

CountryViews

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE COUNTRYSIDE CONSERVANCY



Anglers line the gorge at Little Rocky Glen on opening day.

Scenes of Spring

By the time you read this, we will be well on our way into summer, but here are a few scenes from Spring 2009 courtesy of the Countryside Conservancy!

On opening day this year, fishermen and fisherwomen lined the banks of the gorge at Little Rocky Glen, steadily casting and catching with intense concentration and quiet enjoyment. It was a beautiful morning and another example of why we are so glad to be able to open this property to the public for outdoor recreation and education. On the same weekend, the Boy Scouts of Factoryville Troop 175 visited the Glen for an overnight camping stay, fishing and cleanup of the property. In May, the Cub Scouts took their turn camping at the Glen. These visitors are making good use of our new picnic shelter as well as the natural assets of this great property.

At the Earth Day & Arbor Day Celebration in Tunkhannock on April 25, volunteers from the Conservancy and Endless Mountains Outfitters attacked a bank of Japanese Knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum*) at the top of the boat ramp at Riverside Park. Japanese Knotweed, sometime called “Japanese bamboo,” is a fleshy Asian shrub with heart-shaped leaves that grows tall and dense along rivers, roads, and frequently disturbed areas. It is taking over our creeks and rivers, driving out native plants that would do a better job of stabilizing the banks and shading the water.

The volunteers cleared a large area, taking all viable roots and shoots off-site for safe disposal. New knotweed shoots were two feet high at the same site a week later, but that’s all part of the fun when it comes to invasive plant control. The group plans to hold another “knotweed whack” in June, train Riverside Park volunteers in eradication, and continue the battle to take back at least a little of the park from this pushy uninvited guest.

Here is a suggested use for Japanese Knotweed from Len and Gerry Janus:

Japanese Knotweed Tea. Use Japanese Knotweed stems, coarsely chopped or broken (use kitchen shears on tough stems). Cover with cold water, bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer for 20 minutes. Strain and add sugar to taste. Chill before serving. Fresh strawberries or raspberries, crushed, may be added; strain again to remove seeds.



Bob Daniels, Phil Swank and David Buck attack knotweed at Riverside Park.

Tenth Annual Auction coming!

This year’s Auction will take place on Saturday, July 11 at a new location: on the lawn at the Allied Services Corporate Center in the Abington Executive Park, on the Morgan Highway in Clarks Summit. As always, live music, a great buffet dinner and open bar, fascinating Auction offerings and furious (but friendly) bidding await you! Call 945-6995 to reserve a place for you and your friends, and check our website soon for a sneak preview of offerings!



Countryside Conservancy

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2009 Stewardship Award Recipients Honored

Countryside Conservancy instituted its annual Stewardship Awards some 13 years ago to honor the efforts of good stewards of the land. Eight recipients of this year's Stewardship Awards were honored at a ceremony on Earth Day, April 22 at Keystone College.

Paul and Diane Milnes were recognized for their home and vineyards in Wyoming County. The Milnes have carefully restored the home, thought to date from at least the 1850s, and surrounded it with beautiful landscape plantings. Paul has planted grapevines both near



A quiet corner of the Milnes' property.

their home and on a former orchard owned by Daniel and Heather Williams. Paul became interested in growing grapes following visits to Europe and the Finger Lakes region. He has planted riesling, cabernet franc, and other grape types that suit the local soil and climate, and he sells to Nimble Hill Winery.

Also in Wyoming County, Daniel and Heather Williams were honored for their restored historic home on Sugar Hollow Road. This is the home that Dan grew up in, which has long been in their family's ownership. Since moving back to the old home, the Williamses have put in great

effort in restoring and updating the main house, adding new plantings and beautiful stone walls along the road. The house now presents a fresh new face to passersby, while nearby an old summer kitchen awaits restoration in years to come.

