

# CountryViews

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE COUNTRYSIDE CONSERVANCY



## Fall Events

### 11th Annual Tailgate Picnic



Join us to celebrate summer's end in the great outdoors!

The concept is simple: pack a picnic lunch, drive on out to our picnic site and have a great afternoon. Simple, but so satisfying. Enjoy live music, a delicious corn roast and roasted marshmallows courtesy of the Conservancy. A highlight of the Picnic once again this year will be free rides in a tethered hot air balloon, provided by Endless Mountains Hot Air Balloons! We will also offer children's activities and games. Guides will be on hand to help you walk Conservancy-protected lands, which extend to Lackawanna State Park.



This year's Tailgate Picnic will take place on **Sunday, September 18** at the Conservancy's own Meadowsweet Preserve. The Preserve is located on Lily Lake Road in Dalton, just east of the former picnic site at the Scranton family field. Take PA Route 407 north for three-quarters of a mile from the intersection of PA Routes 632 and 407 at the Waverly Community House. Turn left onto Lily Lake Road, and the picnic site is less than half a mile down the road on your right.

Teri and Steve Erickson, our 2005 Picnic chairs, look forward to seeing a good crowd at the event! Admission is \$15 per carload. The fun starts at 2:00 pm and goes on till dusk, or until it's too dark to play football!

### Second Annual 5K Cross Country Trail Run

The Conservancy will hold its Second Annual Cross-Country 5K Trail Run on **Sunday, October 16**. The run will start and finish at Lackawanna State Park's Bull Hill Trailhead on Route 438 in Benton Township, Lackawanna County. This challenging but scenic race course will cover open hillsides on State Park land as well as the Conservancy's 29-acre Ziegler Preserve next door!

Registration opens at 9:00 am, and the race begins at 10:00 am. Registration is \$15.00 per person and includes a T-shirt for the first 50 entrants. While the race will be timed, non-competitive runners and walkers are welcome to take part as well. All ages and abilities are welcome to participate.

The run is being organized by Conservancy Board member Bill Booth with Mickey Tierney, Curt Stevens and Joe Tierney. Booth describes the race course as "scenic and challenging," with rolling hills, majestic fields, and numerous stone walls. One 2004 participant noted that there was barely any level land to be found on this run! Fall colors should be at their peak on race day, making this one of the most scenic runs of the year.

Our warm thanks go to Lackawanna State Park for its support of this event. For more information, to become a sponsor, or to register for the race, please contact Mary Felley at the Conservancy office, tel. (570) 945-6995, email [cconserv@epix.net](mailto:cconserv@epix.net).

## On Heaven Hill

Conservancy Executive Director Mary Felley recently sat down with Kathryn LeSoine to talk about her decision to place a conservation easement on her land. She found out that Kathryn and her husband Will Chamberlin had been talking about land conservation long before they approached the Conservancy. A few years ago they received a staggering estimate for kitchen remodeling, and realized that there must be better ways of using the money. Land conservation came in at the top of the list.

Kathryn knew that she wanted to find "a place that had been loved" that she could love in her turn. At first they thought of finding an unbuilt property and building a small earth-sheltered home. In February 2002, however, they saw a 116-acre wooded property with an old house in Bridgewater Township, northwest of Montrose. Kathryn says she fell in love with the place as they walked up an old logging road to the cattle pond at the top of the hill. She describes it as one of the last large parcels remaining in that area, which increased the urgency of protecting it.

To their own amazement, they bought the property within a week. Their intention as they made the purchase was both to conserve the land and to enjoy it. "I can't think of anything that has a greater feeling of giving than protecting land," says Kathryn. Once the land was theirs, the next step was to ensure that it would be protected over the long term.

They turned to the Countryside Conservancy to discuss the possibility of placing a conservation easement on the land.

Kathryn reports that the Conservancy Board members were very good to work with. Thinking through the issues was the most important part of the easement planning process, trying to envision what types of land uses might be possible and appropriate here not only today, but a hundred years from now. They found the Board members' long-term perspective and familiarity with different land use options was very helpful, and helped them avoid careless planning that might be either too loose or too restrictive for themselves and future owners.

