

CountryViews

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE COUNTRYSIDE CONSERVANCY



New Acquisition: Trostle Pond

We are excited to share with you news of our latest conservation acquisition: Trostle Pond, a 34-acre property just north of Lackawanna State Park in Benton Township. The spot is a stunning vista of open meadows, water and fringing woodlands on the very doorstep of the Park.

The Countryside Conservancy identified this property as being at high risk when it was listed for sale in 2005. As a large parcel in a prime location, on a state highway in an area zoned for residential development, the land could easily have been bought, subdivided and re-sold for new home construction. This would have drastically altered the existing rural and open landscape.

The Conservancy stepped in to purchase the property, with critical support from two sources. One was the Whitney Chamberlin Memorial Fund, a fund established in memory of a young conservationist who was taken from us too early in life. We wish to express our deep gratitude to Whitney's parents, Will Chamberlin, Jr. and Katie Constable, for establishing this fund to be drawn upon for worthy conservation projects. The Conservancy is exploring ways of placing a suitable memorial to Whitney on the property.

The other source of short-term funds to complete the acquisition was a one-year no-interest loan from the Norcross Wildlife Foundation. We are very grateful to the Foundation for their role in this acquisition, but now the clock is ticking. The Conservancy needs to raise sufficient funds to pay back the loan by September 2007. We invite you to make a donation to the Conservancy's Land Fund to help pay off this loan!

Trostle Pond is a conservation-worthy site for many reasons. It occupies a strategic position at the northern gateway to the State Park on Route 407, and it borders the park for almost half a mile. It ties in naturally to trails in the State Park (Bull Hill and Tree Line Trails), which are actively used by hikers, bikers, hunters and others. Woodland and creek habitats on the property merge seamlessly into the Park. The outflow from Trostle Pond enters Lackawanna Lake, the heart of the Park. Protection of the pond and its catchment from development will help sustain water quality in Lackawanna Lake, and maintain the natural value of the lake and surrounding woods.

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Photo: Susan Scranton Dawson

Thanks to our Auction donors!

Lack of space in our Summer newsletter made it impossible to thank by name the many, many donors to our Auction this year. We are happy to be able to make up now for this neglect. Please see pages 4 and 5 for a list of Auction donors--and please support the local businesses that support the Conservancy!



Countryside Conservancy

PO Box 55
La Plume PA 18440
(570) 945-6995
www.countrysideconservancy.org
ccconserv@epix.net

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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 Acquisition: Trostle Pond

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Finally, as shown in these photos, the parcel has very high scenic value! It has a long and very visible frontage on Route 407. The pond and rolling fields are an important amenity for users of this much-traveled road, creating a benefit even for casual passersby. The permanent protection of this property will be of significant benefit to the watershed, the environment, the local community, and everyone who enjoys the State Park.



Photo: Susan Scranton Dawson

Trail at Abington Little League

In October, the Conservancy and the Abington Little League signed a permanent agreement for a trail easement at the Little League fields at Ackerly Field, Glenburn Township. The Conservancy extends its gratitude to Ellen Bugno and the Board of the Abington Little League, without whom this opportunity would never have come to fruition.

The trail will form a loop around all five ball fields, extending half a mile in length. It will provide a place where friends and families of Little Leaguers can stretch their legs and enjoy the many attractive trees and shrubs that the Conservancy and the Little League have planted all around the ball fields.

The ball fields and the trail can be reached from the Little League parking area on

Ackerly Road. Eventually the trail will run up the hill behind the parking lot to Ackerly Road, where walkers will be able to cross over to a section of the planned Trolley Trail that is already owned by the Conservancy.

Ackerly field was historically a destination for community members and for riders of the Northern Electric Trolley; the site was used for horse races, auto races and fairs in the early 20th century. The Conservancy has done a great deal of beautification work here over the years, with invaluable support from the Little League, Glenburn Township and many volunteers. We are dedicated to maintaining this spot as an outdoor recreational asset for ball players, their families, and community members into the future.

Second Edition of *The Northern Electric* Available

The second edition of *The Northern Electric* is available for purchase from the Countryside Conservancy. Norm Brauer's comprehensive history of the Northern Electric Railway contains over 200 pages of photos, history, anecdotes and business records, plus foldout maps!

The Northern Electric trolley once served communities as far-flung as Scranton, Clarks Summit, Glenburn, Dalton, Factoryville, Lake Winola, Nicholson, Hop Bottom, and Montrose (and Brooklyn, as a Susquehanna County friend reminds me). This is a great holiday gift for any history or rail buff.

The book sells for \$33.39 including sales tax (shipping and handling are a few dollars more). Call (570) 945-6995 to order your copy today! Book sales support Conservancy operations, including the development of parts of the old trolley line into a non-motorized recreational trail.

Our thanks to author Norm Brauer, and to the Lackawanna Heritage Valley Authority, the National Park Service and the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, which generously helped support the reprinting of this local classic.