Mark and Cindy Tompkins and their children Trevor and Mariah were recognized for Evergreen Lane Farm, north of Montrose. The family milks a herd of registered Holsteins on this farm, founded by Mark's parents in 1964. They have worked with the Chesapeake Bay Program to improve runoff management and provide clean drinking water for the cattle. In addition to their good land management, the Tompkinses are also ambassadors for farming and the dairy business. For seven years they have hosted the "Spend a Day on a Dairy Farm" event, welcoming thousands of visitors to learn about dairy farming. Their hard work and dedication has made the farm an outstanding example of conservation values and community involvement.



Heritage breed chicken at Evergreen Lane Farm.

Martin Comey and Mary Lee Fitzgerald received a Stewardship Award for their home on Lake Avenue in Montrose. This couple has made Montrose their place of retirement, settling down in what is

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.

described as “one of the most elegant and historic homes in Montrose.” They have spent a great deal of time and resources to preserve and maintain the home, while also expanding it to be able to welcome their many children and grandchildren when they visit.

In Lackawanna County, the Abington Area Joint Recreation Board was honored for the Abington Community Garden. This garden, a recent addition to the Abington Community Park in South Abington, was created in response to a survey of residents and has proven a great success, with plots fully subscribed for the 2009 growing season. Gardeners receive technical training, and extra produce last year was shared with local food pantries.

Nannette and Mark Burti received an award for their Burti Ceramic Studio in Fleetville, a beautiful property near Deer Lake which combines home, business, and shared-use vegetable gardens. The studio and kilns make use of adapted farm structures on the property, beautifully restored and updated. Nan Burti teaches courses at the studio in addition to creating her own original ceramic artwork.

Doug and Judy Johnson and Dave and Debbie Johnson in Benton Township were recognized for Amasa Hill Farm, a family dairy farm that is now expanding into Angus beef cattle as well. They farm their own land as well as areas of leased land, and maintain a herd of 250 dairy cattle. The Johnsons practice careful farm

management, and Amasa Hill Farm is enrolled in the state Agricultural Preservation Program.

Finally, Susan and Andrew Maslar received an award for their home and lands in Fleetville. The Maslars raise organic vegetables, flowers and laying hens on a small property in the heart of Fleetville. Susan’s skills as a master gardener are in evidence all around the property, which is impeccably maintained.

The Conservancy thanks all the award recipients, who care so deeply for their



Flowers and vegetable beds at the Maslars' home.

land and have shown it through their work. All awardees received certificates of appreciation and a one-year membership in the Conservancy. Our thanks to Caroline Seamans and Gayle Müller, co-chairs of this year’s Stewardship Award Committee; to committee members Amy Broadbent, Lydia Coulter, Jim Garner, Jo-Ellen Greene, Margaret Hull, Ernie Keller, Gerald Kenjorski, Marta Kovacs Ruiz, Joanne Smith and Ed Zygmunt for their time and effort.



A view of the barn and silos at Amasa Hill Farm.

Upcoming Events

Saturday, June 13: Bird watching walk at Little Rocky Glen, led by Joe DeMarco for the Endless Mountains Nature Center. Search the hemlock forest and fields for warblers, vireos, orioles and more. Meet at 8:00 am at the entrance north of the bridge on Lithia Valley Road, with the green metal gate and Conservancy sign. Bring binoculars and field guide if you have them, and wear good walking shoes. A donation of \$3 per person to Endless Mountains Nature Center is encouraged. Email EMNCinfo@yahoo.com or call 836-3835 for directions. More information on the Nature Center can be found at www.EMNConline.org.

The Conservancy will also take part in:

- Tunkhannock Founders’ Day
Sat., June 27
- Lake Carey Day
Sat., July 25
- Celebrate our River Day, Tunkhannock
Sat., July 25
- Forest City Old Home Week
July 30 to August 1

We hope to see you at one of these events!

For more information on Countryside Conservancy events, please call 945-6995 or visit the News and Events section of our website at www.countrysideconservancy.org/news.htm.



Jack-in-the-pulpit blooming on Meadowsweet Preserve.