Kathryn and Will decided to retain the house and surrounding nine acres as a building area in which a limited amount of renovation and additional construction can take place. Under the terms of the

conservation easement, the rest of the property will remain largely untouched into the future.

Kathryn added that the process of having a biologist conduct a baseline inventory of the property, and receiving a copy of his report, bound her and Will even closer to the land. By the time the easement finally closed at the end of 2004, they felt deeply invested in the property. Their nickname for it, "Heaven Hill," suggests how much this place means to them.

For Kathryn, conserving land is a fulfilling and enriching, even a spiritual, experience. She likens it to "having a full cup and inviting others to drink with me." Each time they walk up the old road to the pond, what's not important melts away, leaving the comforting knowledge that the woods, wetlands and wildlife will remain long after they're gone.



*A little slice of Heaven Hill. Photo credit: K. LeSoine*



**Recent Events:**  
***Annual Auction a Winner***

Our 2005 Auction on July 9 was once again a "Great party!" (to quote from a satisfied guest) and a key piece of our annual fundraising jigsaw. Attendance was up from 2004, and our revenues once again exceeded our budget projections. As in the past, the music, food, crowd and atmosphere were all fantastic. Even the weather cooperated, though only at the last minute.

Our warmest thanks to all the private and corporate donors and sponsors, area businesses, guests, and volunteers (especially our great Auction Committee) for their invaluable generosity with their time, energy, inventiveness, and checkbooks.

***Parade of Ponds***

The Conservancy thanks Creekside Gardens of Tunkhannock for donating part of the proceeds from its Second Annual Parade of Ponds on July 9-10. The Conservancy and the Tunkhannock Public Library were the lucky beneficiaries of this self-guided tour of area water gardens. Dozens of pond enthusiasts across our region hospitably opened their gates to display their water gardens to visitors, and the Conservancy is grateful to have benefited.

**Book Launch:**  
***All Aboard  
the Northern Electric***

... the book, that is! The Countryside Conservancy is proud to offer for sale the second edition of Norm Brauer's comprehensive history of the Northern Electric Railway, the trolley line that once ran passengers and goods from Scranton to Factoryville, Lake Winola, Nicholson, and Montrose. 209 pages of photos, history, anecdotes and business records, plus foldout maps! A faithful reprinting of the original 1987 publication, plus photos of additional Trolley artifacts discovered since that time. Invaluable for any local history or rail buff.

The book sells for \$33.39 including sales tax (shipping and handling are a few dollars more). Call (570) 945-6995 to order your copy today! Proceeds will support Conservancy operations, including the development of parts of the old trolley line into a non-motorized recreational trail.

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 to kick off the reprinting. We also wish to thank author Norm Brauer for granting us permission to undertake this project, Carl Packer of the Lackawanna and Wyoming Valley chapter of the National Railway Historical Society for help with distribution and sales, Attorney Russell D. Shurtleff for providing additional material, and Ed Nowakowski of PrintEd Products for printing.



## Stewarding the Land

The Conservancy, with the help of DCNR's Bureau of Forestry, has retained wildlife biologist Rich Gulyas and forester Jim Lacek, both of Bradford County, to prepare Management Plans for four properties owned by the Conservancy around Lackawanna State Park: the Ziegler Preserve on PA Route 438, Quarry Ridge on PA Route 407, and Meadowsweet Preserve and Gateway Preserve on Lily Lake Road.

On an initial walkover of the properties in July, the consultants offered great ideas about the educational potential of these lands, and were impressed and a bit bemused by the variety of non-native plant species that encumber some of our Lackawanna County properties.

