

# CountryViews

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE COUNTRYSIDE CONSERVANCY



## New Easements in Susquehanna County



*The Cope family home at Woodbourne Orchards (Photo: Rylan Coker)*

The Conservancy recently closed its first easements in Dimock Township, Susquehanna County, on lands owned by Patricia Bidlake. Pat's family has a long tradition with the land and with nature. She is a descendant of Thomas P. Cope, a Philadelphia Quaker shipping merchant who acquired a large tract of land in northeastern Pennsylvania in 1817. Her grandfather, Francis R. Cope, was a keen naturalist who donated almost 500 acres of the family's lands to The Nature Conservancy in 1956. Pat's mother Theodora and grandmother Margaret Cope donated additional acreage in subsequent years, creating the beautiful 648-acre Woodbourne Forest and Wildlife Preserve with its wildlife, wetlands and ancient hemlock stands.

Pat's mother Theodora Cope Gray was a noted naturalist, a founding member of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, and author of *Driftwood Valley*, a memoir of life in the wilds of British Columbia. Pat herself sits on the management committee of the Woodbourne Forest and Wildlife Preserve, and her husband is a retired wildlife biologist. Clearly, conservation is a strong current within this family.

Woodbourne Orchards is the name of the family acreage on Route 29 north of Dimock, 52 acres of which (with two houses) remains in Pat's ownership. The land is bordered on two sides by the Woodbourne Forest and Wildlife Preserve and offers open, undeveloped views from Route 29 and from Woodbourne Rd. The landscape is a mosaic of pasture, farm fields, old orchards, and closed-canopy hardwood forest.

Facing the problem of how to maintain a large and complex property when she and her husband live much of the year in Canada, Pat spent several years reflecting and consulting with experts to identify the best conservation approach for this historic property. Pat eventually decided to work with the Countryside Conservancy. Pat subdivided the original 62 acres into three parts, each containing one of three existing homes. Lot 1 contains wooded areas, fields, old orchards, and Pat's own home, a stately 1880s structure built by her great-grandfather that boasts beautiful woodwork and a view all the way to Elk Mountain. Lot 2 contains her mother's home and ten (Continued on page 4)



*Flowers at the Bidlake property. (Photo: Rylan Coker)*

## SAVE THE DATE for the Countryside Conservancy's Ninth Annual Auction!

This year's event will take place on Saturday, July 12. It kicks off at 6 pm on the green at Keystone College. As always, live music, buffet dinner, an open bar, fascinating Auction offerings and furious (but friendly) bidding await all comers! Call 945-6995 to reserve a place for you and your friends!



## Countryside Conservancy

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Rylan Coker, Land Protection Specialist  
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### 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.

## 2008 Stewardship Awards



*View of the Cappucci's farm*

The Countryside Conservancy announced the winners of its 2008 Stewardship Awards at a ceremony on May 7 at Keystone College. This year's ceremony recognized ten property owners and caretakers in our region as outstanding stewards of their farms, homes, lands and waters.

Three awards went to working farms: to **James and Vivian Cappucci** for their farm in Mehoopany, to **William and Elaine Wood** for Brookwood View Farm on Route 92 in Jackson Township, and to

**Eleanor Jagger, Cheryl Jagger Williams and Richard Williams** for Sheepy Hollow Farm in Hop Bottom (famous for its stock dog trials).

Four homeowners were honored for outstanding stewardship of residential properties: **Deb and Jim Nagle** for "Meadowwood" in Dimock Township, **Frank Pinkowski** for his Fieldstone Farm home near Montrose, **Mrs. Edmund Thomas** for her historic family home in Factoryville, and **Sonji Lee and Neil Andre** for their "Kickback Farm" outside Montrose.

Three winners were named in the Special Use category: the **Newton Lake Watershed Association** for their efforts to study and protect the lake; **Sally Steele and Ray Biglin** for a restored wetland and invasive plant control site on their land near Lake Carey; and the **Mountain View Garden Club** for their beautification and greening efforts in the greater Clifford area.

