

# CountryViews

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE COUNTRYSIDE CONSERVANCY



## Land Preserved on South Branch of Tunkhannock Creek

In October 2005 the Conservancy purchased 45 acres of land in North Abington Township from the estate of George Messimer. This beautiful property lies along the South Branch of the Tunkhannock Creek upstream from Lackawanna State Park. It slopes down from the ridgeline to the creek under heavy tree cover, with majestic bluffs overlooking shaded stream pools. The parcel includes almost 1,300 feet of stream bank, and covers much of the steepest part of the hillside for nearly a mile upstream of this. The Conservancy identified this part of the 145-acre Messimer property as a conservation priority in discussions with the owner due to its value in protecting a steep slope from disturbance and development, its value in protecting the creek, and its potential for scenic hiking and nature appreciation.

It is the Conservancy's plan to maintain this property in its current forested, undeveloped state, to maintain and enhance its ecological value, to protect the stream from erosion and runoff, and to provide a site for appropriate forms of outdoor recreation and nature education.

The lower end of this property is about half a mile upstream from the State Park boundary. It is separated from the park by the Hull family's Spring Hills Farm, the bulk of which is in conservation easement (with the Conservancy) and agricultural conservation easement (with Lackawanna County). Protecting lands in the vicinity of the State Park is among the Conservancy's top priorities. Every piece of conservation land we can add to the mosaic will enhance the integrity of the State Park, the water quality of local streams, and the sustainability of the area's beauty.

The Conservancy is extremely grateful to Nathaniel Messimer for his generosity in making the land available for purchase by the Conservancy through a bargain sale, and to attorney Ty Welles for the many hours he put in on this project.

The acquisition of this property was supported in part by a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, which the Conservancy is using to protect the Lackawanna State Park and the South Branch of the Tunkhannock Creek in the Park's vicinity. To date, this grant has helped the Conservancy protect over 93 acres of conservation land in this area.



*Photo: Kathryn LeSoine*

## Advisory Board Launched

The Countryside Conservancy launched its Advisory Board at a November 2 lunch meeting at Keystone College. The meeting introduced the new Advisory Board members to the Conservancy's Board of Directors and staff, and gave them an introduction to how the Conservancy operates and what challenges it faces in achieving its mission.

This Advisory Board is a new venture for the Conservancy. It was created to give the Board and staff input from a wider circle of community members, representing a broad variety of personal and professional experience. The members of our Advisory Board are drawn from across the three counties we work in: Lackawanna, Wyoming and Susquehanna. We are honored to welcome the inaugural members of the Advisory Board:

Dr. Edward Boehm  
Ms. Sally Bohlin  
Ms. Jeanne Bovard  
Dr. Walter Broughton  
Mr. Mark Catalano  
Mr. Phil Condron  
Atty. Michael Cowley  
Mr. Robert Daniels  
Mr. Thomas Davis  
Mr. Joseph DeMarco  
Atty. Dave Gromelski  
Ms. Violet Kelly  
Ms. Darlene Kostelac  
Ms. Marta Kovacs-Ruiz  
Ms. Christine Laytos  
Mr. Jack Muller  
Ms. Carol Nelson Dembert  
Ms. Connie Sheils  
Mr. Bill Tersteeg  
Mr. Michael Williamson

We look forward to benefiting from the

good advice and discernment of our Advisory Board, and to having their support as we strive to do our work in the best interests of the community and in the most effective way.



*New Advisory Board members (l-r): Michael Williamson, Bill Tersteeg, Dave Gromelski, Jack Muller, Darlene Kostelac, Marta Kovacs-Ruiz, Violet Kelly, Tom Davis, Joe DeMarco, Carol Nelson Dembert, Walter Broughton, and Jeanne Bovard. Not pictured: Ned Boehm, Sally Bohlin, Mark Catalano, Phil Condron, Michael Cowley, Bob Daniels, Christine Laytos, and Connie Sheils.*

## Tailgate Picnic A Winner Again

The Conservancy's Eleventh Annual Tailgate Picnic took place on September 18 at the Conservancy's own Meadowsweet

Preserve on Lily Lake Road. A great crowd was there to enjoy the beautiful weather. The band, operating this year



under the name "Bob and the Blacktoppers," was wildly popular once again. Fine weather, walks along wooded Conservancy trails, a reading by local author Suzanne Staples from her new book *Under the Persimmon Tree*, roast corn and marshmallows over an open fire, and the ever-popular hot-air balloon made it a great event. The day was topped off by the infamous pie-eating contest, led by the MacGregors, and pick-up football games as dusk fell.

