

CountryViews

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE COUNTRYSIDE CONSERVANCY



Go Green Bike Tour—Saturday October 2nd



By Caroline Seamans, Board Member and Bike Tour Co-Chair

After days of downpours, the weather broke on Friday afternoon allowing things to dry out. On Saturday, volunteers began to set up under a pavilion in the Lackawanna State Park with the morning sun peeking out just enough for them to see through the fog and across the lake. With fall foliage as a backdrop, the first registrants began unloading their bikes and checking out the color-coded, posted map to choose mountain and road riding routes. Before long, 111 riders with cue sheets and maps in hand were pedaling off!

As the enthusiastic early morning activity died down, the catering truck pulled in and began setting up grills and serving tables under the pavilion. Non-participating friends started perusing the raffle set-up, taking advantage of the walking paths

around the lake, using their electronic devices, and generally relaxing. Mike Lambert and Bob Strunk of High Falls began setting up their sound system under the tent and checking their microphones and instruments.

Because the routes were so varied and cumulatively covered approximately 155 miles, local volunteer firefighters from Fleetville, Dalton, Factoryville, Hop Bottom, Springville, and Nicholson offered potable water and restroom facilities to the riders; Fleetville also offered dispatch service for emergencies and for the SAG (support and gear) wagons.

Bob Ide with the Great Outdoors covered our event and added an additional episode to the initial program he filmed and aired for us prior to the event.

The first riders back sported smiles of self-satisfaction and were greeted with familiar music and food including burgers, hot dogs, pasta, pierogies, fruit, cider and other cold drinks.

The chitchat was pleasant, the atmosphere relaxed, and the music conducive to unwinding. The crowd appeared totally satisfied. Music gave way to a few announcements, and then the drawing of names and numbers began for the plethora of raffle items including a compass, riding gloves, heart rate monitor, cycling socks, sunglasses, gift certificates, a full face shield helmet, tire pump and other biking gear. The grand prize, a Cannondale F9 mountain bike from Sickler's Bike Shop, went to Larry Trygar of Moscow, PA!

Thanks to the amount of generous donations from sponsors, everyone had a good chance to win something. After the last ticket was drawn amid more tunes, people started packing up, exchanging information, and talking about next year's Go Green Bike Tour!

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Go Green Bike Tour (continued from page 1)

Sponsors for event included:

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Hunting Season

Three Conservancy properties will be open to deer hunting this year—Ziegler (on Route 438), Messimer (on Grist Mill Road), and Quarry Ridge (on Route 407 but accessed from within Lackawanna State Park)—for two weeks after Thanksgiving and three weeks after Christmas.

- Nov. 29-Dec. 11, 2010 for rifle season
- Dec. 27-Jan. 15, 2011 for flintlock and archery

To apply for a permit, please call Jennifer at 945-6995. Hunting is not permitted on any other Conservancy properties, including Meadowsweet Preserve on Lily Lake Road.

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. Stay alert, be aware of your surroundings, be courteous to others, and above all be visible!

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.

Meet Our Trail Coordinator!

If you've been involved in the Conservancy within the past ten years, chances are pretty good that you already know Cheryl Ellsworth. Cheryl began as the Conservancy's very first employee back in 1999 and knows the ins and outs of this organization like the back of her hand. Most of her time here has been spent keeping the books, managing grants, applying for accreditation and livening up the office with her energy and wit.

While her role as the "life of the office" persists, she has set aside her other tasks to focus on coordinating the complex activities that encompass the Trolley Trail project. In addition to this new position, Cheryl works as a music therapist at three different facilities! Armed with her native wooden flute and beautiful singing voice, she makes her rounds at Allied Services, Mercy Hospital Hospice and the Jewish Home of Eastern PA – Alzheimer's Unit.

Whether she's working with engineers to plan a multi-million dollar recreation trail, comforting the elderly in their later stages of life or making dinner for her son and husband, Cheryl is always keeping busy and improving the lives of others. We are extremely grateful to have her on our team and hope she stays long enough to see the Trolley Trail make it all the way to Lake Winola!