There were heartwrenching stories among the winners, like that of Walt Jagger of Sheepy Hollow Farm who passed away just two months before the awards presentation. But there were inspirations as well, like his daughter Cheryl Jagger Williams who said simply, "This farm will go on as long as I'm alive." Deb Nagle was embarrassed to be honored for "doing what comes naturally," which for her and Jim involved creating a nature-education and recreation wonderland on their Susquehanna County acreage.

Frank Pinkowski noted that sometimes a person trying to care for the land and its heritage can feel like the world is spiraling down around him, but as he looked around the room at the landowners, friends and supporters in attendance, he said, "Coming to an event like this, you realize you're not alone."



*Unique stone wall at Kickback Farm*

The Newton Lake Watershed Association was honored for the amazing quantity and quality of scientific investigation they have conducted as an all-volunteer organization dedicated to the health and survival of their beautiful lake, and the Mountain View Garden Club was said to outclass any road crew in their ability to wield shovels and heavy equipment with energy and passion.

The Conservancy thanks all the award winners, who care so deeply for their land and have shown it through their work. All award winners received certificates of appreciation and a one-year membership in the Conservancy. Our thanks to Amy Broadbent and Gerald Kenjorski, co-chairs of this year's Stewardship Award Committee; to committee members Lydia Coulter, Jo-Ellen Greene, Margaret Hull, Ernie Keller, Marta Kovacs Ruiz, Jack and Gayle Muller, Susan Scranton Dawson, Joanne Smith and Ed Zygmunt for their time and effort.

The Stewardship Awards were instituted 12 years ago to express the Conservancy's appreciation for the efforts of good stewards of the land. The Countryside Conservancy considers it part of our conservation mission to recognize and thank land owners and stewards who maintain their properties with respect for the land's conservation and cultural values and thereby bring pleasure to the public.



*Rustic lane on Frank Pinkowski's farm*



*Entrance to Sheeple Hollow Farm*



*Members of the Mountain View Garden Club hard at work.*

## Best of the Abingtons!

The Conservancy was surprised and delighted to be voted "Best of the Abingtons" in the category of "non-profit project" this spring! This vote, obtained through a readers' poll in the Abington Journal, was extremely gratifying as it showed that people around the Abingtons are aware of and appreciate our work: protecting lands around Lackawanna State Park, conserving Little Rocky Glen, monitoring water quality in the South Branch of the Tunkhannock Creek and our work to create the Trolley Trail. We warmly thank all those who voted for the Conservancy, and we hope that someday we will be as well known throughout the whole Tunkhannock Creek Watershed!

## Membership Renewals

Starting in spring 2008, our members will begin receiving a membership renewal notice from the Conservancy in the month of their last membership gift. Previously, we sent out letters only in the fall to everyone. We are trying to shift to a rolling membership renewal system to smooth out the revenues from this source over the whole year. Please bear with us as we make this shift!

In addition to membership renewal letters, members may also receive invitations to respond to special appeals from time to time, for important projects like the Trolley Trail or improvements at Little Rocky Glen.

And just in case that economic stimulus check from the government is burning a hole in your bank account, we gratefully accept any economic "stimulus" of our Land Fund, Trail Fund, Stewardship Fund or general operating fund! If you're not using it to pay for \$4.00 gas, why not use your refund to stimulate the cause of land conservation?

## New Easements

*Continued from Page 1*

acres of fields and old orchards, recently sold to a writer who is another member of the Woodbourne Preserve Management Committee. Lot 3 contains the oldest of the houses, from the early 19th century, with two barns, pastures, fields and an old orchard. Pat hopes this third property will find a buyer who might operate it as a small-scale farm.