2009 Annual Meeting

An overflow crowd filled the room for our Annual Meeting on April 2. Conservancy staff reported on land conservation successes, accreditation and other highlights of the year past, while Ellie Hyde, chair of the South Branch Tunkhannock Creek Watershed Coalition, introduced the audience to this all-volunteer arm of the Conservancy and its work in protecting this part of the Tunkhannock Creek Watershed. Volunteer trail-builder and mountain biker Joe Tierney gave a great presentation on the trails of Lackawanna State Park and surrounding Conservancy preserves, complete with helmet-cam video and soundtrack! Our thanks to Joe for a detailed and highly entertaining talk.

(On the subject of trails and the State Park, word has it that the new footbridge at the end of Benton Road and Austin Road, downstream from the dam at Lackawanna State Park, is ready to open! We haven't heard about an official opening date as of press time, but it may be open by the time you read this. Watch our website for updates, or take a walk and check it out.)

At our Annual Meeting, we said goodbye to three departing Board members:

Harmar Brereton has been a Board member since 2006. His vision of forging connections between farming, environmental sustainability, community health and even natural gas development helped inspire the Conservancy's Board to expand its boundaries of what a land trust can do. Harmar and his wife are great friends of the Conservancy and terrific Auction supporters.

Amy Broadbent has been a Board member since 2003. She ably chaired the Outreach Committee since its creation and also served on the Land and Water Protection Committee. She did yeoman work on the Auction for many years, co-chairing the event in 2005, 2007 and 2008. She has been an outstanding ambassador for the Conservancy, introducing our organization to all and sundry. Her energy and organization have been an enormous boon to the Conservancy.

Michael Kane has been a Board member since 2003. Mike served on the Board Development Committee, taking a role in strategic planning, Board diversification and more. Mike was deeply involved in developing policies for the Conservancy and helping the organization prepare for accreditation. His analytical skills,

combined with a strong pragmatic streak, have been great assets to the Board and his insights were always welcome.

The Conservancy welcomed three new members onto the Board in spring 2009. **Bill Kern** recently returned to his home town of Tunkhannock after completing a Master's degree in environmental studies. He works on clean energy projects with Green Energy Outreach Services, and is also a keen mountain biker. **Elaine Shepard** of Clarks Summit is a longtime Conservancy friend and has been an invaluable Auction volunteer for several years. She was recently voted "Best of the Abingtons" in the Realtor category (Classic Property). **Tom Noone** of West Clifford has a diverse life experience encompassing Marine service, social work, art woodworking, and professional and Board service with non-profits including American Red Cross, Community Intervention Center and Artists for Art.

The Conservancy also welcomed **Jennifer Carney** of Dimock, **Michael Hillebrand** of Jermyn and **Joe Tierney** of Dalton to positions on the Advisory Board at the Annual Meeting.

Nickels for the Countryside

Everything Natural, the great health, whole and holistic store on State Street in Clarks Summit, continues its "Nickel Campaign." To reduce waste, the shop invites customers to bring their own bags, and in return gives customers a wooden nickel which they can donate to one of three local charities. In the current campaign, the management has kindly named Countryside Conservancy as one of the charities you can choose from.

Other local businesses offering ways to support the Conservancy include the Hails Family Farm delivery service (hailsfamilyfarm.com) and Harmony Restored (sports and Swedish massage by Dave Jennings; 746-1664). And Countryside Conservancy continues to benefit from the GoodSearch (www.goodsearch.com) and GoodShop (www.goodshop.com) websites; see the "Support Us" link on our website to find out how you can support us painlessly through these great partners!

Save the Trees

From time to time we send emails about the Conservancy to members and supporters. Messages may include announcements of upcoming events, news of new protected lands, or requests for volunteers. If you'd like to be added to our email distribution list, please send a message to cconserv@epix.net with the words "subscribe Conservancy" in the subject line and your name in the body of the message.

This newsletter can be found on our website as soon as it hits mailboxes: just go to www.countrysideconservancy.org, click on "About Us," and then on the "Newsletters" link on the sidebar. Back issues can be viewed here too. If you prefer to read the newsletter online, please email us at cconserv@epix.net and we can remove you from the newsletter mailing list; instead, we'll send you an email reminder when the new issue comes out.

