

Friends of
ESMONT



Esmont, Virginia

Program Plan & Projects



PROGRAM PLAN

Esmont Virginia covers a large geographic area including the historic village of Esmont (Village), Porters Road, Chestnut Grove, and many farms surrounding the area. From its beginning in the mid-1800s, Esmont village, located on Esmont Road, was a bustling village with a regional bank, several thriving general stores, a profitable railroad, a wood yard for shipping and receiving railroad ties and pulpwood, a slate quarry operation, a livery stable, and doctor's office. This boom continued into the 1950s, when the quarry operation closed. The bank had previously been converted to a post office, the rails and depot were removed, the wood yard vanished, most of the stores had closed, and the historic village of Esmont started into steady decline.

Over the next 60+ years, the historic Village deteriorated from a lack of attention from its residents and county officials. The Village has never had its own elected officials, nor have Porters Road or Chestnut Grove. However, Porters Road and Chestnut Grove both prospered to some extent, while the Village steadily declined.

Friends of Esmont, Inc., (Friends) a non-profit 501 (c) (3), was started by a former resident of the Village, who upon return to the area after a long absence, was quite dismayed at the deteriorated conditions. Once word got around that an organization had been started with the purpose of bringing life back into the Village, turning it into a destination for locals and visitors, and making it the hub of activity as in the past, people from all around the area and across the country signed up to become Friends of Esmont. The response was overwhelming, and the organization quickly grew and organized, selecting a Board of Directors, developing a website, and holding regularly scheduled meetings.

This success attracted the town of Scottsville and the village of Alberene to join forces with Friends of Esmont, thereby covering the Southern Corner of Albemarle County, or the *Forgotten Southern Corner of Albemarle County*. These contiguous areas have a population of approximately 4,511 people.

After several meetings with residents, the question was asked of them, "what would you like to see done in the Village to make it an attraction?" A lot of discussion ensued and after several meetings, a list of fourteen (14) projects were identified as helpful to the Village, but also benefiting all the other Esmont areas, particularly Porters Road and Chestnut Grove.

PROGRAM PLAN, continued...

For a new, small organization, fourteen projects seemed too many at one time. Therefore, the next task was to cull the projects down to the top 7 or so. The goal was to have all projects benefit the Village, as well as the surrounding areas, and each project would benefit the others.

The projects getting final approval are listed below. Descriptions of each project are attached showing how each project benefits the community, relates to other projects, the estimated cost for each project, and each project's sustainability. Also attached is a map of the Village of Esmont showing all the structures and 5 of the 7 Projects, along with a map of Albemarle County showing all properties with Esmont addresses in green, Alberene addresses in pink, and Scottsville addresses in yellow.

PROJECT LIST:

- 1. Rails-to-Trails: Esmont Trail - *See Update Jan. 2020***
- 2. Memorialize the Esmont Depot**
- 3. Restoration of Historic Homes**
- 4. Establish a Wildlife Refuge Along Ballinger Creek**
- 5. Chronicle Esmont History - *See Update Dec. 2020***
- 6. Easy Access to Esmont Fulfillment Farms**
- 7. Purvis Store Market**

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Though all the projects are interconnected, it is not expected that all seven will be active at the same time, but rather one or two initially. Rails-to-Trails will take many years to complete; the Purvis Store Market will take several years as will the Restoration of Historic Homes. The other projects should take less time per project.

The decision as to which project to begin with, and when, will be determined primarily by the availability of funds. Land acquisition could present time-lag problems for the Trail, Wildlife Refuge, the Depot Memorial and Purvis Store Market.