed in partnership with Grelen Nursery, James Madison's Montpelier and PEC, the Trail connects residents and tourists to the area's rich natural and cultural origins. Sections of the trail have signs with QR codes that provide hikers with the opportunity to learn about the various trees and plants along the way.

With trailheads located at The Market at Grelen and below David M. Rubenstein Visitor Center at Montpelier, the trail is free and open to the public during business hours. The scenic Trail also crosses over the portion of Chicken Mountain that is protected under a conservation easement co-held by Virginia Outdoors Foundation and The Piedmont Environmental Council.

Both separate trail systems, now connected, are quite beautiful. The Grelen Trail system goes thru the Nursery and has two gorgeous vistas overlooking the tree rows. The site of the Blue Ridge Mountains in the distance absolutely makes walking to the top 110% worth the effort. In addition, there is a loop that goes thru old growth forest and meadow.

The trail network and the grounds of Montpelier offer some of the only public access to the largely conserved Madison-Barbour Rural Historic District. Additional trails at Montpelier go through the 200-acre James Madison Landmark Forest with trees that have been virtually undisturbed by man since the 1790s, and include massive oak, beech and poplar trees.

Quotes from the partners:

"We absolutely love having the trail open for our clients to enjoy! They get to experience the beauty of the nursery and land like never before and it's gorgeous no matter what the season," said Leslie Gregg, co-owner of Grelen Nursery

"We appreciate the recognition of the Trail as a Virginia Treasure. The designation draws attention to the sustained conservation effort at James Madison's Montpelier and within the Madison Barbour Rural Historic District," said PEC President Chris Miller. "The Governor and the General Assembly have provided increased funding for conservation in the 2017-2018 budget, and PEC looks forward to working on additional conservation projects in the area."

"James Madison's Montpelier is open to the public seven days a week," said Montpelier President Kat Imhoff. "We are delighted the Governor is recognizing this joint effort to bring more Virginians to our property to enjoy its history and natural beauty."