We particularly wish to thank our sponsors, Adams Enterprises and Northwestern Mutual Financial Network, for their financial support of this year's Picnic. We thank Teri and Steve Erickson for chairing the event, and the Waverly Community House, PNC Bank, the Acker Family, and Malcolm and Ann MacGregor for their invaluable assistance!



## The Stewardship Fund

The Countryside Conservancy's mission is to conserve lands and waters in and near the Tunkhannock Creek Watershed for the public benefit now, and for the future.

The "now" part can be accomplished by accepting a conservation easement on a property, or by accepting fee simple ownership of a property. But how do we assure that the land is protected "for the future"? How do we make sure that in 20, 50 or 100 years' time we will still be able to monitor easements, manage our landholding, and ensure that the conservation values we are committed to protecting remain intact?

A large part of the answer is the Conservancy's Stewardship Fund. This Fund was established by the Conservancy's Board of Directors to support land stewardship costs incurred by the Conservancy. These costs include monitoring and enforcement of conservation easements, and management, patrolling and signposting of lands that the Conservancy owns. The Fund may also help cover the legal costs of defending conservation easements held by the Conservancy, should this ever become necessary.

The Conservancy's practice is to draw on only interest generated by the Fund, leaving the principal to keep generating interest for future needs. The Stewardship Fund is held and managed separately from other funds, such as the



Land Fund which holds monies for land or easement purchase, and the operating accounts that support day-to-day operations.

The Conservancy requests that donors of land or conservation easements make a gift to the Stewardship Fund. This gift is tax-deductible, like any other qualified gift to a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. We welcome gifts to this Fund from other donors as well. Please contact the office at 945-6995 to find out more.

Assuring adequate funds for future monitoring and management is critical

to the long-term success of our mission. This Fund gives the Conservancy financial assurance that good work we do today will not slip away.

There are some things that money can't buy, but a strong Stewardship Fund is an investment that can help "buy" permanent good stewardship over protected lands. Please consider helping us buy long-term peace of mind with a gift to the Stewardship Fund!

## Donor Newsflash!

### New Tax Benefit for Cash Donors through end of 2005

Thinking about making a gift to the Conservancy in 2005? Then you should know that Congress has greatly enhanced the federal tax benefits available for cash gifts to charitable organizations made between now and December 31, 2005. The contribution limit for certain outright gifts of cash has increased from 50 percent of adjusted gross income to 100 percent of AGI. An article about this can be viewed at <http://conserveland.org/features/TaxBenefit> .

Donors are recommended to consult their tax advisors about the optimum amount to contribute in 2005, and the advisability of making contributions from their IRAs or other qualified plans.

## Staying Safe in the Woods

If you live in northeast Pennsylvania, you know what time of year it is: hunting season! From bow season opening on October 1 through the end of January, hunters will be in the woods and fields on the lookout for deer, grouse, quail, turkey, bear and more as the various seasons open and close. (And remember that for some species like coyote, there is no closed season!)

If you're a hunter, please hunt safely and with respect for other users of the woods. If you're not a hunter and are entering woods, swamps or other natural areas this time of year, please take basic safety precautions for your health and the hunters' peace of mind. Recommended measures include:

DO wear bright colors, preferably hunter orange. If you don't already own a bright orange jacket, vest or hat, you can get one at sporting goods and many other stores. A simple orange nylon vest costs only a few dollars. And don't forget to get some color on your dog! Bright-colored dog vests and collars are available for just this purpose. DON'T wear white, which can be mistaken for a deer's flag; and don't wear colors that blend into the woods.

DO avoid areas that you know are actively hunted; DO seek out areas where hunting is less popular. However, as you know, deer can be found almost everywhere in this part of the state!

DO be aware that hunting goes on in most parts of the countryside, including parts of the State Parks.

In addition, the general precautions of knowing your location and route, carrying a cell phone, and sticking to established trails rather than bush-whacking are all good ideas. We want to see you in the woods, but we also want you to come home safe!

