

CountryViews

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE COUNTRYSIDE CONSERVANCY



Countryside Conservancy Gains National Accreditation



Conservancy staff members Rylan Coker, Cheryl Ellsworth (seated) and Mary Felley with the Conservancy's accreditation certificate.

Countryside Conservancy is delighted to announce that it has been accredited by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission! Countryside Conservancy was one of the first graduating class of 39 accredited land trusts (six of them from Pennsylvania) recognized at a ceremony at the Land Trust Alliance's national "Rally" conference on September 19 in Pittsburgh.

Commission Executive Director Tammara Van Ryn said, "Accredited land trusts meet national quality standards for protecting important natural places and working lands forever. The accreditation seal lets the public know that the accredited land trust has undergone an extensive, external review of the governance and management of its organization and the systems and policies it uses to protect land."

The Conservancy's Executive Director Mary Felley said, "We are delighted to have received accreditation, which confirms our commitment to permanent land conservation. The Conservancy is a much stronger organization today for having gone through the rigorous process of accreditation over the past two years."

The Conservancy has worked with conservation-minded landowners in Lackawanna, Susquehanna and Wyoming counties to protect over 1,100 acres of lands and waters in the region. Collectively, land trusts across the country have worked with landowners to save over 37 million acres of farms, forests, parks and places people care about. Strong, well-managed land trusts provide local communities with effective champions and caretakers of their critical land resources, and safeguard the land through the generations.



Accredited land trusts display a seal indicating to the public that they meet national standards for excellence, uphold the public trust and ensure that their conservation efforts are permanent. The seal is a mark of distinction in land conservation. The Countryside Conservancy is proud to display the accreditation seal on its website and letterhead, and will strive to uphold best practices in private land conservation.

Special thanks are due to Cheryl Ellsworth, the Conservancy's Program Manager, as well as to staff members Mary Felley and Rylan Coker, and to Board members Dorrance Belin, Michael Kane and Lydia Coulter as well as the whole Board of Directors for their contributions to reaching this important milestone.

More information about land trusts and accreditation is available on the Land Trust Accreditation Commission's website, www.landtrustaccreditation.org.



Staff members Mary Felley, Cheryl Ellsworth and Lois Yeust prepare the Conservancy's application packet



Countryside Conservancy

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Mary Felley, Executive Director
Rylan Coker, Land Protection Specialist
Cheryl Ellsworth, Program Manager
Lois Yeust, Administrative Assistant

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.



Countryside Conservancy Wins Environmental Partnership Award

On October 29, the Countryside Conservancy was honored with an Environmental Partnership Award from the Northeastern Pennsylvania Environmental Partners. The award honored the Conservancy's work in partnership with landowners, community members, schools, churches, Scout troops, businesses, foundations, and local, county and state governments to protect lands and waters in our part of northeastern Pennsylvania.

Conservancy Executive Director Mary Felley in her acceptance speech thanked the Conservancy's partners in conservation, and noted that the Conservancy's thousand-plus protected acres is a "good start" but needs to be followed by much more. "Our goal is not only to protect the landscape," said Felley, "but to re-establish connections between land and people—us and our children. If we don't do that, what are we saving it for?"

Among the Conservancy's achievements, Felley highlighted the acquisition and opening of Little Rocky Glen in Wyoming County, and preserves around Lackawanna State Park; progress on the "Trolley Trail" rail-trail project; the all-volunteer accomplishments of the South Branch Tunkhannock Creek Watershed Coalition; and achieving accreditation from the Land Trust Accreditation Commission.

She noted that the Conservancy has achieved what it has only thanks to the vision and the combined power of its members, funders, volunteers and board—people who give up their evenings and weekends, their talent and treasure to help save our countryside for the future.

In closing, Felley mentioned Roz Peck, one of the Conservancy's founding Board members, and recipient of a Shelburne Environmental Leadership Award from the Partners in 2003: "Roz was a visionary who pursued her conservation goals regardless of what was considered achievable or advisable. I urge all the 'Roz'es out there in the audience to follow her example!"

The Northeastern Pennsylvania Environmental Partners are a coalition of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Alliance, the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the state Department of Environmental Protection, the Pennsylvania Environmental Council, PPL Corporation, Procter & Gamble Paper Products Company and Wilkes University.

