



CHERI WOODARD REALTY

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Eldon View

4802 Sperryville Pike
Woodville, Virginia
15.8 Acres

Three Bedrooms, Two Full Baths, Two Half Baths

Plus Two Bedroom Guest Cottage

Interior Features

- Ceiling Fans Throughout
- Fifty Gallon Capacity Hot Water Heater Upstairs
- Eighty Gallon Capacity Hot Water Heater Downstairs
- Plenty of Storage Space
- New Pella Doors and Windows
- Hardwood Floors
- Main Level Laundry Room
- Verizon Landline
- Dish Network for TV and Internet
- Attached two car Garage
- Two-Zoned Heating and Air Conditioning
- In 2017, the Crawl Space was Entirely Encapsulated to be Energy Efficient

Main Level

Formal Living/Dining Room

- Trayed Ceiling
- Pella Windows with Built-In Shades Overlooking Eldon Farms
- Wood-Burning Fire Place

Causal Living/Dining Room

- Built-In Bookshelves
- Pella Windows with Built-In Shades Overlooking Eldon Farms
- Wood-Burning Fireplace with Wood Stove Insert

Office

- Built-in Book Cases
- Eldon Farm Views

Kitchen

- Custom Renovation of Kitchen Cabinets
- Stainless Steel Appliances included Double Oven
- Bosch Dishwasher, installed 2014
- Wood Flooring
- Granite Countertops
- Separate Informal Dining/Breakfast Room

Master Bedroom Suite

- Walk-in Closet
- Full Bathroom
- Access to Patio with Hot Tub and Outside Shower
- Amazing Eldon Farm Views

Upper Level

- Two Bedrooms
- Large Attic Storage Area
- Full Bathroom

Guest Cottage

- Remodeled Full Bathroom
- Separate Two-Bedroom Septic System
- Bedroom
- Office/Bedroom with Murphy Bed
- Attached Workshop
- Attached Extra Garage

Exterior Features

- Perennial Gardens
- Large Porches
- Million Dollar Views
- Rear Patio with Motorized Awning
- Hot Tub and Outside Shower
- Privacy
- Detached Six Bay Car Garage
- Paved Parking Pad and Driveway

Welcome changes — not development — afoot at Eldon Farms

rappnews.com/2017/04/16/welcome-changes-not-development-afoot-at-eldon-farms/

By John
McCaslin

4/16/2017

Public hiking and riding trails on horizon; farm's attorney: 'We want to integrate ourselves more into the community'

Mention "Eldon Farms" and residents of Rappahannock County will tell you everything they know — or more likely don't — about one of the last contiguous land tracts of its kind in the eastern United States.

"It is the last," pipes up Arthur "Art" Schiller — attorney, counselor and president of Lane Industries, Inc. — from the backseat of an SUV that is traversing the farm's unparalleled 7,100 acres of pastureland and forests encompassing Woodville from all directions.

Repositioned over Manhattan, Eldon Farms would stretch from Wall Street to Harlem. Conversely, you could squeeze almost nine of New York City's Central Parks into Eldon's 65 miles of fencing.

"It used to be larger — 9,000 acres in three counties," points out Schiller, who for 37 years has advised and counseled the farm's numerous stakeholders and staff on all matters legal and otherwise, bovine included.

Even downsized, it's a freak of nature that this unblemished breath of fresh air — its vistas rivaling if not surpassing nearby Skyline Drive — exists in this age of suburbanization, especially with Washington, D.C.'s commuter belt expanding by the day.

And that's what has folks here concerned.

While many Rappahannock residents have never stepped foot onto Eldon (not that the welcome mat has been put out) they take pride in its significance and claim it as a county landmark. So the mere sight of a bulldozer clearing brush from one of the farm's cattle pastures gets tongues wagging from Slate Mills to Courthouse Row.

"If people are driving by and see anything being done to the property the rumors begin," acknowledges Eldon Farm's manager John Genho, a leading international cattle genetics consultant who is well-liked and respected in Rappahannock County circles.

"But we're not up to anything," he stresses.

