

The Recorder

Inclusive, independent, indispensable.

Valley Conservation Council names new director

October 04, 2018

STAUNTON – Valley Conservation Council has announced the promotion of Natasha Skelton to executive director.

Skelton, who joined the organization in early 2017 as an associate director for outreach, brings with her a background in agricultural education and communications management along with a lifetime of experience building relationships with individuals and organizations throughout the Shenandoah Valley.

Under Skelton's leadership, VCC aims to accelerate its conservation and education activities, broaden its membership, and leverage strategic partnerships to protect the natural and cultural heritage of the greater Shenandoah Valley region.

"VCC supporters have dedicated themselves to protecting a truly unique and special part of the world," Skelton said. "I'm proud to call the Valley home and to work toward conserving this special place alongside passionate people."

Since joining VCC, Skelton has worked with fellow staff to streamline the organization's management, cultivate partnerships with fellow conservation organizations, recruit new staff and board members, resume VCC's conservation easement program, and apply for accreditation with the Land Trust Alliance.

Butch Snow, chairman of the organization's board of directors, described the selection of Skelton as an important step that will build upon this momentum. "Natasha is a rising leader with in-depth understanding of conservation policy and the critical role land trusts such as ours play in protecting land," he said.

Skelton was raised on a beef and poultry farm in Rockingham County, and graduated summa cum laude with an agriculture education degree from Virginia Tech. She taught agriculture in Shenandoah County Public Schools and is a certified nutrient management planner. Prior to her

work at VCC, she managed the purchasing, travel and operational services departments at Rosetta Stone, delivering on business efficiency and risk management goals. She also led Rosetta Stone's event marketing program for eight years, managing an average of 45 strategic marketing events annually.

She and her husband, Jason, live outside Bridgewater with their two school age children.

Valley Conservation Council is a nonprofit organization working to protect the farms, forests, open spaces, and cultural heritage of the greater Shenandoah Valley region.

Established in 1990, the organization has helped protect tens of thousands of acres in 11 counties, holds nearly 50 conservation easements, and conducts education and outreach activities valleywide.

VCC works directly with landowners seeking to protect their land through conservation easements, supporting the valley's natural resources, rural landscape, and agricultural economy, and aims to educate community members of all ages about the steps they can take to protect our natural and cultural resources.