Hunting Season

All visitors to our preserves are reminded that three of our properties will be open to deer hunting for two weeks after Thanksgiving and three weeks after Christmas. The properties are: Ziegler (on Route 438), Messimer (on Grist Mill Road), and Quarry Ridge (on Route 407 but accessed from within Lackawanna State Park). Anyone wishing to obtain a permit to hunt deer on these properties on Dec. 1-13, 2008 (rifle season) or Dec. 26, 2008-Jan. 10, 2009 (flintlock and bowhunting) is asked to call the office at (570) 945-6995 to obtain a permit application, regulations and map. Hunting is not permitted on any other Conservancy-owned properties.

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. Please stay alert, be aware of your surroundings, be courteous to other users of the landscape, and above all be visible!

Picnic Shelter Opened at Little Rocky Glen



Conservancy supporters and friends gather as Natalie Solfanelli of the Lackawanna Heritage Valley Authority cuts the ribbon on the new picnic shelter.

Countryside Conservancy held a ribbon-cutting for a new picnic shelter at Little Rocky Glen on October 14. The ceremony was attended by Representative Sandra Major, PA District 111; Dennis DeMara from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources; Natalie Solfanelli, Executive Director, Colleen Carter, Director of Programs, and Sarah Piccini, Program Officer from the Lackawanna Heritage Valley Authority; Jeanne Bovard, Executive Director of the Scranton Area Foundation; Alex Fried, Public Relations Manager for Procter & Gamble; and members of the Countryside Conservancy Board of Directors, Advisory Board and staff.

Construction of the picnic shelter, designed by architect James Rogers of Dalton, was supported in part by a grant from the Lackawanna Heritage Valley Authority in partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and the National Park Service. Additional funds were provided through anonymous foundation support.

The new picnic tables in the picnic shelter were built with the help of a generous grant and team of hard-working volunteers from Prudential organized by Michael Williamson, also supported by volunteers from the Trail Rotary Club. Greg and Clyde Ellsworth provided the picnic table plans, and Greg led construction.

The Conservancy's Little Rocky Glen preserve in Clinton Township, Wyoming County is a truly beautiful spot whose creek gorge, forests and fields attract numerous visitors each summer. The Conservancy acquired the property with grant assistance from DCNR and many foundation and private donors, who are acknowledged on a new plaque on the picnic shelter.



A host of volunteers from Prudential and several members of the Trail Rotary Club assemble picnic tables at Little Rocky Glen.

Books of Our Region

Thinking about your Christmas gift list? Here are two great books featuring two Tunkhannock Creek Watershed landmarks!

Norm Brauer's history of our favorite local trolley line, *The Northern Electric*, tells the story of the Northern Electric Railway (1907-1932) 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, Glenburn, Dalton, 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. (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.)

A new addition to our local history library is *Lake Carey*, hot off the presses this year in Arcadia Publishing's "Images of America" series! The author is Dr. Walter Broughton, a Conservancy Board member. This photographic journey through the history of the Lake offers over 100 pages of historic photos, postcards, maps and solid historical research. Broughton wrote the book "to increase public awareness of the lake's heritage and the natural beauty that drew people to it." Royalties from sales of the book will be donated to the Lake Carey Conservation Fund. *Lake Carey* is available from local bookstores, web-based booksellers and from www.arcadiapublishing.com.

Lackawanna State Park Update

Trostle Pond, on the property of the same name that the Conservancy transferred to the Park earlier this year, has been designated as a youth fishing area (age 12 and under only; adults may assist children). There are few such sites in Lackawanna County, and this is a great way of introducing children to fishing.

State Park staff sowed native wildflower seeds on the field behind Trostle Pond this summer, and the results were striking – a beautiful diversity of colorful blooms across the hillside. State Park Manager Alex Stout said it was a very good show for the first year.

Replacement of the old iron bridge below the Lackawanna Lake dam at the State Park is well underway and may be complete before the end of 2008. The new bridge will be for non-motorized recreational traffic only, including hikers and mountain bikers. Joe Tierney's trail-building group has been working on a trail extension from Trostle Pond over to the new footbridge, which will traverse a large section of the Park to take advantage of this new link.



Native wildflowers in bloom at Trostle Pond

Countryside Conservancy and Gas Leasing

As a land trust, the Countryside Conservancy is dedicated to land and water conservation. We are not opposed to exploration and extraction of natural gas, but we want to ensure that the process does not damage natural resources of conservation value. To that end, we are working hard to educate ourselves about the pros and cons of gas development, and we urge landowners to do the same.

If you are considering preserving your land for the future, don't assume that gas leasing will preclude you from placing a conservation easement on your land. There are ways for gas leases and conservation easements to coexist. Donating a conservation easement to the Conservancy may also provide opportunities for income tax deductions that could be important if you receive royalty income. Please contact Rylan or Mary at our office, (570) 945-6995, if you'd like to explore your conservation options with us.