Trolley Trail Stays On Track

By Cheryl Ellsworth, Trail Coordinator

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce to you and also to acknowledge and thank the Countryside Conservancy Trolley Trail Committee. Chaired and legally guided by Attorney Charles "Ty" Welles, the committee also consists of the following enthusiastic members: Pat Acker, Dorrance Belin, Amy Broadbent, Christine Dettore, Jim Dougherty, Jeff Fleming, Jack Muller, Abby Peck (Dalton Street Railway Company President), and Janine Port. Trail Coordinator Cheryl Ellsworth and Executive Director Bill Kern

complete this group who brings many areas of expertise and experience to the table. Recently, the committee lost a cherished member in Elizabeth "Betty" Bellantoni, who lent her courageous support and excitement to the project over the last few years. Betty will be fondly remembered and sadly missed.

The Countryside Conservancy and Trail Committee also wish to remember and applaud the lifelong dedication and contributions to our project by local historian and author, the late Norm Brauer. Norm generously donated the proceeds of his book *The Northern Electric* to the Conservancy in 2005. The Conservancy launched a second printing of this work (still available by calling the office) in an effort to raise money and attention to the cause of restoring the former trolley right-of-way traversing our local area, to a non-motorized community friendly walking trail. Norm often stopped by the office to share trolley stories and memorabilia with the staff. He was always welcome and his anecdotes were greatly appreciated! His passion and kindness will be missed.



The committee along with a supportive Board has made tremendous progress with this long range Conservancy project. With that being said, the following

excerpts highlight progress this past summer and early fall to date:

In September, the Conservancy partnered with Glenburn Township to seek out Pennsylvania Community Transportation Initiative monies (PennDOT). Although funding prospects are limited in this tough economy, the committee was pleased to be in position to partner with Glenburn and apply. Countryside acknowledges the support of local communities such as Glenburn, Dalton, LaPlume, Factoryville and the Abingtons in the past and looks forward to their continued cooperation.

Also in September, the Conservancy, through funding provided by the Whitney Chamberlin Memorial Fund, was able to purchase a 3.6 acre property in Glenburn from Marc and Kelly Altier. Board members Attorney Sandra Boyle and President Jack Muller were instrumental in coordinating this purchase. This segment will provide an integral trailhead and scenic picnic area while protecting the land from further development in a highly developed area. The Conservancy wishes to thank Marc and Kelly Altier for their willingness to discount the purchase price in support of the Trolley Trail project.

The staff and committee continue to meet with Project Coordinator Tim Wilson (Arora & Associates PC) to inventory, study, and walk trail segments. Landowner meetings, mapping and strategizing continue to progress in order to complete a Master Site Plan by early 2011 which will position the Conservancy for grant seeking in early spring. Arora is specifically planning the first three miles of trail from Clarks Summit to the Dalton line. This plan will include provisions to allow access to persons with physical disabilities.

As this goes to print, the committee is involved in three other complex trail projects which may provide up to 9,000 feet of right-of-way! These projects have been in negotiations for several years and we hope for their completion in the near future.

Gas got you down?

By Bill Kern, Executive Director



If you're anything like me, you immediately get skeptical (and nauseous) when something new comes to town that involves cutting down forests and moving mountains. My gut instinct is to think of the worst case scenarios and then wish that it would all go away. Such is the case with gas drilling.

Although I live in South Montrose and drive past several active natural gas drilling sites on my way to work daily, I jumped at the opportunity to visit a Chesapeake rig. From my former work in the renewable energy industry, I knew that a site tour can often demystify new



and unfamiliar technologies and processes so I figured I should give it a chance. On September 16th, I traveled to Chesapeake headquarters in Towanda with a dozen other land trust representatives from around the state.

