

CountryViews

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE COUNTRYSIDE CONSERVANCY



Land Protected in Herrick Township

Countryside Conservancy recently completed its eighteenth conservation easement, and its first in Herrick Township, Susquehanna County, on lands owned by Donald and June Felley. This conservation easement will forever protect 54 acres of forests and fields just up the hill from the East Branch of the Tunkhannock Creek, less than two miles from Elk Mountain.

About half of the property consists of active hayfields and old fields slowly succeeding to shrubland. The other half is forested, dominated by trees typical of our region like red maple, white ash, black cherry, sugar maple, hemlock, yellow and black birch. One corner of the property is occupied by a small pond with well-developed marsh vegetation and a stand of quaking aspens. The land slopes down toward the creek and affords beautiful views of the eastern slopes of Elk Mountain.



View of Elk Mountain, North and South Knob, from the Felley easement (photo: Rylan Coker)

Don and June, who have a home nearby, purchased this property back in the 1970s with the thought that one of their children might someday want to build a home there. As their children grew up and for the most part moved away from the area, it became clear that the land was unlikely to be in demand by family members in the short term. The Felleys wanted to protect it, while ensuring that it would retain enough development potential to be marketable in the future.

The Conservancy drafted a conservation easement to meet the owners' needs, based on site visits and discussions over the course of several years. The conservation easement will strictly limit subdivision and development on this property. It leaves scope for no-surface-operations gas leasing, which would permit horizontal drilling for gas under the land but no disturbance of the surface soil, vegetation or water. The easement ensures that, apart from these limited allowances for future development, the property will remain essentially in its current condition into the future. It will protect a key piece of the East Branch Tunkhannock Creek watershed, part of the landscape that skiers and snowboarders at Elk Mountain enjoy so much.

The Conservancy thanks the Felleys for their dedication to protecting this land, and their careful planning to achieve their goals. We are honored to help protect this beautiful piece of our countryside.

We will introduce more of our 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.

Save the Date for Countryside Conservancy Events!

Annual Meeting: Thursday, April 2, 4:30 pm, President's Dining Room, Keystone College. Reception to follow.

2009 Stewardship Awards: Wednesday, April 22, 7:00 pm, Evans Hall, Keystone College. Coffee bar and desserts.

Both are free events, and the public is warmly invited. Please call the office at 945-6995 for more information.



Countryside Conservancy

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Upcoming Events

Don't let the winter weather keep you shut in at home! The Conservancy welcomes your participation in the following **free** events over the next few months. All are open to the public.

Monday, March 2: Presentation by Richard Adams on the work of the Susquehanna River Basin Commission and its regulation of water withdrawals—of special interest as it relates to development of the Marcellus Shale. 7 pm, Room 214 Capwell Science Hall, Keystone College. Offered by the South Branch Tunkhannock Creek Watershed Coalition (see page 7).

Tuesday, March 24: The Garden Exchange will host a presentation on “Living Green” by Lisa Alexander, at 7 pm at the Waverly Community House. Alexander is a nationally recognized green living expert and green building consultant who has appeared on MSNBC and regional TV.

April 2: Countryside Conservancy Annual Meeting. 4:30 pm, President's Dining Room, Keystone College. Guest speaker to be announced. Reception to follow.

Wednesday, April 22: Countryside Conservancy 2009 Stewardship Awards. 7 pm, Evans Hall, Keystone College. Come help us honor outstanding caretakers of the land in our region! Enjoy a free latte bar and refreshments.

Friday, April 24: Evening presentation on stream macroinvertebrates by Kristen Travers of the Stroud Water Research Center, taking place at Keystone College. Offered by the South Branch Tunkhannock Creek Watershed Coalition (see page 7).

Saturday, April 25: Earth Day and Arbor Day celebration in Tunkhannock. Activities, lectures, tree planting, live music and more with all your Earth-hugging and tree-hugging friends at the Dietrich Theater and Riverside Park throughout the day. Countryside Conservancy will kick off a Japanese Knotweed control project at Riverside Park – join us!

