

# CountryViews

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE COUNTRYSIDE CONSERVANCY



## Conservancy Welcomes New Executive Director

The Board of Directors is pleased to announce that they have hired Bill Kern of Tunkhannock as the Conservancy's new Executive Director. He started work on March 8.

Kern is a biology graduate of Ithaca College. He earned a Master's in Environmental Studies at Brown University, with a thesis project focused on soil toxicity in post-Katrina New Orleans. Following completion of his Master's, he conducted a 4-month study funded by Brown on sustainability in Tunkhannock. He also served on the Conservancy's Board of Directors from April 2009 until his hiring.

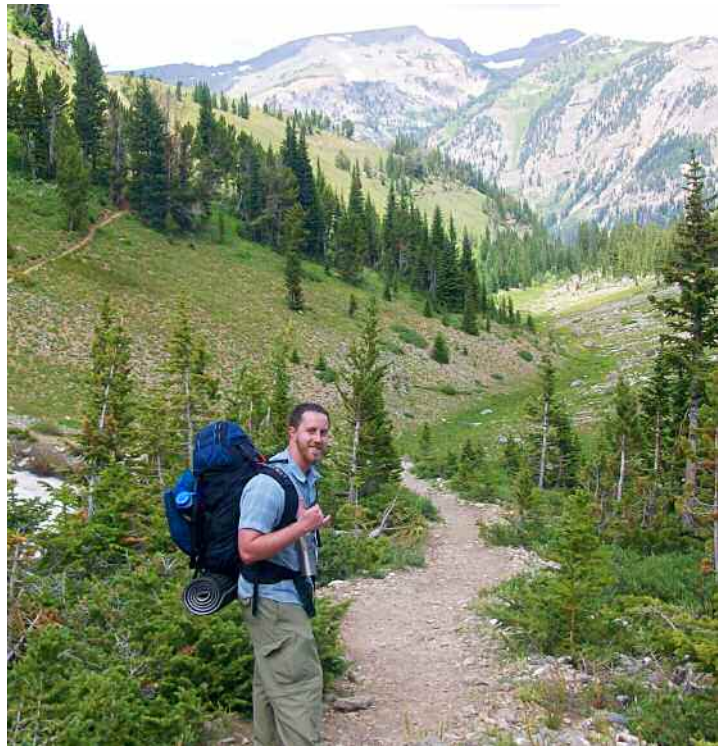
"The Conservancy is ideally situated to help the area strike a balance between economic progress and environmental protection," said Kern. "We are at a crossroads and I couldn't be more pleased to have this opportunity to work with the dedicated board of directors and members of this fine organization. Having been born and raised in Tunkhannock, this watershed has been my backyard for pretty much my entire life, and protecting it is extremely important to me."

Since August of 2008 Kern had been working with Green Energy Outreach Services (GEOS), a public relations and grassroots organizing firm specializing in the renewable energy industry. "Working on large-scale wind and solar projects in NY and PA taught me the importance of public opinion and community support," remarked Kern. "Without informed public awareness and strong community backing, even the most well-intentioned efforts are bound to fail. I intend to apply these lessons to my new role with the Conservancy by expanding and strengthening our valuable network of members and supporters."

"Of the various ongoing efforts here at the Conservancy, I'm personally very excited about the Trolley Trail project," he said of the trail that will eventually link Lake Winola with Clarks Summit. "After living in Providence, RI and Ithaca, NY, I've seen firsthand the profound impact that alternative recreational routes can have on a community. From giving people the opportunity to safely push their children's strollers to commuters who want a healthy route to bike to work, this trail will significantly improve the lives of the people and communities throughout the 6 and 11 corridor and beyond."

Bill takes over the reins from Mary Felley, the Conservancy's Executive Director since June 2003.

*See page 3 for other staffing changes.*



*Bill Kern out on the trail in Wyoming.*

## Save the Date for Countryside Conservancy Events!

Our 2010 Annual Meeting and Stewardship Awards ceremony will take place on Wednesday, May 5 in Evans Hall at Keystone College, starting at 7:00 pm. This event is free and open to the public. Come enjoy a variety of delicious coffee and desserts, catch up with the Conservancy, and meet some outstanding stewards of our watershed!