As Genho negotiates his vehicle across unfrequented pastureland, stopping every so often to unhook cattle gates or to point out wildlife — and killer views that housing developers would die for — he and Schiller are well aware of the intrigue and even mystery that has surrounded the farm for decades.

And for that, surprisingly, they accept part of the blame.

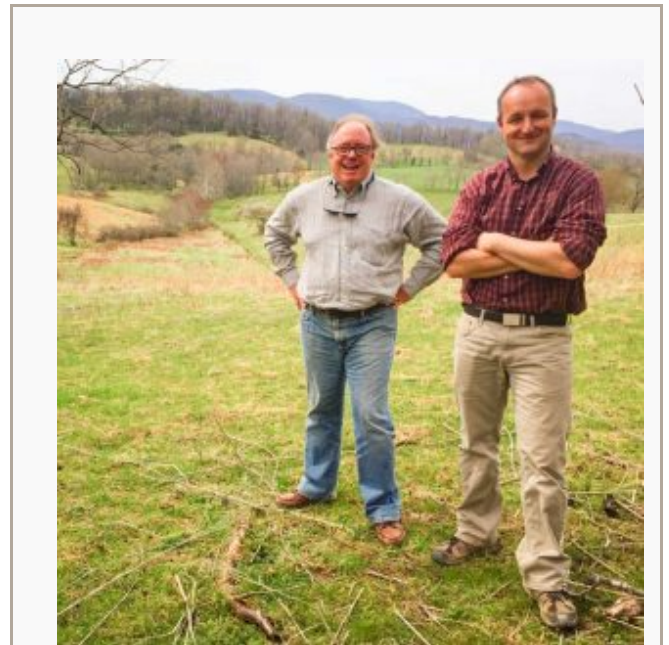


Photo by John McCaslin

Lane Industries, Inc., attorney Art Schiller (left) and farm manager John Genho provide a tour last week of the 7,100 acre Eldon Farms.

“We’ve not been too outgoing, but it’s not been intentional,” insists Genho, a Cornell post graduate who grew up on a cattle ranch in central Florida and resides today near Woodville with his wife and young children. “We’ve always been friendly. We’ve just been keeping our heads down and going about our work.”

But change is in the air, the pair of men confirm.

For starters, if you haven’t noticed, Eldon Farms is getting out of the landlord business: the number of rental homes dotting the expansive property has decreased in recent years from 25 to 10.

“Something went wrong in these houses several times a day,” explains Genho, which made it difficult for Eldon’s mere full time staff of six — cowboys, for the most part — to concentrate on the farm’s primary source of income: cattle ranching (currently 1,000 head, although there’s been more).

“Apart from the 25 rentals we also had [as many as] 10 homes on the property that were uninhabitable,” continues



Photo by John McCaslin

Just a portion of the spectacular Eldon Farms landscape, some of which will soon be opened to the public.

the manager, who next month will have been at Eldon for 12 years.



Photo by John McCaslin

A 19th century log cabin that sits on Eldon Farms' property was recently renovated.

So slowly but surely Eldon has been knocking down — and in one recent case igniting in view of curious rubberneckers on the Sperryville Turnpike — its more undesirable properties.

“Everybody was worried, ‘What’s Eldon Farms going to do?’” recalls Genho. “We’re tearing down homes and they’re wondering what are we going to put up in their place?”

It was more than a half-century ago that Mr. and Mrs. William “Bill” N. Lane of Lake Forest, Illinois — he the president and CEO of the office supply and equipment giant General Binding Corporation — first visited Rappahannock County and like so many others immediately fell in love with the place. But what happened next was nothing short of improbable.

“I went around and rang a lot of doorbells, mostly of farmers about to retire,” Lane recalled to an Ohio newspaper reporter in 1976. “The small guy could exist but he could live better if he cashed in his chips.”

Cash in their chips they did: local farming families named Miller, Hall, Combs, Woodward, Spitler, Gatley and Quasebarth. In one fell swoop in 1961 the Lanes purchased seven farms consisting of over 3,200 acres and soon secured close to 6,000 more. The county was abuzz.

