

CountryViews



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE COUNTRYSIDE CONSERVANCY

Trolley Trail Project Makes Major Advances



A cattle crossing that still exists under the right of way.

The Conservancy's ongoing "Trolley Trail" project has made exciting and impressive progress over the past few months. The Conservancy recently closed on both a land donation, containing trolley Right Of Way (ROW), and a trail easement in the Glenburn section of Lackawanna County. These transactions make it possible for Countryside to seek professional planning input to formally design the first three miles of useable trail from Clarks Summit to Dalton.

In winter 2010, Ms. Abigail Peck, daughter of visionary Conservancy founder Rosamond Peck, and President of the Dalton Street Railway Company (DSRC), signed over a portion of property in Glenburn, approximately 5.6 acres, containing 2,700 feet of pristine ROW of the former trolley line. This portion of trail extends to the Dalton Borough line and consists of a meandering length of trail through the woods and contains a picturesque wooded grove which

may be used in the future as a meditative picnic spot. Abby and her siblings, Mr. Jamie Peck, Oregon; Ms. Laura Peck, Esquire, Philadelphia; and Mrs. Lucy (Peck) Eysenbach, Massachusetts, have supported their mother's dream of creating a recreational, non-motorized walking trail linking several municipalities (Clarks Summit, Glenburn, Dalton, LaPlume, Factoryville) for years.

From 1908 to 1932, the Northern Electric Railway operated a scheduled trolley service for passengers and freight from Scranton to Lake Winola and the towns in between: Chinchilla, Clarks Summit, Glenburn, Dalton, La Plume, Lithia Valley and Lake Winola. Commuters used the trolleys, as did families headed out to Lake Winola for summer vacation. The Northern Electric built amusement parks at Grove Street in Clarks Summit and at Lake Winola, luring riders to dance pavilions, booths and rides. Seasonal fairs drew riders to Ackerly Fairgrounds, now the site of the Abington Little League complex, for horseracing, flower and vegetable shows and entertainment. Farmers shipped their milk to dairies in town, while coal and other freight was shipped out to the countryside.



"A Northern Electric Car on the trolley line in Glenburn Township." (photo: Norm Brauer archives)

The rail right of way was owned by the Dalton Street Railway Company (DSRC). After the company filed for bankruptcy in 1932, the track, trestles and rolling stock were sold along with many sections of the right of way. In 1945, the DSRC was acquired by James K. Peck, whose heirs still own it and are eager to have the corridor become a motor-free community walking trail. Today the 12-mile corridor has a checkerboard pattern of ownership, with the DSRC owning all the sections which were not sold in the years since 1932.

During June 2010, the Conservancy also officially closed on an easement which will allow for smooth access to the Peck family donation mentioned above. This easement of approximately 25,000 square feet was donated by The Church of the Epiphany, Glenburn, and will allow trail users to access Church grounds in order to proceed toward Dalton. Discussions with Church officials had been in progress for several years. In the past two years, church officials and members Fr. Craig Sweeney, Jody Post, Roger Mattes, John Enders, and Amy Fleming

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Upcoming Events

Fall events include our 16th Annual Tailgate Picnic and 1st Annual Go Green Bike Tour! See page 2 for more information.



Countryside Conservancy

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Trolley Trail Project (continued from page 1)

have been most helpful in bringing this long-awaited connecting piece to closure. Attorney Charles "Ty" Welles, acting on behalf of the Countryside Conservancy, has guided both transactions to successful conclusions.

The completion of these transactions allows the Conservancy to pursue development of a master site plan for the first three miles of trail, now essentially continuously connected, from Clarks Summit to Dalton. On June 28th, 2010, the Conservancy entered into an agreement with Arora and Associates, P.C. consulting engineers to conduct the studies necessary to complete an in-depth plan. This will place the Conservancy in a position to pursue grant monies in the near future and provide the necessary expertise to navigate those areas of trail which may require special attention or present accessibility issues.

We will keep you apprised of ongoing developments with the Trolley Trail as they occur. For more information, visit our website at www.countrysideconservancy.org, or contact us at (570) 945-6995 or cconserv@epix.net.