Well Water and Natural Gas Drilling

Increasingly, people are focusing on the water implications of natural gas development, particularly the large amounts of water used in drilling and hydraulic fracturing ("fracking"), and the disposal of solid and liquid wastes from the well site. It has only recently become widely known, for example, that there are no wastewater treatment plants in our part of the state that are approved to treat fracking fluids.

If you have well water and you have signed a gas lease or if your neighbors have, it's an excellent idea to test your water supply so that you will have pre-drilling baseline data. The testing needs to be done by a DEP-certified lab in order to be admissible for legal purposes. Call DEP to find out more about well testing and which labs are certified to run the tests that detect substances used in gas production.

Landowners in Lackawanna, Susquehanna and Wayne Counties should call DEP's Scranton office at (570) 963-4521. Landowners in Wyoming and Luzerne Counties should call DEP's Wilkes-Barre office at (570) 826-2511 and ask for the Water Supply Program.



Tailgate Picnic

Thanks to all who attended our Tailgate Picnic on September 21! The weather cooperated to provide a really beautiful fall day, making the Conservancy's Meadowsweet Preserve on Lily Lake Road the place to be. We salute Picnic chairs Pat Acker and Abby Peck who brought off a great event, and Amy T. Broadbent who lent her invaluable assistance in organizing childrens' games and countless other details.

Making their picnic premiere this year was the band True North, who set a mellow tone with a mix of country, blue

grass and classic rock throughout the afternoon. Thanks to Kenny Chilewski (guitar and vocals), James Estes (dobro and vocals), Cristina Cox (fiddle and mandolin) and Larry Sokolowski (guitar and vocals) for setting the musical landscape for the afternoon.

Angie Colarusso of the Second Chance Wildlife Center was another new Picnic friend this year. She brought along several furry friends to introduce to the children, and gave a great presentation about the wild creatures she has rescued and rehabilitated.

Our thanks as always to Margaret Hull and Spring Hills Farm for providing wagon rides with Ben and Jake the Belgians, to the Acker family for providing the corn roast and smores, to Bill Booth for leading a mountain-bike tour of Lackawanna State Park and Conservancy trails, to Tom Durbin and Joe Janichko for preparing the field at Meadowsweet Preserve, to the Waverly Community House for setting up the tent, and to everyone else who pitched in and made this year's Picnic a great success.

Tailgate Picnic photos were contributed by Board member Amy T. Broadbent.



In Memoriam

Denise Wright

It is with sorrow that we report the passing of Denise Marie Gromelski Wright, a longtime friend of the Conservancy. All who knew her were saddened to hear of her death in September.

Denise loved the outdoors, and was active in horseback riding, skiing and gardening. She served on the Countryside Conservancy Board of Directors from 2000 to 2006. Even before joining the Board, Denise was an active volunteer for the organization: she and her husband Joe led the Conservancy's "Special Places" event in 1999, and she helped organize it again in 2000. She and Joe co-chaired the Third Annual Auction in 2002 to great success, and were enormous Auction supporters through the years. A wonderful cook who loved to entertain, Denise also catered a Board retreat for the Conservancy in 2004.

Denise will be deeply missed by all who knew her. We extend our heartfelt condolences to her family and friends, and we express our sincere thanks to Dorrance and Susan Belin, who made a gift to the Conservancy in her memory.

Walter Zezeski

Walter Zezeski passed away in September at the age of 84. His daughter, Donna Kaplan, and her husband Barry were kind enough to designate the Countryside Conservancy as a recipient charity for memorial gifts. Donna and Barry said that Walter loved the outdoors and especially Lackawanna State Park, and they thought of the Conservancy in recognition of the conservation work it has done around the Park. We are deeply grateful to Donna and Barry, and to the following donors who made gifts in Walter's memory:

American Red Cross of Lackawanna County
Laura Ancherani
Robert F. and Mary Anne Cherundolo

Michael and James Colangelo
John and Angela Cooper
Employees of Cooper's Seafood House
Rob and Colette Eisenbach
Billie Jo and Donald Ross
Carmen and Diane Scrimalli

Walter's wife Elnora, and Barry Kaplan's mother Ravina Kaplan, also passed away at nearly the same time. The following individuals made gifts in memory of Walter, Elnora and Ravina:

Mrs. Dorothy Bosak Bosley and Mr. J. Conrad Bosley
Elaine Shepard

We wish to extend our condolences to the family and friends of Walter, Elnora and Ravina.

John L. Ryon, Jr.