Brian Grove, Chesapeake's Director of Corporate Development, first gave us a presentation on the process of fracking and the methods practiced by Chesapeake. What was supposed to be an hour-long presentation lasted upwards of two and a half hours as Mr. Grove entertained a litany of questions from the environmentalists gathered around him. After satisfying or at least temporarily tiring out his questioners, Mr. Grove arranged for three vehicles to transport us to an active drilling rig near Wysox.

Knowing that active industrial zones are normally dangerous places and off-limits to outsiders, I had low expectations for the amount of access that we would have to the rig. But throwing on a hardhat and safety glasses seemed to appease Chesapeake's insurance concerns, and the next thing I knew we were climbing the ladder up to the rig's control room. We got to see the blowout preventer, the drilling mud mixer, the drilling depth monitor and anything else that we wanted to see. All of the employees were polite and willing to talk to us about their particular functions on the rig.

One of the main take-home points from the rig tour was that not all drilling operators are created equal. Chesapeake is not using open pit water storage and they recycle the 15% of fracking fluid that comes back up. Their whole pad is lined with multiple layers of materials to prevent the spread of spilled fluids and their wells are lined with several layers of concrete to minimize the risk of gas migration to unwanted areas (like our aquifer). Chesapeake is leading the industry in developing safer and more efficient drilling practices and in most

cases is well above the standards set forth by the DEP.

All that being said, I still do not get a warm and fuzzy feeling when I see drilling rigs. In a thorough study conducted by the PA Land Trust Association, drillers in PA have amassed 1614 violations since 2008, 1056 of which were identified as "most likely to harm the environment." Our very own Chesapeake topped the list with 149 violations but it should be noted that when compared with the total number of wells drilled, they did not make the list of Top 25 worst offenders.

The bottom line is that natural gas extraction is an industrial activity and as with any industrial activity there are associated risks. Since corporations exist to maximize profits, it appears Chesapeake understands that minimizing risks, reducing the number of violations and making the whole process as efficient as possible will save them money in the long run. And considering this is an industry that's here to stay, I hope the other companies catch on more quickly than they have been.

As I alluded to earlier, fear of the unknown is the worst fear of all. If you are concerned about gas drilling, I strongly encourage you to go on a rig tour. While some fears will never be assuaged by a tour, understanding the process better will at least help you to focus your worrying on legitimate



Natural Gas Update – by the Numbers

By Bill Kern, Executive Director

- **107,144,485** (and counting) – the amount of money that would have been raised by a reasonable natural gas severance tax had it been enacted in October 2009. Nearly every other natural gas-producing state except for PA has a severance tax in place that helps to fund environmental protection efforts, road repairs and general budgetary needs. While one version of a severance tax passed the House, the Senate could not come to an agreement and the tax appears to be a missed opportunity considering the anti-severance tax stance of governor-elect Corbett. (source: www.PennFuture.org)
- **800,000** – the amount of state forest acreage temporarily off-limits to gas drilling as a result of an executive order issued by Governor Rendell last month. Governor-elect Corbett has expressed a commitment to overturning the moratorium but will probably not do so all at once. (source: www.dep.web.state.pa.us)
- **29,600** – the number of homes that could be heated by the amount of natural gas produced from a single well in Susquehanna County after just nine months of production. Under new state law, Marcellus gas operators are required to report production numbers every six months, and the results indicate that Bradford and Susquehanna Counties combined account for more than half of the state's production. (source: Philadelphia Inquirer)
- **8 out of 9** – the number of hydraulic fracturing companies that agreed to voluntarily submit timely and complete information to help the EPA conduct its study on fracking's potential impact on drinking water. The uncooperative holdout – Halliburton. (source: www.EPA.gov)



concerns and eliminate the overwhelming stress of infinite fears. Mr. Grove of Chesapeake Energy and representatives from Cabot Oil & Gas have both expressed interest in conducting tours for Conservancy members. If you would like to go on one, please contact us here at the office and we will begin making the arrangements. These tours are not set in stone and probably will not take place until next spring or summer, but we will put you on the list and notify you when the plans are finalized. Please understand that these tours are for individuals who actually want to learn more about the process and not for persons looking to berate the industry. I guarantee you no matter how passionate you are you're not going to convince Mr. Grove and Chesapeake that drilling in the Endless Mountains is a bad idea. We already tried.