Upcoming Events

Moonlight Kayak Paddle: Friday, August 20. Angela Lambert, environmental educator at Lackawanna State Park, will lead a moonlight kayak paddle on Lackawanna Lake starting at 7:30 pm. This event is specially scheduled for the South Branch Tunkhannock Creek Watershed Coalition - and friends. Join us to see bats, sunset and moonlight. And enjoy the calm of twilight paddling! Call Angela at 945-7110 if you wish to reserve a kayak, paddle and vest from the Park at \$5 per boat (limited number available). Call Angela (945-7110) or Bill (945-6995) for more information.

Nicholson Bridge Day: Sunday, September 12 in Nicholson. The festival encompasses several streets, featuring everything from bands and food to contests and games. Come out and help celebrate the heritage of Nicholson.

16th Annual Tailgate Picnic: Sunday, September 19 at Meadowsweet Preserve, Lily Lake Road, 3pm till dusk. Free to Conservancy members.

Go Green Bike Tour: Saturday, October 2 at Lackawanna State Park. Check-in from 8 to 10am. Routes for mountain bikers and road bikers of all ages and skill levels will be available. The cost is \$35 if you register before September 26 and includes food, beverages and a raffle ticket for all sorts of great prizes. Proceeds support the Countryside Conservancy in their pursuit of "Keeping Green Spaces Green!" Check out our website at www.countrysideconservancy.org for more information and to register online.

Elk Mountain Fall Festival: Saturday and Sunday, October 9 and 10. The Conservancy will have a booth – come visit us!

Northeast Environmental Partners Awards Dinner: Thursday, October 14 at the Woodlands Inn and Resort, Wilkes-Barre. Celebrate "An Evening for Pennsylvania's Environment" as we honor individuals and organizations who, through partnerships, have achieved excellence in environmental protection or conservation.

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.

Celebrate Our River Day

Despite temperatures reaching into the mid-90's, nearly one thousand people descended on Riverside Park in Tunkhannock for "Celebrate Our River Day." Curt Bogart, Penny Davis, Mary Felley, Ellie Hyde and Margie Hovan all chipped in to staff the Conservancy



table and help Professor Peter Petokas with his ever popular hellbenders. (Hellbenders are giant native salamanders, and well worth getting to know.)

Meet the Newest Member of the Countryside Team!



In May of this year, the Conservancy welcomed its newest staff member, Jennifer Forster! With Cheryl Ellsworth focusing mainly on Trolley Trail activities and

Lois Yeust taking a well-deserved break from her Conservancy duties, Jennifer has taken over the bookkeeping, event coordination, member outreach and making sure that the Conservancy functions like a well-oiled machine.

A native of Wilkes-Barre and a graduate of West Chester University, you might have seen Jennifer in her previous role as executive assistant at Patsel's restaurant or browsing the shops of Tunkhannock where she now resides. Jennifer is a great addition to the Conservancy team and has already begun earning her stripes by jumping right into the planning and execution of this year's annual auction. We're sure that you will enjoy her passion, dedication and good nature every bit as much as we have!

Putting Your Money Where Our Mouth Is!

Much of what we do here at the Conservancy is either intangible or difficult to quantify. In an effort to show you, our members, exactly how we are making use of your generous donations, I'd like to introduce this new section to the newsletter. Here, I will convey activities and functions of the Conservancy that are made possible only through your much appreciated support.

Office Expansion

As you may know, the Conservancy has been working in relatively modest quarters since our inception in 1994. With the expanded scope of our work, additional office space has become a necessity. Beginning in July, we are renting both sides of Wyoming Hall from Keystone College. This expansion provides space for board and committee meetings, storage of event supplies, office space for future hires and much-needed work space for volunteers and staff.

Website Redesign

This fall, expect a whole new look and feel when you visit our website: www.countrysideconservancy.org. More and more people are using the internet to learn about organizations, outdoor activities and environmentally friendly practices. With that in mind, it has become increasingly important for the Conservancy to have a "fresh face" and utilize the wave of social media to maximize our education, outreach and fundraising efforts.

Trolley Trail

So far this year, the Conservancy has secured more than 3,400 linear feet of Trolley Trail right of way between Clarks Summit and Dalton. For more information on this progress and the hiring of consulting engineers see the Trolley Trail article on page 1.

Education

A good portion of our time is spent educating ourselves and, in-turn, others in the latest facts and reports surrounding natural gas extraction from Marcellus Shale. Representatives from the Conservancy have attended or presented at no less than two dozen events pertaining to gas drilling within the past year. As an activity that will be a part of our landscape for multiple generations, it is important for the Conservancy to be a well-informed, fact-based conduit of information for the residents of northeast Pennsylvania.