Sunday, May 10: Mother's Day bird walk on a Conservancy preserve with Joe DeMarco, 7:30 am to 11:30 am. Meeting place to be announced; please call the office for further information.

Thursday, May 14: Presentation on Birding the Endless Mountains by Nancy Wottrich, author of “A Birder's Guide to Susquehanna County.” 7 pm, Waverly Community House. Co-presented by Countryside Conservancy and the Waverly Community House.

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

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.

New Footbridge at Lackawanna State Park

The Lackawanna County Commissioners recently announced the completion of a new pedestrian bridge in Lackawanna State Park that will connect existing trails in North Abington and Benton Townships. The old iron bridge at the end of Benton Road had long been closed to vehicles and pedestrians due to safety concerns. The new span re-connects Benton Road and Austin Road across the South Branch of the Tunkhannock Creek. Lackawanna County Commissioners Michael J. Washo, Corey D. O'Brien and A.J. Munchak allocated \$173,000 from the Landfill Trust to fund the project.



View of the new footbridge (photo: Joe Tierney)

Members of the Conservancy Board of Directors had long pursued the idea of turning the old bridge into a new, safe crossing for non-motorized recreational users. We are delighted to see this vision brought to fruition at last! We sincerely thank the county commissioners and everyone who made it happen.

Trail builder extraordinaire Joe Tierney and his team of volunteers recently completed a new 2.25 mile North Woods Trail in the State Park that will run from this new bridge all the way to the Trostle Pond park extension on Route 407.

Joe reports that with the new bridge and trail in place, there are now approximately 24 miles of trails in Lackawanna State Park and surrounding Conservancy owned lands.

A ribbon-cutting date is expected to be announced once the bridge decking is installed in the spring. We will be there, and hope you will too. We hope this new footbridge will someday also form a link

in a Trolley Trail spur running back to the main Trolley Trail line in Dalton.

Conservancy Board member Bill Booth has offered to lead a mountain bike ride over the North Woods Trail and the new bridge, possibly before our annual Tailgate Picnic on September 20. Stay tuned for details!

Remembrance of Times Past

From time to time we are lucky enough to hear from a member with a special memory of the past.

One renewing member who no longer lives in our area read in a recent issue of the newsletter about the conservation easements we recently finalized on Pat Bidlake's property, the old Cope family home next to the Woodbourne Forest and Wildlife Preserve. This gentleman remembered spending summers at the Dimock Campgrounds in the late 1930s and early 1940s and visiting Woodbourne for afternoon tea. He attended nature classes that Mr. Cope taught for the local youth camp, leading them through the Woodbourne forest. Those classes were "something else," he reports! We can only imagine: the Cope family has been a font of natural history knowledge and conservation ethic in our area for generations.

Another member recently sent in his renewal donation and wrote that while at 92 years old, he felt he was "too old to be an active member," he still supported our efforts to preserve land and water. He recalled enjoying Little Rocky Glen "sixty or seventy years ago." Remember: you're never too old to be a member, and you can choose just how active you want to be!

We are immensely grateful for all these personal notes and remembrances. We love to reconnect in this way through memories and stories. Please share your memories with us if you'd care to, and let us know if we can share them with others through our newsletter!

The Ziegler Preserve

Some of our preserves don't get many visitors simply because we haven't let people know where they are! We want to get you out on our great properties, so we will be highlighting our preserves with directions and descriptions in upcoming issues of *CountryViews*. This month, we introduce the Ziegler Preserve.

This wooded 29-acre preserve in Benton Township, Lackawanna County borders Lackawanna State Park. It was purchased by the Conservancy with the help of a DCNR grant in 2003. It is informally known as "Esther's Woods" in memory of Esther Ziegler, who made her home here for many years.

The preserve is accessed from State Route 438. A gravel parking area is on the north side of the road a little over 1 mile east of its intersection with Route 407 (Wallsville Corners), and a bit more than 1 mile west of I-81 Exit 201 (East Benton). A drive off the parking area leads to a private home; visitors to the preserve are requested not to drive up the driveway or approach the house.