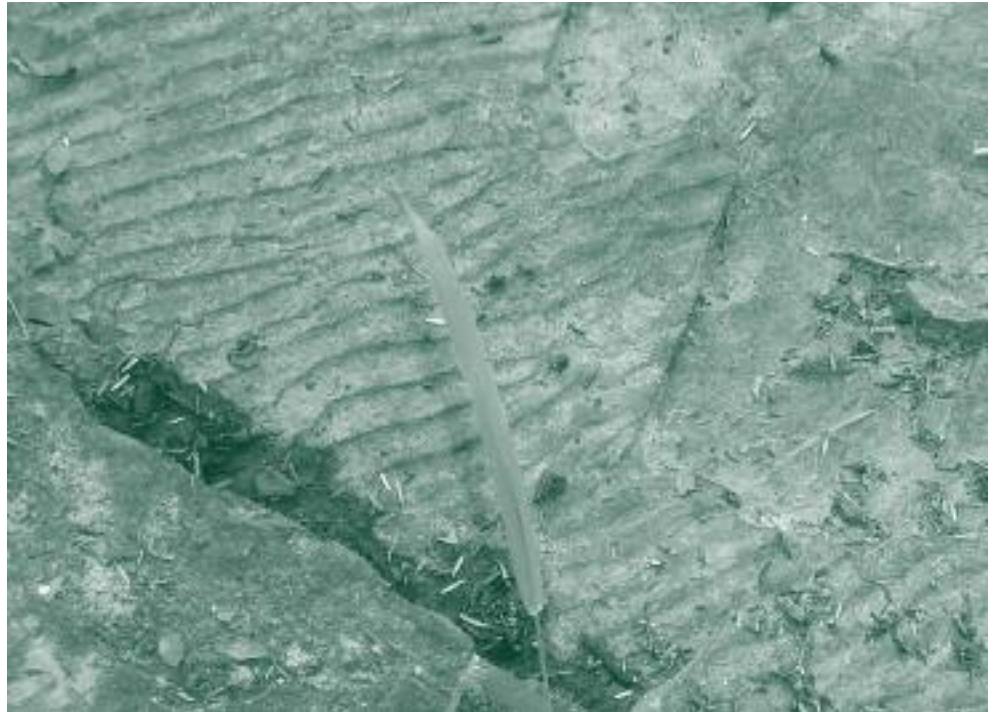
We are grateful to Ernie Keller of the Lackawanna County Conservation District and Jack Gearhart of the Forestry Bureau for introducing us to Rich and Jim, and for helping arrange a cost-share under which the Bureau of Forestry will help pay for preparation of the plans.

Good planning is a great investment in the future of any property. With our new Management Plans in place, we will start taking more and better actions to improve the ecological health of these properties and make them more accessible and enjoyable to the public.

## Stewardship Award Nominations Invited

Do you like what your neighbor is doing with his property? If so, let us know about it! The Conservancy invites nominations for its Tenth Annual Stewardship Awards. The awards honor those who maintain their properties in a manner that respects the conservation values of the land and brings enjoyment to the community. Awards are made in three categories: Working Farm, Residential, and Other. Susan Scranton Dawson of Dalton and Jo-Ellen Greene of Thompson are chairing this year's Stewardship Awards Committee.

Owners of properties in the Tunkhannock Creek Watershed and surrounding areas are eligible for consideration. Anyone is welcome to nominate a property for an award. Nomination forms are available by contacting the Conservancy at (570) 945-6995 or at [cconserv@epix.net](mailto:cconserv@epix.net). Nominators are encouraged to submit photos of the nominated property, which may be used in an award certificate! The deadline for nominations is September 15, 2005. Award winners will be honored at the Countryside Conservancy's annual meeting in April 2006.



## Every day is Earth Day

Everything Natural on State Street in Clarks Summit has "It's a Beautiful World" T-shirts for sale! These great 100% cotton shirts with 4-color printing are just the thing. Sizes range from small to extra-large, and the price is just \$14.99. The T-shirts were created for Earth Day 2005. Proceeds of sales benefit the Countryside Conservancy and the Lackawanna River Corridor Association. Get yours now and show the world what planet you're on!



## Little Rocky Glen: Being a Good Neighbor



The Conservancy gave Little Rocky Glen a "soft" opening to the public in June, when hot weather enticed visitors to the shady banks of the creek. We placed temporary entrance signs at the two trailheads on Lithia Valley Road.

We are still perfecting our management plan for this property, and will soon start working with a consultant to draft a master site plan. In the meantime, the entrance signs outline the key points of our management approach. Fishing, hiking, picnicking, and general enjoyment of the natural surroundings are permitted and welcome. Prohibited activities include swimming and diving or jumping from the rock ledges, and the use of alcohol.