## Trail Run

This year's Second Annual Cross-Country Trail Run took place on the morning of October 16, under a partly sunny sky with occasional gusts of rain and wind. This year's Run attracted a good, competitive field despite the weather, and the organizers received many compliments from runners on the beauty of the scenery and the layout of the trail.

This year's winning time belonged to Kevin Bandru, who shaved half a minute from Randy White's first-year record with a time of 18:08. Randy came in second this year with a time of 19:09. 2004 overall female winner Alaina Dietz retained her title with a time of 21:48. The full list of runners and their times can be viewed at <http://mykmon.tri pod.com/cc101605.html>. We would like to thank all the participants, and urge them to tell their friends about this great run!

Thanks to Trail Run organizers Bill Booth, Curt Stevens, Joe Tierney and Mickey Tierney for their invaluable work in bringing off this event. We also warmly thank our financial sponsors for their support: Insurance Markets, PNC Bank, Adams Enterprises, Peoples

National Bank, the State St. Grill, and Don and Julie Wademan General Contractors. We are also grateful to our in-kind sponsors and supporters: Endless Mountain Water (drinking water), Ray's ShurSave of Factoryville (bananas), the Endless Mountains Running Club (timing clock), the Fleetville Fire Police (traffic control), the Dalton Fire Company Ambulance (first aid), the Bell Mountain Bike Club (patrolling), and of course Lackawanna State Park for once again graciously opening the Bull Hill area for this event.

Part of the Trail Run course runs over the Ziegler Preserve owned by the Conservancy. This trail is open to the public from dawn to dusk, and is accessible from a gravel parking area on the north side of PA Route 438 just 1 mile east of Route 407 or 2.2 miles west from I-81 Exit 201. The trail is a 1-mile loop that starts at the back of the parking area, and it also connects with the Park's Bull Hill Trail. Call the office at 945-6995 for detailed directions and information, and please remember when you're out in the woods that fall is hunting season!



*And they're off!*



## Trolley History Available

The Countryside Conservancy has officially launched the second edition of *The Northern Electric*, Norm Brauer's comprehensive history of the trolley line that once served communities as far-flung as Scranton, Clarks Summit, Glenburn, Dalton, Factoryville, Lake Winola, Nicholson, Hop Bottom and Montrose.

The book offers 209 pages of photos, history, anecdotes and business records, plus foldout maps. It is a faithful reprinting of the original 1987 publication, plus photos of additional Trolley artifacts discovered since that time. The book sells for \$33.39 including sales tax (\$36.04 including shipping and handling), and it would make a great Christmas present for that history or rail buff in your family! Copies can be ordered from the office at (570) 945-6995. Proceeds support Conservancy operations, including the development of parts of the old trolley line into a non-motorized recreational trail.

Brauer, a resident of Dalton, is also author of *Return to Bailey Hollow: A History of Dalton, PA* and *There to Breathe the Beauty*, a photographic account of the camping trips of Henry Ford, Thomas Edison, Harvey Firestone and naturalist John Burroughs. Brauer attended a book signing on November 3 at the new First Liberty Bank and Trust in Clarks Summit, which has been decorated with historic images of the Northern Electric and the neighborhoods it served.

The Conservancy offers its grateful thanks to the Lackawanna Heritage Valley Authority, the National Park Service and the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, which generously provided a grant toward production costs. We also wish to thank author Norm Brauer, Carl Packer of the Northeast Pennsylvania Rail Historical Society, Attorney Russell D. Shurtleff, and Ed Nowakowski of PrintEd Products.



(left-right) Jack Carling, Lackawanna Heritage Valley Authority Contract Manager, Carl Packer, the Lackawanna & Wyoming Valley Railway Historical Society, Norm Brauer, author, Mary Felley, Countryside Conservancy Executive Director, Cheryl Ellsworth, Countryside Conservancy Project Manager, Natalie Solfanelli, Lackawanna Heritage Valley Authority Executive Director, and Attorney Russell D. Shurtleff, Countryside Conservancy Board Member, mark the re-issue of *The Northern Electric*.