The conservation easements on these properties will forestall further subdivision and home building, and maintain the properties in much their current state. Restriction of further development on these properties will protect wetlands, water quality, soils, habitat integrity, wildlife and scenic values of the Woodbourne Preserve. Agriculture and other compatible activities will be permitted. It is Pat's hope that all three properties will support sustainable rural lifestyles with activities that might include small-scale farming, nature and heritage study, low-impact tourism, or artist's studios.

Pat was most generous with her time and information during the process of developing the conservation easements. She shared many family documents, including old orchard planting plans and notes from her grandfather, who was deeply concerned about the prospect of oil and gas extraction back in the 1930s! The Conservancy thanks Pat and her husband Larry for their patience, insight, and deep care for the land. The family has owned and loved this land since the 1800s, and the Conservancy is honored to be able to help protect it forever.

We will introduce more of our newly protected properties in coming issues of *CountryViews*. If you would like information about protecting your own land, please contact Rylan or Mary at the Conservancy office, (570) 945-6995 or [cconserv@epix.net](mailto:cconserv@epix.net).

## 2008: Year of the Barn

Do you own or know of an interesting, unique, historic or well-preserved barn near you? The Northern Tier Cultural Alliance is developing an inventory of barns in Northern Tier counties and seeks your input! You can print or download a barn survey form at <http://www.ntculturalalliance.org/pdf/barnsurvey.pdf>. The purpose of the "Year of the Barn" project is to document and celebrate our region's agricultural heritage. Both working and historic barns are of interest, and noteworthy barns may be included in a self-guided driving tour the NTCA is developing (with the owner's permission only).

The Northern Tier Cultural Alliance is a non-profit organization based in Towanda, working in nine Northern Tier counties including Susquehanna and Wyoming. Countryside Conservancy Board member Amy Broadbent also invites barn owners and barn fans to contact the Conservancy with information on barns of interest; we can be reached at 945-6995, email [cconserv@epix.net](mailto:cconserv@epix.net).

## Farm Bill Extends Conservation Tax Incentive

The Farm Bill recently approved by Congress will extend a 2006-07 tax incentive for land conservation from January 1, 2008 through the end of 2009. The incentive, which applies to a landowner's federal income tax, will:

- Raise the deduction a donor can take for donating a voluntary conservation agreement from 30% of their income in any year to 50%;
- Allow farmers and ranchers to deduct up to 100% of their income; and
- Increase the number of years over which a donor can take deductions from 6 to 16

These more generous provisions may make all the difference for landowners who would like to donate a conservation easement on their lands, but cannot afford to take the full income-tax deduction in a short period of time due to limited income. It may also be of great help to those who have limited taxable income but are making a donation of great value. We thank Congress for including this important measure in the bill.

If you are interested in conserving your land and would like to know more about conservation easements and the Farm Bill incentive, please contact Rylan Coker or Mary Felley at the Conservancy office at 945-6995.

## Board and Advisory Board News

The Conservancy held its 2008 Annual Meeting on April 10 at Keystone College. Five new Directors were elected to the Board: Sandra Boyle of Tunkhannock, Walter Broughton of Scranton and Lake Carey, Vi Kelly of Scranton and Lake Kewanee, Bill Lewis of Montrose, and Caroline Seamans of Fleetville. We warmly welcome them onto the Board!

In addition, the following Directors were re-elected to three-year terms: Pat Acker, Dorrance Belin, L. P. Frieder III, and Margaret Hull.

The Board thanked four Directors stepping down in 2008: Penny Davis, Susan Scranton Dawson, Teri Erickson and Jo-Ellen Greene. All of them have kindly agreed to join the Advisory Board and continue to support the Conservancy, although with a slightly lower time commitment!

Notable milestones passed by Board members this year include founding member Lydia Coulter who recently celebrated her 90th birthday, and Dorrance Belin (who is a few decades younger). We wish them our hearty congratulations.

We also wish to congratulate Advisory Board member Marta Kovacs Ruiz, who was recently elected Woman of the Year by the Business and Professional Women of Tunkhannock.