Tailgate Picnic

By Ellie Hyde, Board Member and
Tailgate Committee Chair



On September 19th, the Conservancy's 16th Annual Tailgate Picnic was held at Meadowsweet Preserve on Lily Lake Road in Waverly. On that beautiful fall day, we had all our staples: corn roast and s'mores provided by the Ackers; horse-drawn wagon rides provided by Margaret Hull, Ben, and Jake; sack races and kite making with help from Gayle Muller and Amy Broadbent; and music, this year by the two-man band, Wandering Aloud. Angie Colarusso of Second Chance Wildlife Center captivated kids with her rescued squirrels and opossums, and gave a very informative presentation on rescuing these little critters.

Our thanks to all who helped, from roasting corn, to directing traffic and preparing the field. It's so nice to get a bunch of Conservancy friends together and enjoy one of the many properties protected from development by this land trust. Everyone had a great time and I hope to see all of you there again next year!



Gifts in Honor, Memory, and Celebration

We offer our thanks to the following individuals who have made gifts to the Conservancy in honor of friends passing a special milestone in their lives, or 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 honor of Cheryl Ellsworth and her longstanding dedication to the pursuits of Countryside Conservancy:

Jack & Gayle Muller

In honor of the recent marriage of Mr. & Mrs. Peter Danchak:

Mr. & Mrs. William Booth

In memory of Norman Paul Brauer:

Lynn H. Nichols

In memory of Jane Studer:

Lynn H. Nichols

In memory of Robert & Louise Hull:

Presbyterian Women of the First Presbyterian Church of Clarks Summit

In memory of Tia, Annabelle, and Abigail:

Ellie Hyde

Christopher Ries Sculpture Raffle



Dimensions:
7 1/2" H x 4 7/8" W
x 2 1/2" D

Countryside Conservancy and internationally recognized glass sculptor, Christopher Ries, have teamed-up for a fundraising raffle to further the Conservancy's mission. The Tunkhannock resident is an ardent supporter of the Conservancy and showed it by hosting a gallery reception to help us kick off the raffle. On Sunday, October 10th, more than 40 Conservancy supporters made their way to Ries' studio on Keelersburg

Road just south of Tunkhannock alongside the Susquehanna River. The wine and cheese reception highlighted Ries' mind-bending repertoire of crystal glass sculptures, including the piece being raffled by the Conservancy, "After Glow." Only 50 tickets are being sold for this \$2,000 sculpture at \$100 per ticket. Over half of the tickets have already been sold, so contact the Conservancy office immediately if you would like the chance to own this incredible piece of artistry and craftsmanship!



Looking for Holiday Gift Ideas?



We suggest *The Northern Electric*, the late Norm Brauer's history of our favorite local trolley line. The book tells the story of the Northern Electric Railway through over 200 pages of photos, history, anecdotes and business records, plus foldout maps. The Northern Electric once served communities from Scranton to Clarks Summit, Factoryville, Lake Winola, Nicholson, Hop Bottom, Brooklyn and Montrose. The book sells for \$33.39 including sales tax (shipping and handling are a few dollars more). A great holiday gift for any history or rail buff. Call (570) 945-6995 to order your copy! Book sales support Conservancy operations, including the development of parts of the old trolley line into a recreational trail.

Baseball caps and canvas tote bags are also available for \$10 each. Both sport the Conservancy logo and can be ordered by calling the Conservancy at 945-6995 or stopping by our office at Keystone College.