A green sign at the parking area marks the trailhead. A one-mile trail loop has been laid out by Joe Tierney, L. P. Frieder and other volunteers. The trail is marked with round metal arrow tags on trees. The loop begins and ends at the parking area, but you can also turn off onto a trail in the Bull Hill area of the State Park about halfway along – watch for the yellow trail markers.



Special Offers from Local Businesses:

Please take advantage of these great opportunities from local businesses that support Countryside Conservancy, and help protect our countryside with your purchases!

Farm-Fresh Delivery from Hails Family Farms

In a time when food safety, transport costs, and sustainability are top concerns, we have an exciting offer to share from Hails Family Farms in Wyalusing. For every new home-delivery subscriber who mentions Countryside Conservancy's name when signing up, the farm has generously offered to donate 5% of sales to the Conservancy for the first year, and 3% of sales for second-year renewers!

The Hails Family Farm offers a terrific variety of locally-grown dairy products and other foods from small family farms in our area. Check the online store at FrontPorchOrganic.com to see their full line of baked goods, cheeses, eggs, meat, produce and more! The farm delivers along the Route 6 corridor from Wyalusing to Scranton. It's reasonably priced organic food, straight from the farm to you.

The Hails Family Farm is a Community

Massage from Harmony Restored

Stressed out by life? Pull a muscle skiing or sledding? "Harmony Restored" can set you right and benefit the Conservancy to boot. When you get a massage from Harmony Restored, 10% of proceeds are directed to the Countryside Conservancy or one of several other local non-profit organizations. You decide where you want your donation to go.

Certified massage therapist Dave Jennings specializes in sports and deep tissue massage. Dave says the sports-specific massage is geared to "help each athletic event participant enjoy the full range of motion, comfort and flexibility needed to perform at the peak of their game, whether that game is golf, swimming, football, baseball, karate, cycling or any other."

Supported Agriculture (CSA) operation. CSAs link farmers with local consumers, and give consumers a direct connection with the land on which their food is produced. CSAs also support the local economy by keeping money circulating locally. (As usual with a CSA, a minimum order is required.)

Please contact the farm to sign up by calling (570) 746-1664 or visiting their website (HailsFamilyFarm.com). Don't forget to mention Countryside Conservancy when you sign up!

We are delighted to extend this offer to Conservancy friends and supporters on behalf of the Hails – good food for a good cause! You'll support local farms, eat healthy, and benefit the Conservancy all at the same time. Our sincere thanks to the Hails family for suggesting this special offer, and for caring for the Earth.

Dave works from studios located in Scranton, Moosic, Clarks Summit and Daleville. Customers can enjoy the use of the fitness centers where his studios are located on the day of their massage. He also offers a mobile out-call service.

Gift certificates are also available and are suitable for any occasion—birthday, anniversary and more. To tend to sore muscles or just to enjoy relaxation at its best, try a massage! Call Dave at (570) 335-2283 to make a date with Harmony Restored.

Our sincere thanks to long-time Conservancy member and supporter Dave Jennings for creating this special opportunity.

For the Birds

Across North America, one of the sure signs that spring is coming is the return of migratory birds. May is a great month to discover the birdlife that fills our landscape! Countryside Conservancy has scheduled two birdwatching activities to celebrate the return of spring and our winger seasonal visitors.

Sunday, May 10: Joe DeMarco will lead a Mother's Day bird walk on a Conservancy preserve. The walk will run from 7:30 am to 11:30 am, giving you plenty of time to bring your mother out for a great morning's birding and then take her out to brunch! The meeting place and destination are yet to be announced; please call the office for further information. Joe is the Chair of the Board of Pennsylvania Audubon, an accomplished birder, and a great guy. Novices and old hands are equally welcome, and all will find something special to enjoy. This event is free, but please call 945-6995 to reserve your place in case of any last-minute change in plans.