Greening the Conservancy

Another area that deserves its due is the environmentally-friendly efforts made by the Countryside Conservancy. The organization itself has always worked towards a more sustainable existence and members should know what strides we take to reduce our carbon footprint in addition to the obvious conservation of land. This newsletter's featured "green practice" is the use of FSC certified paper in our newsletter.

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) standards represent the world's strongest system for guiding forest management toward sustainable outcomes. The FSC label provides a



credible link between responsible production and consumption of forest products, enabling consumers and businesses to make purchasing decisions that benefit people and the environment as well as providing ongoing business value. Look for this logo the next time you purchase any paper or wood based product. For more information you can visit the FSC website at www.fsc.org.

2010 Annual Auction

The Conservancy's Eleventh Annual Auction took place on the lawn at Allied Services Corporate Center in Clarks Summit on July 24. The setting and refreshments were perfect, with a wine bar by Nimble Hill Wineries being a nice addition this year. Live musical entertainment from Jim Cerminaro set the party mood. Ken Rivenburg of

Rivenburg's Auction House led the Live Auction bidding, ably assisted by masters of ceremonies "Vanna White" and "Betty White" (Bill Booth and Jim Vipond). Bidding on over a hundred Live and Silent Auction items went on into the evening, and the weather cooperated beautifully!

We warmly thank our Auction Chairs, Elaine Shepard and Patti Brown, and all Auction Committee members – Michelle Bersch, Ellen Burkey, Penny Davis, Teri Erickson, Lynn Evans, Sherry Nealon Fanucci, George Ginader, Kathleen Graff, Gretchen Ludders, Judy Severson, DeDe Tersteeg and Jim Vipond – for their energy and dedication.



The Conservancy wishes to thank Honorary Auction Chair Bill Conaboy of Allied Services for his generosity and support. We also thank the staff of Allied Services, especially Michael Frey, Stacy, and their enormously capable staff who oversaw the dining for the evening, and Mike DePew of the print shop for help with invitations. We also extend special thanks to George Ginader, Eric Davis and the staff of Ginader Jones and Co. for their help with financial arrangements, and to Caroline Seamans for invaluable help with check-in and check-out. Our warm thanks too to members of the Garden Exchange for providing lovely floral decorations again this year.

Live Auction Donors:

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Dinner is Served!
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We also thank our 2010 Auction sponsors: host sponsor, Allied Services; at the Sanctuary Society level, Marworth; at the Steward level, Henkelman Real Estate, Keystone College, Erickson/Leibman Group – Merrill Lynch, Peoples National Bank, Prudential Retirement, and PNC Bank; and at the Protector level, Action Personnel Services, Alliance Landfill/Apex Waste Services, Community Bank & Trust, Fidelity Bank, Gertrude Hawk Chocolates, Hilton Scranton & Conference Center, Janney Montgomery Scott, Keystone Community Resources, Oliver, Price, & Rhodes, Penn Security Bank, R.J. Walker Co. and Sterling Wealth Management.

Our warmest thanks to all the local artists, merchants and businesses who donated outstanding items to our Auction. Please support these Conservancy friends by giving them your patronage and introducing them to your family and friends! Finally, we sincerely thank all our guests who generously supported us

through their Auction purchases. It wouldn't happen without you!

Auction proceeds support the Conservancy's mission of protecting lands and waters in and around the Tunkhannock Creek Watershed for the public benefit. The Auction is our only significant fundraising event of the year. The continued support

of our donors, sponsors and buyers has been critical to helping us open Little Rocky Glen to the public, build the Trolley Trail, monitor water quality in local creeks, educate landowners on natural gas issues, and the many other efforts we make to protect the lands and waters of our region.



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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 Mary Felley:

Dorrance and Susan Belin
Countryside Conservancy Board of Directors

In honor of Dorrance Belin's birthday:

Mary B. Rhodes
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In memory of Nancy D. Stahler:

Stahler Family Foundation

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In memory of "Moby" Cooper:

Rose, Frank and Olga Opshinsky

Additional 2009 Donors

We offer our sincere apologies to the following donors whose names were accidentally omitted from our Winter 2010 newsletter.