## Countryside Conservancy

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### Staff

Bill Kern, Executive Director  
Mary Felley, Open Space Coordinator  
Cheryl Ellsworth, Program Manager  
Lois Yeust, Administrative Assistant



## Upcoming Events

With spring just around the corner, the Conservancy invites you to take part in some of the following events we have lined up for the next few months:

**Pennsylvania Land Conservation Conference:** April 8–10 at the Desmond Hotel & Conference Center in Malvern, PA. Former Conservancy Executive Director Mary Felley will join representatives from the Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy and Delaware Highlands Conservancy as a panelist for a daylong seminar on land conservation in the face of Marcellus Shale gas development. Visit [www.conserveland.org](http://www.conserveland.org) for information and to register.

**Earth Day and Arbor Day Celebration:** Saturday, April 24 at Riverside Park, Tunkhannock. Join us to whack back the invasive Japanese Knotweed, dedicate the Sycamore trees planted last fall, and enjoy a spring day by the river!

**Adopt A Highway Cleanup:** Sunday, April 25 on Route 632 from Dalton to Waverly. Organized by the South Branch Tunkhannock Creek Watershed Coalition. Meet behind the Dalton Fire Hall at 9:00 am.

**Annual Meeting and Stewardship Awards:** Wednesday, May 5, at 7 pm in Evans Hall, Keystone College. Come meet eight outstanding caretakers of our region's lands who will be honored at this year's Stewardship Awards! Enjoy coffee and a delicious assortment of desserts, and catch up on the Conservancy's activities over the past year. Free and open to the public.

**Stone Wall Workshop:** Saturday, June 19, at Lackawanna State Park and the Conservancy's Ziegler Preserve. Join stone wall expert Ken Ely for a presentation on the techniques of stone wall restoration, then put your new skills into practice in restoring stone walls at the Ziegler Preserve in Benton Township!

**Kids' Nature Camps at Little Rocky Glen:** The Endless Mountains Nature Center will host nature day camps at the Conservancy's Little Rocky Glen preserve during the weeks of June 21-25 and August 2-6. Half-day and all-day sessions are available; separate sessions are designed for pre-kindergarten through first graders, and second through sixth graders.

Space is limited, so register early! To sign up, visit [www.EMNOnline.org](http://www.EMNOnline.org) and click on the "Nature Day Camp" link at the top of the page. Discounts may be available for Conservancy members.

**Eleventh Annual Auction:** Our date this year is Saturday, July 24 on the lawn at the Abington Executive Center in Clarks Summit, once again courtesy of Allied Services. Save the date and plan to be there!

### 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.

## Go Green Bike Tour



*Explore off-road trails via mountain bike*

This fall, the Conservancy will offer something new: a bike tour running the length and breadth of the Tunkhannock Creek Watershed! Our first annual “Go Green” Bike Tour takes place on Saturday, October 2, 2010.

The purpose of the event is to acquaint more members of the public with the beauties of our countryside, to promote biking as a major recreational sport for this region, and to showcase the many riding routes and trails available to the public here. This year’s inaugural tour welcomes riders of all ages and abilities, including biking clubs, individual bikers and groups, families with kids, and college and high school students.

With seven different routes to choose from, the tour will offer something for everyone, from “never-ever” beginners to single-track junkies. Three on-road rides following public roadways of the region will be offered, including a metric century (100 kilometers or 58 miles), a 29.4 mile ride, and a 22 mile ride. A choice of four off-road rides will be available for the mountain bikers, ranging from scenic

dirt road tours to “technical” trails in Lackawanna State Park.

Lackawanna State Park, conveniently located close to Interstate 81 and U.S. Routes 6 & 11, will be the start and end point for the tour. The Conservancy has rented a pavilion and will have access to rest rooms and the warming hut. Food service will be available, and participants and their families will also be able to use the Park’s grills and picnic tables, yurts and campsites.

Activities at the State Park will also include a raffle of a Cannondale mountain bike and other great prizes.