Tailgate Picnic Wrap-Up



Picnic chairs Jim and Sharon Vipond

It was the Conservancy against the weatherman on Sunday, September 24. But despite occasional rains and threatening clouds, the Conservancy's Twelfth Annual Tailgate Picnic went ahead, under the more than capable leadership of chairs Jim and Sharon Vipond. Turnout was a bit lower than usual, due to the weather, but those who braved the clouds were able to enjoy all the amenities of our classic fall get-together. The Tailgate Picnic is the Conservancy's longest-running event. It's a great neighborhood-style gathering with a focus on families and children. This year's event was also a special thank-you to Conservancy members, who received free admission.

A list of the donors gives a snapshot of the attractions that were on offer: Gerrity's, which supplied pies for the pie-eating contest; Miller's Agway, for a discount on sacks for the sack races; the Acker family, who donated the corn and ran the corn roast; the Dalton Do-It Center, which

donated the use of a generator; and Spring Hills Farm, which offered horse-drawn wagon rides courtesy of Margaret Hull and her team, Ben and Jake. We thank all these donors for their generosity!

We thank our good-natured and generous chairs the Viponds, as well as volunteers including Bill Booth, Amy Broadbent, Tom Durbin and Joe Janichko, for their diverse contributions that made the day special.

Prior to the Picnic, Bill Booth and Joe Tierney organized a mountain-bike ride up the new trail winding through the woods of the Meadowsweet Preserve, up to Quarry Ridge and into Lackawanna State Park. Rumor has it that they rode the whole length of the Park from the Conservancy's trailhead at Lily Lake Road—a trip made possible through several strategic conservation purchases by the Conservancy, and the outstanding generosity of a neighboring landowner who granted permission for trail users to cross a strip of private land. Thanks to Bill, Joe, and all bikers and hikers who support the trail! Joe is working on a formal map of the trails he and his team have created over the Meadowsweet and Quarry Ridge Preserves. The map, once complete, will be posted at the Lily Lake Road trailhead.



Margaret Hull and her team give Sharon Vipond a ride

Hunting and the Conservancy

This fall and winter, the Countryside Conservancy is undertaking an experimental permitted deer hunting program on several of its preserves. Hunting is limited to deer, and hunters are requested to apply for a permit from the Conservancy.

Two of the properties open to deer hunting are in North Abington Township: Quarry Ridge (accessible from Abington Trail in Lackawanna State Park), and the Messimer Preserve (on Grist Mill Road off Route 524). The other two are in Benton Township: the Ziegler Preserve (on Route 438 east of Wallsville Corners), and Trostle Pond (on Route 407 north of Wallsville Corners).

These preserves are open to hunting on the following dates: Monday, Nov. 27 through Saturday, Dec. 9, 2006 (rifle only); and Tuesday, Dec. 26, 2006 through Tuesday, Jan. 9, 2007 (muzzle loader and archery).

The Conservancy took the decision to try this approach after long discussion involving many stakeholders, both hunters and non-hunters. These four properties are ones on which hunting took place before the Conservancy took ownership, and three of them adjoin parts of Lackawanna State Park that are open to hunting. In the end, the paramount consideration was the need to control deer numbers in order to allow our native forests to regenerate. This year's program is a trial run, and we welcome feedback on this experiment.

Non-hunters are urged to exercise due care when out in nature during hunting season, whether on these preserves, in the State Park or on other public-access lands. Please wear orange and make yourself visible! Hunters, please show courtesy and consideration for the non-hunters who also use these lands for their health and enjoyment!

Thank You, Auction Donors!

We omitted a full list of the donors to our 2006 Auction in our last newsletter due to space limitations. We want to make up that oversight now, and extend our warm thanks to the following businesses and individuals who helped us create the biggest and most varied auction lineup we've ever presented! The following is a combined list of donors to the Live and Silent Auction categories:

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Numerous anonymous friends also made contributions to both the Silent and Live Auction array.

We are glad to provide contact information for any of the business donors, merchants, artists and artisans listed above. We are profoundly grateful to these donors who go all out, whether by donating a part of their livelihood or by creating a special item or service as a volunteer in their precious spare time! And we extend our most sincere apologies to anyone we have inadvertently overlooked.

Honors and Memorials

We offer our thanks to the following individuals who have made gifts to the Conservancy in memory of or in honor of individuals. These gifts will be placed in the Conservancy's Land Fund to support our land protection activities throughout the region.

In memory of C. Lee Havey, Jr.:
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Rodes

(Our apologies: in our last issue we omitted the "Jr." in Mr. Havey's name when acknowledging a memorial gift from Lynn Nichols.)

In memory of Jim and Roz Peck:
Ms. Sylvia Jenkins

Gift to Peck Memorial Trail Fund:
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Rodes

What better way to remember a departed friend who loved the land, or to celebrate a joyous passage in a loved one's life, than to make a gift? Through the Conservancy you can give the gift of conservation, which goes on forever.

