

# CountryViews

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE COUNTRYSIDE CONSERVANCY

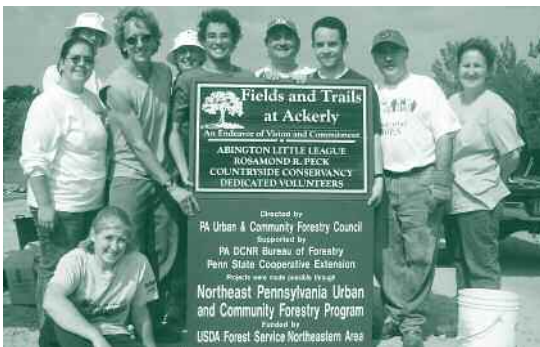


## Trail day at Ackerly Field

The Countryside Conservancy thanks Michael Williamson and his colleagues from Prudential, who carried off a very successful volunteer day at Ackerly Field, Glenburn Township on September 22. This fall planting and cleanup supported the Conservancy's ongoing beautification efforts at the Abington Little League complex at Ackerly Field. The Prudential group, along with volunteers from the Conservancy and Keystone College, planted ten new trees and shrubs, cleaned up brush and litter, pruned, watered, mulched, and made the place sparkle! Areas cleaned up included the ballfields and parking area, landscape plantings, the Conservancy's loop trail around the fields, and the old Hunt Club site across Ackerly Creek.

The volunteers also prepared the site for two new signs to be posted at the fields, honoring Conservancy founder Rosamond R. "Roz" Peck, the Countryside Conservancy, Abington Little League, the Northeast Pennsylvania Urban and Community Forestry Program, and the many volunteers that have contributed to the beautification of this site. We are deeply grateful for all their contributions.

Prudential employees and other volunteers taking part included: Michael G. Williamson, Barbara Williamson, Megan Williamson, Dan Williamson, Gavin Cerco, Robert A. Luciani, Kevin Siebecker, Ryan Siebecker, Gabe D'Ulisse, Tory D'Ulisse, Gavin D'Ulisse, Debra Hedrick, Mary Borthwick, Kathleen Swartwood, Ellen Farrell, Lynne Fortuner, Mary York Roberts, Anthony Roberts, Megan Wolfe, Devaki Constantine, Finn Shore, Vegas Carr, Gayle Muller, Jack Muller, Amy Welcome, David Gromelski, Charlie Gromelski, Cheryl Ellsworth, Mary Felley, Abby Peck, Pat Acker, and Margaret Hull.



Board member Abby Peck, together with Prudential and Conservancy friends, displays new signs to be posted at Ackerly Field



Volunteers pose with a newly planted tree at Ackerly Field. Kneeling/seated from left: Kathleen Swartwood, Ryan Siebecker, Charlie Gromelski, Sadie Allen, Brandon Sperger and Terri Heil. Standing: Ellen Farrell, Gavin Cerco, Kevin Siebecker, Mary Borthwick, Debra Hedrick, Michael Williamson, Maria Fanning and Domenica Coleman.

Our thanks also to Maria Fanning, Director of Service Learning for Keystone College, who brought Keystone students Domenica Coleman, Terri Heil, Sadie Allen and Brandon Sperger to lend a hand.

Countryside Conservancy has conducted tree plantings and cleanups at this site for eight years in partnership with the Abington Little League, Glenburn Township, the Garden Exchange, Abington Rotary and local Scout troops. We are delighted to welcome Michael Williamson and the Prudential team as new partners in the beautification of this community site.

## Volunteer and make a difference!

Mike Williamson of Prudential was the prime mover in organizing this fall's cleanup at Ackerly Field. His simple inquiry as to whether the Conservancy could use some volunteer support led to the mobilization of a whole team from Prudential, as well as a posse of Conservancy volunteers and Keystone College students jumping on board. The Conservancy is always seeking volunteers to lend a hand, to plant trees, organize the Auction, tend trails, introduce new friends, or develop new events. If you think you might be interested in giving a little of your time and abilities, please contact our office at 945-6995. Thank you!