“If ever there was bargain priced land it was right here in Rappahannock,” said Lane, figuring he paid an average of \$50 an acre.

He merged the several farms into one, christening the sizable jewel Eldon Farms (named after the pre-existing Eldon Farm).

Tragically, Bill was killed in a 1978 car crash on the family’s 300,000-acre “Bell Ranch” in New Mexico, a spread so magnificent that it had its own zipcode. Then in 2002 cancer would take the life of his son and namesake, William Lane III. Another son, Jeff, died in 2007 when his single-engine airplane crashed on the same New Mexico ranch that he and his family operated after his father’s death. Suffice to say, all three Lane men died too young.

But in the Ohio newspaper interview, published less than two years before he died, Bill pledged of Eldon Farms: “I’ll never sell. We’ve got the land in a corporation so that it’ll never get split up. All my planning has been to keep it from ever getting fragmented. I’ve told my children that if they ever have to sell the land to raise money it’s a time for them to take a good, hard look at themselves in the mirror.”



Photo by John McCaslin

Interior of above log cabin.

Generations, of course, come and go, and Eldon Farms has since been fragmented here and there, although one might argue it was accomplished strategically. Either way, it is surviving Lane family members today who have full ownership and control of the farm.

“Twenty stakeholders of various generations, all related,” Schiller discloses from his rear seat.

For tax purposes, the attorney also reveals, Eldon Farms is divided into three different business entities, one of them curiously enough “Lane Real Estate, Inc.”



Photo by John McCaslin

Eldon Farms is currently restoring this old barn along Sperryville Pike in Woodville, just one of many large and smaller barns scattered throughout the property.

Don't read anything into that, Schiller says in the same breath.

Still, it raises the age old question: what does the future hold in store for Eldon Farms and its surviving 7,100 acres?

“The plan is not to develop,” assures Genho. “We're not up to anything. Our track record shows that we're exactly what this county stands for. And we're not short on track records.”

Schiller seconds that answer, pointing to the owners' attentive “stewardship” of Eldon over the years. And even today, he adds, with the ongoing restoration of several of the farm's more historic structures — houses to barns to a 19th century log cabin we visit that appears ready for a tenant.

So these pristine pastures for the foreseeable future will remain for the cows?

“The cattle is a tool to help manage the land,” educates Genho, not intending to dodge the question. “And in good years you can make money, and others not really. Two years ago was phenomenal.”

“Future generations will decide what to do with the farm,” Schiller doesn’t hesitate to say. “John and I are not family members and don’t get a vote. The direction the cousins [Eldon’s owners] have put to me is to work with John and invest in the land as good stewards, good husbandry. Let’s get the farm to where it should be. Restore the land to where people will be proud to come out here and look at it.”

People as in the public?

“We are looking at opening up a couple of walking trails and riding trails,” Genho reveals for the first time. “They will be controlled routes, and we will have check-in procedures” where the public can make reservations, including online, to hike and ride (the farm already allows scheduled access to some of the local fox hunting clubs).

Genho says his staff will be working this spring and beyond to emblazon trails, while also numbering gates for first responders in the event of emergencies — “so we can tell them to go to gate 17 for instance.”

“We don’t want people coming here and getting lost,” he points out.

Schiller adds with a grin: “You don’t want to find yourself in the middle of a bull field.”

The plan, says Genho, is for the trails to pass through “ecologically friendly areas” of timber, grasses and ponds that are home to bears, bobcats and quail — “with cattle safely on the other side of the fence.”

“We want to integrate ourselves more into the community,” Schiller explains, noting that one reason for his visit from the Midwest was to arrange for the donation of one acre of Eldon Farms to St. Paul’s Episcopal Cemetery in Woodville, which would allow for future expansion.

If all goes well, the public trails will be completed in the coming months — “We’re hoping for this summer, that is our goal,” says Genho — and Rappahannock County residents will then be able to experience Eldon Farms unlike ever before — and hopefully far into the future.