Tenth Annual Auction Coming Soon!

The Countryside Conservancy's Tenth Annual Auction will take place on Saturday, July 11 at a new venue, on the lawn at the Allied Services Corporate Center at the Abington Executive Park on the Morgan Highway in Clarks Summit. Please join us! The evening will feature live music, cocktails and a sumptuous array of dining choices. Live Auction bidding will be courtesy of Ken Rivenburg of Rivenburgs Auction Gallery, and Phil and Curt Stevens will be our Masters of Ceremonies.

Auction Chairs Jim and Sharon Vipond are leading up a great team of veterans and new volunteers including Julianne Adams Barrett, Nancy Brown, Kathleen Graff, Gretchen Ludders, Kristie Miller McMahon, Caroline Seamans, Elaine Shepard, DeDe Tersteeg, Maureen Walker and Carla Williams, plus several anonymous helpers.

Artists of our region who will be contributing original artwork to the Auction lineup include Betty Bryden, Tom Canouse, Marylou Chibirka, Mark Ciocca, Lisa Cunningham, Renee Emanuel, Peter Hoffer, Tom Noone, Lou Pontone, Angelique Prevost.

A small sampling of other items includes handcrafted jewelry from Kristie Miller McMahon, hand-tied trout flies, handcrafted jewelry boxes, a fly-fishing class, an inflatable bass boat, yoga classes for children and adults, a Harvest Dinner package, a golf foursome in the Poconos, luncheon for ten at your home, and offerings from local merchants including A&G Outfitters, Stone Bridge Inn, Versailles, Nada, James Simrell, the Lamp Factory, Suburban Casuals, Burti Ceramic Studios, the Waverly Deli, Kidazzle, Idlewild Ski Shop, NOW Hair Salon, Mary Go Round and the Artisan's Image.

Please visit our website as the event draws nearer for a sneak peek at selected Auction items from the privacy of your



Auction Committee members gather by the Tunkhannock Creek (l-r): DeDe Tersteeg, Gretchen Ludder, Jim Vipond, Elaine Shepard, Kristie McMahon and Kathleen Graff.

own home (coming soon at www.countrysideconservancy.org/auction.htm).

Event sponsors as of press time include: at the Sanctuary Society level, Marworth and Skinner Systems Inc.; at the Steward level, Gertrude Hawk Chocolates, Merrill Lynch / Erickson Group, PNC Bank, Penn Security Bank & Trust Company and Peoples National Bank; and at the Protector level, Action Personnel Services, First Liberty Bank & Trust, Gentex Corporation, Keystone Community Resources, Inc., William R. Lewis, CFP, Oliver Price & Rhodes, Phil and Jon Stevens with Janney Montgomery Scott LLC, Pennstar Bank, P&G Paper Products, and R. J. Walker Co.

Additional sponsors, and donations of items for the Silent or Live Auction, are still welcomed; please contact our office at 945-6995 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 join us and bring your friends! Call our office at (570) 945-6995 now or email cconserv@epix.net to request an invitation or to reserve your ticket. Tickets are \$60 per person (\$75 for Patron listing in the program).

The Messimer Preserve

We will highlight a different Conservancy preserve in coming issues of *CountryViews*. This spring, we introduce the Messimer Preserve. This 44-acre preserve in North Abington Township, Lackawanna County lies on the South Branch of the Tunkhannock Creek. It was purchased by the Conservancy in 2005 with the help of a DCNR grant. The Conservancy purchased the part of the property closest to the South Branch in order to protect the hilly, wooded slopes above the stream from development. The South Branch is the main tributary to Lackawanna Lake at Lackawanna State Park.

The Messimer Preserve is accessed from Grist Mill Road, off PA Route 524 about two miles west of the I-81 Scott exit. Go up Grist Mill Road until you see a white "please park here for Messimer Preserve" sign on your left. This small parking area is about a quarter-mile up the road from the Conservancy's property boundary. Walk along the dirt road past a house on the right (please respect neighbors along the road when approaching this property!) until the posted signs end and you see the Conservancy's white metal tags on trees to either side of the road. The road then dips down toward beautiful views of the creek, and a green trailhead sign indicates a path to the left as an alternative to walking the road. The Conservancy does not own all the creek frontage in this area, so pay attention to our metal boundary markers as you go along!