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Ms. Angela Lambert	Mrs. Nancy Stahler
Mr. Stephen Lawrenson	Jeff and Laurie Stephens

Stonewall Workshop

Countryside Conservancy held its second annual Stone Wall Workshop on June 19th at Lackawanna State Park and the Ziegler Preserve. The workshop, hosted by Ken Ely, included a slideshow of the area's stone walls, as well as hands-on training on stone wall building. The 14 attendees learned some valuable stone wall building skills, and a highly-trafficked wall crossing on the Ziegler Preserve got a much-needed facelift!

Ken, the Commonwealth Speaker for the Pennsylvania Humanities Council, is a native of Susquehanna County and has been involved in stone wall building and restoration since his teenage years. He founded Good Neighbor Walls in 1996 and has completed projects in Susquehanna, Wyoming, Luzerne, Bradford and Broome (NY) counties. This event was made possible by the Pennsylvania Humanities Council and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

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.

Recent Activities

Members of the Watershed Coalition joined in the Earth Day/Arbor Day celebrations in Tunkhannock on April 24. Volunteers removed invasive Garlic Mustard, picked up litter, and dedicated riverside trees planted by the Tunkhannock Tree Association in memory of Burr Hamilton.

Alana Roberts of the Lackawanna County Conservation District reported that DEP will fund bacterial monitoring along the South Branch of the Tunkhannock Creek at four sites this summer. Results at two sites sampled in 2009, below Chapman Lake and near I-81, yielded generally acceptable results for bacteria levels.

Michael Delprete of Lech's Pharmacy spoke to a recent Coalition meeting about his efforts to set up a collection and disposal program for unused pharmaceuticals, to reduce the impact of flushed drugs on aquatic ecosystems. Amazingly, Pennsylvania pharmacies cannot legally collect unused medications once they are dispensed. Flushed unused doses pass through sewage treatment plants and septic tanks, into our groundwater and streams, where they are taken up by invertebrates and fish. Crazy as it sounds, trout carrying doses of birth-control or anti-depressants are well documented, and the effects are as yet largely unknown. We thank Michael for taking an interest in this issue, and hope to help him however we can. In the meantime, please don't flush your unused meds – landfill them!

Marcellus Shale Topics

Several members of the Watershed Coalition attended a "Water Dog" training session in Williamsport in March. The Water Dogs, working in the Pine Creek watershed of Tioga and Lycoming Counties, are private citizens who keep an eye out for problems arising from Marcellus Shale drilling and alert regulators when something is of concern.

The training session included presentations by representatives of Range Resources and Chief Oil and Gas, followed by discussion of the role private citizens play in monitoring natural gas production. Emphasis was on staying safe, staying legal (no trespassing), and not "crying wolf." Trainers advised sticking to areas you are familiar with, while looking for unexpected changes such as new erosion, gullies and washouts, foam, discolored water, and black mud.

Suspected problems in our counties can be reported to Water Quality staff via the DEP Wilkes-Barre main phone number, (570) 826-2511. Calls to this number after office hours will be directed to an emergency report line. The US Environmental Protection Agency has its own tipline for anyone wishing to report problems related to gas drilling: 1 (877) 919-4EPA.

The Watershed Coalition is considering whether to bring a "Water Dog" training session to our area. We will also stay tuned for progress on a statewide training course and manual Trout Unlimited is working on.

The Susquehanna River Basin Commission has begun continuous real-time water quality monitoring at six sites in the watershed, including Meshoppen Creek. Parameters being monitored include temperature, pH, conductance, dissolved oxygen and turbidity. It is hoped that this system can help detect releases of salty drilling wastewater into waterways. The Commission plans to set up a total of 30 monitoring sites on tributaries to the Susquehanna wherever drilling is planned. You can view data results in real time at their website; www.srbc.net/programs/remotenetwork.htm Follow the link at the top of the page.

In Harrisburg, Coalition members are following the progress of several proposals to introduce a severance tax on natural gas production. Conservation groups agree that revenues from such a tax must be directed toward environmental protection and communities affected by drilling, not just poured into the state's general fund.

The state government is now considering tighter restrictions on the levels of total dissolved solids (TDS) permitted in wastewater discharges. The wastewater produced in Marcellus Shale drilling has extremely high TDS levels (mainly salts), and the proposed regulations are meant to prevent high TDS concentrations being discharged into our streams and rivers, where they could affect aquatic life, industrial water use, and human health.

Stonewall Workshop Photos



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

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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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