## Auction 2008 Preview



The Countryside Conservancy's Ninth Annual Auction will take place on Saturday, July 12 on the green at Keystone College. You are cordially invited to join us! The evening starts at 6 pm, with live music, cocktails and dinner. Live Auction bidding will be courtesy of Ken Rivenburg of Rivenburgs Auction Gallery.

Silent Auction Chairs Kristie Miller McMahon and Gretchen Ludders, and Live Auction Chairs Elaine Shepard and Kathleen Graff, are assembling a dazzling auction lineup. Among the items on offer are: original artwork by Christopher Ries ("Lotus," pictured), Brian Keeler, Robert Stark, Jordan Taylor, Nan Burti, Matt Povse, Bill Tersteeg and others; a private cooking party at Michaelangelo's; an assortment of fine wines and champagne; a backstage tour of the Metropolitan Opera; fine doggie furnishings to pamper your pet with; children's parties, concert tickets, jewelry, home furnishings and more!

We thank Auction Chairs Julianne Barrett and Amy Broadbent for their energy and dedication. We'd like to extend our sincere appreciation to all of our Auction Committee members, who are a pleasure to work with: Yvonne Alu, Karen Barren, Penny Davis, Eleanore Ginader, George Ginader, Mary Gromelski, Elizabeth Karazim Horchos, Erin Kane, Lisabeth Maletta, Lori McHale, Caroline Seamans, Karen Thomas, Jim Vipond and Amanda Von Rudenburg.

A number of sponsors have already confirmed their support for the event: at the Sanctuary Society level, Marworth and Riverfront Sports Complex; at the Steward level, Action Personnel Services, Alliance Landfill/Apex Waste Services, Gentex Corporation, Peoples National Bank and PNC; and at the Protector level, Condrion & Company Inc., Erickson/Greco Group - Merrill Lynch, Keystone Community Resources, Knowles Associates Insurance, Oliver Price & Rhodes, Pennstar Bank, and R. J. Walker Co. Our host sponsor is Keystone College.

Additional sponsors, and donations of items for the Silent or Live Auction, are still welcomed; please contact our office to find out more. Auction proceeds promote the Conservancy's mission of protecting lands and waters in and near the Tunkhannock Creek Watershed for the public benefit.

Please plan to join us, and bring your friends! Call our office at (570) 945-6995 now or email [cconserv@epix.net](mailto:cconserv@epix.net) to request an invitation or to reserve your ticket. Tickets are \$60 per person (\$75 for Patron listing in the program).

## Countryside Conservancy and Gas Leasing

The Conservancy has been following the development of gas leasing in our area with keen interest. Our best advice to any landowner is to talk to a good lawyer and educate yourself as much as you possibly can before signing anything. A lease may be an important source of income, but it may also alter your land, permanently, in ways that are hard to predict.

The Conservancy will take part in a statewide meeting of land trusts this month in Harrisburg to better understand the effects gas extraction may have on our landscape, the interactions of leases with conservation easements, and how we can best protect the most important elements of our countryside for the future.

If you are considering preserving your land for the future, don't assume that gas leasing will make it impossible to place a conservation easement on your land. There may be ways for gas leases and conservation easements to coexist, by limiting the activities permitted under a lease or by limiting the area of allowable disturbance to only part of your lands. A conservation easement may also provide opportunities for income tax deductions that could be important if you receive royalty income. Please contact Rylan or Mary at our office, (570) 945-6995, if you wish to discuss your conservation options.

## Upcoming Events

**Sat., Jun. 21:** Come out for **Founder's Day** in Tunkhannock! The Conservancy will be there, sharing a booth with the Lake Carey Cottagers' Association. Conservancy Board member Walter Broughton will be signing and selling copies of his new book, *Lake Carey*. Royalties will be donated to the Lake Carey Conservation Fund.

**Sat., July 12:** Our **Ninth Annual Auction** kicks off at 6 pm on the green at Keystone College. 'Nuff said. Call 945-6995 to reserve your place now!