We thank North Abington Township for their support of this conservation acquisition, particularly for creating the parking area. And we warmly thank the Messimer family for thinking of the Conservancy when it came time to determine the fate of this beautiful property.

Stewardship Days 2009

We have lined up several stewardship dates on Conservancy preserves for this summer:

Sat., June 13: work day at Little Rocky Glen (Clinton Twp., Wyoming County; 10:00 am start). We will pick up litter, attack multiflora rose and other invasive plants, sand and stain the picnic tables. We'll wrap up with a bring-your-own picnic lunch.

Sat., June 20: work day at Ziegler Preserve (see Stone Wall Workshop listing below).

Sat., July 18: Boundary line marking and removal of old No Trespassing signs at Messimer Preserve (North Abington Twp., Lackawanna County).

Sat., Aug. 29: Trail clearing, tending and posting on the Miller preserve (La Plume Twp., Lackawanna County). This small but highly visible parcel on Route 6 includes part of the Northern Electric right-of-way.

Sat., Sept. 19: work day at Meadowsweet and Quarry Ridge Preserves (Abington and North Abington Twps., Lackawanna County). Any needed work in preparation for our fall Tailgate Picnic on Sun., Sept. 20.

We seek volunteers who are comfortable working in the outdoors, in sometimes unpredictable environments, with moderate supervision. People who can bring their own tools are always welcome! Please note the above dates are subject to change; call the office at 945-6995 if you are interested in taking part, or to be added to our stewardship volunteers list.

In Memoriam

We offer our thanks to the following individuals who have made gifts to the Conservancy in memory of friends and family members who are no longer with us. These gifts are placed in the Conservancy's Land Fund to support our land protection activities throughout the region.

In memory of William Lawson Chamberlin, Ann Kip Reilly and Whitney Lawson Chamberlin:

Kathleen and Phil Graff

In commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the death of Joseph R. Swiderski:

John K. and Caroline Seamans

Remembering Burr

In memory of Burr F. Hamilton

Sarah Carr

Gayle and Jack Müller



The gifts in memory of Burr were deposited in the South Branch Tunkhannock Creek Watershed Coalition Fund, in recognition of the labor, time and wisdom he gave to the Coalition. Burr was a quiet but vital presence in

the Coalition since its creation in 2003. He waded creeks, collected water samples,

tied flies, posted signs and in a hundred ways made the group better, more effective and more fun. Burr's wife Joan said that the Watershed Coalition members were like extended family to him, and there is no question he was like family to us. We miss him, his dry wit and his big heart terribly; we will do our best to honor his memory by carrying on the work he began.

Gifts in Honor, Friendship and Celebration

We also thank those who have made gifts to the Conservancy in honor of friends and associates, or in celebration of special moments in their lives.

An anonymous donor made a gift in honor of Dorrance Belin.

Jack and Gayle Müller gave a gift membership in the Countryside Conservancy to Denise and Steve Skurnowicz.

An anonymous donor has given a one-year membership in the Countryside Conservancy to Elise Giuliano and Grey Perry Seamans in celebration of their recent marriage. They reside in New York City and also own a house and land in Wyoming County.

We are always happy to arrange gift memberships for a friend or family member. Just let us know the recipient's name and address when you make your gift, so we can add them to our mailing list.

Stone Wall Workshop with Ken Ely

On May 30 and June 20, Ken Ely will lead a stone wall workshop for Lackawanna State Park and Countryside Conservancy. Ken, a skilled stone wall builder and restorer and a great teacher, will give a slide presentation on Sat. May 30 at 8:00 pm in the State Park's campground amphitheater. Please call the office at 945-6995 to reserve your place. This will be followed by a hands-on stone wall repair work day at the Ziegler Preserve on Route 438, Benton Township on Saturday, June 20 starting at 2:00 pm. You must attend the May 30 session to work with Ken on June 20. Spaces are limited; call 945-6995 to reserve your place. The Conservancy requests a \$15 donation for participants in the hands-on stone wall work (no donation needed to attend only the slide presentation). If stone walls are not your thing, there will be other tasks available at the Ziegler Preserve on June 20, including invasive-plant removal. Our thanks to Ken Ely and to Lackawanna State Park for making this opportunity available!