Remember, activities that are against the law no matter where they take place include underage drinking, use of illegal substances, littering, fishing without a license, dangerous behavior, and disturbing the peace. We have given the State Police, Game Commission, and Fish and Boat Commission full authority to enter our property at the Glen and enforce the law.

The rocks here are age-old and tell the history of our region for time out of mind. The neighbors who live near this spot appreciate its serenity and quiet. Please think of them and enter this place respectfully. Your good behavior makes it possible for everyone to enjoy this wonderful spot. If you don't help us take care of it, we won't be able to continue opening it to the public.

## Teachers in the Glen

On July 13, a group of grade-school teachers from across our region enjoyed the beauty of Little Rocky Glen as part of a week-long course on Watershed Concepts taught by the Keystone College Environmental Education Institute (Kceel).

Two weeks later, a group of high-school teachers spent time at the Glen as part of a Kceel course on the geology of Northeastern Pennsylvania. Both groups were effusive in their praise for the beauty and value of the Glen, and were glad to learn that the Conservancy has protected it for public enjoyment and education.

Teachers and student groups are welcome at to the Glen. A Conservancy guide can be arranged to present the history of the Glen and talk about its preservation. If you plan to bring a group, please contact the Conservancy office at (570) 945-6995 in advance to make arrangements.



*A Kceel teacher training workshop in session*



*Photo credit: Norm Brauer Archives*

## The Glen Captured in Time

Local historian Norm Brauer generously lent the Conservancy a set of photos that show ballplayer hero Christy Mathewson's wife and sister on an outing at Little Rocky Glen in 1904, over a century ago!

The ladies' dresses, wide hats and high-buttoned boots look quaint to us now, but their joyful expressions and the age-old solemnity of the rocks around them could have been filmed yesterday. Our thanks to Norm for sharing these treasures!

◀ *Christy Mathewson's sister Christine and wife Jane at Little Rocky Glen, 1904.*

## Tax Proposals Endanger Land Conservation

Early this year, the US Congress Joint Committee on Taxation recommended drastic reductions in income tax deductions for private landowners who voluntarily conserve their land. The existing tax incentives, enacted over 25 years ago, have supported conservation donations of over 34 million acres of working farmlands, wildlife habitats, natural landscapes, and parklands.

The committee recommended eliminating any tax deduction for a conservation easement from a landowner who continued to live on the land, and in all other cases limiting the tax deduction to one-third the value of the gift. For donations of land in fee simple, the committee recommended limiting the tax deduction to the owner's basis in the gift rather than the appraised market value.

The Countryside Conservancy and the land trust community nationwide oppose these changes. So does the National Governors Association and so, luckily, do numerous Federal legislators. We hope that Congress will see reason, and not stifle an important conservation incentive that has been working well for decades. We urge Congress to focus instead on better enforcement of existing IRS regulations, to prevent abuses of existing tax incentives.

We also support the national Land Trust Alliance's initiative to develop an accreditation process for land trusts, in order to provide a third-party "seal of approval" for qualifying land trusts and to strengthen public confidence in voluntary, private land donations. The Countryside Conservancy is following the development of an LTA accreditation process with interest, and plans to seek accreditation once the process is finalized.

We will keep our readers posted on these developments.

## Thank You to Our Members!

We are delighted to report that our membership has shot up from 284 in the 2004 annual campaign to 410 so far this year - an increase of over 40% in just one year! We have welcomed over 100 new members during the 2005 campaign, a phenomenal degree of growth for a small organization like ours.

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 will help keep the Conservancy healthy and active in the coming year:

Debbie Amato  
Barbara Androski  
Michael and Linda Barrasse  
Mr. and Mrs. Paul Beane  
John B. Beemer  
Mary Blau  
Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Bogedin  
Joel Broadbent  
Patricia Cembalest  
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Atty. and Mrs. Stephen Saunders  
Dan and Karyn Townsend  
The Waverly Womans Club  
Janet Weeks  
Mr. and Mrs. Billy Williams

If you haven't yet, please join or renew your membership. You can find a membership form on the back of this newsletter. Your gift is what makes our work possible! Members who renew before press time of the next CountryViews will be acknowledged in the Fall 2005 issue.