**Fri., July 18: Full Moon Kayak Outing** at Lackawanna State Park, courtesy of Angela Lambert and the South Branch Tunkhannock Creek Watershed Coalition. Free, but space is limited. Call Mary at 945-6995 for more information and to reserve your place.

**Sat., July 26:** Come **Celebrate Our River** at Riverside Park in Tunkhannock. Enjoy kayak floats, great live music and more on the banks of the mighty Susquehanna! The Conservancy and the South Branch Tunkhannock Creek Watershed Coalition will have a display, and be available to answer questions.

**Sat., Aug. 2: Walk the Woods and Meet the Sheep** at Spring Hills Farm. The Hulls' Spring Hills Farm is the first property that the Conservancy protected with an easement, 10 years ago. We will mark the anniversary with a walk of the protected area, and also drop in to visit the flock of Jacob Sheep that recently moved onto the farm. Meet at 10 am at the sugar house. The walk is free, but please call 945-6995 to reserve your place.



*Spring Hills Farm sugar house*

## 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 memory of James Devereaux Ross:*  
Lynn H. Nichols

*In memory of Vito Guast:*  
Matthew and Dorothy Mackie

*In memory of Larry Theilgard:*  
Kathleen and Phil Graff

*In memory of Joseph Cathrall:*  
Kathleen and Phil Graff  
Amy Broadbent

*In honor of Mary Felley:*  
Jeanne A. Bovard

*In memory of Edward Link:*  
Lynn H. Nichols

*In honor of Dorrance R. Belin's 70th birthday:*  
Charles and Nancy Belin  
Anonymous

*In honor of Lydia Coulter's 90th birthday:*  
Calvin and Marjorie King

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.

## Final Issue of CountryViews

That is, if you don't join now! To contain costs and save resources, we will be cutting back our mailing list to active members and supporters. If you want to keep in touch with us and stay up to date on our activities, please use the membership reply form on the back page of this newsletter and send in your contribution today!

## Update on Accreditation

As reported in our Winter 2008 newsletter, Countryside Conservancy is seeking accreditation with the national Land Trust Accreditation Commission. We are glad to report that we submitted our application before the May 1 deadline (the Executive Director was heard to say that it was the first time she had ever submitted anything ahead of deadline; all thanks in that regard are due to Program Manager Cheryl Ellsworth!).

A public comment period is now open. Members of the public are invited to provide signed, written comments about the Conservancy and its application to the Land Trust Accreditation Commission. Comments must relate to how Countryside Conservancy complies with national quality standards. These standards address the ethical and technical operation of a land trust. For the full list of standards, please visit [www.landtrustaccreditation.org/getting-accredited/2008-indicator-practices](http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org/getting-accredited/2008-indicator-practices).

Comments will be shared with the applicant for a response, but the name of the commenter may be withheld from the applicant at the staff's discretion if releasing the name would have adverse consequences for the person making the comment.

To learn more about the accreditation program or to submit a comment, please visit [www.landtrustaccreditation.org](http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org). Comments may also be faxed or mailed to the Land Trust Accreditation Commission at 112 Spring Street, Suite 204, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866 (fax: 518-587-3183, email: [info@landtrustaccreditation.org](mailto:info@landtrustaccreditation.org)). Correspondence should be marked "Attn: Public Comments" and should be submitted by June 14, 2008.

## Wildflowers in the Woods



*Trillium, one of the many wildflowers encountered during the walk. (Photo: Amy Broadbent)*

The Messimer Preserve lies along the South Branch at the end of Grist Mill Road off Route 524, east of Lackawanna State Park. It is open from dawn to dusk. Please park in the designated parking area on the left side of the road before you reach the preserve boundary, and walk down to the creek.

On May 3, Len and Gerri Janus led a wildflower walk through the Conservancy's Messimer Preserve in North Abington. A dozen hardy nature lovers turned up despite the drizzle, and enjoyed an assortment of spring blossoms and a bit of wildlife in the woods down by the South Branch of the Tunkhannock Creek. Thanks to the Januses for lending their botanical expertise for this outing!