## CountrySide Conservancy

PO Box 55  
La Plume PA 18440  
(570) 945-6995  
www.countrysideconservancy.org  
cconserv@epix.net

### Board of Directors:

Margaret Hull, President  
Michael T. Kane, Vice President  
George Ginader, Treasurer  
Howard Jennings, Secretary  
Patricia Acker  
Dorrance Belin  
William Booth  
Harmar Brereton  
Amy T. Broadbent  
Lydia Coulter  
Penny Davis  
Susan Scranton Dawson  
Teri Erickson  
L. P. Frieder III  
Kathleen C. Graff  
Jo-Ellen Greene  
Jeff Mitchell  
Jack Muller  
Abby Peck  
Russell D. Shurtleff

### Staff

Mary Felley, Executive Director  
Rylan Coker, Land Protection Specialist  
Cheryl Ellsworth, Program Manager  
Lois Yeust, Administrative Assistant

### Mission:

The CountrySide Conservancy is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to protecting lands and waters in and near the Tunkhannock Creek Watershed for the public benefit now, and for the future.

The CountrySide Conservancy is a tax-exempt organization as provided by IRS regulations. A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

## Board Highlights and Thanks



*Professor Howard Jennings is joined by (l-r) Kathleen Graff, Margaret Hull, Mary Felley and Cheryl Ellsworth of the Conservancy at the awards dinner.*

The Conservancy is pleased to announce that two of its Board members, Howard Jennings and Harmar D. Brereton, were recently recognized for their contributions to our communities of northeastern Pennsylvania.

**Professor Howard Jennings** of Keystone College, a Conservancy Board member, was recently honored with the 2007 Thomas P. Shelburne Environmental Leadership Award. The award was conferred on Howard by the Northeast Pennsylvania Environmental Partners on October 18, at the Partners' annual dinner.

Howard has exemplified environmental leadership in our region for decades. In addition to teaching biology and environmental science at Keystone College for nearly 40 years, he supervised the Youth Conservation Corps at Delaware Water Gap in the 1970s, was instrumental in creating the Pocono Environmental Education Center, and led the development of a nature trail network on Keystone's Woodland Campus. At Keystone, he serves as the academic coordinator for the Willary Water Resource Center, a local watershed resource that hosts the Tunkhannock Creek Watershed Atlas ([www.atlas.keystone.edu](http://www.atlas.keystone.edu)), an online repository of information about our 413-square-mile watershed. Most recently, Howard has been a key player in the creation of the Keystone College Environmental Education Institute (Kceel), a teacher-training initiative launched in 2004.

Kceel has provided training for hundreds of educators in our region and consistently earns high praise from participants.

Howard has served since 1998 as a Director and since 2000 as Secretary of the CountrySide Conservancy. He brings to the Board a scientific perspective and an understanding of local community and landowner views. He was instrumental in the creation of the South Branch Tunkhannock Creek Watershed Coalition, a citizens' group operating under the aegis of the CountrySide Conservancy since 2003.

Conservancy Board member **Harmar D. Brereton, MD** was recently honored by the American Cancer Society at its Ball of Hope, an event that raises awareness and funds for cancer research, patient services and educational programs. The Ball took place at the Scranton Cultural Center on October 27.

The American Cancer Society recognized Harmar for his leadership work in radiation therapy in our region. He is a partner in five cancer centers, including the Northeast Regional Oncology Centers. He also helped to establish the Northeast Regional Cancer Institute, a local consortium of hospital dedicated to cancer research and education.

Finally, the Conservancy extends its sincere thanks to **Lisa Hall**, who has retired from the Board of Directors after years of dedicated service. Lisa recently took a job with the Small Business Development Center at the University of Scranton, and her work and travel schedule preclude her giving the Conservancy the time she used to. She won't leave us entirely, however, as we have asked her to step onto our Advisory Board so we can continue to draw on her skills and knowledge from time to time. We thank Lisa warmly for all her good work, and wish her well!