Thursday, May 14: Nancy Wottrich will give a presentation on "Birding the Endless Mountains." Nancy is the author of *"A Birder's Guide to Susquehanna County,"* a keen volunteer with the Friends of Salt Springs Park, and teaches an adult-education class on birdwatching in Susquehanna County. This event is co-presented by Countryside Conservancy and the Waverly Community House, and will take place at the Waverly Community House on Route 407 in Waverly. The presentation starts at 7:00 pm.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service reports that some 46 million Americans enjoy birdwatching every year, making it second in popularity only to gardening among US hobbies. Whether you're a newbie or one of those 46 million satisfied customers, we hope you'll join us for one or both events!

Hiking the Great Northeast

Attorney Jeff Mitchell recently presented a talk and slideshow on local hiking trails to a near-capacity crowd at the Dietrich Theater. Jeff, a Conservancy Board member since 2006, has authored several outdoors books including *"Backpacking Pennsylvania," "Hiking the Endless Mountains,"* and *"Hiking the Allegheny National Forest."* All are available locally at Fitze's Department Store in Tunkhannock. He is currently working on a paddling book.

In his presentation at the Dietrich, Jeff mentioned a number of local hiking opportunities: some well-known like Ricketts Glen, some less so. His slides showing scenic highlights of the hikes were beautiful. Jeff reflected that of the many miles of country he has wandered in his hiking and camping career, Northeastern Pennsylvania has some of the most beautiful he's seen.

Countryside Conservancy maintains hiking and mountain-biking trails on several of its preserves, including Little Rocky Glen, Meadowsweet-Quarry Ridge, and Messimer. Trail maps for several of these properties can be downloaded from our website, www.countrysideconservancy.org; just follow the "Protected Lands" link for information about all of our preserves. We will add more maps as time goes on.

For people interested in knowing more about local hiking opportunities, Jeff recommended several other websites worth a visit:

Mid Atlantic Hikes (a "superb resource"):
www.midatlantichikes.com/pa.htm

PA Hikes (another "top notch website"):
www.pahikes.com/

Keystone Trails Association:
www.kta-hike.org

Woodbourne Forest:
www.woodbourneforest.org

Endless Mountains Hiking Club:
www.woodbourneforest.org/hiking_club.htm

Susquehanna Trailers Hiking Club:
susquehanna_trailers.tripod.com

"Hiking Jane" Frye:
www.hikingjane.com

Endless Mountains Nature Center:
www.emnconline.org

Greater Wyoming Valley Audubon Society:
www.gwvas.org

Lackawanna Audubon Society:
academic.uofs.edu/faculty/careym1/las.html

Sierra Club, NEPA Chapter:
www.pennsylvania.sierraclub.org/northeastern/outings.asp

Northeast PA Audubon Society:
www.nepaaudubonsociety.org

The Conservancy has invited Jeff to lead a hike on one of our own properties this year. Watch this space for details!



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 have been placed in the Conservancy's Land Fund to support our land protection activities throughout the region. Gifts in memory of Roz and Jim Peck are placed in the Peck Memorial Trail Fund to support our trail development work, in memory of their many contributions toward the Trolley Trail.

In memory of Denise Wright:

Peter and Sally Bohlin
Kathleen and Phil Graff
John and Caroline Seamans (accidentally omitted from our last issue)

In memory of Edson Green:

Genevieve Green

In memory of Robert and Nona McElwee:

Howard and Susan Jennings

In memory of Dr. Eugene Monick:

Dr. and Mrs. Harmar Brereton

In memory of Rosamond and James Peck:

Gail and Peter Reifsnnyder

In memory of Jim Rowlands:

Margaret C. Haver

In memory of John L. Ryon, Jr.:

Peter and Sally Bohlin
Thomas and Barbara Rodes

In memory of Walter Zezeski:

Nancy and Charles Donlin, Jr.
Chester J. Kulesa Family

In memory of Walter and Elnora Zezeski and Ravina Kaplan:

Megan D. Wolfe

We apologize sincerely for failing to thank Michele Cooper in our last newsletter. Michele, her sister Donna Kaplan and brother-in-law Barry Kaplan were kind enough to designate the Conservancy as a recipient for gifts in memory of Michele and Donna's father, Walter Zezeski. We extend our heartfelt thanks to the whole family for their great thoughtfulness at a difficult time.