The Go Green tour will introduce riders to a number of biking trails created by dedicated volunteers on Conservancy preserves around Lackawanna State Park. The road tours will also pass some of the hundreds of acres of scenic private lands that the Conservancy has protected through conservation easements around the watershed.

Registration opens on April 5. At our website—[www.countrysideconservancy.org](http://www.countrysideconservancy.org)—follow the link on the left-hand margin of the homepage to find preliminary information on the Go Green bike tour. Then get your friends or family together and sign up!



*Bikers check out the new bridge by the dam at Lackawanna State Park*

Sponsors as of press time include New Milford Bike, Sicklers Bike and Sport Shop, California Springs, Cannondale, Planet Bike and an anonymous sponsor. We invite more sponsors, donors and volunteers to get involved in the planning of this year’s inaugural tour. We hope it will become a big annual draw to our area, showcasing the Conservancy’s work in protecting the beautiful lands and waters of our region.



## Farewell to Rylan

In other staffing changes, the Conservancy bids a fond farewell to Land Protection Specialist Rylan Coker, who in January 2010 took up a student teaching position at Tunkhannock High School. He hopes to teach high school science full-time beginning in fall 2010. His mapping, computer and field skills, his botanical expertise and his easygoing manner made him a great addition to the Conservancy’s staff. He will be missed. We wish him the best of luck in his new career!

## Save the Date for Auction 2010!

The Conservancy will hold its Eleventh Annual Auction on **Saturday, July 24** on the lawn at the Allied Services Corporate Center, at the Abington Executive Park in Clarks Summit. This is the same venue we enjoyed last year, which was immensely popular with the guests in attendance. We couldn't be happier to be holding the event there once again, and our warmest gratitude goes out to Allied Services for their invaluable support.

Auction Committee members, led by Elaine Shepard and Kathleen Graff, are

organizing the lineup of items for bidding and other key details of the event. Additional volunteers are invited to join the committee and help with any aspect of organizing the event, from donations to sponsorships to guest lists to decor.

Several sponsors have already lent their support to this year's event, including Peoples National Bank, Keystone Community Resources, Penn Security Bank & Trust, and Janney Montgomery Scott LLC. Additional sponsors, and donations of items for the Silent or Live

Auction, are 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.

As always, the evening will feature great music, cocktails, and a mouth-watering array of dining choices. Please save the date, and remember to call the office soon to book your seats!



*Auction tent at Allied Services, 2009.*

## Shop the Conservancy



The Conservancy is offering caps and canvas shopping bags bearing the Conservancy's well-known tree logo. Watch this space for pricing and how to buy! We also have Conservancy bumper stickers, a white oval with the tree and our name, available for \$1.00. Wear the tree and show the world you care about our countryside!

The Conservancy also offers for sale Norm Brauer's book *The Northern Electric*. This book tells the story of the old interurban trolley line 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, and the Conservancy is working to turn the section from Clarks Summit to Lake Winola into a non-motorized recreational trail. The book sells for \$33.39 including sales tax (shipping and handling are a few dollars more).

Call the office at (570) 945-6995 to shop and support the Conservancy today!



*What well-dressed cars in our watershed are wearing*

## From the (Former) Director's Chair

I joined the Conservancy as Executive Director in June 2003. The Conservancy hired me in a great leap of faith – I came in as an environmental consultant with my professional experience solely in East Asia, and with no nonprofit management experience at all. Over the past six-plus years, I have had a great experience in this job, learning more than I ever intended to about the most arcane areas of land law, surveying, appraising, and local regulations, as well as about local neighborhoods, history and ecology. Starting in 2007, I began learning about something I'd never planned to study at all: natural gas development. And along the way I learned a great deal about how a small nonprofit organization works in its local community. The support I have had from members and supporters, volunteers and our Board of Directors has been outstanding; these people are the lifeblood of the Conservancy, and I have had the privilege and responsibility of keeping the blood flowing and the organization moving.

Now that the time has come for me to move on and make a change in my life, I'm doing it in small steps. As a first step, I'll be going from full-time to part-time with the Conservancy. I'll be devoting my efforts to an initiative called "Outreach and Education for Open Space and Outdoor Recreation in Lackawanna County." This project is funded in part by a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation, Growing Greener Environmental Stewardship Fund under the Pocono Forest and Waters Conservation Landscape.