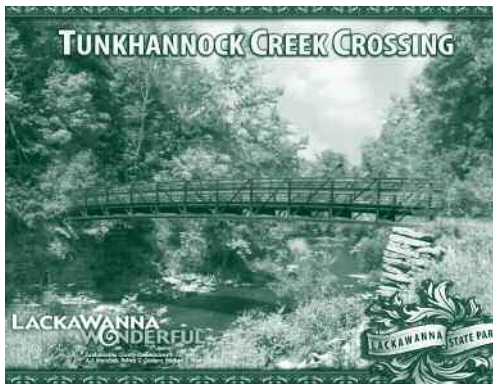
## Lackawanna State Park Update

On October 9, Lackawanna County majority commissioners Robert Cordaro and A. J. Munchak announced that the County will replace the old iron bridge over the South Branch of the Tunkhannock Creek at the end of Benton Road in North Abington Township. The existing structure (see photo), while picturesque, has long been unsafe, although some Park users still cross it on occasion. The proposed new bridge (artist's conception, pictured) will be limited to non-motorized user such as hikers, bicyclists and horseback riders. The Conservancy has long sought the restoration of a safe stream crossing here, to link Benton Road and trails on the south side of the Park to those on the west side. We also hope this bridge will someday be a link in a Trolley Trail spur running back to Dalton. We sincerely thank the County for moving forward with this project!

The bridge will link State Park lands on the east side of Ackerly Creek to lands owned by Jack and Gayle Muller on the west side. The Mullers worked with the Conservancy in 2005 to put a conservation easement on 18 acres of their property along the South Branch of the Tunkhannock Creek. This easement formally opened up parts of the Mullers' property along the creek for non-motorized public recreational access such as hiking and fishing.



*The existing 19th-century iron bridge*



*Artist's rendering of proposed new bridge*

In other State Park news, the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources has taken an option to purchase the Trostle Pond property on Route 407 from the Conservancy. Once ownership is transferred to DCNR, this 34-acre parcel will become part of Lackawanna State Park, managed together with the adjacent management unit of the Park. We are very happy to be able to work with DCNR to protect this property.

## Shopping for the Greater Good

A few months back we told you about GoodSearch ([www.goodsearch.com](http://www.goodsearch.com)), a search engine you can use to raise money for the Conservancy simply by searching the Internet. Go to the GoodSearch site, enter Countryside Conservancy in the box headed "Who do you GoodSearch for?", and search away! An estimated penny per search will be generated for the Conservancy.

The latest addition to the stable of Good things is "Goodshop.com", an online shopping gateway that directs a portion of your purchase to the charity you select. GoodShop.com connects you to online stores and ensures that up to 37 percent of each purchase is donated to your favorite cause. Hundreds of stores like iTunes, Barnes & Noble, Best Buy, Hotels.com, ebay and Overstock.com have teamed up with GoodShop. Simply enter their online store through the GoodShop portal, and every time you place an order, these stores will donate a percentage of the sale to your selected charity. You pay nothing extra for accessing their store through GoodShop.

Just go to [www.goodshop.com](http://www.goodshop.com), enter Countryside Conservancy in the box headed "Who do you GoodSearch for?" and click on the button for the online store of your choice. Tell your friends and family, too. With the Christmas shopping frenzy approaching, now is the time to make a difference painlessly!

## Hunting Season Open

We remind all those who enjoy visiting our preserves that four of our properties will be open to deer hunting for two weeks after Thanksgiving and three weeks after Christmas. The properties are: Ziegler (on Route 438), Messimer (on Grist Mill Road), Trostle Pond (on Route 407), and Quarry Ridge (on Route 407 but accessed from within Lackawanna State Park). Anyone wishing to obtain a permit to hunt deer on these properties on Nov. 26-Dec. 8, 2007 (rifle season) or Dec. 26, 2007-Jan. 12, 2008 (muzzle loader and bowhunting) is asked to call the office at 945-6995 to obtain a permit application, regulations and map.