Gifts in Honor

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

In honor of Mr. and Mrs. Peter Frieder:

Breig Brothers

In honor of Mrs. Colleen Snowdon

Breig Brothers

Gift Memberships

Finally, we deeply appreciate the thoughtfulness of those who give memberships to the Conservancy as a gift!

Gift memberships for Patrick Boyle and for Meaghan and Jason Jones:

Sandy Boyle

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 promptly add them to our mailing list.



Keep in Touch by Email

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. This is a great way to keep up with Conservancy happenings. We expect to send out about one message per month, so it won't overwhelm your inbox.

If you would like to be added to our email list, please send an email message to cconserv@epix.net with the words "subscribe Conservancy" in the subject line and your name in the body of the message.

Moving some of our informal communications from snail-mail to email will help us reach a wider audience at shorter notice, and save paper and stamps: good for the Conservancy and good for the Earth!

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.

The Watershed Coalition is becoming more active in studying and discussing issues of local environmental and economic concern, such as the disposal of wastewater from natural gas well drilling and fracturing. The Coalition sent a letter to the Scranton-Abingtons Planning Association, urging the association to protect 100-foot creek buffers along waterways when planning new development. You can read more about stream buffers and why 100 feet should be the minimum protection at <http://www.pacleanwatercampaign.org/buffer.html>.

The Coalition offered a great presentation by Gerry and Len Janus on invasive plants on January 5. The lecture attracted

a large turnout, who were regaled with Japanese Knotweed tea and Garlic Mustard dip! The Coalition hopes to do more on the invasive-plants topic in 2009: we will try to arrange a hands-on workshop in the spring or summer, and we also plan to launch a Japanese Knotweed removal project at Riverside Park in Tunkhannock.

The Coalition's February 2 event was a screening of the WVIA documentary "Nutrient Trading: Reducing Pollutants in our Watershed." Guests included producer Kelly Donaldson, Ann Smith of the Department of Environmental Protection, Chesapeake Bay Foundation scientist Harry Campbell, and Kathryn Davies of

WVIA-TV. Nutrient trading is a new program administered by DEP which gives point-source polluters such as sewage treatment plants a more cost-effective way to meet their nitrogen and phosphorus targets, by buying "credits" from farmers who reduce the amount of fertilizer, manure and sediments they allow to escape into local waterways. Nutrient trading is now being introduced across the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. The presentation engendered much interest and some well-targeted questions from the audience. This is a program we all need to understand better as it is introduced into our region in coming years.

The Coalition's calendar of free public events in 2009 continues with the following:

- **Monday, March 2:** Presentation by Richard Adams on the work of the **Susquehanna River Basin Commission** and its regulation of water withdrawals. This presentation will be of special interest as it relates to development of natural gas in the Marcellus Shale, a process that uses large quantities of fresh water. The presentation will take place at 7:00 pm in Room 214, Capwell Science Hall, Keystone College. Adams is an engineer under contract to the Commission. He provides regional outreach and compliance for the Commission on the water withdrawal and consumption activities associated with Marcellus gas well development. He is retired from the DEP Water Quality and Watershed Management Programs in Williamsport.

- **Friday evening, April 24:** Presentation on **Stream Macroinvertebrates** by Kristen Travers of the Stroud Water Research Center. Kristen will explain what these small stream creatures are and what their presence and diversity can tell us about the health of our local creeks. This presentation will take place at Keystone College, and will be followed on Saturday morning by a creekside field session in La Plume to see what kinds of critters we collect in the South Branch of the Tunkhannock Creek.

To get the latest information on all our events, visit the Countryside Conservancy website's News and Events page at www.countrysideconservancy.org/news.htm, or call secretary Mary Felley at 945-6995.

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.



Len and Gerry Janus and their audience at the January 5 presentation.

**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

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: _____

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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



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