Having lived in Lackawanna County for over six years, I am very happy to have the opportunity to promote the county's great open-space and outdoor resources. This project will continue through June. Opportunity permitting, I may continue



*Mary hopes to have more time for stuff like this after she shifts to part-time.*

with the Conservancy on a related project on into the fall.

After that, I will be leaving the Conservancy as an employee (though staying on as a member) and moving to the greater Philadelphia area, to be closer to my parents' primary residence. We'll see what opportunities open up there! When I go, I'll miss lots of things about living in the Tunkhannock Creek watershed, including: living close to downhill and cross-country skiing and (usually) having plenty of snow each winter; learning to kayak on local streams and the river; having places like Little Rocky Glen right down the road; riding behind Margaret Hull's team at Spring Hills Farm. Above all, enjoying the great open spaces that are all around us, dismissively identified as "vacant" or "undeveloped" land in planning documents and developer's drawings – as if they were a blank slate, not vital habitat for countless living organisms as well as spiritual food to every passerby.

Working for the Conservancy, I have been proud to help the organization achieve conservation victories such as protecting Little Rocky Glen and other sites of natural beauty; opening these areas for public use; bringing the Trolley Trail steadily closer to reality; involving volunteers in conservation through the South Branch Tunkhannock Creek Watershed Coalition; and achieving accreditation. I believe we are well positioned to face current and future challenges, including natural gas development in our region.

It has been an honor to be associated with this organization, and with the many strong volunteers, members and colleagues that populate it. I hope each of you will continue your support of our work, keep in touch, and let us know how we're doing. I am immensely grateful to each of you, and trust that the Conservancy will continue to fulfill your hopes and justify your faith in us.

— by Mary Felley

## 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 memory of Marianne Nelson:*  
Her friends at Everything Natural

*In memory of Nancy Stahler:*  
Ann Chamberlin

*In honor of*  
*Kristie Miller McMahon's birthday:*  
Gretchen Ludders and Bob Fleese

*In honor of Tina and Terry Haight:*  
Warren and Heather Acker

*In honor of the anniversary of*  
*David Oswald and Brigitte Moyer:*  
Bill and DeDe Tersteeg



## Quarry Ridge Preserve

From time to time we introduce different preserves owned by the Conservancy in the pages of our newsletter. This month, we present the **Quarry Ridge Preserve**.

This 30-acre preserve in North Abington Township, Lackawanna County was the first property ever purchased by the Conservancy, back in 2000. The property was originally part of a small farm whose slopes were used for pasture and woodlot. Many years ago, several small quarries were cut into the exposed rocky ledges at the top of the ridge to supply local building stone. The name "Quarry Ridge" alludes to these old quarries and to the Ridgeways, the family from whom it was purchased.

This property, like the Conservancy's Meadowsweet, Ziegler and Messimer Preserves, was acquired by the Conservancy as part of a drive to protect acreage near Lackawanna State Park from further development, and to increase the acreage of public-access lands around the Park. The Quarry Ridge Preserve lies at the southern extremity of the Park.

About five years ago, the Conservancy linked up Quarry Ridge with the Meadowsweet Preserve via a private landowner agreement with a neighbor to create a mile-long walking and mountain-biking trail from Lily Lake Road to the State Park. The trail runs to the top of the ridge, winds through the old quarries, and then ties in to the Park's Abington Trail at the top of the ridge overlooking Lackawanna Lake. You can find a trail map in the "Protected Lands" section of our [website](#).

Quarry Ridge is accessed from the same parking area at Lily Lake Road that serves the Meadowsweet Preserve. The parking area is on the north side of the road about three-quarters of a mile from the intersection with Route 407.

The Conservancy has worked with forester Jim Lacek to develop a manage-



*Trail through the woods at Quarry Ridge.*

ment plan for the property. The plan outlines goals such as controlling invasive non-native plants and restoring forest on old pasture and cut-over woodland areas. Deer hunting is permitted on Quarry Ridge, as it is in adjacent areas of the State Park, in order to assist forest regeneration. Hunters are required to apply for a permit from the Conservancy to hunt this land, and are asked to enter the property from the State Park rather than Lily Lake Road.