The Conservancy took the decision in 2006 to allow deer hunting on these lands in an attempt to control deer numbers, and thereby help regeneration of native forest species.

Hunters and non-hunters, people and dogs alike, please remember to wear your orange while in the woods during hunting season this fall and winter. Please stay alert, be aware of your surroundings and courteous to other users of the landscape, and above all be visible!



## Tailgate Picnic



Thanks to all who attended our Tailgate Picnic on September 23! The afternoon could not possibly have been more beautiful. Thanks to our famous nameless band, which did a great job as always, and to Munster, the teen band that stepped in for a set. Thanks also to Margaret Hull and Spring Hills Farm for providing wagon rides, to the Acker family for the corn roast, to Bill Booth for leading a mountain-bike tour of Lackawanna State Park and Conservancy trails, to Tom Durbin and Joe Janichko for their help preparing the field at Meadowsweet Preserve, to the Waverly Community House for setting up the tent, and to everyone else who pitched in and made this year's Picnic a great success. Above all, thanks to Sharon and Jim Vipond for their capable, good-humored and unflustered approach to chairing the whole event!

Here are some photos contributed by Amy Broadbent, Susan Scranton Dawson and Mary Felley from the Picnic.





## Trail Update

*Contributed by Bill Booth;  
photos by Scott Christina*



*Bill Booth (right) and friends gather on the trail*

The morning of the Countryside Conservancy's annual picnic on September 23, 2007 marked the second anniversary of the 'Trail Appreciation Mountain Bike Ride.' Perfect conditions greeted riders who assembled at the Lily Lake Road trailhead at Meadowsweet Preserve.

The ride was organized to recognize the efforts of volunteers who labored throughout the year to expand and upgrade what has become one of the premier trail networks in the region. The ride also recognizes the leadership of the Countryside Conservancy in not only preserving open space but collaborating with both DCNR (Lackawanna State Park) and private landowners to make these special places available for recreational use.

Loyal local riders were joined by enthusiasts from as far away as Mountaintop, PA for the ride which launched from the Meadowsweet Preserve and then traversed approximately 12–15 miles in a loop that took the riders as far north as

the Bull Hill trail and the Conservancy-owned Ziegler Trail. People not familiar with the trail system were surprised to find that they can easily connect through these various parcels to create a smooth flowing circuit through the State Park and beyond.

The day's ride showcased the Countryside Conservancy's 'signature' mountain bike terrain on the Ziegler property and on Quarry Ridge (just north of Meadowsweet). These trails, while appropriate for hiking, horseback, etc., are particularly challenging (fun) for mountain bikes due to some of the steep and rugged topography in these sections.

The 2007 season saw a tremendous amount of work on the trail system by legions of volunteers led by local biking enthusiast Joe Tierney. In the spring, new trails were added on the Meadowsweet and Quarry Ridge Preserves owned by the Countryside Conservancy. Later in the summer and early fall, with the cooperation and support of the State Park, the Frost



*Navigating a creek crossing built by volunteers*



*Climbing through the old quarry on Quarry Ridge*

Hollow Trail was completely reconstructed to create a more sustainable route through an area of the park vulnerable to erosion. All trail projects seek to adhere to IMBA (International Mountain Biking Association) guidelines for environmental sensitivity and sustainability. Finally, new signage including GPS trail maps were installed in key locations both in the park and on Conservancy protected lands.

(Editor's note: Joe Tierney, other members of the Hubbard Bike Club, Lackawanna State Park Manager Alex Stout, and Countryside Conservancy Executive Director Mary Felley appeared on a recent edition of *The Great Outdoors* on Fox 56. We thank Bob Ide and Val Geist for featuring this group in the show and letting the bikers showcase some of the great trails they have built and maintained on State Park and Conservancy land.)

Look for more trail updates in future issues of *CountryViews*!

## Little Rocky Glen Update

Construction continues on the picnic shelter at Little Rocky Glen, and the structure should be ready for ribbon-cutting in spring 2008. Meanwhile, the Conservancy has received word that PennDOT is preparing to replace the Lithia Valley Road bridge at the edge of the Glen. We hope they will be able to replace it with a structure that allows passersby to see at least a little of the beautiful gorge below!