Our final suggestion is one that has gained popularity in recent years and that is giving the gift of Conservancy membership! If you know someone that would appreciate becoming a member and helping to protect the lands and waters in the Tunkhannock Creek Watershed, give us a call and we'll take care of the rest. You can even fill out the back page of this newsletter and just include a note explaining that it is a gift. It couldn't be easier!



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.

By Ellie Hyde, Board Member and Chair of the SBTC Watershed Coalition

The Coalition's program on August 2nd was "Marcellus Comes to Town." Our objective was to present views that may not have been considered yet by many.

Andy Goldberg of Independent Water Testing spoke about testing private water supplies in the Marcellus Shale environment, and Steve Saunders of Tressler Saunders, LLC spoke about key issues to be considered before signing a gas lease. Many topics Steve discussed and the issues related to them were quite a shock to the audience. His main message was—be well-informed before signing a lease and seek professional advice.

Both speakers were well received by over 100 members of the public in attendance.

On September 13th, the Watershed Coalition was pleased to have Dr. Jerry

Skinner of Keystone College present the program "The Effects of Gas Drilling on Wildlife." Jerry gave an excellent presentation on this topic. He feels the biggest concern is fragmentation of habitats. Fragmentation occurs when roads and pipelines are cut through forests and fields. Many animals and birds need very specific conditions for survival, and fragmentation totally changes their habitat. Other concerns include noise, disturbance and open water impoundments that may attract wildlife to their detriment.

Renee Czubowicz Tierney gave a short introduction to mountaintop removal mining, an extremely harmful method of coal mining practiced in parts of West Virginia. It not only destroys mountaintop habitat, but also the entire stream valley when mining waste is dumped.

Quarry Ridge Tree Planting

By Bill Kern, Executive Director

If you were to ask Joe Tierney what it takes to rebuild a forest, he would most likely spare you a lecture about soil compaction, acidity, species diversity and biomass index. Joe would probably respond, "You need people, gloves, mattocks, shovels, seedlings and a good work ethic." And that is exactly what we had on a brisk October morning to plant 200 conifers on the Quarry Ridge Preserve.



Before the planting could take place, however, we had to prepare the site by removing as much invasive vegetation as possible. Thanks to Tom Durbin and his brush hog, the honeysuckle and other invasive vegetation didn't stand a chance. By digging up and removing the unwanted vegetation, we were ultimately giving the young seedlings a better chance of survival.

Ten volunteers made the trek into Quarry Ridge from the Meadowsweet parking lot, including Zoe McGlynn from Waverly Elementary and Peter McCorkell, a second-year Commonwealth Medical College student from Washington state. Zoe brought along her video camera to shoot some footage of the planting for a school project which you can see on Countryside Conservancy's Facebook page or by following this link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kuxkmrQ6y-U>

The Stewardship Committee is already planning another planting for the spring, so if you want to be involved just give the office a call at 945-6995 or shoot us an email at cconserv@epix.net. The more people we have, the more trees we can plant, the greater the impact we can have at rebuilding our forests!

Free Raffle



Over the summer, the Countryside Conservancy had representatives at various community events displaying our information and brochures. From Founder's Day in Tunkhannock to

Elk Mountain's Fall Festival, volunteers gave up their Saturdays and Sundays to spread the word about the good work being done by the Conservancy. As part of this outreach, the Conservancy offered a "Free Raffle" to anyone interested in

learning more about our conservation efforts. In exchange for their contact information, raffle participants had their choice of trying to win hand-tied, one-of-a-kind tied fishing flies from Ron Kozlowski or sterling silver earrings by local jewelry artist Kristie Miller McMahon. Out of more than 100 entrants, Sylvia Gioupis, Rosemary O'Koren and Nathan Oscarson each won a set of flies and Russell Alvaro won the pair of earrings. Congratulations to the winners and a huge thank you to Ron and Kristie for their beautiful work and reliable commitment to the Conservancy!

**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

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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 Bill Kern at P.O. Box 55, La Plume PA 18440. (570) 945-6995 or cconserv@epix.net



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