*Participants in the May 3 wildflower walk gather at Lackawanna State Park. (Photo: Amy Broadbent)*

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

With the coming of spring, the Watershed Coalition has wrapped up its winter-season lecture and movie series, pulled on its waders and headed out into the creek again.

Water quality monitoring began on April 19. This year the Water Quality volunteers are monitoring 10 sites, up from just six in the past; for the first time, they include the three main tributaries to Lackawanna Lake. Thanks to Dale Holen, chair of the Water Quality Committee, and to all our new and returning volunteers. (If you haven't volunteered yet but you're interested, we have a pair of waders waiting for you! Call Mary at 945-6995 or email [cconserv@epix.net](mailto:cconserv@epix.net) to get involved.)

Water quality data from 2004 to the present are available to any interested party as a spreadsheet and graphs, beautifully laid out by volunteer Jack Stroud. Contact Mary Felley at 945-6995 to get a copy of the data.

The Water Quality team, under the leadership of Jeff Aronsohn, conducted its spring macroinvertebrate monitoring on the South Branch in La Plume on April 26. Results were favorable, indicating a healthy aquatic community in the creek.

The Watershed Coalition recently "adopted" Route 632 between Dalton and Waverly, and did their first clean-up of the road on April 20. Over a dozen stalwarts turned out and cleaned up an amazing assortment of junk on this two-mile stretch of road. The group will continue to do periodic clean-ups through the summer and fall; call 945-6995 to get involved!

Finally, a Full Moon Kayak Paddle is tentatively scheduled for Friday, July 18 at Lackawanna State Park. A serene way to enjoy the heart of our watershed. Participation is free of charge, but spaces are limited. This event will take place weather permitting. Call 945-6995 to reserve your place. Thanks to Angela Lambert for organizing this!

## **Who is that girl?**



We invite you to visit our redesigned website, launched in spring 2008 at <http://www.countrysideconservancy.org/>. It includes photos of our conserved properties. Scroll down to the bottom of the "Preserves" page to find an interactive map and directions to our preserves around Lackawanna State Park and to Little Rocky Glen. We will be adding preserve and trail maps to this page over time, so visit regularly!

Also, we are curious about the identity of the sweet little girl gracing our home page. We think she was photographed at a "Special Places" day sometime around 2000. If you recognize her, please let us know who she is!

## **Trail Update and Volunteer Opportunities**

Joe Tierney, trail builder extraordinaire for the Conservancy and for Lackawanna State Park, has outlined the following tentative schedule of trail work dates for summer 2008.

Sat., July 12: Summer maintenance brush cut back. Meet at Turkey Hill Trailhead on Rte 407 at 9:00 am.

Sat., Aug. 30: new trail building, location to be announced

Sat., Sept. 13: new trail building, location to be announced

Sun., Oct. 5: new trail building, location to be announced

Sun., Nov. 9: new trail building, location to be announced

Joe notes that the new trail construction is subject to park approval. He invites all interested parties to email him to get on his circulation list. He can be reached at [singletrack@epix.net](mailto:singletrack@epix.net).

## **Volunteer Corner**

The Countryside Conservancy marked National Volunteer Week by giving a small mark of thanks to our volunteers: a recycled plastic rule, to show that their worth to us is "immeasurable"!

Conservancy volunteers range from our Board members to Auction committee members to water quality monitors to trail builders. Thank you all!

To sign up as a volunteer for the Conservancy, contact Lois or Mary at the Conservancy office, 945-6995, and we will send you a volunteer form to fill out. Registered volunteers will receive regular updates on upcoming volunteer events, and we plan to profile some of our star volunteers on the "Conservancy Friends" page of our website in coming months.

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

\_\_\_\_\_ Family \$50

\_\_\_\_\_ Friend \$100

\_\_\_\_\_ Founder \$150

\_\_\_\_\_ 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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