Watershed Events:

News from the South Branch Tunkhannock Creek Watershed Coalition

The South Branch Tunkhannock Creek Watershed Coalition is an arm of the Conservancy that focuses on raising awareness, connecting people with the watershed, and encouraging them to protect water resources.

Natural gas development has become a forefront issue for the Watershed Coalition. On March 2, the Coalition invited Rich Adams of the Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC) and Bryan Swistock of the Penn State Cooperative Extension to present on the issues of surface water use and wastewater disposal in the development of the Marcellus Shale gas play. The lively and even heated discussion that ensued indicates how deeply concerned people are about the risks to our local surface waters and groundwater.

Water use is of particular interest now that the first application has been filed by an energy company for a water withdrawal permit on the South Branch of the Tunkhannock Creek, in Benton Township. The Coalition offered its water quality and macroinvertebrate monitoring data, collected downstream of the proposed site, to the SRBC for use in review of this permit application.

In wastewater disposal, Coalition representatives attended a Penn State Cooperative Extension presentation in Towanda that stated that the preferred method (by industry, at least) of disposing of gas drilling wastewater is to deep underground injection—a method which creates roughly the same environmental concerns as gas extraction from deep wells. The only alternative is treatment and discharge into surface waters, which is problematic given the high salt content of the treated wastewater. The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) plans to tighten up their wastewater discharge standards by 2011, but the energy companies will not put well drilling on hold till then. Two gas wastewater treatment plants are being proposed in the immediate vicinity of the Tunkhannock Creek Watershed, one on

a Meshoppen Creek tributary and one on the Susquehanna River. The quality of their discharge should be of interest to all in our area.

In April the Coalition sent a letter outlining its environmental concerns over the Marcellus Shale to elected officials at all levels from municipal to Federal, as well as local conservation districts, resource conservation and development councils, DEP, the SRBC, and the PA Association of Conservation Districts. While the Coalition appreciates the potential value of this natural gas resource to the economy of our region, our state and our country, it urges that proper environmental safeguards be used to protect the health, safety and well-being of our citizens as well as the natural beauty of our area.

The chief concerns outlined in the letter were developed with reference to a white paper produced by Pennsylvania Trout Unlimited:

- the removal of millions of gallons of water from streams and aquifers to hydrofracture the Marcellus Shale layers
- the potential environmental damage done by the fracking water, on site and during its disposal
- whether the monitoring and enforcement agencies are adequately staffed
- potential effects of drilling activity in Special Protection Watersheds (High Quality and Exceptional Value streams) and Wilderness Trout Designated areas
- the adequacy of bonding to deal with plugging/closing of wells and any long-



Jeff Aronsohn and Kristen Travers sort critters during the April macroinvertebrate monitoring.

term environmental implications of orphan/abandoned well sites

- sediment and stormwater runoff from well pad sites

The letter outlined recommended actions to deal with each of these concerns. A copy of the letter can be obtained from Mary Felley, Coalition Secretary at 945-6995.

Meanwhile, the Coalition's 2009 schedule of water quality monitoring resumed in April 2009 at 10 sites in the South Branch watershed. On April 24 and 25, the Coalition conducted its spring monitoring of stream macroinvertebrates at a site in La Plume, and registered very good results. Our thanks to Kristen Travers of the Stroud Water Research Center for leading us again this spring! And Alana Roberts has helped the Coalition secure a grant for bacteriological monitoring of two sites in the South Branch Tunkhannock Creek watershed this summer, adding further to our data on the stream's health.

If you'd like to be added to the Watershed Coalition email list, please call Mary Felley at 945-6995 or email her at cconserv@epix.net.

**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

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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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