## In Memoriam

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 Christine Haight:*  
Warren and Heather Acker

*In honor of Rosemary Tran's 90th Birthday:*  
Ann Chamberlin

*In memory of Bob and Louise Hull:*  
Women's Association of the  
First Presbyterian Church of Clarks Summit

What better way to remember a departed friend who loved the land, or 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.



## Fall Appeal Now On

In early December you will be receiving a year-end appeal from the Conservancy. We hope you will respond as generously as you can. We are climbing new heights as an organization, with new staff to lead our land-protection program and a predicted record number of conservation easements closing in the next few months. We expect to nearly double our protected acreage in the next year! To support our continued efforts, please add us to your year-end giving list. Protecting lands and waters for the future is a gift that will keep on giving forever.

## Creating a Legacy

Several friends of the Conservancy have mentioned that they are making a gift to the Conservancy through their will. We suspect that more planned-giving donors are out there, unbeknownst to us. While we would be delighted to learn upon your passing that you had remembered us in your will, we would much rather thank you now! The Conservancy is hoping to establish a legacy society to honor those who have remembered the Conservancy in their will or through other planned giving mechanisms. Letting us know that you have planned a gift to the Conservancy will let us acknowledge your generosity publicly (we can also keep it anonymous if you wish) and thank you today for your future gift. If you have specified a gift to the Conservancy through a bequest or trust, please contact Mary Felley, our Executive Director, at (570) 945-6995 or [cconserv@epix.net](mailto:cconserv@epix.net), so we can welcome you as a charter member of our legacy society.

Planned gifts can be directed to the Conservancy, or to the Countryside Conservancy endowment funds we have created with the Scranton Area Foundation and the Community Foundation of Susquehanna and Wyoming Counties. Gifts made to the endowment funds will continue to grow and generate income in perpetuity – possibly the truest example of a gift that keeps on giving. Gifts made to the Conservancy can be further restricted as the donor wishes, for example to go to our Land Fund (to help us bring more land under protection), or to our Stewardship Fund (to help ensure the defense of our conservation easements and the good stewardship of the lands we own).

Bequest language for a will can be as simple as: "I give to the Countryside Conservancy, a non-profit corporation with tax identification number 23-2787790 and with principal business address at P. O. Box 55, La Plume, PA 18440, (\_\_\_% of the residue of my estate) or (the sum of \$\_\_\_\_\_), to be used for the benefit of the Countryside Conservancy as the Board of Directors thereof may direct."

We are happy to discuss different giving options with donors. To find out what you can do for the Conservancy, please call Executive Director Mary Felley at 945-6995.

## Go Green for the Holidays

Green is Good! Here's a great way to keep your lawn green, be good to the planet, and benefit the Conservancy at the same time. D&D Organic Lawns has generously agreed to donate \$10 to the Countryside Conservancy from the sale of every \$75 gift certificate this holiday season!



The gift certificate is good for one application of organic based lawn food, to be redeemed once the growing season starts in spring 2008. The gift certificate can also be used to get \$100 off D&D's regular all-season lawn treatment package, which covers 10,000 square feet of lawn.

D&D Organic Lawns has offered chemical-free, Earth-friendly lawn treatments for the last five years. These gift certificates are a great gift for your favorite lawn owner for any occasion—holidays, birthdays and more. Call Josh or Kelly Arp at (570) 586-1016 to get your gift certificate. The Arps are located at 912 Walnut Street, Clarks Summit, PA 18411.

Our sincere thanks to D&D Organic Lawns and to Conservancy supporters Josh and Kelly Arp for creating this special opportunity. We also appreciate D&D's generosity in donating a lawn-care package to the Conservancy's Auction this year.