We offer our sincere apologies for any errors or omissions in these acknowledgements. Please contact us if we have overlooked your gift or misspelled your name, and we will make it right in our next issue! We are grateful for your forbearance.

Another Way to Give: IRA Rollovers

The Pension Protection Act of 2006, signed into law in August, contains a variety of incentives for charitable giving. Among these is an "IRA rollover" provision that allows individuals aged 70 and older to make charitable gifts totaling up to \$100,000 per year from their IRAs. Amounts donated from a traditional IRA will not be counted as taxable income. Gifts must be made to a qualified charitable organization, such as the Countryside Conservancy, which is a 501(c)(3) organization under the Internal Revenue Code.

This provision of the law will be in effect only until Dec. 31, 2007. (It is part of the same tax law that created improved tax incentives for donations of conservation easements, mentioned in our Summer 2006 issue; those provisions too are set to expire at the end of 2007 unless renewed.)

Please visit <http://www.independentsector.org/programs/gr/IRARollover.html>, including the Donor Fact Sheet, for more information on how this program works. If you are eligible, please consider making a gift from your IRA to the Countryside Conservancy!

Thank You to Our Supporters!

We wish to acknowledge all those who have made donations since the date of our last newsletter! We thank the following individuals whose contributions are helping to keep the Conservancy healthy and active:

Mr. and Mrs. William Acker
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If you haven't yet, please consider making a year-end gift to the Conservancy. You will find a donation form on the back page of this newsletter. Your gift is what makes our work possible! Gifts received before press time of the next CountryViews will be acknowledged in the Winter 2007 issue.

Watershed Events: News from the South Branch Tunkhannock Creek Watershed Coalition

On November 14, members of the Watershed Coalition held a convivial year-end gathering at Gin's Tavern. New officers were elected: Dale Holen as Chair, Ellie Hyde as Vice-Chair, Mary Felley as Secretary, Jeff Aronsohn as Water Quality Chair, and Alana Roberts as Education Chair. Congratulations to the new leadership, and thanks to retiring chair Bill Tersteeg for his service!

Over dinner, Coalition members brainstormed about activities and projects for the coming year. The group will organize several winter-season events, including a slideshow and lecture on streamside plants by Gerry Janus (date to be announced). We may also undertake an educational project with local high-school students in the spring.

The Watershed Coalition wrapped up a third season of water quality monitoring in November this year. This year we added a sixth monitoring site in Ackerly Creek to the five already established in the South Branch of the Tunkhannock Creek. We would love to expand the program further upstream toward Clarks Summit, Scott Township, Benton Township, etc. If you'd like to volunteer with us, please give Mary Felley a call at 945-6995, or email Water Quality Committee chair Jeff Aronsohn at cyberknight@epix.net. The work is simple and rewarding, with a friendly bunch of people (it may even earn you a free breakfast at the Blue Bird Diner!).

Cleaning Up Our Lands

Project COALS (Clean Up Our Anthracite Lands and Streams) is a new program that aims to help concerned citizens clean up illegal dumpsites. This project came into being through cooperation between the state Department of Environmental Protection and other parties interested in restoring the beauty of our often abused countryside. Dumpsites on public lands such as State Parks and State Game Lands are particularly suitable candidates for a COALS cleanup.

Project COALS is active in Lackawanna County and elsewhere in the state. If you know of a washing-machine graveyard or a tire pile that you'd like to see cleaned up, please contact Alana Roberts, Watershed Specialist with the Lackawanna County Conservation District (tel. 570-281-9495) for more information about the program!

Land Trusts Make a Real Difference

As of 2005, over 37 million acres of land have been conserved by land trusts across the nation! What's more, almost half a million of those protected acres are right here in Pennsylvania. That's the good news from the 2005 Land Trust Census, just released by the Land Trust Alliance.

The total protected acreage is enormous: considerably greater than the state of Pennsylvania (29.5 million acres). The best news is that the rate of land protection may actually be slightly outstripping the rate of land loss due to sprawling development.

This truly remarkable achievement in land protection is the result of hard work by over 1,600 land trusts—non-profit organizations like the Countryside Conservancy that are devoted to protecting, as the Census puts it, "a certain type of land that is important to the character and soul of each community." And the achievements of land trusts are due in large part to the unstinting efforts of volunteers and of private donors. The Conservancy thanks you for making our work possible!



Grant for Little Rocky Glen

The Endless Mountains Heritage Region recently announced that the Countryside Conservancy will receive a \$7,500 grant for parking and trail improvements at Little Rocky Glen. The grant will help create a safe off-road parking area and improve an existing trail on the north side of the creek. Work is likely to take place in spring 2007. Our grateful thanks to the Endless Mountains Heritage Region for its support!

The Conservancy is working with James Rogers Architects of Dalton on conceptual planning for Little Rocky Glen. This process will help us determine the appropriate size and location for the parking area and other minor improvements we may make to the site over time. We are most grateful to JRA for their input!

**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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_____ Friend \$70

_____ Founder \$100

_____ Patron \$250

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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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