## Trolley Trail Feasibility Study

The Feasibility Study on turning the old Northern Electric trolley line into a non-motorized recreational trail is nearing completion. The Conservancy will hold its final public meeting on this DCNR-supported study on Thursday, November 17 at 6:00 pm in the President's Dining Room at Keystone College. At the meeting, representatives of the Conservancy and study consultant Mackin Engineering will present the study's key findings and invite a final round of public comment. The meeting is free and open to the public; all are welcome to attend.

Following the November 17 meeting, the draft final study report prepared by the study consultants will be available for a period of 30 days at the Conservancy's office at Keystone College, at the Dalton Community Library, and at the Factoryville Public Library for review and comment by any interested members of the public. Please call 945-6995 for more information.



## Thank You to Our Members!

We wish to welcome all the new and renewing members who have supported our Annual Campaign 2005 since the date of our last newsletter! We thank the following individuals whose contributions are helping to keep the Conservancy healthy and active this year:

Mrs. Judith Fassett Aydelott  
Mr. Ted Brewster  
Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Cox  
Mrs. Susan Scranton Dawson  
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Durbin  
Mr. and Mrs. John Fassett  
Dr. and Mrs. Anthony Fazio  
Ms. Nancy Hill  
Mr. Bernie Kiesnoski  
Mr. Thomas Kilcullen  
Dr. and Mrs. Francis Laluna  
Mr. and Mrs. Vincent Maletta  
Ms. Barbara Mazurik  
Mr. Nathaniel Messimer  
Mr. and Mrs. Leo Moskovitz  
Atty. and Mrs. James Oliver  
Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Scott  
Mr. and Mrs. John Seamans  
Mr. and Mrs. William Steppacher  
Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Theilgard  
Mr. and Mrs. Rickard Yeust

If you haven't yet, please join or renew your membership now. You can find a membership form on the back of this newsletter. Your gift is what makes our work possible! Members who join or renew before press time of the next CountryViews will be acknowledged in the Winter 2006 issue.

## Honors and Memorials

We offer our thanks to the following individuals who have made gifts to the Conservancy in memory of or in honor of individuals. These gifts will be placed in the Conservancy's Land Fund to support our land protection activities throughout the region.

*In honor of the wedding of Mary Tuthill and Jackson Stroud:*  
Mrs. Janet T. McCabe

Abington Community Library Board of Directors

*In honor of John Atkins' birthday:*  
Nancy Stahler

*In honor of Tripp Broadbent:*  
Mary Felley

*In memory of Shirley A. Dunstone:*  
Susan and Dorrance Belin

*In memory of Jane and Daniel King:*  
Adelle Powell

We offer our sincere apologies for any errors or omissions in these acknowledgements. Please call us if we have overlooked your gift or misspelled your name, and we will make it right in our next issue! We are grateful for your forbearance.

What better way to celebrate a joyous passage in a loved one's life than to make a gift? Through the Conservancy you can give the gift of conservation, which goes on forever. The Conservancy is happy to accept gifts in honor of birthdays, weddings and other special events.

## Trail Fund Growing

We wish to thank the following individuals who recently made gifts to the Peck Memorial Trail Fund, in support of our trail development efforts:

Elizabeth I. Cooper  
Pat Fuller

Development of non-motorized recreational trails, particularly the Trolley Trail, was a long-held dream of Roz Peck's, and this fund was established through a gift from the Peck family in her memory. Donations to this fund are always welcomed, and are a wonderful way to remember Roz.

## Save The Trees

If you would prefer not to receive our quarterly newsletter, or if you are receiving multiple copies, please contact our office by phone at (570) 945-6995 or by email at [cconserv@epix.net](mailto:cconserv@epix.net) to let us know.

## State News

### Keystone Principles Announced

The Governor's office has announced that state government agencies will begin applying new principles and criteria to guide investment and growth around the state. These "Keystone Principles for Growth, Investment and Resource Conservation" are meant to guide development toward that combination of economic vibrancy and environmental quality that we all dream of for our state.

The principles include many sound ideas that will promote the type of growth and development the Countryside Conservancy envisions for our region. Examples include:

- Redevelop first: reuse and redevelop previously developed sites where possible.
- Concentrate development: support development that is compact, conserves land, and is integrated with existing or planned infrastructure. Foster developments and neighborhoods that offer healthy lifestyles.
- Foster sustainable businesses, including those that use our farmlands, forests and other natural resources in a sustainable way.
- Restore and enhance the environment.
- Enhance recreational and heritage resources, including parks, forests, trails, gamelands and fishing areas.