The Conservancy warmly thanks the volunteers, including Tom Durbin, Joe Tierney and many others, who have worked to develop the trail and keep it open over the years. The Meadowsweet-Quarry Ridge trail is one of our most popular recreational sites with local residents.

## **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 has spent the winter discussing developments in the natural gas arena, and planning several spring and summer events (see page 2 of this newsletter). We have also replenished supplies for water quality monitoring, which begins in April. If you're interested in volunteering, please contact Mary at 945-6995 or [cconserv@epix.net](mailto:cconserv@epix.net).

Foremost among the topics of discussion at recent meetings has been the Marcellus Shale gas development. One recurring question has been what role we can usefully play as private citizens in making sure that natural gas development activities proceed without unnecessary harm to the environment. In northcentral Pennsylvania, a group calling themselves "Waterdogs" has formed for just this purpose. A Waterdog training event is planned in Williamsport for the morning of Saturday, March 27. This event is being organized for citizens who want to volunteer their services to help keep an eye on natural gas development activities. (Needless to say, keys to being a responsible waterdog include staying legal – i.e. no trespassing – and staying safe.)

The Williamsport Waterdog training costs \$10 for registration, plus \$20 extra to purchase your own Total Dissolved

Solids (TDS) meter. If you'd like to attend, please contact Carey Entz of the Lycoming County Conservation District at (570) 413-3003.

Meanwhile, the US Environmental Protection Agency has established a tipline for anyone wishing to report problems related to gas drilling. The number is 1 (877) 919-4EPA. In case of emergency, call the National Response Center at 1 (800) 424-8802.

Several representatives of the Watershed Coalition attended a daylong seminar on the "Science of the Marcellus Shale" at Lycoming College in January. High points of the event included several fascinating presentations on the makeup of the flow-back water brought up from gas wells during and after the fracturing process, and options for treating and disposing of it. It was confirmed that Marcellus flow-back is indeed high in salts, with many of the samples turning up as 25 to 30% salts (ten times as salty as seawater).

In February, the Coalition submitted comments on DEP's proposed tightened standards for Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) in wastewater – standards proposed in response to the increased volume of high-salt wastewater arising from the

fracturing process, and concerns about its effects on our state's streams and rivers. The Coalition's comments were generally supportive, but there is some concern that the 500 mg/l limit for TDS may be too high for some forms and lifestages of aquatic life. A dearth of data on native stream and river organisms prevents us from knowing for sure.

You have probably heard that DEP has proposed to set up a Scranton office with 10 new inspectors for Marcellus Shale gas wells. We are glad to see that DEP is paying attention and putting itself closer to where drilling is underway.

Finally, we understand that the Susquehanna River Basin Commission has received funding from gas company Eastern Resources to install a real-time water quality monitoring system at up to 30 streams throughout the basin, as discussed in our fall newsletter. The monitoring system would track levels of total dissolved solids (an approximation of salt content) and other key parameters, to permit a rapid response to problems that might arise. This is a noteworthy commitment by an industry player to support the monitoring of water conditions as gas development proceeds throughout the river basin.

## **Trees for Burr**

Wendy Sweppenheiser reports that the Tunkhannock Tree Association planted not one but five American Sycamores in memory of Burr Hamilton at Tunkhannock's Riverside Park last October. The number of trees was increased thanks to generous donations and a matching grant. Our sincere thanks to the Tunkhannock Tree Association for their riverside revegetation work at this scenic park. We hope to dedicate these trees at the Earth Day & Arbor Day Celebration at the park on Saturday, April 24.



*Burr collecting water samples on the creek in 2005*

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

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

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_ Patron \$250

\_\_\_\_\_ Benefactor \$500

\_\_\_\_\_ Trust Partner \$1,000 and up

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Consider a gift to the Countryside Conservancy in honor of someone you care about. The gift of conservation will last forever.  
For more information contact Mary Felley at P.O. Box 55, La Plume PA 18440. (570) 945-6995 or cconserv@epix.net



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