## Memorials

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

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

*In memory of Rosamond R. Peck:*  
Elizabeth I. Cooper  
Mr. and Mrs. James Cours  
Mr. and Mrs. William Kent

*In memory of Robert Messimer:*  
Mr. and Mrs. William Kent

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.



## Watershed Events

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



Burr Hamilton has posted sturdy aluminum signs to mark the five sites where water quality monitoring is taking place on the South Branch of the Tunkhannock Creek. Monitoring continues once a month (despite the very low creek levels), and we have added alkalinity to the list of items we test for.

Through a mapping assistance grant, the Coalition has received a set of maps from the Susquehanna River Basin Commission that show the topography,

land use, geology and soil types of the Tunkhannock Creek Watershed. A letter-size printout of the maps is available to interested parties; come to one of the Coalition's monthly meetings to get one! Meetings take place at 6:30 pm on the second Tuesday of every month at the Conservancy office, and members of the public are always welcome.

At the Coalition's June meeting, Dr. Bob Cook of Keystone College gave an intriguing presentation on the hydrological cycle and the water budget of the Tunkhannock Creek Watershed. Among the facts gleaned by the audience:

- A watershed boundary is defined purely in terms of surface flows; groundwater, however, can flow across watershed boundaries.
- The capacity of surface water storage (lakes, swamps, streams) in our watershed is negligible compared to the groundwater storage capacity.
- The amount of groundwater stored in the Tunkhannock Creek Watershed is measured in the trillions of gallons, while the annual water budget (the water that passes into and out of the system) is only in the billions of gallons per year.
- Almost two-thirds of the stream flow in our watershed comes from groundwater, and only one-third from overland runoff.

A detailed presentation of the calculations behind our local water budget can be viewed at: [http://www.atlas.keystone.edu/research/groundwater/4\\_water\\_budget.htm](http://www.atlas.keystone.edu/research/groundwater/4_water_budget.htm).

The Conservancy and the Watershed Coalition hosted a display at the recent "Celebrate our River!" event on July 23 at Tunkhannock's Riverside Park. We enjoyed meeting friends, enjoying the breeze off the river and listening to great music from John Hazard, who was wrapping up a week-long musical float trip down the Susquehanna. We hope the Dietrich Theater will hold this event again next year!

## Growing Greener Deal Approved

You may have heard that the "Growing Greener" referendum on a \$625 million bond issue for environmental purposes passed by a comfortable margin in Pennsylvania's primary elections this year. The citizens have spoken: environmental quality is worth investing in!

The Governor and the state legislature have lately agreed on how this money will be spent. Among the types of projects that will be funded by "Growing Greener II" are open space conservation; farmland preservation; improvements to the State Parks and State Forests; cleanup of mine sites; remediation of brownfields (abandoned industrial sites); and community revitalization, because rejuvenating forlorn downtowns is a key to preventing unnecessary paving-over of rural areas.

## Free Conservation Workshops

The Pike County Conservation District is holding a series of evening workshops on land conservation and planning. Upcoming events in this series:

**Wed., Aug. 24, 6:30 pm:** "Open Space Planning Success Stories from Monroe County." Pike County Area Agency on Aging Center, 150 Pike County Blvd., Hawley.

**Sun., Sept. 18, 12:00 to 5:00 pm:** "Protecting our Hunting, Fishing & Outdoor Recreation Landscape." PPL Learning Center, Route 6, Hawley.

**Thu., Sept. 29, 7:00 pm:** "Land Conservation: A Foundation for Healthy Waters." Pike County Conservation District Education Building, Rt. 402, Blooming Grove.

**Tue., Oct. 18, 7:00 pm:** "Save Our Land, Save Our Towns": Presentation by Pennsylvania author Tom Hylton. PPL Learning Center, Route 6, Hawley.

All events are free and open to the public, but advance registration is requested. To register or for more information, contact the Pike County Conservation District at (570) 226-8220 or visit their events webpage at <http://www.pikeconservation.org/BulletinBoard/>.



**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

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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

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