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

It has been a busy few months for the Watershed Coalition. On September 10, the Coalition met with Kristen Travers of the Stroud Water Research Center to discuss our water quality monitoring program, now in its fourth year. Kristen attended courtesy of C-SAW (Center for Scientific Assistance to Watersheds). Kristen helped us brainstorm how to expand our monitoring program into the eastern half of the watershed, how to check the accuracy of our results, and how to share our findings with local residents and municipal authorities.

Lackawanna County Watershed Specialist Alana Roberts led a rainbarrel workshop at Lackawanna State Park on October 1, with the support of the Watershed Coalition. Some 30 homeowners learned about the benefits of capturing the rain that falls on their roofs, diverting it from stormwater drains and saving it for watering their gardens during dry spells. The attendees also heard a brief presentation about rain gardens, another great tool for capturing runoff, before going home with brand-new rainbarrels to hook up to their downspouts. The event was so popular that the Coalition is considering holding another workshop next spring.

Alana also organized a second cleanup day at Bull Hill, Lackawanna State Park on September 27. Once again, Watershed Coalition volunteers teamed up with students from Lackawanna Trail High School and State Park staff to remove much of the remaining garbage and scrap metal from this former dump site, which is looking better all the time.

The Watershed Coalition held its 2007 elections in November. We welcome Ellie Hyde as our new Chair, and Dale Holen as our new Vice Chair and Water Quality Chair. Mary Felley continues as Secretary, and Alana returns for a second year as Education Chair. Congratulations to our new officers, and warm thanks to retiring Chair Dale Holen and retiring Water Quality Chair Jeff Aronsohn. Jeff has led the water quality monitoring program since its inception in 2004, and will now enjoy a well-earned break. We deeply appreciate his tireless efforts and his consistent good humor, even when wading icy creeks early on Saturday mornings.

## **Accreditation and Capacity Building**

The Countryside Conservancy has applied for accreditation with the national Land Trust Alliance (LTA). Of the 82 land trusts nationwide that will seek accreditation in 2008, our name was the very first one pulled out of the hat when the applicants were announced in October! As a result, we will be submitting our application to the LTA soon, in May 2008. More on this in our next issue.

Accreditation with LTA is one part of an ongoing capacity-building initiative by the Conservancy, aimed at making us stronger and more effective in land conservation. The initiative takes in not only our LTA accreditation process, but also the retention and training of our new professional Land Protection Specialist, and development of a formal map-based Conservation Plan to guide the organization's land-protection planning.

We wish to convey our very warm thanks to the Scranton Area Foundation, the Margaret Briggs Foundation, the Pennsylvania Department of Economic and Community Development and a generous individual donor who have extended support for this initiative. We also gratefully acknowledge the assistance of State Representative Jim Wansacz and his staff in seeking support from DCED.

## **Oil and Gas News**

Oil and gas leasing is the latest big thing coming over the horizon in northeast Pennsylvania. The Conservancy is open to working with landowners who lease oil and gas rights on their lands, provided that the permitted oil or gas operations do not compromise the identified conservation values of the land. No Surface Operations or No Development leases, which do not involve drilling or disturbing the surface, will generally not pose a concern.

Our advice to landowners considering signing an oil or gas lease is simple: get yourself a good lawyer! Leases are complex legal documents, and you need to make sure that the lease protects your interests and the health of your land. Leases can be written to control which parts of the property can be accessed by the exploration company, how close to homes and water wells drilling can occur, what types of cleanup and restoration are required, and more.

Always ask questions and read the fine print before you sign anything. Never let yourself be pressured into signing a lease on the spot. Be prepared to negotiate to get the deal you want and the assurances you need. Carefully balance the risk of permanent change to your land against the guaranteed income from a lease, and the slim chance of a really big payout.

To help landowners educate themselves on this important subject, the Conservancy is planning to host a presentation on oil and gas leasing on December 9, 2007 at Keystone College. Please call the office at 945-6995 for more information.



**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.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

VISA/MC: \_\_\_\_\_ EXP: \_\_\_\_\_

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



NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT NO. 5  
LA PLUME PA 18440

Countryside Conservancy  
P.O. Box 55  
La Plume, PA 18440