The ten Keystone Principles, with commentary, can be viewed online at: [http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/news/news\\_releases/2005/1005-keystone\\_principles.htm](http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/news/news_releases/2005/1005-keystone_principles.htm).

## **Watershed Events: News from the South Branch Tunkhannock Creek Watershed Coalition**

### **Movie Night, November 15**

After splashing around in the creek all spring and summer, the South Branch Tunkhannock Creek Watershed Coalition is coming indoors for the fall. The group will host its first-ever Movie Night at 7:00 pm on Tuesday, November 15, 2005.

We'll be showing the National Geographic documentary "Strange Days on Planet Earth: Invaders," which probes the dangers posed by invasive species. To bring the movie home for us, special guest Donna Murphy of the US Forest Service will give a presentation on invasive plant species that are causing problems here in Northeast Pennsylvania.

Movie Night will be hosted by the Lackawanna State Park's Environmental Learning Center on PA Route 407. Please call Angela Lambert at 945-7110 or the Conservancy office at 945-6995 for directions.

The Coalition will hold its November meeting immediately before the movie, at 6:30 pm at the same location. Join us then if you'd like to know more about who we are and what we do!

### **Ivy Park Concerns**

At the September meeting of the Watershed Coalition, local resident Ellen McGlynn voiced concerns about the groundwater contamination around the Ivy Park industrial site. A number of private wells in the vicinity of the park have proved to be contaminated with trichloroethylene and other pollutants, in some cases far above EPA drinking water standards. Ivy Park is situated in the South Branch of the Tunkhannock Creek watershed, just off the Waverly exit of Interstate 81. A group of concerned citizens have banded together to seek further information on the situation and press for official action. Their website can be found at [www.ivyparkneighbors.com](http://www.ivyparkneighbors.com).



## **Macroinvertebrate Mania**

The Watershed Coalition conducted its second collection of stream macroinvertebrates near Penn Brook Park in La Plume Township on October 8. Jeff and Ev Aronsohn, Esther Friedmann, Burr Hamilton, Jackson Stroud and Mary Felley were the intrepid volunteers this time, once again more-than-capably led by Kristen Travers of the Stroud Water Research Center. Thanks to the training session that Kristen led back in April, the volunteers now know what the critters are supposed to look like, and sorting and identification went much faster this time!

The volunteers found high numbers of caddisfly and mayfly larvae, and a wider diversity of organisms than were present in April. It seemed that the low water levels, rather than killing off stream life, merely concentrated it into a narrower volume of water, making it even easier to collect samples. Our overall "stream score" was 10 out of 12, an improvement on our score of 9 in April 2005.

Several specimens were preserved in alcohol, in accordance with our collecting permit. These will be added to the Coalition's budding collection for reference and educational use. The rest of the critters were returned to the stream following sorting and identification.

Our thanks to Kristen Travers, the Stroud Water Research Center and our volunteers for making this a wet but delightful morning out!

## **State News**

### **Looking to the River**

WVIA announces the launch of a new documentary film entitled *Looking to the River*. This documentary examines the Susquehanna River, past and present, and its importance to those who live in its watershed. The film had its theater premiere on November 4th in Lewisburg, and will be broadcast on television on a date to be announced in December. Visit <http://www.wvia.org/RIVER/River.html> to learn more!



**Join Countryside Conservancy's efforts to preserve the fragile natural beauty of our area.  
The future depends on us. Please join us today.**

\_\_\_\_\_ Family \$35

\_\_\_\_\_ Friend \$70

\_\_\_\_\_ Founder \$100

\_\_\_\_\_ Patron \$250

\_\_\_\_\_ Benefactor \$500

\_\_\_\_\_ Trust Partner \$1,000 and up

Please tear off and remit with your check or VISA/MC charge to Countryside Conservancy, PO Box 55, La Plume, PA 18440.

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PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

Consider a gift to the Countryside Conservancy in honor of someone you care about. The gift of conservation will last forever.  
For more information contact Mary Felley at P.O. Box 55, La Plume PA 18440. (570) 945-6995 or cconserv@epix.net

**Countryside Conservancy Board of Directors**

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*1-800-732-0999*

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