We offer our thanks to the following individuals who have made gifts to the Conservancy in memory of John L. Ryon, Jr.:

Dorrance and Susan Belin
Amy T. Broadbent

All memorial gifts are placed in the Conservancy's Land Fund to support our land protection activities throughout the region.



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.

Friendship, Celebration and Thanks

We also extend our warm thanks to the following individuals who have made gifts to the Conservancy in honor of others. These gifts too go into the Conservancy's Land Fund to support our land conservation projects.

In honor of Dorrance Belin:

Dr. and Mrs. Edward Boehm
In honor of Mrs. Esther Friedmann:
Amy T. Broadbent
Ann Chamberlin
Lynn H. Nichols

In honor of Margaret Hull:

First Presbyterian Church of Clarks Summit, Presbyterian Women

In appreciation of Bob Hunter:

Amy T. Broadbent

In honor of Amanda Von Rudenborg and L. P. Frieder, III upon their marriage:

Heather and Warren Acker

We also thank Amy T. Broadbent for donating a gift membership for Suzy and John Mikulak. Gift memberships are another way to share your love of the land with those you care about, and introduce friends to the Conservancy!

More Ways to Support Conservation

Gas Bonus

If you received a gas leasing bonus (an up-front rental payment on a gas lease) this year, you will have an increased income tax liability come April 2009. You can reduce your tax burden by making a tax-deductible gift to Countryside Conservancy before the end of 2008. Gifts to the Conservancy are tax-deductible.

IRA Charitable Rollover Extended

Congress recently extended the IRA charitable rollover for 2008 and 2009. This means that a charitable gift made directly from an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) to a nonprofit organization such as Countryside Conservancy in 2008 or 2009 will not be taxed as income, provided that the IRA holder is age 70 or older, the gift totals \$100,000 or less per year, and the withdrawal goes directly from the IRA to the charity. (You do not need to itemize your income taxes in order to take advantage of this opportunity; however, if you do itemize, you cannot also take the contribution as a deduction.) Please contact your tax advisor or accountant, or call the Conservancy at (570) 945-6995, if you'd like to explore this giving option.

Gifts of Stock

Improbable as it may sound in the current market situation, it is possible that you own stock that has greatly increased in value since you acquired it. You may want to consider turning it into a charitable gift. By donating the appreciated stock to a nonprofit rather than selling it, you can avoid paying capital gains tax and also take an income tax deduction for the gift based on the stock's fair market value.

The Conservancy is able to accept gifts of stock. Take a look into your portfolio, talk to your accountant, and see if a gift of stock is right for you! Then call Mary Felley at the Conservancy (570) 945-6995 to get the information you'll need to complete the donation.

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 came out for the Northeastern Pennsylvania Philharmonic's Crescendo Family Concert on October 12. The concert theme was "Song of the Earth," and the Coalition hosted a "River Walk" quiz game that took children from the headwaters all the way to the Chesapeake Bay as they learned about water, nature and conservation. Thanks to Ellie Hyde and Gayle Muller for leading many young friends along the River Walk!

The Coalition is planning another series of free public events for early 2009. These will most likely take place at Keystone College. The tentative schedule includes:

- Monday evening, January 5: **Invasive Plants** presentation by Gerry and Len Janus
- Monday evening, February 2: Screening of WVIA documentary "**Nutrient Trading: Reducing Pollutants in our Watershed**"
- Monday evening, March 2: **Rainbarrel Workshop** with Alana Roberts (go home with your own rainbarrel!)
- Friday evening, April 24: Presentation on **Stream Macroinvertebrates** by Kristen Travers of the Stroud Water Research Center

Topics, dates, times and venues are subject to final confirmation. 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.

The Coalition is concluding another year of water quality monitoring and macro-invertebrate monitoring, which indicate reasonably healthy conditions at our testing sites. Results of water quality monitoring going back to 2004 can be accessed online from the Coalition's homepage, <http://www.countrysideconservancy.com/sbtcwc.htm>. We currently monitor water quality at ten sites in the South Branch watershed, and we will be able to expand our coverage further as we get more volunteers involved.

The Watershed Coalition held its annual elections on November 3, and unanimously re-elected last year's officers. We welcome back Ellie Hyde as Chair, Dale Holen as Vice Chair and Water Quality Chair, Mary Felley as and Alana Roberts as Education Chair.

Save The Trees

If you would prefer not to receive our quarterly newsletter, or if you are receiving multiple copies, please contact our office by phone at (570) 945-6995 or by email at cconserv@epix.net to let us know. You can view past issues of our newsletter online at www.countrysideconservancy.org; click on the "About Us" link and then the "Newsletters" link.

**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.

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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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